

THE ROLE OF PRIVATE SOCIAL INVESTMENT FOR IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT

Today, debates about eucalyptus plantations in Brazil are sporadic, as opposed to the past. They involve positive and negative points of view. Criticisms mostly relate to alleged environmental aspects of soil and depletion of water resources, reduction of biodiversity and, in some cases, rural exodus and impoverishment of communities surrounding large eucalyptus plantations. Both sides have arguments that are being better understood by each other thanks to science, communication and practical examples. This article deals with decision-making processes of private social investment projects, having as theoretical basis Sustainable Development, Corporate Social Responsibility, Private Social Investment and Stakeholder Engagement. A case study was conducted on an industrial eucalyptus-reforestation company with industrial purposes, present in 21 cities in the state of Bahia, Brazil. From this, it was possible to evaluate the level of engagement that the company intends to have with the communities in its area of influence and to engage them in their decision-making processes regarding private social investment projects. Indeed, the results do not show discrepancy between the perceptions of both sides. However, they point out improvements should be made in projects with communities. As a theoretical contribution, it was found that there was an image improvement in all audiences involved, and a manual of good practices was created for companies and communities.

Keywords: Stakeholder Engagement, Social Responsibility, Private Social Investments, Shared decision, Eucalyptus culture.

INTRODUCTION

Seeking conciliation between environmental & social issues and economic growth, with the purpose of making it fair, became a major challenge that was transferred latently to the 21st century. In this context, Sustainable Development and Social Responsibility are at the center of attention, making this point increasingly important to discuss the real participation of different audiences in the discussion and decision-making processes.

Since these discussions became latent, a variety of people and civil society organizations, public authorities, private initiative, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and bodies linked to the United Nations started to make joint efforts to advance the understanding on how each group of society can contribute to achieve sustainable development, based on social and environmental responsibility actions. (Barbieri & Cajazeira, 2012) [3]

For being so broad, the Brazilian Association of Technical Standards (*Associação Brasileira de Normas Técnicas – ABNT*) provided Social Responsibility with a national standard in 2004, ABNT 16001 - Social Responsibility, Management System and Requirements (National Institute of Metrology Standardization and Industrial Quality - *Instituto Nacional de Metrologia, Qualidade e Tecnologia – INMETRO*, 2004). Its second version was updated in July 2012, after the launch of the international standard ISO 26000 on Social Responsibility, published in 2010. In Brazil, important socio-environmental discussions aimed at protecting the Atlantic Rainforest coincide with the beginning of a federal government policy to support reforestation. At the time, the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) reported that the world would run out of forest-based products as a consequence of population growth and the inability of supply, due to restrictive plantations in the planet's temperate zones, the so-called "forest blackout".

Thus, in the 1980s, the extreme south of Bahia and its region called *Recôncavo* became a major expansion pole of forest massif, especially with the plantation of eucalyptus, due to its prior areas devastated by pastures/agriculture and exceptional soil and sun conditions.

Originally from Australia, eucalyptus has about 600 species adapted to different soil and climate conditions. The spread of eucalyptus seeds from all over the world began in the 19th century, in South America. The first country to register eucalyptus was Chile, in 1823, and later Argentina and Uruguay. Eucalyptus was brought to Brazil at that time as a source of firewood for locomotives, railway sleepers and utility poles.

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As the eucalyptus culture expands in Brazil, criticism begins to emerge. In many situations, eucalyptus came to be considered the “number 1 public enemy of nature”. It is common to hear that the harm lies in it being an exotic genus. Such intense rejection is a curious case of xenophobia by environmentalists, as they demonize the eucalyptus for being a foreign invader species but they have never done that to coffee, citrus or even to pine trees.

Some other not well-founded criticisms, according to Koopmans (2006) [18], mention the harmful effects of monoculture, changes in springs and phreatic zones, dryness and impoverishment of the soil, allopathic effects on other kinds of vegetation and extinction of fauna. More recently, social criticism has intensified regarding rural exodus, replacement of native cultures, land expansion and pressure on small producers, and the impoverishment of the region.

Companies that cultivate eucalyptus, in general, have always had a reactive response to such criticisms even coming from myths or not based on science, without an effective concern with the sharing of interests between the undeniable economic development provided by the forestry park for cellulose and the negative perception of society surrounding the plantations have of these benefits.

Therefore, this article addresses the engagement of stakeholders, more specifically of communities, as a strategic tool to achieve the success of Private Social Investment projects, carried out by organizations with the objective of developing communities in areas surrounding operations. Despite having as main focus the engagement of communities as a strategy for the success of private social investment, this article does not intend to evaluate all aspects of Social Responsibility, but only one of its axes: the involvement and development of communities. Also, it is not the purpose of this paper to answer criticisms regarding eucalyptus growing, but rather to find paths and channels of communication capable of sharing information and actions in favor of good coexistence between surrounding communities and those who plant eucalyptus for industrial purposes.

To this end, the object of this study is a reforestation company for industrial purposes operating on the North Coast and *Agreste* region of Bahia, Brazil, producing eucalyptus trees to supply a pulp mill located in the Camaçari Complex (Bahia state). The company has eucalyptus plantations in 21 municipalities, comprising a total of 13,595.86 square kilometers and 604,025 inhabitants, according to the demographic census of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (*Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística* - IBGE, 2010) and 282 communities in its area of influence.

The company, which previously carried out specific and philanthropic actions, started to engage these communities in order to make them part of its decision-making processes regarding private social investment projects. Until the completion of this research, the company already had 18 social

projects carried out in several municipalities and communities in the region. This study had as methodology a single case study, five main projects were selected, one towards education, two towards agribusiness and two towards entrepreneurship.

This study has a general objective of verifying how organizations can foster the engagement of communities, in the perception of those involved, to achieve effective results that reflect on the success of their projects with the communities, and has as specific objectives: analyze community engagement projects used by the company object of this study; verify the effectiveness of said projects; and raise awareness of communities and their managers, their effective engagement and participation in the decision-making process, for purposes of comparing with the information obtained from the company. Thus, it was possible to answer the following question: how can community engagement be used as a strategy for success in defining private social investment and in the results of the work developed by organizations in communities where they operate?

Theoretical review

The concept of sustainable development emerged in the 1970s. Its emergence came from the need to find a middle ground between opposing thoughts. On one hand, the “developmentalists” (Anthropocentrism) and, on the other hand, those who feared economic growth, believing it could undermine the environment (Ecocentrism). According to Romeiro (2012) [23], these two controversial thoughts surfaced at a time of strong global economic growth.

One of the main stages of these discussions was the first United Nations Conference on the Environment, held in Stockholm, in 1972. At this conference, the basic normative concept of sustainable development was presented, designated at the time as an “approach to eco-development”, Queiroz et al (2015) [5].

In 1980, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) jointly produced a document entitled “World Strategy for the Conservation of Nature”, defining sustainability as a characteristic of a process or state that can be maintained indefinitely (Dias, 2011)[7].

According to the document, sustainable development is “a transformation process in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development and institutional change are in harmony and strengthen the present and future potential, in order to meet human needs and aspirations”(WCED - World Commission on Environment and Development, 1991).

There are still many disagreements about the real meaning of sustainable development, since many believe that development and growth are synonymous. Sachs (2008) [24] argues that growth is not synonymous with development if it does not increase employment, if it does not reduce poverty and if it does not reduce inequalities.

According to Dias (2011), sustainable development in organizations has three dimensions: economic, which provides that these organizations must be economically viable; social, which considers that the organization must meet the requirements of providing the best working conditions for its employees; and environmental, which provides that the organization must be guided by the eco-efficiency of its production processes.

Based on these three aspects - economic (profit), social (people) and environmental (planet or nature) - John Elkington (2012) [8], founder of a British consulting company SustainAbility, introduced the concept of “Triple Bottom Line”, known in Brazil as the Sustainability Tripod. According to him, companies should have their financial performance measured based on these three lines and only those that manage to produce, considering the three aspects, will know the total cost of doing business.

In 2015, after more than three years of discussion, governments and state leaders approved, by consensus, the document entitled “Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” [12], which presents an action plan for people, planet and prosperity, aimed at strengthening universal peace with more freedom, recognizing the eradication of poverty in all its forms. The Agenda consists of a Declaration with 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets to be achieved in order to fulfill these goals. With the construction of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) [12], the role of private organizations became more relevant, thanks to the greater incentive to Private Social Investment (PSI) and the exchange of technologies.

The focus of this article is specifically on one of the SDGs, goal number 16, regarding Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. Among its proposed actions, this article will explore actions 16.6, which proposes “to develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels”; and 16.7, which proposes “to ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels”.

Although various aspects of social responsibility have been the object of action by organizations and governments since the end of the 19th century, the term social responsibility became widely used in the early 1970s. As it primarily focused on business, the most well-known term for most people is Corporate Social Responsibility (Barbieri & Cajazeira, 2012) [3].

Some standards and guidelines deal with the subject in greater depth. Nationally, ABNT 16001: 2004 and 2012[15]; and internationally, ISO 26000: 2010 [1] are the most used by organizations that wish to incorporate socially responsible practices into their management.

According to the international standard, an effective way for an organization to identify its social responsibility is to become familiar with the issues related to social responsibility in its seven central themes: organizational governance, human rights, labor

practices, the environment, fair operating practices, consumer issues, and community involvement and development. [1]

ISO 26000 on Social Responsibility (ABNT, 2010), considers as stakeholders the organizations or individuals who have one or more interests in any decisions or activities of a specific organization. Therefore, it is essential that the organization knows the impacts of its activities, in order to be able to identify its most important stakeholders. The standard emphasizes that organizations can have a large number of different stakeholders who have different and sometimes conflicting interests.

Among the various definitions of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), in the view of the Ethos Institute (2006) [14], the term represents the set of interests of companies and their stakeholders, in addition to promoting the socioeconomic development of the surrounding communities.

Private Social Investment (PSI), on the other hand, is one of the several facets of Social Responsibility, and can be defined as the voluntary and planned use of private resources in projects of public interest, and should under no circumstances be confused with assistance. It usually involves not only prior planning but also the constant monitoring of project results. It should be noted that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is much broader than Private Social Investment (PSI), which focuses on the management of relationships with the community, while CSR has its actions also aimed at other audiences, such as employees, shareholders, customers, suppliers, government and regulatory agencies, among others. Over time, the concept became widespread among the business community, especially due to the high investment companies started to make in the social field, highlighting Brazil as a relevant actor in a new wave of project development social aspects (Kisil, 2007) [17].

Theories about the concept of PSI differ slightly, especially regarding the need to establish partnerships for its implementation. Fischer, Fedato and Belasco (2005) [10] understand that in Brazil PSI is materialized in social projects developed from partnerships or alliances between the Second and the Third Sector. For GIFE (2002) [13], PSI is characterized by directing private resources from legal entities or individuals to projects and social actions, without the need for partnerships or alliances with the Third Sector. According to Degenszajn and Ribeiro (2013) [06], “PSI is the voluntary transfer of private resources in a planned, monitored and systematic way to social, environmental and cultural projects of public interest”. For them, how the voluntary transfer of resources is made is what differentiates PSI from assistance actions, especially because of three characteristics that are present in PSI, but not in assistance: a) the concern with the planning, monitoring and evaluation of projects; b) the use of strategies oriented to sustainable results of impacts and social transformation; c) community involvement in the development of actions.

For this study, we used as reference standards and guidelines the AA 1000 SES for Stakeholder Engagement [2], ISO 26000

for Social Responsibility, the Sustainable Development Goals - Agenda 2030, and the Project Management Body of Knowledge Guide (PMBOK) [20] for Project Management.

The standard ISO 26000 (ABNT, 2012) [1] points two fundamental practices of social responsibility: the recognition by the organization of its social responsibility, which involves the identification of the problems of the impacts of the decisions and activities of the organization and the understanding on the best way to approach these problems, contributing to sustainable development; and the engagement made by the organization with its stakeholders.

Stakeholder management was also included as one of the top 10 areas of knowledge in the 5th edition of the PMBOK Guide to project management (Project Management Body of Knowledge), [21] launched in 2014 by the Project Management Institute (PMI). As a result, the topic gained an entire chapter within the international guide to discuss the importance of knowledge and involvement of stakeholders in all types of projects.

According to AA 1000 Stakeholder Engagement Standard (SES) (Accountability, 2015) [2], stakeholder engagement, when performed with quality, can lead to more equitable and sustainable social development, giving those who have the right to be heard the opportunity to be taken into consideration in decision-making processes, in addition to helping determine issues relevant to the organization's management, enabling greater risk and image management, allowing the sharing of resources (knowledge, people, money and technology) to solve problems and achieve goals that cannot be achieved by organizations when they act individually.

METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative and quantitative research primarily because of the need to understand qualitatively and with greater depth the guidelines for community engagement. Subsequently, the quantitative methodology was used, which contributed to verify the level of engagement resulting from the information provided by the company object of this study regarding its actions, and also to compare this data with the perception of the communities participating in these projects. The idea was to create a solid base from the qualitative data, to then quantify it by applying it to the company object of this study, that is, to use qualitative data to enrich the quantitative analysis.

This study was composed of a structure of initially descriptive and exploratory character, as suggested by Yin (2015) [25] but with a deeper comparative character, in order to achieve the expected results. In the exploratory phase, secondary data was sought in books and documents on the subject in order to elucidate the problem, the theoretical framework and the experiences already developed on the subject (Gil, 2009) [11].

The second phase was of a descriptive nature, consisting of the collection of more in-depth information about each

of the international standards and guidelines for stakeholder engagement and also the collection of information about engagement strategies used by the company object of this study (Gil, 2009) [11].

Lastly, a comparative analysis was carried out two ways: the first between international standards and guidelines that deal with the subject, aiming to find points of convergence in order to build a database capable of serving as a reference for collecting and analyzing information; and, then, a comparison between responses by company representatives and responses by participants of social projects the company carries out, in order to verify the veracity of actions and alignment between the two audiences.

In order to achieve the objective proposed by the research, the strategy chosen was the use of a single case study, having as object reforestation company Copener Florestal, which operates in 21 municipalities in the North and *Agreste* regions of Bahia, and comprises 282 communities in its area of direct influence.

In addition to the bibliographic research on Sustainable Development, Social Responsibility and Stakeholder Engagement, other documents were used as a reference, such as ISO 26000 standard for Social Responsibility, the AA 1000 SES for Stakeholder Engagement, the PMBOK Guide for Project Management and the Sustainable Development Goals - Agenda 2030.

Regarding data collection on the company's performance, a semi-structured interview was conducted with the team working in the company's Social Responsibility area with the goal of reaching the first specific objective of this research that was to analyze community engagement techniques used by the company object of this study. The interview was divided into: Community Mapping, analysis of social indicators, analysis of social vulnerability, analysis of impacts, classification and prioritization of communities, stakeholder engagement, evaluation and monitoring, international guidelines and standards.

In order to achieve the second specific objective, which was to check with communities that are part of the social projects carried out by the company, the perception about their effective engagement and the participation in the decision-making process, questionnaires were applied both with the managers of each of the five main social projects developed by the company, as well as with some participants of the social projects who play a leadership role in their communities, for purposes of comparing against information obtained from the company. Questionnaires were applied to a total of 19 participants in these projects. Table 1 presents the main topics in the questionnaires.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The company Copener Florestal has been operating on the North Coast and *Agreste* region of Bahia since the 1980s. However, it was purchased by the current management group in 2003. It is a reforestation company with industrial

purposes. It produces eucalyptus trees to supply fibrous raw material to a special dissolving-grade market pulp company located in the Camaçari Complex (BA). Its eucalyptus plantations are spread over 21 municipalities on the North Coast and *Agreste* region of Bahia.

Copener's history was marked by clashes between the business and workers and local community interests. In the initial years of eucalyptus plantation expansion on the north coast of Bahia, the movement "*Basta Reflorestamento*" (*Enough Reforestation*) emerged, spearheaded by a group of

small farmers, residents and local NGOs.

Neto & Xavier (2019) [19] alerts that, in addition to facing environmental impacts, "precarious working conditions marked the company from the beginning. Data was found that attests to the use of slave-like labor in a format very common to that found in the fields in Brazil". The author also points out the complicated conditions of forestry operations with intensive use of chainsaws, axes for debarking and a plethora of unsafe arsenal vis-à-vis modern forestry operations and their highly automated harvester / forwarder equipment.

Table 1. Questionnaire applied

A. Aspects considered in the interview with representatives from Copener Florestal:

Information on the Company itself and the territories impacted.

Information on the characteristics of the organizational group dealing with the communities researched.

Information on Private Social Investments projects considered.

The time such investments are being done, the priority focus of such investments, if such investments are philanthropic or consider long-term impacts, how many projects the company is currently involved in, and number of people impacted.

Management of stakeholders and mapping of communities.

How the company classifies its area of influence?

How the company begins its work with such communities?

If a socioeconomic diagnosis is carried out before these investments are made, considering the context and peculiarities of the region and the people involved?

If there is any data collection beforehand concerning the communities by internal company areas.

Which external institutions are considered to gather data about such communities?

What kind of information is gathered about these impacted groups?

If the company maps all the communities involved in the investments, and how?

If traditional communities such as (indigenous people, quilombolas, fishermen, shellfish pickers and others) are considered, and if there is a specific tool to identify their rights? If so, which one?

If the data collected on the communities is available in a unified system or spreadsheet? And which one?

If the company has a stakeholder matrix? If so, what data / information is it composed of?

B Aspects considered in the questionnaire applied to Community leaders:

B.1 Understanding the Purpose of the engagement

If the community participated actively in defining this project, and how?

If the community presented the demand to the company?

If the company suggested the project?

If the community understands the purpose of such projects?

Scope of the Engagement

If the company invited the community to meetings to discuss possible projects to be implemented, and made clear the purpose of the meetings?

If, during the meeting, the company tried to understand what was most important / relevant for the community?

B.2 Understanding the level of the organization's commitment to engagement

If the company usually listens to the community to understand its most relevant demands?

If the company defines social actions in an inclusive / participatory way with the community?

If the company usually responds to questions and demands of the community?

B.3 Understanding who will be responsible for engagement

How was the group defined that would participate in this project?

Who are the people in the company who participated in discussions about the project?

If it was clear to the group who was the person to be contacted in the company to discuss issues pertaining to the projects?

B.4 Understanding the organization's environmental factors

If before starting the project dialogue, did the company introduce itself, clarify doubts about its activities and make itself available for any clarifications?

If it was clear to the community what the company's business is, where it operates, how its activities operate?

If the company had ever sought to know what the community's expectations were in relation to how it managed its impacts?

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To combat such criticism, albeit often superficial and with little foundation, and aiming to understand the context of the place where its activities are developed, as well as know the main demands and complaints of communities in relation to its work, Copener Florestal formed a specialized team in 2012 to carry out a socioeconomic diagnostic in all municipalities where it operates. The diagnosis showed that the 21 municipalities where the company operates totals 13,595.86 square kilometers and 604,025 inhabitants, based on the demographic census of the IBGE – Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (Neto & Xavier, 2012) [19]. According to the same source, 37.61% of the population of the municipalities in the company's area of influence is still living in rural areas. In these municipalities, there was an increase in the FIRJAN Municipal Development Index (Índice FIRJAN de Desenvolvimento Municipal - IFDM) [09] between 2005 and 2011, varying from 0.08 to 0.19, while in the state capital the variation was 0.06 (Federation of Industries of the State of Rio de Janeiro - [Federação das Indústrias do Estado do Rio de Janeiro -FIRJAN], 2016), which shows a significant improvement in living conditions in the area studied.

The diagnostic showed that the communities complained about the company's absence and demanded closer ties and partnerships for the region's development. Based on this diagnosis, the company developed and implemented its Social Responsibility Policy in late 2012, early 2013, covering four pillars of action based on the main demands of communities and social indicators of municipalities: education, entrepreneurship, agribusiness and permanent dialogue.

Based on these pillars, the company began to hold several meetings with the communities, aiming to validate the pillars, think and discuss possible projects that could be carried out, and analyze the partnerships necessary to execute them. At the time of this research in 2016-2017, the company already had 18 social projects carried out in several municipalities and communities in the region, five of the main projects were selected for this research, one in education, two in agribusiness and two in entrepreneurship.

Interview with the Social Responsibility team

The semi-structured interview with the team working in the company's Social Responsibility area was divided into: community mapping, social indicator analysis, social vulnerability analysis, impact analysis, classification and prioritization of communities, stakeholder engagement, evaluation and monitoring, and guidelines and international standards.

As for the social impacts of its activities, the company usually collects information such as: how its activity is inserted in the community, impacts on other economic activities carried out in the area, impacts on the community's security, in its cultural aspects, among others. To verify and measure the occurrence of these impacts, the Social Responsibility team created a questionnaire which was used on residents of the communities during a social action carried out after the operational activities.

In order to involve stakeholders in the definition of its social investment actions, the company informed that they are based on Sustainable Development Goals and international FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) and Brazilian Forest Certification Programme *CERFLOR* (*Certificação Florestal*) / PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification) standards, both aimed at the certification of forest management, and also on part of the AA 1000 SES of Stakeholder Engagement.

Questionnaire applied to managers and participants of social projects and data triangulation.

This phase was divided into two steps. The first step consisted of applying the questionnaire to managers of each of the five main social projects developed by the company. Three professionals manage the five projects. In the second phase, some participants in the social projects that play a leadership role in their communities were selected to understand how they perceive the engagement fostered by the company. The questionnaire was applied to a total of 19 participants from these projects, two in the Beekeeping Project, two in the Family Agriculture Project, two in Project Andorinhas (industrial sewing), six in the education project and seven in the Earth Fibers project (handcrafts made from piassava and lianas). The objective was to make a triangulation as a means to validate data, in order to verify if the company's efforts aimed at engaging communities are perceived the same way by the participants of the social projects, having the "ideal type" as basis for this

analysis, constructed from the international guidelines and standards in the previous chapter.

Education Project

In 2014, the company started a pedagogical orientation project, in partnership with municipal schools from four cities where it operates (Entre Rios, Itanagra, Inhambupe and Cardeal da Silva). The company invited the Chapada Education and Research Institute (*Instituto Chapada de Educação e Pesquisa* – ICEP) to execute the project. It comprises a total of 647 education professionals that participate directly in the project, including teachers, pedagogical coordinators, school principals and education secretaries. The project benefits approximately 12 thousand students in the municipal school system. Six professionals from different municipalities who participate of the project answered the questionnaire of this research.

In general, it can be said that the education project developed by Copener Florestal in partnership with ICEP reached a very positive level of engagement, having few perception differences between community participants and the company's project manager. In spite of the small differences in perception in each phase, statements by the manager and participants of the education project had, on average, the same engagement perception level, 92%.

Beekeeping Project

The beekeeping project provides resources for beekeepers to take advantage of the use of bee honey in the company's eucalyptus plantation areas. The methodology applied to the Beekeeping project was not the same as the one applied in other company projects as it is an old activity in the region where the company operates. Therefore, it is not known for sure when the activity started; but, in 2012, Copener Florestal entered into a partnership with the State University of Bahia (UNEB) to carry out a complete diagnosis of the activity, so that it could then define how it would work with beekeepers in the region. The survey was concluded between 2013 and 2014 and attention was called to several points, such as the proximity between the apiaries, which resulted in reduced productivity, the lack of order among beekeepers, competition with beekeepers in neighboring states, the lack of formalization of the activity with the company in order to provide greater security to beekeepers, and other aspects.

The results of the diagnostic were presented to the 158 beekeepers mapped and participants of the diagnostic, through workshops and numerous discussions, with the participation of UNEB and Copener Florestal representatives. Gradually, a few demands of participants were presented to the company, which sought the best way to meet them. Currently, there is a formalized agreement between the company and the beekeepers so that they can have access to company areas to set their apiaries. All apiaries properly indicate the contact info of each

beekeeper. Before forestry operations, company representatives contact the beekeepers requesting the temporary removal of their boxes from the places where the operation will take place, in order to avoid risks of accidents and damage to the apiaries.

The biggest differences are in the preparation and implementation phases of the engagement. The project manager pointed out that one of the greatest difficulties in engaging participants in this project is the distribution of beekeeping activities across the 21 municipalities where the company operates and the lack of an association or a cooperative to congregate these beekeepers and strengthen them as a group.

It is worth mentioning that this project is of great value to the company's business, since it allows the land used by the company to plant eucalyptus, which is its main activity, to also be used for another purpose: the generation of income for beekeeper communities, that is, there is added value to the land, in addition to the direct economic interests of the organization. The level of perception with this project was 67% for community leaders.

Family Agriculture Project

The Family Agriculture Project started in 2014 in 14 communities and is present in six municipalities in the region where the company operates. As of the date of this research, 180 families participated in the project, developed in partnership with Agroecological Center of the Northern Bahia Coast (*Centro Agroecológico do Litoral Norte da Bahia* - CEALNOR). The objective of the project is to help small rural-producing families with technical assistance, acquisition of quality inputs and access to credit.

In general, the perception of project participants in relation to engagement actions fostered by the company is 82%, very close to what was pointed out by the project manager, 87%, demonstrating that, in this project, there is great synergy between the company and the participating communities, and that the project has been carried out prioritizing stakeholder engagement.

Some points of improvement were identified, both by the community and by the manager himself, and these are points that can be worked on to increase the level of engagement in the Family Agriculture Project.

Project Andorinhas (Swallows)

Project Andorinhas started in 2013, on the initiative of the company itself, aiming to develop an income generation project in the Inhambupe municipality (BA), where the company develops a major part of its forestry activities. The project brings together seamstresses from different communities in this municipality, who have undergone an intensive course in industrial sewing to be prepared to form an industrial sewing cooperative, with a primary focus on the production of uniforms.

The company renovated a warehouse located in one of its farms and acquired more than 50 machines for cutting, sewing, embroidering and finishing. It also hired a specialized consultancy to develop the group's Business Plan and formalize the cooperative. The company buys its employee uniforms from the cooperative and encourages its partners to do the same. The demand for products manufactured by this group is significant. The uniforms factory that opened in the first half of 2014 was renamed Project Andorinhas by the cooperative's own members. At the beginning, there were 40 participants, most of whom were women, but that number fell due to some difficulties faced along the way, especially the distance between some communities where part of the seamstresses lived in and the location of the factory. The company has held a series of meetings with the group to seek the best solution. In general, the perception of engagement through the eyes of the manager of Project Andorinhas was 69%, while for project participants it was 72%, showing great similarity and alignment, even though several points of improvement were observed. The biggest divergences in perception are in the phases of understanding the engagement, preparing the engagement and implementing the engagement plan.

Earth Fibers project

Project Earth Fibers, in the format it was in the period of this research, started in 2014 in the municipality of Itanagra. The idea came from an existing project that the company partnered in but was not directly responsible for. The project came from a demand from the community, which used to extract piassava fibers from one of the company's areas to sell piassava strips to artisans from other locations, that is, they were only intermediaries of the raw materials, but did not produce the handcrafts as end product, which caused them to lose the greatest value of the product.

The company sought to verify the existence of the potential for handcrafts among the residents of São José do

Avena village, a district in the municipality of Itanagra (BA). It found out that there were people with handcraft skills, but that they did not have the necessary incentive to improve themselves. After a few meetings, the company decided to create an entrepreneurship project in that location and opened the meetings to everyone interested in participating in the project. Up to the date of the research, 11 artisans were part of the group participating in the project, named Earth Fibers, working not only with piassava but also with the lianas found in company areas. Using the raw material, the artisans produce different pieces such as baskets, lamps, sousplat and other decorative objects. The perception of the company in relation to the engagement of the group participating in this project was of 75%, while participant perception was 66%.

Comparison between the company's perception and that of communities participating in social projects

In general, there was no discrepancy between the responses of the company's project managers and responses of the participants. As shown in Chart 1, the Education project was the only one that had the same perceived level of engagement by both parties, 92%. The Beekeeping project presented the biggest difference between responses, having a variation of 21%. As explained above, it is a project that stems from an old company methodology and that requires procedural improvements. Perhaps this conflict is due to the fact that the project was already in place before the company's intervention.

The other projects indicate a certain transparency and convergence of perception between the parties in relation to the reported data, but this doesn't mean that the level of engagement doesn't need to be improved in some projects. There are several points for improvement that need to be considered by the organization and its partners in executing projects aimed at developing communities.

Table 2- Level of engagement perceived by the company and by the community in each project

Engagement (%)	Community Project				
	Education	Beekeeping	Family Agriculture	Andorinhas	Earth Fibers
Company	92	88	87	69	75
Community	92	67	82	72	65
Δ	0	21	5	-3	10

CONCLUSION

Developing the research involving the organization object of the case study and, at the same time, the public participating in its social projects, made the results more qualified and transparent, since it was possible to compare responses of both audiences. The interviewees made it clear that, before the company starting investing in the engagement of communities, it didn't have a positive image among its various external audiences. However, since the company started strong engagement work, the results of its projects have been visibly positive and the company's image has started to be totally different for its various audiences, including its internal audience, which has become prouder of the organization. Also, the communities became more engaged and motivated having their interests taken into consideration.

Therefore, the methodology used made it possible to achieve the objectives, demonstrating how the engagement of communities, encouraged by the company, was a successful strategy in the definition of private social investment, reaching positive results and placing successful projects in the communities surrounding the company's operation areas.

Understanding that organizations are increasingly interested in strengthening the relations with their stakeholders as the fruits of this research are two Social Management Technologies, totally complementary. The first was called the Engagement Questionnaire and aims to help diagnose the actions that the organization does or fails to adopt with regard to the engagement

of its stakeholders. The other technology is a practical guide for engaging communities in the development of social projects, with the purpose of presenting suggestions for community engagement actions, focusing on the development of social projects in a participatory manner.

Carrying out this research also made it possible to discuss the most recent engagement standards and guidelines, some of which have not yet been translated into Portuguese and other languages.

The effective participation and involvement of Copener Florestal, object of this case study, especially in relation to transparency in information, was extremely relevant for the collection of reliable data, fundamental for the comparative analysis and presentation of final results that can serve as a basis for the company itself to use in the review of some engagement processes. After all, it was possible to identify the actions taken by the company and how the participants of its main social projects perceive these actions.

As a suggestion, future studies should analyze the connection between social projects and the impacts caused by the activities of organizations, that is, whether the projects developed by organizations somehow manage to mitigate or minimize the impacts caused by their activities and what is their effectiveness. It would also be opportune for future studies to include interviews with people who actually benefited from the project, not just community leaders. ■

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