

Guidelines for Engagement in Developing Countries

Introduction

Iowa State University of Science and Technology is committed to excellence, integrity, the free exchange of ideas and collaboration. It is imperative that the creation, sharing and application of knowledge be a global effort characterized by a profound respect for the diversity of people and ideas. The mission of Iowa State University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CAL S) is to educate future leaders, conduct mission-oriented basic and applied research and share new knowledge for the betterment of Iowa and the world. We embrace our role in addressing challenges in global food security, food safety, climate change, environmentally sustainable stewardship, renewable energy and human health. Our students must be well-prepared to become effective global citizens as employees, employers, public leaders, stakeholders, philanthropists and other roles that contribute to a global approach. Cross-cultural partnerships are critical for globally mobile faculty, staff and students — and graduates and alumni.

These partnerships are forged in countries around the world. One way we meet our mission is through engagement, education, research and information sharing in developing countries. Some of this work is conducted primarily with institutional partners in academia and government. But faculty, staff and students also experience first-hand the profound challenges faced by many rural communities. Guided by education, research and information sharing, they can work collaboratively on potential solutions. Much of the college's recent experience in developing countries, especially in Africa, is grounded in collaborative work for the benefit of small farmers and with particular attention given to women producers. We work with communities on goals that may include achieving food security, improved nutrition for women and children, sustainable incomes for their families, access to clean water and sanitary conditions, improved environmental conditions and effective agricultural use of available water resources. We work to build education capacity and improve educational opportunities for children, with a special emphasis on agriculture.

The following guidelines were developed to help inform decisions in the college on engagement in developing countries. They also aim to help CAL S faculty, staff and students better understand the challenges involved with engagement. The guidelines should be considered along with the other guidelines, requirements, policies or codes of universities, federal and local governments, funding agencies, professional organizations and other bodies with supervisory responsibilities. The guidelines are applicable regardless of country, partners and funding sources. We expect the results of our work to be an expression of our mission, values and principles, just as we expect the results of our science, education and extension and outreach to contribute to positive change that improves lives.

The process of developing the guidelines included an extensive literature review; review of guidelines from other organizations; input received by participants at a November 2012 seminar on Guiding Principles in International Agricultural Development: The Sustainable Rural Livelihoods Model; and a review of a draft by faculty, staff, students CALS alumni and feedback from other interested individuals.

Guidelines for Engagement

1. Our work aligns with the strategic plans of the college and Iowa State University, which emphasize our commitment to meeting global challenges and improving the lives of people worldwide.
2. We are committed to collaborating with partners engaged in the U.N. Millennium Development Goals¹ and its post-2015 development agenda, focusing on people-centered development through a collaborative livelihoods approach²; universal primary education; sustainable management of forest, agricultural and pastoral landscapes; protection of the natural environment and biodiversity; and achieving economic sustainability by strengthening local economies that lead to sustainable livelihoods.
3. We expect our faculty, staff and students to respect and value the people, cultures and communities with which we engage, conducting themselves ethically and with integrity. In doing so, we expect to learn from these experiences and relationships, gaining valuable knowledge that enriches education, research and outreach.
4. We are committed to helping rural people in developing countries attain their goals of achieving food security, which exists “when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life.” (World Food Summit, 1996). We work with communities on sustainable agricultural goals that help them gain access to sufficient, nutritious food and sustainable incomes, resulting in good health and well-being.
5. We value participatory decision-making, led by the local community. We value learning and collaboration among families, rural communities and civil societies to nurture civic responsibility, effective leadership and resilient social institutions. We support governance structures that are effective and efficient; encourage participation and empowerment at all levels; are respectful of human rights; and are committed to improving the lives of their people.
6. In partnership with rural people and communities, we help to address the needs of the most vulnerable by building resilience through research, education and outreach. These groups may include malnourished children, women heading single-parent households, ethnic and religious minorities, unemployed youth, displaced persons, and families living with HIV/AIDS and other devastating diseases.
7. We follow a tested, well-accepted set of extension and rural development approaches, including those guiding CALS’ Center for Sustainable Rural

Livelihoods, that are built on collaboration in learning, integration, analysis and reflection:

- **Listening and learning.** We begin by listening to the needs and aspirations of the communities and stakeholders at the local level, including active involvement from the most vulnerable stakeholders. A thorough assessment of needs should be completed at all levels.
 - **Analysis.** We study resource constraints and opportunities to identify possible approaches and programming that serve as a baseline of information to evaluate future progress.
 - **Collaborative planning.** We use an inclusive process to develop a long-term plan with the intended beneficiaries, local leaders and other stakeholders through a transparent and public decision-making process to ensure long-term success.
 - **Blending compatible and complementary scientific knowledge.** We consult with the local community, researchers and experts from the region on new or improved technologies appropriate for testing, adaptation and dissemination, with decisions based on objective evidence of usefulness and risks. We share results of research with local communities to inform, educate and track progress.
 - **Cultural sensitivity.** We implement the program in a culturally sensitive manner involving local stakeholders and leaders. Programs contain both short-term deliverables and long-term capacity development of people and institutions that respect local tradition and practice.
 - **Monitoring and evaluation.** We monitor implementation closely, reflect on lessons learned and adjust as needed in consultation with the local community and local partners, including the most vulnerable stakeholders.
8. We use a holistic, community needs-based, capacity development approach³. This approach is employed to: reduce poverty and improve food security sustainably for families and rural communities; improve educational opportunities for youth and adults; and strengthen the capacity of participating nongovernmental organizations and educational institutions.
9. We respect the legal, land and property rights of all people and communities. We are committed to managing our operations recognizing the authority of laws and regulations of the community and the country. We also abide by the voluntary Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investment, which were developed jointly by World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and International Fund for Agricultural Development.

10. As a public institution of higher education, we require our partners — individuals, civic societies and public and private sector entities — to be committed to achieving results compatible with our values and principles and consistent to the values of the recipients. In making decisions on partnerships, we will evaluate potential partners' . . .
- . . . goals and motivation for engaging with a developing country and community
 - . . . past performance in similar programs and communities
 - . . . commitment to managing forest, agricultural and pastoral landscapes sustainably
 - . . . commitment to protecting and managing the integrity of the natural environment
 - . . . commitment to philanthropy without creating dependency
 - . . . cultural sensitivity and respect for human rights, dignity and diversity (e.g., social responsibility statement)
 - . . . commitment to appropriate technology transfer and information sharing
 - . . . commitment to sustainable development and participatory approaches in which local communities have a voice and provide decision-making
 - . . . commitment to transparency and open communication, with a willingness to share their experiences and information with students, staff and faculty.

These criteria will be evaluated in an ongoing basis.

Implementation

The Guidelines for Engagement in Developing Countries are links available on the college's Policy & Best Practices and Global Programs websites. They will be distributed to college faculty and staff, student organizations and interested parties. They will be incorporated into the college's annual new faculty orientation. The Dean's Global Advisory Committee has been established to review the guidelines annually (see below).

Dean's Global Advisory Committee

The Dean's Global Advisory Committee is made up of faculty and staff with broad international experience, an undergraduate student and a graduate student. Committee members are named by the Dean. The committee, which reports to the Dean, reviews the guidelines annually to recommend updates or changes. The committee reviews proposed college activities in international development and advises the Dean on adherence to the guidelines. The committee reviews proposed goals, expectations and partners, and advises the Dean on potential conflicts of interest or inconsistencies with the guidelines. Summaries of projects or activities in developing countries will be included in the monthly Global Programs newsletter.

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¹ The eight U.N. Millennium Development Goals range from halving extreme poverty rates to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education. The goals form a blueprint agreed to by all the world's countries and all the world's leading development institutions. They have galvanized unprecedented efforts to meet the needs of the world's poorest. (<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>)

² According to the International Fund for Agricultural Development, <http://www.ifad.org/sla/>, the sustainable livelihoods approach is a way to improve understanding of the livelihoods of limited-resource farmers. It examines factors that affect livelihoods and relationships between these factors. It can be used in planning new development activities and in assessing the contribution that existing activities have made to sustaining livelihoods. Two key components are a framework that helps in understanding the complexities of poverty and a set of principles to guide action to address and overcome poverty.

³ From the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, <http://www.fao.org/capacitydevelopment/en/>: Capacity is defined as “the ability of people, organizations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully. Capacity development is the process of unleashing, strengthening and maintaining of such capacity.” This definition is based on the work of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, reflecting the broadest consensus possible within the international development community.