Community Involvement as a Part of Sustainability

According to the United Nations, sustainable development is one that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This is the definition of sustainability that is most frequently used. However, no mention of societal issues, giving back to the community, community outreach, or involvement in the community can be found in that definition. So, why do so many people believe that community involvement is a necessary component of long-term sustainability?

Today, sustainability encompasses more than only environmental protection and the conservation of natural resources. It now frequently refers to what is known as "people, profit, planet," or the triple bottom line, which encompasses not just environmental protection but also profit making and the stakeholders engaged with an organization (people). Employees and residents of the communities in which a company operates are examples of stakeholders. Stakeholders, also known as "people" are individuals who may be influenced in some way by a company's decisions and activities.

What is Community Involvement?

Community participation can take numerous forms e.g. raising money for local charity organizations, organizing clean-up days for local parks or beaches, or simply teaching locals about sustainability in general. The term "community involvement" does not only refer to persons who are not affiliated with the company. Employees are also members of the community, so it's critical for a hotel to look after them by paying fair wages, giving fair benefits, encouraging them to volunteer for charitable causes, and educating them about the value of being involved in the community as a whole.
Positive energy translates to increased job satisfaction, lower turnover, and eventually affects the "profit" in the triple bottom line if employees are happy with the work they do and the organization they work for.

Participating in the community is not a new concept, and it is not something that businesses are only starting to embrace. Many people in the hotel sector and beyond have been giving back to their communities for years. The significance that people place on community involvement when making decisions appears to have shifted over time. This can happen in the hospitality business when a guest chooses one hotel over another depending on how involved the hotel is in the community, or when a potential employee chooses one hotel job over another for the same reason.

Hotels can also publicize their humanitarian actions in annual sustainability reports that are easily accessible to clients. They are now emphasizing such efforts more prominently on websites than in the past, making it easier for customers to learn about the hotel's efforts.

**How Can Hotels Support the Community?**

A hotel can support a community in a variety of ways. The following are some of the most notable measures made by hotels:

- **A hotel can "go local";** by purchasing local products, paying workers a fair salary, and adhering to fair trade standards.
- **Alleviate poverty;** either distributing food to impoverished areas or taking more urgent steps to enhance their communities' living conditions.
- **Encourage involvement by educating guests;** about the surrounding community and how they may help and contribute.
- **Improve infrastructure;** Hotels that contribute to road construction or community water distribution can have a long-term influence. This is especially crucial for hotels that are opening in new locations. The picture below is of a foot bridge constructed by Cottar’s Camp taken during the ecorating reassessment of the property in 2021.
• **Unlock human potential:** Providing education, training job-specific skills, and exclusively hiring local residents all contribute to a community's full potential. The picture below is of an onsite beading studio constructed by Basecamp Masai Mara for the Maasai women for bead works and product development trainings. They also market the products to specific Western counties.
There are also plenty of other hotel companies that are already involved in the community, particularly at the corporate level. These efforts are frequently incorporated into a company's overall sustainability or corporate social responsibility policy.

**Why support the community?**

Why do it? It is easy to say that becoming involved in the community is good for business and good for society. It makes a significant difference. It's also easy to state that it gives you the chance to meet your neighbors and form new friendships. It could help you solve a problem in your neighborhood (e.g., provide food to households in need). Further, it aids in the promotion of your brand and the spread of information about your firm.

From the above discussions, hotels should consider investing in community involvement (Corporate Social Responsibility) as it could increase brand reputation, results in higher sales, premium prices, and improve employee attraction and retention, among other things. Finally, in the words of American publisher Mark Twain: "Always do right. This will gratify some people, and astonish the rest."