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PLC Internationalisation strategies

Template for case study of good practices

Aims: to provide an opportunity for developing shared understanding between policy makers and SE stakeholders on a good practice, its strengths and weakness; to document the key elements of the good practice for peer review learning and discussion. In this case the good practice is aimed at understanding the strategy to internationalise of a Social and Solidarity Economy organisation or how a SSE network is supporting the internationalisation of its members.

Key issues: given the need to highlight all types of internationalisation and the aim of producing (on a second phase) a series of tools to support internationalisation strategies of SSE organisations, special attention should be given at: diversity of flows (good/services, financial and intangible assets' ones) and direction (inward and outward internationalisation).

Length: <8 pages

The following provides an outline structure for good practice cases.

Title: Technology & knowledge transfer for Collaborative Action

Authors and organizational affiliations:

The following case study on models of Development Alternatives for Internationalisation of Social and Solidarity Economy has been compiled by Shrashtant Patara and Kanika Verma belonging to the Society for Technology and Action for Rural Advancement (TARA), an incubation engine of Development Alternatives Group, India. Authors were supported by Shivankar Mohan and Mayank Nautiyal in writing this case study.

1. Background: Social and Solidarity Economy sector, institutions and policy framework in the region/State/country where the organisation is located

Briefly summarise: landscape of level of development of SE sector, related institutions, and public policy relevant to SE in this region/country. Special focus should be given to policies and private initiatives supporting internationalisation (max 1 page)

In India, there has been a significant amount of innovation in socio-economic empowerment models based on principles of solidarity. However, even with demonstrable impact in terms of key social and



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economic indicators, these initiatives remain at the periphery of the mainstream Indian economy. A few of the more significant and influential advances are summarized in the following paragraphs.

In 1946, two village societies aggregating milk formed a co-operative, today known as Amul Dairy. Their collaboration enabled them to narrow the gap between producers and consumers, creating organic networks. However, it was much later in the 1980s, when a few Civil Society organisations conceptualized and developed an idea of development ventures that combined economic returns with social impact as core objectives within their enterprise. They aimed at rapid creation of collective enterprises and practices that incorporate the unemployed into the labor market through home-based/community enterprises, associations, Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and producers' cooperatives. This contribution in influencing ecosystem actors led to the launch of the Self-Help Group Bank Linkage Programme (SHG-BLP) by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development - NABARD, in 1992. The programme allowed banks to provide financial services to registered/unregistered SHGs that included members from very low income families, usually women.

Successful demonstration of SHG models, influenced other organisations to recognize and adopt social practices. In early 1990's, Kudumbashree Mission, a society in the state of Kerala launched creation of community networks at the local, middle, and government level to better service its stakeholders. This model provided institutional structure for equitable economic activities, serving as an instrument to Government agencies to tackle issues of poverty through economic and social empowerment.

Government agencies recognized the role of NGOs, giving them greater importance in economic plans. The Andhra Pradesh Mutually Aided Cooperative Societies Act of 1995 was one of the first legislations in India that encouraged multiple stakeholders to own SHG Federations and cooperative societies, providing better management and reducing red tapism. This introduced many innovative microfinance practices leading to the creation of nearly 25% of the country's SHGs in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

Over 200 government schemes initiated by the central and state governments through which more than 30,000 NGOs have direct access to resources for rural development. Depending on the operation, these organisations embarked in addressing different spaces of social entrepreneurship from micro credit, education, healthcare to scientific advances. Organisations such as SEWA Foundation, Husk Power, Development Alternatives Group, Barefoot College, Pradan, Villgro, and Dasra are a few that focus on maximizing benefits for their stakeholders over shareholders. These grassroots NGOs have been able to work with rural entrepreneurs and stakeholders to create more equitable economic models of activity. However, due to changing legal environments, tax issues, lack of access to capital and well defined property rights, inappropriate government regulations and low business acumen has limited the growth of their model to specified villages and communities. In July of this year a new Ministry of Cooperation was inaugurated after the Supreme Court struck down the 97th Amendment pertaining to cooperatives.



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From a policy point of view, the government's uptake of imbibing SSE principles has been lacking. It has done little to promote SSE and has mainly followed top-down welfare schemes in alleviating poverty and bettering livelihoods.

2. Summary of main characteristics of good practice approach

Describe the process, instruments and resources used during the internationalisation of the organisation. Provide a general introduction of main characteristics of the organisation (considered relevant to understand its internationalisation strategy). Provide also aims and rationale for the strategy (why did the organisation engaged in this process? What was it looking for? Etc.)

(Max 4 pages)

The Development Alternatives Group is a unique collaboration of organizations with not-for-profit research and charity objectives and social enterprise ambitions. It comprises the Society for Development Alternatives (DA), Society for Technology and Action for Rural Advancement (TARA) and its affiliate social enterprises that are committed to accelerated impact in the areas of entrepreneurship and job creation.

With the ability to work across local, subnational, national, and global levels, the DA Group designs systemic solutions to the global challenges of poverty and environment, and applies at scale locally, through multi-stakeholder partnerships.

A pioneer in sustainable development, DA Group designs and disseminates:

- cutting edge technologies, appropriate for the contexts of developing societies
- rational environmental management systems to enhance ecosystem and livelihood resilience
- enabling policies strategies and people oriented institutions to empower communities, small businesses and local governments

The DA Group has adopted an I4 strategy to scale its impact. This includes Innovating and Incubating inclusive eco-solutions and packages to help meet the basic needs of societies; Implementing replicable solutions in a commercially viable manner; Influencing the ever-growing base of beneficiaries and partners, including enterprises, government bodies, private corporates and civil society organisations (CSOs).

To internationalise the work and experience, under an umbrella of social innovation approach, the model adopted by DA has three broad components namely –

i. Transfer of innovative technology solutions:



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Green-inclusive products and services that are scalable and have demonstrated high impact across India and elsewhere have been incubated, customized and transferred globally, to fulfil the basic needs of the communities. The human-centric co-design of technology solutions and packages cater to the socio-economic aspirations of entrepreneurs and requirements of local markets to ensure adaptability.

DA's technology transfers programmes have entry points from social and environmental angles beyond the economic aspects of the solutions. The main beneficiaries of the transfer of technology are the entrepreneurs seeking to set up or expand their operations. The idea is to introduce an appropriate technology in the country by:

- Conducting extensive feasibility assessment that includes technical, social, economic and environmental concerns
- Adapt the existing technology in the present context
- Package the technology to meet the requirements of the market as well as aspirations and capabilities of entrepreneurs or enterprise
- Augmentation of supply chain for resources and linkage with markets and financial institutions
- Implement and commission the solution by providing necessary technical support from India or locally (if available)
- Strengthen this transfer and disseminate the benefits to a larger stakeholder group through regional and national platforms

The objective of the programme is to locally anchor the transferred technology to augment supply of quality resources through a critical mass of production units. The implementation process optimizes the use of locally available resources to ensure affordability of the components. The process includes two major components of high impact demonstration and ecosystem development. (The entire process is illustrated at the end of this section as it involves the two other major components)

Multiple parameters influence this process of technology transfer. To give a few examples; in Indonesia and Sri Lanka, the urgent rehabilitation needs after the Tsunami and the subsequent scarcity of low investment building materials created the need for a rapid response to set up the technology enterprises. Also the added co-benefit of livelihood creation through these micro enterprises enhanced the sustainability. On the other hand, in Malawi, the policy driver to look at alternate, cost-effective technologies, provided a keen hook for the transfer of the Vertical Shaft Brick Kiln (VSBK) technology. In Bangladesh, unavailability of a low-cost solution to provide safe drinking water to the base of the pyramid led to transfer of WATA technology package.



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ii. Exchange of knowledge and experience

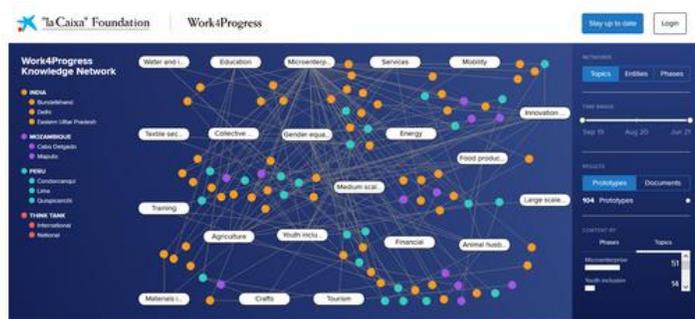
In order to catalyze transformational change in economic and social norms of underserved communities, extensive awareness, intensive training and long term handholding support is needed to build capacities of entrepreneurs as well as associated enterprise ecosystem actors.

The knowledge and experience of DA along with that of its partnering CSOs, government agencies and associated field experts are packaged and exchanged with the SSE agencies of partnering nations. These packages are targeted to -

- Support entrepreneurs in taking informed decisions before and after starting the business
- Establish and/or improve relationship of an entrepreneur with its enterprise ecosystem
- Provide entrepreneur with information on pool of technologies on best practices
- Transfer knowledge of best practices, processes, and innovations that drive the system of entrepreneurship led development
- Disrupting typical organizational and structures and inter-organizational processes of collaboration for individual and collective transformation

Thus, technology support for entrepreneurs and operators to adopt improved technology options need to be an essential part of this transformation. DA Group has initiated and been part of several such platforms and networks that enable the transference of knowledge.

The support provided to the marginalized through social innovation in the space of entrepreneurship through a community of praxis that innovates responses to intractable social-ecological challenges, packages and disseminates them through various platforms. Platforms centered around regional hubs and peer networks help create a trusted inclusive environment for the many stakeholders to engage with each other. Examples of such platforms include the Work 4 Progress (W4P) platform, a platform built around a unique social innovation methodology that puts communities at the center; Systems Play, a collaborative focused in the global south that builds capacities to innovate;



A screenshot of the W4P Virtual Lab dashboard representing the various interconnections between the prototypes and geographic spread



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SILK

and Positive Sparks, a listening platform helps DA to unite voices of young people from India to that across different countries.

iii. Collaboration and alliances to maximize influence:

Mere transfer of technology and knowledge to a country doesn't ensure its widespread adoption. Long term support is imperative to achieve scale and impact that an exchange envisions. Through platforms and partnerships, DA collaborates with local and national government agencies, key private players of the sector to disseminate solutions and their impact. Collaborations and alliances aims to -

- Influence policy actions of local government bodies and agencies towards sustainable adoption
- Direct flow of resources towards organisations / enterprises working to sustain and expand social and solidarity economy practices in India

This has supported DA's interventions to move beyond the first enterprise and create a critical mass of profitable enterprises, thus demonstrating the potential for change both for the entrepreneur and the local economy. By drawing external support in terms of knowledge, finance and/or markets, long-term policy actions by local governance institutions are likely to happen as it makes institutes more participatory, accountable, transparent and responsive to the needs of the people.

The examples of such collaborations are, DA Group has been a member of the Alliance of NGOs and CSOs for South-South Cooperation (ANCSSC), host platform Mainstreaming Alternate Perspectives (MAP-SA) for communities, organisations, businesses and governments to engage, enrich and take forward the transition to green, inclusive and fair economies in India and South Asia. As a member of the Green Economic Coalition (GEC), DA represents India for voicing the grassroots experience in a global network of diverse organisations from different sectors for greening the economy by drafting working papers, policy issues and organizing conferences. As a member of Green Climate Fund (GCF), DA is influencing public and private players to undertake sustainable financing of clean initiatives within India. These measures have supported DA to direct resources and best practices to India for engaging, assessing and reflecting commitments of private and government sectors to create a local green economy. This connectedness with the global development community has helped us to draw on and share international and national experiences in global and regional platforms. This has led to exchange of knowledge and capacity building of various ecosystem actors, de-risking operationalization of new approaches and practices that are likely to create a paradigm shift from the conventional practices and the engrained mentality amongst entrepreneurs resisting to process innovations.

Beyond these models, DA's unique brand identity supports mainstreaming of its knowledge products, advocacy papers and technologies in the international market. DA manages its brand through a



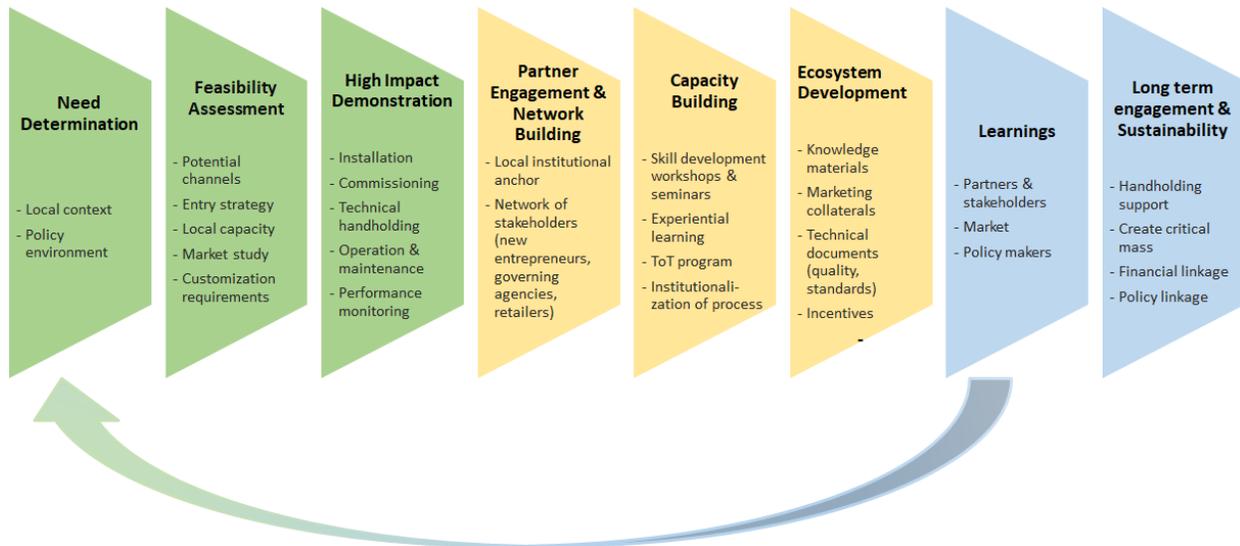
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continuous process of comparing perspectives from partners, entrepreneurs, retailers, stakeholders and the community at large. This helps DA in understanding, communicating and delivering value propositions they seek for services.



Model of DA Group to Internationalise its approach

3. Evidence/Justification for Good Practice

Soft evidence: For example, qualitative or indirect elements which demonstrate its impact, relevance, efficiency, achievement of the goals, etc. Such elements can also be personal assessment regarding benefits for either the organisation itself, its worker or any other stakeholder (beneficiaries, communities where it is placed, etc.)

Hard evidence: For example, data from evaluations or relevant quantitative indicators.

(Max 1 page)

DA has an embedded process of learning that continuously monitors and evaluates its activities, processes, goals, and impacts. A few indicators of DA’s good practices are mentioned below:

i. Transfer of innovative technology solutions:

- By leveraging resources worth USD 46 million from grants and direct contracts for consultation, DA has internationalized green building material technologies of Eco Kiln and Micro Concrete Roofing (MCR) tiles. These technologies have been transferred to 13 countries across the globe in



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the last 10 years creating more than 470 social enterprises, earning a revenue of more than USD 25 Million. These enterprises have generated USD 991.55 Million (as on April 2020), employing more than 55,700 marginalized rural populaces directly or indirectly into the green value chain. Applications of these technologies have supported local enterprises to save consumption of 1.78 million tons of coal and 5 million tons of firewood as fuel. Indirectly, transfer of green building technologies helped the agricultural sector of the beneficiary nations such as Malawi, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, South Africa etc. to conserve 7.8 million tons of top soil and reuse 2.78 million tons of industrial waste. Mitigating 5.71 million tons of CO₂ as of April 2020, governments of these countries were able to contribute to their COP 21 commitments. The building materials produced from these technologies have also improved the quality of housing and saved around 40% cost from bricks and mortar alone thereby transforming businesses of private construction companies.

- Similarly, in Bangladesh, through a grant funding of USD 20,000, transfer of a low-cost solution called the WATA technology package (branded as Aqua+), provided access to safe drinking water to the base of the pyramid populace. Through a robust business model that included social marketing tools, resilient supply chain, manufacturing and quality control processes, the cost of Aqua+ solution was brought down to USD 0.27 ensuring its affordability. As the solution scaled throughout the nation, the cost increased to just USD 0.57, with DA Group selling more than 112,000 bottles of Aqua+ in the first 2 years earning more than USD 30,000.

ii. Exchange of knowledge and experience

In the last three financial years, by directing appx. USD 8 million, DA has developed partnerships with over 80 SSE organisations to internationalise our processes and tools. Over 35 modules have been co-created to build capacities of change makers to move towards SSE solutions, 65 enterprise packages have been transferred, and over 11 toolkits are being used that facilitate systemic changes at micro-meso and macro levels.

- Systems Play currently consists of three regional hubs: Africa (in Cape Town), Asia (in New Delhi), and Latin America (in São Paulo) and an online hub which, among other things, is the home for knowledge generation and assets. Each regional hub has engaged hands-on projects and has a specific programmatic focus supporting partnering organisations to share social practices and knowledge that enable systemic innovations, and building the network of shared responsibilities among partners.
- Similarly, DA's W4P platform aims to accelerate the creation of meaningful livelihoods and dignified employment in developing countries (currently India, Mozambique and Peru) through the creation of platforms for innovation, action, and continuous learning. Since the platform's



inception in 2018, 37 partner organisations spread over 6 networks in the three countries have engaged over 40,000 potential entrepreneurs in collective activities. Across the three platforms 4,756 jobs have been created of which more than 40% are women.

iii. Collaboration and alliances to maximize influence:

DA has utilized around USD 1 million worth resources to influence green economies, creating an active network of civil societies, labor groups, small businesses, researchers and practitioners in each focus country. Through these networks, a fair transformation towards a green economy is leveraged through policy and institutional actions. Organisations like GGGI, SEED Climate Finance, Centre for Responsible Business, TERI, Switch Asia, FICCI, UNIDO, GIST, UN PAGE and GRI to name a few have adopted and validated DA's best practices and tools to bring and sustain local green economies in Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

- Over 100 Policy briefs, working papers and conferences were organized through the GEC platform between 2016 to 2020. Evidence and cases generated helped the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Government of India to develop a Green Economy Action Plan aimed to transition the processes of procurement of micro, small and medium enterprises in India towards sustainability. Later, DA facilitated its implementation in the state of Bihar.
- An online dialogue and knowledge sharing hub called Mainstreaming Alternative Perspectives (MAP) platform was co-created by DA that engaged communities, organisations, businesses and governments to create a repository of evidence on kinds of inclusive-green models and livelihood interventions in various sectors like agriculture, energy, tourism, art and craft. 100+ green initiatives have been adopted by various SSE organisations so far in India and South Asia through this platform.

4. Context and history of how it developed

Describe the origins of the good practice/strategy, and its evolution to current praxis. With reference to the scoping document, discuss the problems/challenges it addresses. For example, if it addresses different flows, if both directions, inward and outward, are relevant, etc. Also, describe how it fits within a broader spectrum of activities of the organisation.

(Max 0.5 page)

DA Group as a first Indian social enterprise was set up in 1983, that established a model wherein a non-profit promotes innovations of a for-profit organisation, with no stakes in ownership attached. For the next 10 years, DA pioneered this model by incubating and implementing innovative ideas, technology



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solutions and production systems in the resource efficient building material sector. In the late 1980's, DA began to collaborate with Norway, Spain, Switzerland, UK etc. by establishing flows for transfer of technology, finance, and knowledge to address local needs in India. This enabled DA to establish its ability and intention of bringing and connecting research to practice, large to small organisations, technology to human aspects, innovation to amplification with a social objective. In the early 1990, DA started to share this model to promote sustainable innovative models within the rural communities, social organisations and policy conferences across India, and beyond in global networks promoting outward flow of packaged technologies and services by 1991. Organisations in India such as SELCO, Jain Irrigation, Ashoka etc. adopted this mechanism that was legitimized by DA Group. DA served as advisory to multiple commissions and over 45,000 Civil Society Organisations, led World Conservation Strategy etc. to drive the movement towards sustainable, equitable and a fair transition of economy beyond just profits.

The inherent and dedicated approach of DA Group towards open source in knowledge and IP sharing creates a win-win model of technology led practice to policy with partners. This makes DA's impact deep and wide bringing resilience in underserved communities, and scalability to the solutions of businesses.

5. Outcomes (for different stakeholders)

Describe its main achievements (intended and unintended); and, if feasible and relevant, how it is seen by different stakeholders involved (workers, local communities, clients, partners, etc.).

(Max 0.5 page)

Over the last three decades through platforms and partnerships, DA Group has been actively involved in advocating adoption of sustainable practices in businesses, local public agencies, corporates and bi-lateral agencies. They have demonstrated transfer of technology and knowledge solutions across 32 countries. The clients, partners, government agencies and other social organisations within India and beyond look to DA as an organisation that has the ability to build evidence on action based research & connect that with global actions for sustainability in terms of livelihood creation and greening economies.

For example, DA's VSBK, MCR tiles and LC3 technologies have supported construction sectors with a cost effective solution that not only supports manufacturing of affordable-quality bricks, but helped to reduce country-wide pressure on consumption of natural resources (forest woods, mitigating over 5.7 mtCO2)¹. In the process, these green enterprises generated local employment and promoted women entrepreneurship in the brick making sector, enabling them to earn up to nine times more than what they earned previously. Moreover, the technical and financial knowledge modules develop the skills of different stakeholders in the enterprise ecosystem that ensure dissemination of the technology at scale,

¹ Data points mentioned in this response are measured values in the last 6 years i.e. between 2014-2020



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especially amongst women groups. This also supported the creation of sustainable supply chains for enterprises to facilitate sourcing of raw materials and create new market linkages.

Through Systems Play, Global Sparks, W4P platform, ILO Decent Jobs 4 Youth Platform, and the UNDP Accelerator Labs, learnings and knowledge is shared across a global network. Active promotion of interaction and systems thinking on interconnected social and ecological issues has helped co-create solutions and ecosystems for sustainable livelihoods.

Our working papers, policy and issue briefs helped to influence policies in Malawi’s brick sector, introducing environmentally sound technology that consumes 65% less energy and leads to 25% reduction in cost of bricks. With European Commission, DA has been representing the UNFCCC COP initiative to strengthen the network of global CSOs to direct actions towards vulnerable communities in climate-sensitive areas.

6. Drivers and Barriers

Briefly summarise its main drivers (market opportunities, direct requests, competition, social issue or clients being international, etc.) and barriers (regulations, absence of tailored support measures, inadequate management practices, etc.).

(Max 1 page)

Drivers	Barriers
<p>Global Practices / Policies:</p> <p>Enforcement of Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) helped to create demand for green technologies of DA, accelerating its adoption in international space. The VSBK technology of DA became the first registered bundled project in the world under CDM.</p>	<p>Access to Finance:</p> <p>Access to capital was recognized as the most significant of all barriers. Burden of huge interest rates, guarantees, offsets, collateral etc. prevent entrepreneurs from starting new ventures.</p>



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<p>International Clients:</p> <p>The Carbon Financing Mechanism helped DA to not only leveraged initial capital for its entrepreneurs but also provided support in terms of recognition and credibility to the technology that it offered amongst other financial institutes and policy makers</p>	<p>Negotiation Process:</p> <p>Long durations and considerable personnel resources are spent to negotiate projects with global funding agencies and foreign government agencies.</p>
<p>Availability of trained workforce:</p> <p>Training of existing and potential entrepreneurs, stakeholders from public and private agencies resulted in development of necessary workforce that enabled rapid adoption of solutions across county and beyond. Many of the trainees served as consultants to other countries.</p>	<p>Economics over socio-environmental transformation:</p> <p>Many multinational corporations continue to provide innovations for large profit over community benefits. This results in higher payback periods, discouraging inclusive adoption of solutions.</p>
<p>Open source technology and knowledge transfer:</p> <p>DA’s approach of license free transfer of technology and knowledge materials made adoption of best practices affordable and fair.</p>	<p>Changing politics and diplomatic relationships:</p> <p>Frequent change in foreign trade policies and public authorities in India and other countries delays international logistics i.e. approvals of VISA etc.</p>
<p>Market Validation and Learning Loop:</p> <p>The practice of continued evaluation helped innovations to evolve, become more localized, increasing their demand in the market.</p>	<p>No SSE dedicated policy:</p> <p>Non-existence of dedicated policies on SSE in India or in the target nation inhibits promotion/ influencing societies of actual impact.</p>

7. Overall assessment

Summarise, in your views, its utility, and its value as a learning case study for other actors (if feasible address at least three: SSE networks, public authorities and other SSE organisations).

(Max 0.5 page)



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DA's experience in internationalizing its initiatives and drawing upon breakthroughs made by organizations elsewhere in the world could be of considerable value to other actors interested in promoting SSE. If we want systemic change to take place that has widespread social and environmental benefits, we need a mix of sustainability solutions, delivered collaboratively through multi-stakeholder networks.

Through our experience, it has become evident that successful internationalisation hinges on the three interconnected components of transference of technology, exchange of knowledge, and maximizing influence through collaboration and alliances. The values created by these three components through the social innovation approach helped DA to bring research to practice, connect large organisations to small enterprises, bridge gaps between technology and human abilities, and accelerate green innovations across 32 countries.

Over two decades between 1990 and 2010, DA relied on sharing knowledge and some amount of advocacy to influence global, national and local institutions. In the last ten years, the emphasis of DA has shifted to a more tactical approach, looking at strategic partnerships in target countries, often with actors in business and industry in addition to civil society organizations and governments. The multi-stakeholder approach helps to sustain and accelerate innovations as they are co-created based on requirements of the country's communities and markets. The underlying 'intangible' assets are deep ownership, mutual trust and responsibility amongst multiple stakeholders. Moreover, in addition to communications being driven by prolific individuals in the organisation, we are now focusing on facilitating this co-creation through tools and our alliances. In the case of the transfer of technologies and services, we have to turn a mix of levers in the ecosystem to make a new technology work. We train entrepreneurs and stakeholders of the enterprise ecosystem on proven technical, financial and marketing practices. This gives rise to solutions that are applicable, profitable and scalable in the local context.

Specifically, by involving local Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), we make them anchors to support the ecosystem of enterprises post transfer. We engage with local vendors and unions to create, sustain and promote markets at local and regional levels. We include local and national government agencies to support and promote these initiatives to provide decent livelihoods to the marginalized communities.

Another key lever to internationalise technology is to strengthen access to credit for entrepreneurs. The social enterprises that we create and sustain have received funds through direct transfer under innovative mechanisms like Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). However, creating sustainable mechanisms with local financial institutes remains a challenge. In the last 2-3 years, DA has become mindful of this driver and is leveraging support from private companies like Lafarge and Atmosfair in Malawi, and government bodies to finance clean technologies.



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The alliances that we form further enables us to position our open innovations, influencing global and national policies as well as resources back into countries.