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## Improving Impact: Collaborative Multi-Party, Multi-Sector Engagement (2011)

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## Improving Impact: Collaborative Multi-party, Multi-sector Engagement

*Most people do not realize the full implications of the fact that we live now in an era marked more by networks than hierarchies. Nowadays, power is distributed across boundaries and borders, rather than concentrated in one place—be it a physical setting, demographic group, industrial sector, or professional discipline. Thanks to systems thinking and the ubiquity of digital tools and platforms, there are many more opportunities for lawmakers, policymakers, and economic institutions to collaborate with concerned citizens on critical public issues, thereby breaking the grip of lobbyists, third-party intermediaries, and the power elite. On top of that are recent breakthroughs in planning, a so-called context-based approach that integrates wider considerations (and metrics) in ways that honor thresholds, baselines, and limits. These breakthroughs were possible because we now recognize the stock and flow of different forms of capital—human, social, environmental, cultural, economic, built environment, even spiritual—are not permanent or infinite. These stock and flows need to be stewarded in ways that contribute to immediate desired outcomes, as well as long-term sustainable prosperity and justice. In addition to wise resource stewardship, a process of carefully designed and managed multi-party, multi-sector education and engagement can help reboot democracy and promote more accountability and inclusive representation. It does so by restoring civic voice and agency at a time when the vast majority of citizens feel left out and ignored, that the game is rigged in favor of a few. The purpose of this article is to help business leaders move beyond simplistic “output measures” of value creation and recognize the importance of constructive community participation in building equity—“equity-as-standing”—along with incorporating probable impacts on a wider context—“context-based sustainability”—to ensure long-term prosperity, peace, and justice. At its core, the model presented here relies on a never-ending process of learning, co-creation, critical reflection and monitoring, and adjustment that makes room for human foibles, errors, and passions and aims.*

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**T**his article defines the role and various components of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility’s values-based Social Sustainability Resource Guide. We hope it serves as an invitation to communities, corporate managers, investors, and other stakeholders to engage with each other in ways that help assure sustainable communities. While rooted in ethical values, the SSRG draws upon the accumulated experience of many individuals and groups, experience that we have distilled and analyzed here.

Most residents want to have a say in improving their communities and the institutions of which they are a part. They most often know best what risks are untenable or injurious and what strategies and practices are likely to succeed in their communities. They can speak directly to questions of livelihood and health, of safety and security, of education and development, because they have to live with any consequences. Therefore, the SSRG is meant to be a guide for beginning a long-term engagement process between communities and companies that fosters

“Improving Impact: Collaborative Multi-party, Multi-sector Engagement,” in *Building Sustainable Communities through Multiparty Collaboration*, ICCR’s Social Sustainability Research Guide (Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility, June 2011). Reprinted by permission of the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility.

mutual learning and understanding, trust, better communication, innovative problem solving, knowledge creation, and positive change.

ICCR seeks to catalyze a process involving communities, companies, individuals, and organizations with a stake in sustainable, and just societies: The Social Sustainability Resource Guide is a step in that direction. To a large degree, this will be an uncharted process of discovery and experimentation:

- First, most corporate social responsibility initiatives emanate from inside the company (usually at corporate headquarters) and extend outwards to external stakeholders and other groups. These efforts, although well intended, often fail to include local individuals, community groups, and organizations in planning and design.
- Second, the social dimension of sustainability defies easy quantitative measurement and, as a result, its analysis remains underdeveloped. However, because companies are making social investments with increasing frequency, it is in their interest, as well as all stakeholders to better understand how well these investments are doing. Qualitative and quantitative benchmarks for gauging progress, as well as collaborative processes for mutual learning and performance improvement are needed. This first step requires adequate baseline information regarding social context, and consensus about overall goals and outcomes.
- Third, even with greater accountability pressures on companies regarding their corporate social responsibility / sustainability efforts, the focus remains on company performance, rather than community impact—particularly long-term social, environmental and community sustainability. The former addresses transparency and disclosure regarding what firms actually do—their policies and practices—to demonstrate their commitment to corporate social responsibility and sustainability. The latter addresses transparency and disclosure regarding what direct and indirect impact these efforts have on community well-being and sustainability—again, through the eyes of those most affected. This gap between “performance” and “impact” demands ongoing study and evaluation, as new insights emerge about what does and doesn’t work.

The Social Sustainability Resource Guide is rooted in the values of faith, justice, integrity, and inclusion, and places community needs at the center of a collaborative process of engagement involving corporate and other stakeholders. The process is subject to monitoring and assessment, to ensure that community and corporate sustainability objectives remain aligned. As such, it is an ongoing process of collaborative inquiry, education, and practice, aimed at prosperity, sustainability, and justice for all.

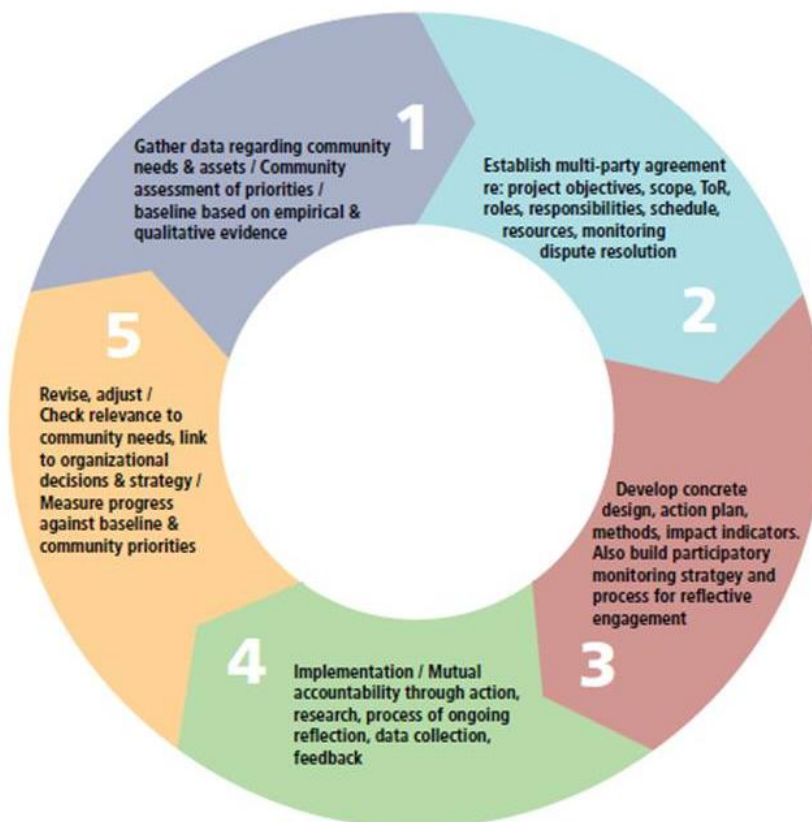


Figure 1: Multi-party Collaborative Approach

An illustration of this evolving approach to social sustainability appears as Appendix A. Figure 1 shows the iterative and overlapping nature of the Social Sustainability Cycle, which represents a form of ongoing action research and active collaborative learning.

The next five sections briefly elaborate these components of the SSRG:

1. Interdependent Values
2. Getting Started: Community Needs, Issues, and Assets
3. Collaborative, Multi-party, and Multi-sector Engagement
4. Business Policy and Program Impacts: A Continuum
5. Evaluation, Monitoring, Assessment, and Adjustments

## **Interdependent Values**

Today, no single individual or institution can “go it alone,” particularly within a networked world

in which collaborative problem solving with a range of private and civic actors is critically important.

Values such as faith, inclusion, and integrity form the bedrock of a sound social sustainability approach. They derive from ancient notions of economic activity, because economic activity is not value free: It involves a series of exchange relationships aimed at community well-being. Indeed, the term “economic” stems from the Greek word, *oikonomia*—meaning “management of the household.” The idea was how to harmonize the “natural” economy of the household and the market to advance, as Aristotle put it, the good life, freedom, and community.

In a networked world, values are interdependent, too— one’s action can have profoundly good or bad impacts on another’s well-being.

The SSRG provides a kind of “normative test” that focuses on results, not intentions. It’s not enough to say that you intend to build a just global community, or empower people to chart their own future. The challenge is to do the work and measure its impact: that a community has become more prosperous and sustainable, that a company’s actions—as defined, witnessed, and lived by those most affected—have fostered these results.

It is grounded in interrelated principles and “value clusters” that reflect beliefs about what is acceptable and what is not. They begin with the notion of “do no harm,” and continue with:

- *Sustainable Community*: This value cluster includes not only a long term sense of shared responsibility, but also notions of Diversity, Equity (standing), Quality, and Safety and Security. “Diversity” involves not just respect for individual differences, but preservation of the ecosystem. “Equity” involves not just equal treatment or standing (related to justice), but also having a stake in economic performance. “Quality” refers to “quality of life” concerns, which relate to physical health and fitness; access to health care services; well-maintained water, sanitation, and transport systems; and life-enhancing goods and services. Quality here also applies to sustainable practices related to the production, distribution, and consumption of food and water. “Safety and security” relates to protection and preservation of the peace, but also preventive actions that promote resilience, as well as immunity from the ravages of disease, poverty, and ignorance.
- *Liberty*: This value cluster includes Freedom from tyranny, oppression, and invasions upon personal privacy, as well as the Freedom to choose one’s values and lifestyle. It involves sharing in self-rule (or choosing not to), free expression, and the ability to shape one’s political and economic destiny.
- *Justice*: This value cluster includes notions of Human Rights, Tolerance, Fairness, and Freedom in pursuit of both the good life and the common good. Included here, too, is an examination of how political instability and poverty contribute to poor health and nutrition, restrictions on reproductive rights and responsibilities, and violence.

Taken together, these value clusters should form the heart of a covenant between the company (and industry) and the community, a collaborative “promise” that balances company self-interest with community well-being (as defined by the community). But it is not without tension; ethics is, in the end, a muddy affair, even if economic opportunities seem clear-cut.

## **Getting Started: Community Expectations, Needs, Issues, and Assets**

Differences in geographical location create different challenges, needs, and issues for communities and local ecosystems, depending upon the facts on the ground. In many instances, existing organizations may track the state of affairs on a range of local social and environmental issues. In some cases, their efforts link to larger groups addressing specific topics (e.g., child health, poverty, economic development) and/or regions. Getting started involves a series of steps involving local people. These steps include:

- *Create and / or engage with a local entity such as a community development foundation, NGO, or college or university that can serve as a trusted intermediary between community stakeholders and business operations;*
- *Recognize Free, Prior and Informed Consent, the starting point in working with Indigenous Peoples, whose right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent is defined by and enshrined in the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;*
- *Conduct local assessment of key community expectations, needs, issues, and assets, with community representatives based on information drawn from multiple sources, to create a starting point from which to measure progress;*
- *Prioritize these needs and issues into manageable clusters to create a “base case” while avoiding fragmentation or duplication of effort (e.g., health and sustainability matters overlap, as do economic development and education, and so on); and*
- *Identify local and regional experts having knowledge of and/or engaged in these clusters as potential partners and sources of information, problem-solving, and support.*

## **Collaborative, Multi-party, and Multi-sector Engagement**

This section looks at the process by which a collaborative group of stakeholders might assess corporate and other social sustainability initiatives. The involvement of key stakeholders in the process is crucial, both to check the validity of assumptions about what’s needed, as well as provide the “thinking space” for creative ideas and suggestions.

All stakeholders first need to agree upon the “What,” “Who,” “Where,” “How,” and “Why” to be evaluated, keeping inclusiveness a consistent theme. Here are some questions to consider:

- *What is to be accomplished?* This includes project goals, objectives, and desired outcomes, as agreed upon by the community and other stakeholders.
- *Who participates?* Participating stakeholders should include communities, civil society, NGOs (local and international), trade unions, corporations and governments (local, national, and global).
- *Where (and what) is the project’s scope and scale?* This includes how many people will be affected, over what territory or geographic setting, levels of government (where appropriate), whether or not international actors will be involved, and so forth. This also is where those involved consider issues of scale—that is, will the project yield changes in public policy, and can it be

transferred to other settings, or is it restricted to the immediate area? How does the program's scope relate to other efforts with similar aims? Are they compatible, or competitive? Finally, what are the limits of what can be done? This is a particularly important question in areas with weak governments.

- *How will the program be implemented?* This is the nuts-and-bolts of an action plan, and includes an agreed-upon time frame and budget. Ideally, the project will be part of a set of community-based actions aimed at improving quality that avoids duplicating or undermining earlier efforts. Another factor to consider in the implementation phase is how disputes will be resolved. What provisions exist for airing grievances and resolving disputes? Given the diversity of non-traditional partners, there can be instances where conflicts of interest, corruption, or cooption occur. Other potential conflicts involve tensions linked to organizational cultures, strategies, power imbalances, languages, and motivation. What trustworthy, capable resources—legal, mediation, and other—stand ready to intervene, should the need arise?

Finally, with respect to implementation, some form of monitoring and evaluation, covering both substantive objectives and process concerns, should exist that enables continued insight into how well the project is doing, what changes need to be made, whether or not certain activities are useful or counterproductive, and what lessons emerge. Because authentic learning is rooted in practice, such a vehicle can help the parties reflect upon the process, share ideas about how to improve, and work together to reconcile differences between what “should be” and what “is.”

- *Why is the program worth doing?* The answer[s] to this question gets to the heart of performance impacts, and whether or not the project benefits the community and other stakeholders—or, at minimum, does no harm. The “why” in the context of long-term sustainability addresses the need for systemic change, not just short-term remedies. Once the project team and stakeholders agree on how best to answer the “Why” question, they can set more specific benchmarks to gauge progress toward their end goal.

## **Business Policy and Program Impacts: A Continuum**

Measuring the social sustainability impact of business involves an assessment of both business operations and any ancillary activities supported by social investing<sup>1</sup>, or cooperative funding arrangements with foundations, other NGOs, and development agencies. Ideally, at both the corporate enterprise and headquarters level, every department embraces sustainability in its goals, processes, and budget; taken together, they comprise sustainability's strategic value to stakeholders and the firm. In some cases, social investing creates stand-alone programs aimed at strengthening community assets; they may be part of cooperative ventures involving other actors. In other instances, the entire business life cycle—entry, operations, and exit—bears upon social sustainability.

Either way, through business operations or stand-alone initiatives, program success depends upon inclusiveness and the extent to which concrete improvement in community life is achieved. Determining value within a social sustainability context is, of course, a process that needs to

unfold at the local level, in collaboration with those most affected. This process also needs to “fit” within the larger corporate framework of civic moral commitments. It involves metrics and less tangible measures of quality, to gauge progress. And it needs anchoring in local realities. Companies are in a good position to mobilize expertise and resources from a variety of places to contribute to community programs collaboratively designed. Ideally, private sector actions also build upon existing community assets—social, human, economic, and natural.

Figure 2 provides an overview of this context and program continuum, within which stakeholders play increasingly important roles. Digital technology is making execution of many of these activities easier, particularly disclosure, transparency, and interactive communication.



Figure 2: Progression of Social Sustainability Program Impact

**“Do No Harm”: Compliance, Disclosure, Capacity Building**

While “Do No Harm” may seem a self-evident prerequisite for sustainable well-being, it can pose a challenge to firms with multiple subsidiaries in different jurisdictions—including those with weak or corrupt governance structures, violent conflict, and human rights abuses. The concept of “Do No Harm” is spelled out by the UN Special Representative on Business and Human Rights in relating to the “corporate responsibility to respect human rights.” The facts on the ground shape interpretations of this baseline “Do No Harm” commitment, and subsequent forms of value protection and creation. Local experts—from business, civil society, and government, as well as international NGOs—play an important role in providing information about local circumstances, needs, and challenges.

Corporate disclosure, reporting, and transparency represent other forms of gauging “Do No Harm,” along with reports issued by international agencies on social sustainability issues such as human rights, hunger, health and safety, labor relations, environmental stewardship, consumer protection, governance, and so on. Increasingly, companies are using their websites for social sustainability reporting and, in some instances, “integrated reporting” of both financial and nonfinancial activity. As a result, external stakeholders must cultivate online research abilities to obtain needed information on country risk assessments, environmental and social impact assessments, security reports, health and safety reports, and business development plans.

**Program Implications:** In geographic areas beset by weak governance and corruption, programs seeking to build health and safety, education, and small and medium business



development help ensure decent living standards, and environmental integrity. In addition, company involvement with international advocacy groups helps address situations where repressive regimes undermine human development and environmental stewardship. Stakeholder engagement can include collaborating on specific initiatives, as well as monitoring and mapping company actions.

### **Risk Management: Due Diligence, Early Detection, Stakeholder Engagement**

This category involves identifying and managing economic, social, environmental, and political risk through a process of due diligence and stakeholder engagement. It presumes a firm has a risk management structure with designated staff and power; open channels for the free flow of information, including provisions for whistleblowers; and policies and procedures for exercising ongoing control, monitoring, and mitigation.

In *Due Diligence for Human Rights: A Risk-Based Approach*, authors Mark B. Taylor, Luc Zandvliet, and Mitra Forouhar present a framework and set of guidelines for conducting human rights risk assessments in an operational field setting. Risk assessments, they write, can be conducted by a range of team configurations, consisting “entirely of company staff, or it may be entirely made up of outside expert consultants or, alternatively, by a mix of both staff and outsiders. All three options have pros and cons.”<sup>2</sup>

Increasingly, experts view internal and external stakeholder consent, involvement, and reporting as necessary preconditions of effective risk management.<sup>3</sup> More than just a one-off meeting, stakeholder engagement involves a broad, inclusive and continuous process encompassing a range of activities and approaches. Participants in effective models of stakeholder engagement should:

- open channels of communication early, despite uncertainties and unclear expectations;
- adopt a long-term view and vision, rather than a short-term, project-specific agenda; and
- be flexible and adaptable to the specific requirements of a given project, its phase of development, and other dynamic forces.

In addition to informal communication, an advisory board with local leaders, and monthly meetings with community representatives and the public can help insure that stakeholder consultation remains open and unbiased.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, effective stakeholder engagement recognizes that members of a particular group may not share the same beliefs and views, and that designated representatives—as in political life—may or may not be faithful to the priorities and interests of the stakeholders they represent. Depending on local circumstances and a project's stage of development, stakeholder composition may differ.

In relation to Indigenous communities, engagement needs to be rooted in the right of “free, prior and informed consent” before any activity, initiative, development project can move forward. Article 32 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN DRIP) states: “Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources. States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources.”<sup>5</sup> In

addition to States, any organization or company that seeks to begin a project on indigenous lands needs to secure the consent of the community through its own representative institutions. This goes beyond stakeholder consultation to ensure the right of indigenous people to say “Yes” or “No” to any proposed project or initiative.

#### *Program Implications*

Within this category, programs aimed at reducing or mitigating risks are developed in response to the collaborative issue inventory and identification of problems warranting action, or areas where existing program impacts might be improved—for example, projects developed initially through a “Do No Harm” framework, such as health, education, human rights, or poverty reduction. In addition, grievance mechanisms and programs—not just to address allegations of misconduct, but also as an early warning system for potential violations—constitute important parts of risk management strategy. As Taylor, Zandvliet, and Forouhar write in *Due Diligence for Human Rights*, early detection and mitigation serves to “integrat[e] a remedy mechanism into the human risk management system as a form of prevention.”

#### **Community Investment: Social Investing**

This category is also known as social or “impact” investing. Community investing is a multi-sector process of building community resilience, involving business, civil society, and government. The challenge remains to cultivate longer-term, locally grown solutions that help assure a healthier, cleaner, and safe environment characterized by sustainable prosperity and justice.

#### *Program Implications*

There is no limit to the nature and type of projects falling within this category, which aligns community needs with company capabilities in ways that continue to improve social sustainability beyond minimal requirements. Often programs fall within industry categories: energy companies supporting access to renewable energy; healthcare companies providing access to medicine and treatment; technology companies improving access to education, training, and communication; and so on.

#### **Sustainable Value Co-Creation: Innovation, Collaborative Partnerships, Mutual Accountability**

This category involves the continued support of multi-party alliances and partnerships that build upon existing expertise and create knowledge and methods for tackling social sustainability issues. It features a collaborative process of co-creation that produces new insights, information, and knowledge. Parties recognize that you learn what works by learning what doesn’t, through a continued process of trial and error. This category emphasizes experimentation, and therefore relies heavily on feedback mechanisms flagging factors that contribute to or undermine success.

Collaborative partners also recognize that no one partner has all the answers: There are no omnipotent experts, no infallible predictions, and no single source of authority. Projects undertaken in this mode thrive in a culture of innovation and mutual accountability, where communities, companies and other stakeholders recognize their responsibilities toward each other while venturing down uncertain paths together.

Because of the unknowns associated with experimentation, this category invites all parties—

community and other stakeholders—to engage thoughtfully in a process of reflective dialogue, planning, and evaluation, where constructive expression and respectful dissent are valued. The objective is to sustain an ongoing process of discussion and synthesis so that ideas and views can be debated, misconceptions clarified, power imbalances addressed, gaps between espoused values and actual behavior exposed, and proposals for change considered.

This involves, by necessity, a great deal of experimentation; distributed and informal learning; critical reflection; cultivation of the ability to distinguish between what is meaningful and what is not; persistence and patience in creating a community of shared inquiry that also leaves room for the unexpected; and ongoing assessment to assure that the wisdom of crowds is harnessed, not hampered.

### *Program Implications*

As with the previous Community Investment category, there are few limits to what can be imagined. The process of collaborative co-creation generates sustainable social impact by developing programs, products, services, and value in ways that materially benefit the community, as well as a company and its more distant stakeholders.

## **Evaluation, Monitoring, Assessment, and Adjustments**

Local experts with experience in program evaluation can be invaluable in designing and implementing a monitoring process. They can help with development of information needs and indicators, selection of appropriate methodologies and research questions, information storage; data interpretation and analysis, and so on. Social science research relies upon classic conventions, which can be applied to social sustainability impact assessment; where possible, that literature should be consulted for guidance, along with resources on organizational behavior and social psychology.

Elements to consider for ongoing evaluation and monitoring include:

1. Gather baseline information on social context;
2. Choice of indicators used to determine how well goals are met;
3. Methods and sources of information for measuring progress, including their reliability;
4. Scale and scope of evaluation effort;
5. Frequency of measurements, including when and how much time (beyond “before” and “after”);
6. Who will be responsible for collecting data and what kind of training is required;
7. Where and how the data will be stored, including paper and digital forms; and
8. Organizing, analyzing, interpreting, and verifying data.

The first step in evaluation occurs at the beginning of the initiative: participants establish adequate baseline information regarding social context, and reach joint agreement about overall goals and outcomes. The “facts on the ground,” tied to shared beliefs about a desired future, help shape their overall design and strategy—and also determine what units of information will be used for judging success. These indicators—for example, wage rates, water quality, enrollment in primary education, training opportunities for adults—serve as benchmarks against which to measure progress. They’re defined in specific terms and represent aspects of those goals people

care about most.

The multiparty planning team needs to decide who will serve as monitors, how domain experts and other outside parties will be deployed, and how frequently measurements and reporting will occur. In addition, provision should be made for monitoring the process itself, including the quality and types of communication used by project team members, stakeholders, and the broader public. How open and willing are project team members to different perspectives and outside contributions? How is conflict handled among stakeholders? What is the commitment to group learning, given the uncertainties that characterize the process—particularly at more advanced stages involving high degrees of experimentation and innovation, as described in the previous section?

Within the educational research field, this is called “formative evaluation,” within management circles, it’s called “action research.”<sup>6</sup> Both formative evaluation and action research feature a spiral series of steps that involve planning, action, and fact-finding about the result of the action, so that adjustments can be made as the process unfolds. Figure 3 shows key elements of the process. Sometimes this is called “adaptive management,” or, as stated earlier, “adaptive leadership,” a way of thinking about how you get from “here” to “there” through a process of continued learning.

Another prominent type of assessment involves “summative evaluation,” which often occurs at the end of a project, research trial, or time period. There are overlaps between formative and summative evaluation, depending on context, but each involves a different kind of data collection, involving quantitative and qualitative measures. University of Illinois professor and evaluation specialist Robert Stake once made this distinction: “When the cook tastes the soup, that’s formative; when the guests taste the soup, that’s summative.”

While the SSRG emphasizes an action research approach, many social sustainability initiatives may need more traditional forms of evaluation to determine gains or losses in, for example, poverty gap ratios, child mortality rates, human trafficking, decent employment, and so on. Either way, there are various available methods for gathering information about indicators. They include:

- Document / literature review, including primary and secondary sources;
- Participant observation;
- Surveys;
- Interviews;
- Focus groups;
- Community mapping; and
- Meetings and other opportunities for communication.

Monitoring teams need to decide which methods they will use for what indicators, and use

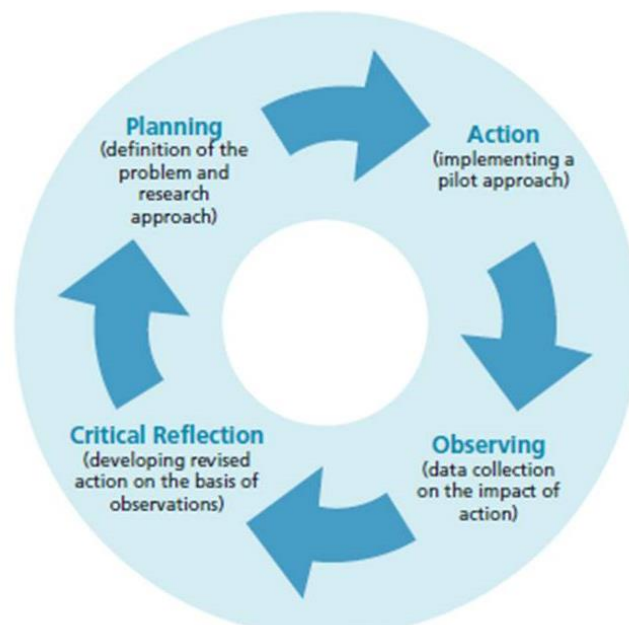


Figure 3: Action Research Cycle

them consistently. In some instances, using more than one method to cross-check validity—for example, supplementing survey data with interviews and focus groups—may be useful. Another decision facing monitoring teams involves scale and scope. Will the indicators be used for measuring changes in the project, the community, the region? What is the geographic scope under review? Changes having a high impact on a neighborhood or community may have lesser impact on a region or country.

Decisions also must be made about when and how often to take measurements; at minimum, measurements are needed before a project starts and after it is completed. It's also useful to document contextual conditions before beginning a project so there's some basis for comparison later on. As the process continues, the monitoring agent or team needs to exercise quality control over its own process, from data collection through the analysis phase.

Indeed, the data analysis covers both quantitative and qualitative information. There are basic steps for each, even though strategies for each of them vary. Whether the information is quantitative or qualitative, the analysis process includes:

1. Organizing the data into meaningful categories, which can involve coding and frequency counting;
2. Analysing the data, through tabulation of numbers or through visual representation, such as charts and tables;
3. Interpreting the data, a process of “meaning making” that draws implications, creates hypotheses and possible recommendations, or offers preliminary conclusions in relation to predetermined impact goals; and
4. Verifying analysis results by including statistically significant values or deviations, comparing to other sources or interpretations, looking for anomalies or “negative” cases, and seeking third-party review.
5. Displaying and communicating results to stakeholders, the community, and critics in credible, transparent, and clear ways.

This analytic phase can lead to new goals, new indicators, new questions and strategies for program development, as shown in. As such it becomes one more step in the monitoring process, and not the last one.

## **Final Thoughts**

The SSRG relies upon a process of collaborative engagement that can yield mutually agreed-upon definitions, benchmarks, process requirements, forms of evaluation, and feedback loops that may need to evolve over time. Meanwhile, the Social Sustainability Cycle, which represents a form of ongoing action research and active collaborative learning, is iterative and overlapping. Its components unfold over time like a spiral, providing a basis from which companies, communities and stakeholders can determine success. But spirals have to begin somewhere, with concrete information about what's going on and what changes are needed for improvement. And they have to produce results—the “impact” part of the equation—that are visible for all to see.

Collaborating for social sustainability impact is not a mechanical process, like designing a car or a computer for top performance and consumer satisfaction. It's a human process, with plenty of room for human foibles, errors, and passions.

Yet, importantly, it's grounded in a series of values, principles, and beliefs about the

capacity of human beings—and profit-seeking institutions—to work together for a better future. While there are many obstacles, there are even more opportunities for companies, civil society, and government to take risks, experiment with new models, work across traditional boundaries, and learn from each other. This is how successful, scalable, and sustainable social impact is achieved.

## **Appendix A**

# Appendix A

## The social sustainability resource guide framework

### INTERDEPENDENT VALUES: SUSTAINABLE PROSPERITY,

#### COMMUNITY

#### NEEDS & ISSUES IN THE COMMUNITY

#### MDGs

#### Baseline Info / Norms

#### GOAL 3:

Promote Gender Equality & Empower Women

Case study example: Timberland/ CARE/ MAMATA

- Timberland's annual assessments reveal that workers in the Chittagong Export Processing Zone lack health awareness and services
- The Workers Representation and Welfare Committee, via social mapping techniques, conducted outreach to factory workers and community members to help spread awareness and generate participation in and advocacy for the training and meetings

#### COLLABORATIVE, MULTIPARTY AND MULTI-SECTOR ENGAGEMENT QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

#### Structures & Forms of Engagement

#### Who is responsible?

- Workers Representation and Welfare Committee (community members)
- MAMATA (local NGO)
- CARE (international NGO)
- Timberland (company)

#### Where (and what) is the scope and scale?

- Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ) in Bangladesh
- 5,600 workers (85% of whom are migrant women from rural areas of Bangladesh; 35% of whom are from surrounding areas) plus the surrounding community of the CEPZ

#### How is it to be implemented?

- Timberland, CARE and MAMATA work to build awareness and advocacy; establish a medical revolving fund; build a microfinance program
- CARE and MAMATA use a variety of techniques for measuring and monitoring the effectiveness of the project, including surveys, worker interviews, cost accounting, and training reviews to measure, monitor and evaluate project impacts

#### Why is it worth doing?

This program aims to help workers and community members meet basic needs and provide betterment of life opportunities through community investment. In this manner, Timberland aims to leverage its business influence to help create positive improvements for the lives of workers who produce its products

# LIBERTY, JUSTICE, INCLUSIVENESS

## PROGRAM IMPACTS

## EVALUATION, ASSESSMENT, LEARNING, STRATEGIC ADJUSTMENTS

### MDGs Target / Goal

### Measures of Impact *(How does the initiative measure outcome?)*

### Community Level Impact *(What impact did the initiative have?)*

### *(How did the parties involved assess the initiative?)*

- Expand women's economic opportunity
- Strengthen women's legal status and rights
- Expand opportunities for women's voices, inclusion and participation

- More and better jobs for women across a wider range of sectors
- A financial sector in which commercial banks and microfinance institutions provide women with access to a range of financial services and products tailored to their needs
- Ensuring that women's voices are heard in the economic arena, and that their priorities are not only heard but also acted on

- Enhance awareness of legal rights, labor laws, and family laws
- Increase workers' capacity to read and write, raising workers' self-esteem, and learning what is required for and has immediate application in their daily work lives
- Improve nutritional intake practices among the workers
- Enhance awareness of common diseases and available referral services
- Improve health-seeking behaviors, related especially to STD/HIV
- Provide access to flexible micro savings and credit facilities to promote savings behavior and provide credit for emergency and betterment opportunities

Engage workers and local community members, who are the program's beneficiaries, to ensure the program addressed real and ongoing needs

The program grew to be self-sustaining and self-funding

Timberland is currently in the process of creating a framework to assess social impacts and Return on Investment (ROI) of its Sustainable Living Environments programs across several projects and regions in order to better understand, track and replicate the community benefits

Timberland and CARE are eager to apply this model to facilitate the creation of Sustainable Living Environments in other regions of need



# The social sustainability resource guide framework

## INTERDEPENDENT VALUES: SUSTAINABLE PROSPERITY,

### COMMUNITY NEEDS & ISSUES IN THE COMMUNITY

### COLLABORATIVE, MULTIPARTY AND MULTI-SECTOR ENGAGEMENT QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

#### MDGs

#### Baseline Info / Norms

#### Structures & Forms of Engagement

#### Goal 4:

#### Reduce Child Mortality Rate

Case study  
example: Merck-  
Nicaraguan Ministry  
of Health RotaTeq  
Partnership

• Rotavirus, a severe, acute form of gastroenteritis characterized by vomiting, watery diarrhea, and fever. Infection may result in dehydration, hospitalization, and/or death

• More than 527,000 children under 5 years of age died each year worldwide from rotavirus; more than 80% of those deaths occurred in developing countries

• In the developing world introduction of new vaccines has traditionally lagged behind developed countries by 15 to 20 years meetings

#### Who is responsible?

- Merck (company)
- Nicaraguan Ministry of Health (government)
- U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (government)
- The Pan American Health Organization (International governmental organization)
- PATH (international NGO )
- NicaSalud and other local NGOs
- Community Members
- Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations (GAVI)

#### Where (and what) is the scope and scale?

Nicaragua, one of the poorest countries in Latin America with a high rotavirus disease burden and a strong immunization program

In 2005, Nicaragua experienced one of its largest gastroenteritis outbreaks with more than 64,000 individuals affected and more than 56 deaths. Disease occurred predominantly in children under 5 years of age, and 67% of the gastroenteritis was identified as rotavirus

#### How is it to be implemented?

- Nicaragua knew how to deliver vaccines, had good infrastructure for vaccine storage and delivery and vaccination rates of 87 – 99% for routine childhood vaccines
- Nicaragua was one of 72 countries eligible for funding through the GAVI Alliance
- Merck pledged to donate enough rotavirus vaccine for 3 birth cohorts of children – roughly 150,000 children every year for 3 year
- In December 2009, financial support for the project was transitioned to GAVI. Today – 1 year after the project ended – Nicaragua continues to routinely vaccinate all children against rotavirus with vaccine purchased by GAVI

#### Why is it worth doing?

Aware of the significant morbidity and mortality associated with rotavirus and recognized the urgency of providing its children with rotavirus vaccine

# LIBERTY, JUSTICE, INCLUSIVENESS

## PROGRAM IMPACTS

## EVALUATION, ASSESSMENT, LEARNING, STRATEGIC ADJUSTMENTS

*(How did the parties involved assess the initiative?)*

MDGs Target / Goal	Measures of Impact <i>(How does the initiative measure outcome?)</i>	Community Level Impact <i>(What impact did the initiative have?)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce under-5 mortality rate</li> <li>• Reduce infant mortality rate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up rotavirus surveillance system at 10 hospitals across the country to determine the number of rotavirus infections that required hospitalization or urgent medical attention</li> <li>• Conduct 2 independent studies at different hospitals to estimate vaccine effectiveness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction (58 - 73%) in severe rotavirus cases in Nicaragua within the first year of the vaccine being routinely administered</li> <li>• Secured long-term vaccine funding, with the World Health Organization (WHO) prequalification and approval of GAVI funding</li> </ul>

The involvement of NGOs and multilateral organizations also was critical in the provision of technical assistance and instruction based on their years of vaccine delivery and research

All partners recognized the importance of securing long term vaccine funding

Training more than 200 physicians and health workers in Nicaragua about the safety and efficacy of the vaccine, the proper age of administration for each vaccine dose, and vaccine storage and handling

Epidemiologists from Merck and the Ministry of Health worked to develop detailed study protocols to strengthen the country's disease surveillance network and to assess the impact of the vaccine

The success of the Merck Nicaragua Partnership serves as a model for countries interested in early introduction of new vaccines, for businesses interested in sustainable business models and for global health public-private partnerships where partners seek to achieve shared objectives

# The social sustainability resource guide framework

## INTERDEPENDENT VALUES: SUSTAINABLE PROSPERITY,

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#### Goal 7

#### Ensure Environmental Sustainability:

#### Access to water

#### Case study example: PepsiCo's WaterHope

- Access to clean drinking water is a key target for the Philippines' Millennium Development Goal (MDG) for Environmental Sustainability
- While national access to water in the Philippines is close to 80%, this drops to 65% for poor households and even lower for slum dwellers
- In communities with WaterHope stations, a large portion of residents lack access to the main water supply and many rely on wells or rivers for their drinking water
- Current cost of water from private water stations is out of reach for many poor families

#### Who is responsible?

- Wholistic Transformation Resource Centre (local NGO)
- WaterHope (community-driven enterprise/local NGO)
- Network of community water dealers (community members)
- PepsiCo (company)

#### Where (and what) is the scope and scale?

PepsiCo and the WTRC started building WaterHope stations in the Philippines in 2007 and have since completed 3 stations in urban Manila. The stations provide nearly 26,000 people in poor communities with accessible, affordable, and safe drinking water.

WaterHope has also helped residents improve their lives through micro-enterprise, and participation in business, while additional health and education activities facilitated by the stations have helped nearly 1,500 people.

#### How is it to be implemented?

Waterhope provides for the establishment of community-owned and operated water stations. The water stations are owned and operated by local NGOs who provide low cost water to a network of community water dealers who in turn sell this water to consumers as part of a viable business operation. Profits from the water station are channeled back into the local community in the form of community development programs.

#### Why is it worth doing?

PepsiCo and the WTRC believed that they could empower local operators to provide safe water affordably and sustainably bringing lasting benefits to surrounding communities.

# LIBERTY, JUSTICE, INCLUSIVENESS

## PROGRAM IMPACTS

MDGs Target / Goal	Measures of Impact <i>(How does the initiative measure outcome?)</i>	Community Level Impact <i>(What impact did the initiative have?)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation</li> <li>• Accelerated and targeted efforts to bring drinking water to all rural households</li> <li>• Safe water supply</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use London Benchmarking Group (LBG) model to develop an assessment process to track impact data and information relating to sales and social programs</li> <li>• Develop assessment framework and participatory review whereby water dealers reflect on the short- and long- term benefits of their involvement with the water stations</li> <li>• Indicators developed included:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of people with access to clean water</li> <li>• Number of water dealers who have been able to start up and sustain their own businesses</li> <li>• Percentage of dealers who observe a reduction in water borne diseases</li> <li>• Clinic data on water borne diseases</li> <li>• Pre-School feedback on children's sick days</li> <li>• People and households with access to safe, affordable, clean drinking water</li> <li>• Station energy usage</li> <li>• Any incidences of poor water quality</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Water from WaterHope stations is more affordable than alternatives on the market. As this price still might not be within reach of the poorest of the poor, WaterHope also provides free drinking water to schools, churches, health clinics, and public transport stations</p> <p>Feedback from community stakeholders in 2009 suggests that WaterHope is also helping contribute to a reduction in water borne diseases (this information has been largely anecdotal)</p> <p>Has helped over 150 microenterprises to flourish, in part by generating additional income for water dealers. These dealers are primarily women from poor neighborhoods who run small stores selling diverse products</p> <p>Since commencing operation, WaterHope stations have also initiated health and education community development programs</p>

## EVALUATION, ASSESSMENT, LEARNING, STRATEGIC ADJUSTMENTS

*(How did the parties involved assess the initiative?)*

Monitoring and evaluation built in from the beginning of the project, helping ensure that all partners are focused on results. WTRC and partner NGOs track and review key performance data, impacts are reviewed annually

Local NGOs commit to using all project revenue to meet their communities' development needs. Station managers must be attuned to the needs of business and the communities where they operate

Diverse skills of the NGO staff allow marriage of the project goals of clean water with an existing micro-finance network, while balancing the expectations of multiple stakeholders

WaterHope's entrepreneurial approach transcends traditional philanthropy

WaterHope is currently reviewing its model for applicability in different markets in and outside of the Philippines. So far, a clear factor in success has been alignment with the microfinance program of an NGO; WaterHope will need to consider whether this is possible in other partnerships

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Social investing is defined as “the voluntary contributions companies make to the communities and broader societies where they operate, with the objective of benefiting external stakeholders, typically through the transfer of skills or resources.” Page 2, “Creating Successful, Sustainable Social Investment: Guidance document for the oil and gas industry,” published by International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association and CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, March 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Mark B. Taylor, Luc Zandvleit, and Mitra Forouhar, *Due Diligence for Human Rights: A Risk Based Approach* Working Paper No. 53 (Cambridge, MA: John F. Kennedy School of Government, Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative, Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Business and Government, Harvard University, 2009).

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, International Finance Corporation, *Stakeholder Engagement: A Good Practice Handbook for Companies Doing Business in Emerging Markets* (Washington, D.C.: International Finance Corporation, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> See Luc Zandvliet and Mary B. Anderson, *Getting it Rights: Making Corporate-Community Relations Work*, (Sheffield, UK: Greenleaf Publishing Ltd., 2009).

<sup>5</sup> Passed by the General Assembly on September 13, 2007, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is the world’s most comprehensive instrument on the rights of indigenous peoples. For more, go to <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Chris Argyris and Donald A. Schön, *Organizational Learning: A Theory of Action Perspective* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1978); Argyris and Schön, *Theory in Practice: Increasing Professional Effectiveness* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1974). Many others [have extended](#) this approach to organizational and individual development, but the essential model remains the same, which involves an iterative process of reflective analysis and renewal.