

# Frame the Future Thought Pieces



## Strategic Partnerships and Innovation



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The difficult times that people, companies, and countries are facing right now, all over the world, are such that it may seem that the effort to overcome these times might exceed our strength. But it is necessary to believe in the potential of cooperation between strategic agents, with focused actions and creativity.

The entrepreneurial sector, government, and society must work together to foster innovation, build partnerships, promote inclusiveness, and stay resilient in times of crisis to create a sustainable future for the next generations.

Innovation has strategic importance in the sense that it can improve not only economic development, but also society's quality of life. For industrial companies, focus on innovation is the most effective strategy to remain competitive.

The Brazilian National Confederation of Industry (CNI), conscious of this, promotes the competitiveness of Brazilian industry by influencing the policy environment with high-quality technical inputs and public-private articulation.

CNI also coordinates the Entrepreneurial Mobilization for Innovation (MEI), created in 2008 to incorporate innovation into the strategy of companies operating in Brazil, as well as to improve the effectiveness of innovation policies and the innovation ecosystem in the country. More than 400 companies contribute to MEI's work today.

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Aware of the new challenges to achieve competitiveness, MEI's agenda for the 2021-2022 biennial includes new themes, such as innovation for sustainability.

Sustainability is not only a trend for the entrepreneurial sector. It represents a new model of production and business. Companies in Brazil and all over the world are seeking to incorporate best practices and technological solutions to achieve better rates of energy efficiency, reduce industrial waste, and increase the reuse and recycling of productive inputs.

Sustainability is a response to the environmental crisis the world has been going through for years now. Since last year, we are facing an even more severe crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic caused many national health systems to collapse and economies to contract. More than ever, science, technology, and innovation helped societies to overcome the major challenges – not only in health, but in the social and economic dimensions.

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It was only through highly innovative projects and unprecedented partnerships that the main instrument to fight the new coronavirus — the vaccine — was made available to governments all over the world. Partnerships among companies and between governments and companies were decisive to keep hospitals and medical care up and running in Brazil.

Sustainability, innovation, and partnership can promote development and competitiveness. But in times of global crisis, resilience and inclusiveness are also needed.

Brazil has more than 200 million people and structural obstacles in education, income distribution, employment, and persistent gender and race inequality, among other socio-economic issues. Without resilience to defy difficulties that cross generations, it is not feasible to promote inclusiveness. And only an inclusive society can produce all the possible benefits for their citizens and companies.

In times of crisis, such as the world is facing now, latent problems become urgent and explicit. In the case of Brazil, but also for other developing countries, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the deficits of the health system and the profound inequalities in society. Nevertheless, this difficult situation induced effective actions created and executed from the partnership of industry, society, and government.

With the sudden high demand for ventilators in hospitals all over Brazil, national and international suppliers could not deliver what was needed to attend to the COVID-19 patients with more severe cases. In a response to this situation, the National Industrial Training System (SENAI), a branch of CNI, put together an initiative to refurbish ventilators to attend to COVID-19 patients at hospitals. The initiative is composed of more than 30 Brazilian and international companies that use their infrastructure and human resources to fix and repair ventilators and distribute them throughout the country to private and public hospitals.

Examples such as this are an incentive to believe in the potential of these five key elements, partnership, resilience, inclusiveness, sustainability, and innovation to contribute to finding solutions not only in moments of crisis, but to promote a better future.