Impact Analysis Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Sustainable Communities

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Background & Introduction

Headquartered in San Francisco, the Foundation for Sustainable Development (FSD) is an international community development organization that creates a global network of grassroots organizations, community leaders, and international volunteers to support community-driven projects that fight **social, environmental, and economic inequities.**

FSD is dedicated to achieving community-driven goals through asset-based development and international exchange in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Overtime, FSD has sought to measure the growth and progress of communities toward the goal of sustainability. With an **ongoing project sustainability rate of 80%**, FSD has been described as the "gold standard for global engagement programs."

A different kind of reporting was required for FSD: a description and analysis of what is taking place at the community level; the process of community-driven development as it unfolds; the interactions with other actors; and specific ways in which assets have been built, renewed and mobilized, interacting with other components of sustainable livelihood.

As such, FSD needed to provide forums for community leaders, groups, and members to contribute perspective on what constitutes a healthy community.

- Established in 2004
- Program sites in **10 cities** across **6 countries**
- **300+ community organization partners**
- **3,000+ volunteers** have supported their work
- Support **~200 projects** & **invest $800k+ in partner communities annually**, directly impacting the lives of 150,000 people on average
- Address issues by responding to community priorities and offering training, grants, and volunteer support to partners

Overview of Phases I + II

Phase I – In the Fall of 2015, our colleagues in the MNA program, Brennan, Helgeson and Lam, consulted with FSD to begin the process of developing a tool to measure their social impact and ultimately creating a measurement instrument to be piloted at an initial FSD site in Jinja, Uganda. The project team conducted stakeholder interviews, reviewed organizational documents, and studied the methods of other similar organizations in order to conceptualize a framework for a pilot study. The study was designed as an easily replicable instrument for identifying the goals and priorities of the community. This would serve as a baseline for future evaluation of FSD's progress on the goals identified. Through the facilitation of a workshop in Jinja, this phase ultimately developed a handbook for FSD to use at other sites to gather data on which to later base an assessment of their impact in these communities.

Phase II – Expanded data collection from the initial Jinja, Uganda site to all of the sites FSD serves with the exception of their 2 sites in India. This included:

1. Masaka, Uganda
2. Kakamega, Kenya
3. Mombasa, Kenya
4. Salta, Argentina
5. Cochabamba, Bolivia
6. Ciudad Sandino, Nicaragua
7. Tola, Nicaragua

Goals for Phase III

After meeting with Executive Director Lisa Kuhn, and International Program Officer Keiko Pinces, it was determined that the scope of this project would focus on using the community driven data to identify local indicators that will allow for FSD to monitor and evaluate progress in a new way. With this new method of collecting information from a community level and identifying each community's goals, FSD desires a more holistic approach to monitoring and evaluating progress that is more aligned with their mission.

In Phase III of the project, our project team set out to:

- Identify the prevalent indicators that emerge from data collected in each community, relating them to the literature and to the FSD priorities and methods.
- Identify the most important indicators and categories in relation to the national policy priorities as in the World Bank and IMF's Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs).
- Identify the most important indicators and categories in relation to the emerging indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals.

Methods

1. Utilize multi-site primary data collected by FSD - In each community, as facilitators, FSD staff and community partners utilized the same methods to capture what the community priorities are in each area.
2. Utilize the national policy priorities as identified in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and the emerging indicators from the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
3. Compare the community-identified priorities from each site with existing indicators of development (from Phase I) in the FSD data with those discussed in the literature (PRSPs, SDGs, etc.) and incorporate them into our larger evaluation structure.
4. Analyze primary site qualitative and quantitative data, identifying themes and map them onto indicators found in the literature in order to determine what development goals are unique or of highest priorities to each community.
5. Formulate recommendations on how to best assess FSD's impact looking forward.

Research Questions

1. How can challenges in monitoring and evaluating progress in sustainable development be addressed by community participation in those efforts?
2. How will the indicators and sustainable development goals that emerge from the individual community sites compare to those identified by larger entities such as the UN's SDGs?
3. How can FSD utilize this information to determine their impact, progress, and further action based on the communities' articulation of their goals?

Resulting Framework + Analysis

FSD "Sector"	Theme (sub theme)	Core Indicator	Other Indicators
Appropriate Technology	Infrastructure (Drinking Water)	Proportion of population using an improved water source	# of houses with a water tank
	Infrastructure (Access to Energy)	# of working street lights in the community	Percentage of households without electricity or other modern energy services
Human Rights	Governance (Security)	Proportion of citizens who have experienced or witnessed violent crime	
	Infrastructure (Sanitation)	Proportion of population using an improved sanitation facility	# of services providing sanitation efforts to streets, parks, and public areas
Gender Equity	Governance (Crime)	Prevalence of robberies/muggings	% of women reporting domestic violence
	Economic Development (Empowerment)	% of women within the community who are employed	
Microfinance	Economic Development (Local)	# of institutions providing microfinance opportunities	# of businesses started through microloans
	Economic Development	# of employment opportunities created by the enterprises financed	Ratio of savings to spending
Environmental Sustainability	Land	Arable and permanent cropland area	Access to livestock, pesticides, tools
	Land	Area of forest under sustainable forest management	
Microenterprise	Economic Development (Local)	# of employment opportunities created by microenterprises	
	Economic Development (International)	% of population with access to loans	% of the population benefitting from external financing opportunities (from outside their community or government)
Health	Health (Service Delivery)	% of population with access to primary care facilities	
	Health (Status)	Prevalence of diseases such as malaria, HIV, tuberculosis, dengue, etc.	Rates of alcohol/tobacco/drug use, % of women utilizing contraceptives
	Health (Service Delivery)	# of healthcare practitioners working within the community	# of nearby hospitals/medical centers
Youth Development & Education	Education (Level)	Gross intake ratio to last grade of primary education	Access to life long learning for all, # of opportunities for technical/vocational education
	Education (Literacy)	Adult literacy rate	Access to suitable school materials (books, writing utensils, etc.)

Recommendations

1. A mandatory training should be developed for all facilitators.
2. Allow for more time to recruit, plan and execute each site's workshops (to ensure a decent sample size, adequate outreach beforehand, lead time to conduct regional trainings).
3. Instead of fully allowing each community decide on how to separate into subgroups all sites should be encouraged to break up into women and men as a starting point. This will allow for future evaluation to focus more on how goals were similar or different across demographics like age, gender, two variables at a time, etc.
4. Ask for specific ways the community can help contribute to improving some of the "issue" areas they identified or how FSD specifically could provide further support towards progress in these key areas of concern.
5. A majority of the communities said they would be willing to participate in follow up workshops and already identified the issues. Therefore, the next workshop should be used to brainstorm research techniques and possible solutions with those who are most familiar with the priorities.
6. Based on the positive ratings given by participants across geographies, FSD site staff should engage with their partner sites a bit more to give their communities a more cohesive idea of why these workshops are taking place and how the data will be incorporated into FSD's work.
7. FSD should examine how much effort they are putting into each sector or program, and how much it aligns with the priorities of each site.

References

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Poster Presentation in fulfillment of the **NPA 616 Capstone** in the **Master of Nonprofit Administration (MNA) Program** – Spring 2016. Supervised by Professor Marco Tavanti, Ph.D.

UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO