



Social Sustainability Assessment Framework

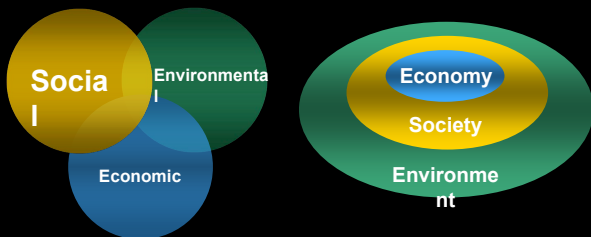


Nicole Hodgson
Institute for Sustainability
and Technology Policy
Murdoch University

Outline of presentation

- Social Sustainability?
- WACOSS Model of Social Sustainability
- The Social Sustainability Assessment Framework
 - Background
 - How was it developed?
 - What does it look like?
 - How could it be used?

Conceptualising sustainability



Social sustainability

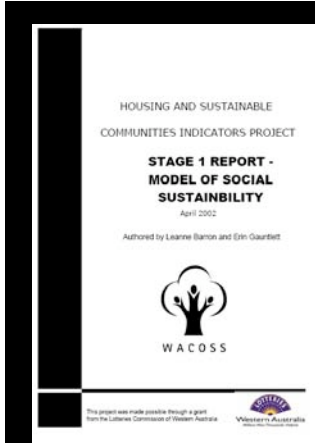
- Only fairly recently receiving research attention...
- Three main centres of research on social sustainability:
 - Oxford Institute for Sustainable Development
 - Sustainable Europe Research Institute
 - Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney

Oxford Institute for Sustainable Development

- Colantonio (2007) "Measuring Social Sustainability: Best Practice from Urban Renewal in the EU"
- "There is limited literature that focuses on social sustainability to the extent that a systematic study of this concept is still missing."
- "Social sciences and social policy research have developed a plethora of social objectives strategies and measurement instruments, but with little regard for the sustainability perspective."

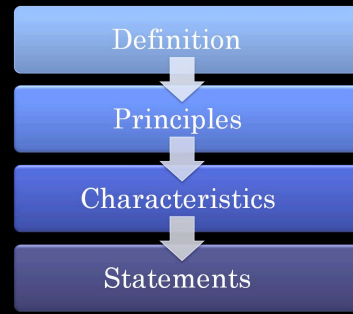
Sustainable Europe Research Institute

- Omann & Spangenberg (2002) "Assessing Social Sustainability. The Social Dimension of Sustainability in a Socio-Economic Scenario"
- "Social sustainability, as an independent dimension of sustainable development, and equally important as the economic or environmental dimension still lacks broad recognition by scientists as well as by decision makers."



Since 2002 WACOSS has been addressing the lack of attention on the 'social dimension of sustainability'.

WACOSS Model of Social Sustainability



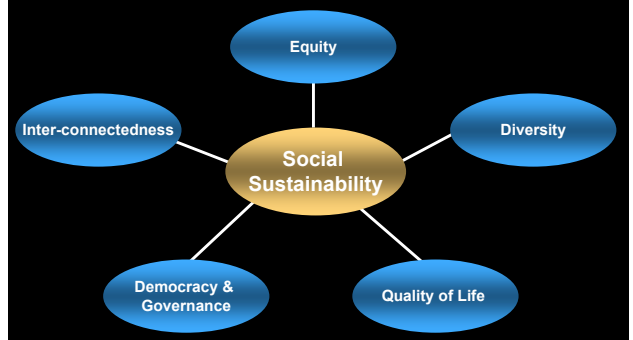
Social Sustainability - Definition

Social sustainability occurs when the formal and informal:

- processes;
- systems;
- structures; and
- relationships

actively support the capacity of current and future generations to create healthy and livable communities.

Social Sustainability – Principles



Socially sustainable communities are equitable, diverse, connected and democratic and provide a good quality of life.

Background to the SSAF



Assessing social sustainability

- Social-Economic Assessment is not enough
 - Social is more than a trickle-down from economic benefit
- Social Impact Assessment is not enough
 - Reactive to projects and driven by proponents
 - Mitigating worst social impacts of a project
 - Fairly constrained version of the 'social' – amenity, visual impact etc
- Social Assessment is not just community engagement

Background to the SSAF

- Initial interest in developing a social sustainability assessment tool to help inform future Sustainability Assessment processes of:
 - State Government
 - Private Sector
 - Local Government
- After discussions with funding body, Lotterywest, the focus became firmly on the assessment of social sustainability WITHIN the community services sector



Social Sustainability Assessment Framework (SSAF)

- A simple, self-assessment questionnaire of 30 questions to help understand how organisations, programs or services contributes to social sustainability by:
 - Encouraging reflection
 - Facilitating discussion and dialogue
 - Enhancing awareness and understanding of a project
- The SSAF is *not*:
 - A formalised, accredited framework
 - A definitive or quantitative tool

How was it developed?

- Two project coordinators – Jane Lawton then Nicole Hodgson
- A reference group primarily from community services sector
- Workshops with the sector and many iterations!
- A piloting process, assisted by consultant Anne Goodall, piloting with four organisations in the sector

The screenshot shows the introduction page of the Social Sustainability Assessment Framework (SSAF). It features the WACOSS logo and the tagline 'Making a Difference through advocacy, training and social policy'. The page is titled 'INTRODUCTION' and contains the following text:

The Social Sustainability Assessment Framework (SSAF) is a tool designed specifically for organisations in the community services sector. It was developed by WACOSS with funding from Lotterywest.

The SSAF will help you to understand how your organisation, program or service contributes to social sustainability by:

- Encouraging reflection
- Facilitating discussion and dialogue
- Enhancing awareness and understanding of your project

The SSAF is intended to be an educative tool, for the learning and benefit of organisations in the community services sector.

The SSAF is not intended to be a framework for competition between organisations in the community services sector, nor is it intended to increase bureaucracy and paperwork for an organisation.

How you use the SSAF is completely up to you! You can use it as often as you like, in any way you wish. You might like to use it for:

- Continuous improvement of projects and services
- Assisting in the development phase of new projects and services
- As a starting point for a more detailed evaluation of projects
- Helping to articulate the broader impacts of projects, especially for advocacy purposes

START THE ASSESSMENT HERE

What is Social Sustainability?

Social sustainability occurs when the formal and informal:

- Processes
- Systems
- Structures and
- Relationships

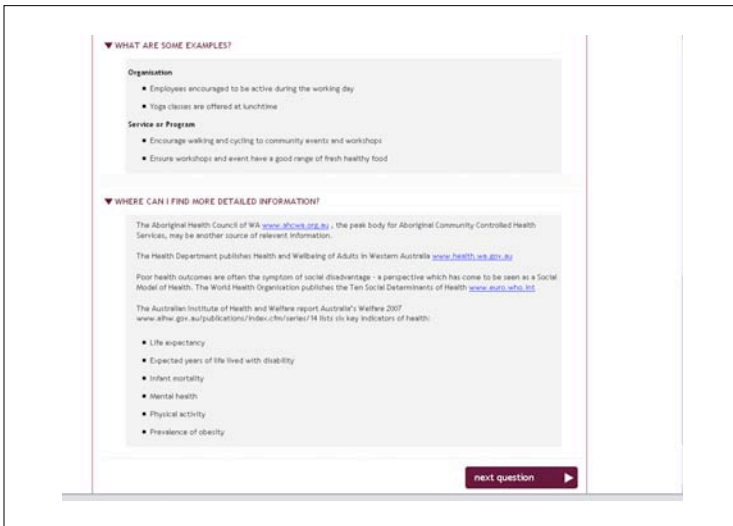
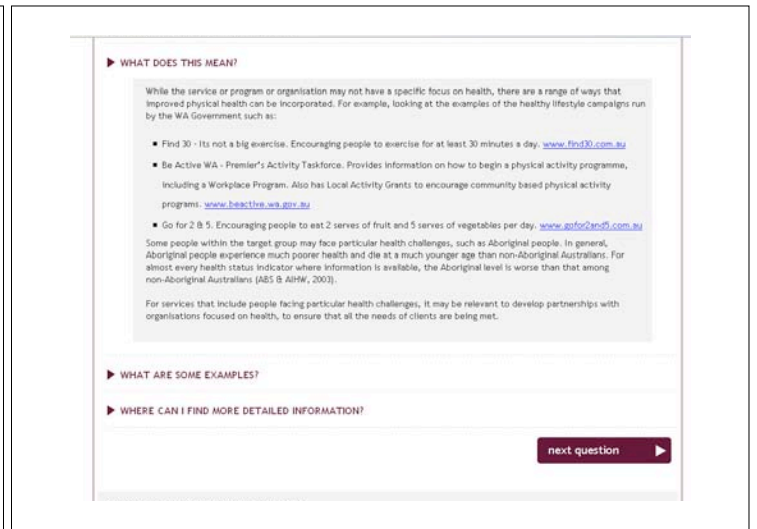
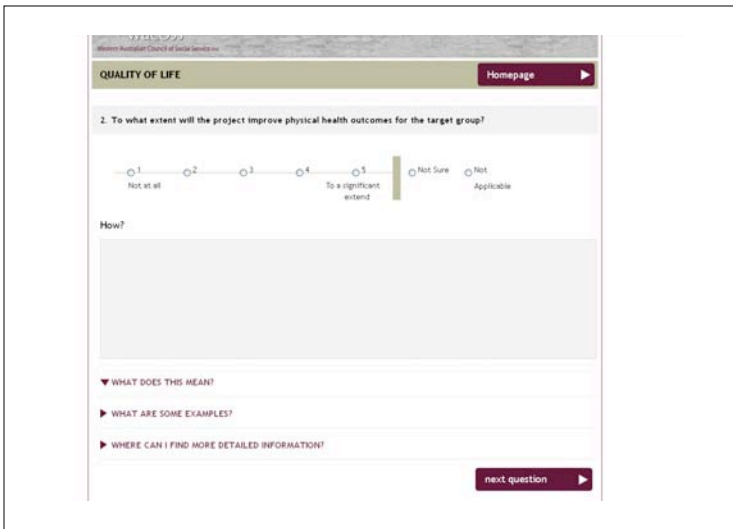
actively support the capacity of current and future generations to create healthy & livable communities. Socially sustainable communities are equitable, diverse, connected, democratic and provide a good quality of life.

WACOSS (2002) "Model of Social Sustainability"

The screenshot shows the 'INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS' section of the SSAF form. It contains the following fields:

- Name of project: [Text input field]
- Intent of project: [Text input field]
- Target Group: Who? How many? [Text input field]
- Client Group: Who? How many? Coverage? [Text input field]
- Location: Metropolitan / Regional / Central / Rural / Remote? [Text input field]
- Timeframe: [Text input field]
- Budget: [Text input field]
- Funding source: Self funded / Externally funded? [Text input field]

A 'next question' button is located at the bottom right of the form.



Part 1 – Quality of Life

To what extent will the project improve:

- affordable and appropriate housing opportunities for the target group?
- physical health outcomes for the target group?
- mental health outcomes for the target group?
- education, training and skill development opportunities for the target group?
- employment opportunities for the target group?
- access to transport for the target group?
- the ability of the target group to meet their basic needs?
- safety and security for the target group?
- access to community amenities and facilities for the target group?

Part 2 – Equity

To what extent will the project:

- reduce disadvantage for the target group?
- assist the target group to have more control over their lives, socially and economically?
- identify the causes of disadvantage and inequality and look for ways to reduce them?
- identify and aim to meet the needs of any particularly disadvantaged and marginalised people within the target group?
- be delivered without bias and promote fairness?

Part 3 – Diversity

To what extent will the project:

- identify diverse groups within the target group and look at ways to meet their particular needs?
- recognise diversity within cultural, ethnic and racial groups?
- allow for diverse viewpoints, beliefs and values to be taken into consideration?
- promote understanding and acceptance within the broader community of diverse backgrounds, cultures and life circumstances?

Part 4 – Social Cohesion

To what extent will the project:

- ☐☐ help the target group to develop a sense of belonging in the broader community?
- ☐☐ increase participation in social activities by individuals in the target group?
- ☐☐ improve the target groups' understanding of and access to public and civic institutions?
- ☐☐ build links between the target group and other groups in the broader community?
- ☐☐ result in the provision of increased support to the target group by the broader community?
- ☐☐ encourage the target group to contribute towards the community or provide support for others?

Part 5 – Democracy & Governance

To what extent will:

- ☐☐ the project allow for a diverse range of people (especially the target group) to participate and be represented in decision-making processes?
- ☐☐ the processes of decision-making for the project will be clear to and easily understood by staff and stakeholders?
- ☐☐ the project have a budget sufficient to ensure adequate delivery by qualified trained staff?
- ☐☐ the project ensure that the use of volunteers is appropriate and properly governed?
- ☐☐ the duration of the project be sufficient to achieve the desired outcomes?
- ☐☐ have you considered what will happen when the project ceases?

How could it be used?

- Continuous improvement of projects and services:
 - E.g. go back in 6 months time and reflect on our project intentions
- Assisting in the development phase of new projects and services
- Helping to articulate the broader impacts of projects for:
 - advocacy to funding bodies and decision-makers
 - making presentations about projects/programs
 - writing case studies / reflections of programs

How could it be used?

- As a starting point for a more detailed evaluation of projects
- As a starting point for peer exchange with other organisations and services
- As an educative tool to work through with staff or management groups to increase understanding about social sustainability and the broader impacts of services
- As a 'checklist' for program management

Where to from here?

- Introduction of the SSAF to organisations in the community sector
- Look for other partners to create alternate versions, for example:
 - Local Government – planning and development assessment processes, broader sustainability assessment processes, community development and community service provision
 - Private sector – sustainability assessment processes, community engagement for development and project proposals

For more information

- Irina Cattalini, Director Social Policy, WACOSS
irina@wacoss.org.au
- Nicole Hodgson, Murdoch University
n.hodgson@murdoch.edu.au