

Global Communities' Social Capital Index

Introduction

In 2015, Global Communities developed a Social Capital Index to measure outcomes of its signature community engagement methodology, Participatory Action for Community Enhancement (PACE). Social capital is a multi-dimensional concept encompassing social cohesion and capacity for collective action, two community resilience capacities that are critical to the success of development work across sectors.¹ The Social Capital Index (SCI) will measure outcomes on six social capital indicators tracked from project baseline to end-line. Social capital is difficult to measure, hence the fact that PACE projects to date have not tracked or reported on it as part of standard M&E activities. The SCI questionnaire is designed to fill this gap, by providing a minimal set of questions that can be easily adapted to local contexts in order to measure social capital outcomes. This brief provides an overview of the importance of measuring social capital for PACE projects, a status update on what has been achieved so far with the instrument, and step-by-step guide to the process of adopting the SCI for your project.

Why Global Communities is Measuring a Social Capital Index

Social capital is gaining prominence in USAID development programming as a result of a new focus on the importance of resilience for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.² Social capital, and particularly social cohesion and capacity for collective action, are crucial resilience capacities³ that underpin much of the vital work Global Communities is carrying out around the world. Measurement of social capital is also essential for conflict sensitive programming⁴, where bonds between members of a particular group may be strong, but relations break down when cooperation is necessary with others outside that group. Understanding and contributing to USAID's knowledge base regarding the social capital impacts of projects is crucial to compelling logical frameworks, learning agendas and evaluation activities.

Social capital, as a concept, has been described as "features of social organization, such as trust, norms and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit".⁵ Measuring and assessing program outcomes in terms of social capital reflects the importance of incorporating cultural factors into development programming, and paying attention to the roles that values and norms play in communities' quality of life.⁶ PACE's participatory approach explicitly promotes dialogue and strengthens relations among individuals and groups as communities work together to identify and prioritize community development needs through the leadership of Community Development Committees. The SCI enables projects to measure the contribution of PACE programming to community resilience outcomes by assessing changes in horizontal linkages between community members, as well as vertical linkages to decision-makers. In sustainability terms, if neighbors establish greater trust in each other and their networks grow beyond their immediate circle, they are more likely to continue to contribute time and resources to community initiatives in a sustainable fashion. The SCI is intended to capture these benefits of PACE in a systematic way, across countries and projects, in order to build an evidence base on the effectiveness of the PACE process, and to promote organizational learning for improved PACE implementation.

Construction of the SCI

The SCI presented below is calculated as a composite of six indicators.

- A: PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY GROUPS AND ACTIVITIES: An individual's score for this indicator is a composite of involvement in groups and activities to improve quality of life.
- B: ATTITUDES TOWARD PARTICIPATION: An individual's score is an indication of prevailing norms about contributing to group efforts and initiatives (i.e. social cohesion).
- C: WILLINGNESS TO TRUST: An individual's score for this indicator is a measure of trust (i.e. bonding and bridging social capital).
- D: NORMS OF ACCOUNTABILITY & INCLUSION: The scores of individuals in a given community are a measure of the community's capacity to influence local decision-making (i.e. capacity for collective action).
- E: INSTITUTIONAL TRUST: The scores of individuals in a given community are an indication of whether the institutional environment encourages or discourages citizen engagement.
- F: STRENGTH & BREADTH OF SOCIAL NETWORKS: An individual's total score is an indication of ability to advance and safeguard his or her quality of life as a result of strong and broad networks.

Progress-to-date on the SCI

The first iteration of the SCI was piloted in PROPEL South Sudan in early 2016. PROPEL is a community driven development project designed to improve community resilience utilizing Global Communities' PACE methodology. The SCI questionnaire used in PROPEL South Sudan was also shared at the 2016 Global Conference in Silver Spring. Findings were triangulated with qualitative results and other PROPEL indicators for maximum program learning; the same approach will be taken at project end-line this year. A brief on baseline results is being shared in regional conferences this year (2017).

Based on findings from the PROPEL South Sudan pilot, several improvements were introduced to the original questionnaire and a new version is being piloted in DOBRE Ukraine this year. DOBRE is a five-year a project supporting decentralization by strengthening citizen engagement and local governance capacity and accountability. Adaptations to the original tool include the following:

- Six indicators replace the three modules of the original. There are two main reasons:
 - First, earlier modules measured multiple concepts related to a single theme; this design made it difficult to use a single number to assess changes in the community (since some aspects might improve, but others might worsen).⁷ In the new version, each indicator measures only one concept so that the results unambiguously reflect improvement or lack of improvement.
 - Second, we added one indicator on norms of accountability and inclusion in decision-making given the importance of this component of social capital (i.e. capacity for collective action) to the PACE methodology.
- Generalized questions on levels of trust were replaced with questions that provide a concrete scenario and ask about likelihood of reaching out to others for assistance or support. The design of the questions prompts the respondent to imagine her/himself responding to a particular situation and is therefore likely to prompt more nuanced and realistic responses.

- Some questions that were tested and worked well in the PROPEL household survey were added to capture missing aspects of the concept the indicator measures. In particular, we added a question on working with others to overcome shared challenges (Module B: Attitudes toward participation), and a question on perceptions of decision-making processes, whether or not they are representative of ordinary people's interests (Module E: Institutional trust).

Using the SCI for your project

Projects that are utilizing PACE or working on local governance are encouraged to use the SCI to capture difficult-to-measure project outcomes. The SCI is a ready-to-use tool designed to fit into a project's baseline, midterm and end-line questionnaire. We also recommend including topics related to the SCI modules in qualitative data collection and analysis. There are three steps to operationalizing the SCI:

- 1) Consultation with Technical team at Headquarters on applicability of the SCI to your logical framework, outcome indicators, and overall M&E design, including any additional project data that can be used to better interpret SCI results. The Technical team will also discuss the deliverables you would like to see as a result of using the SCI; generally, we would provide a brief report at baseline and mid-term, and a more in-depth report at end-line. However, we can also develop diagnostic tools for programming decisions and adaptive management.
- 2) Technical point person from Headquarters collaborates closely with the project's M&E Manager and senior staff to adapt the SCI to the local context and project activities. Adaptation focuses on tailoring response categories and question design to the local context.
- 3) Once the data is collected, you are requested to share your dataset with the Technical point person who will work with a consultant experienced in calculating the Global Communities' SCI to generate a report for your project, in consultation with your M&E manager.

The SCI report for your project can be shared with the donor and other stakeholders, as well as with project staff and community members. Diagnostic tools to facilitate learning or adaptive management activities can also be provided by the Technical point person in cooperation with the project's M&E staff.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the SCI presents an exciting opportunity to measure project outcomes in innovative ways with minimal staff or project resources. A team at Headquarters stands ready to help you achieve this, and in the process, take important strides toward building an evidence base for the success of Global Communities' projects in achieving results through the PACE methodology. The SCI is already being piloted in two countries with widely different contexts and different project aims. The SCI is proving relevant across this range of contexts and activities. As a next step, Global Communities will be selecting additional projects to focus its efforts on measuring social capital, including incorporating qualitative and participatory measurement methods. Focus group discussions, key informant interviews, as well as participatory self-assessment tools will yield valuable data for project diagnostics and learning on how PACE works in different projects and communities.

Social Capital Index Questionnaire

A: PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY GROUPS AND ACTIVITIES

Module A measures levels of participation in community-based groups, including nominal membership (A1), and active participation (A2). It also measures voluntary effort for improving local public services (A3). As a whole, the individual's score for this indicator is a composite of involvement in groups and activities to improve quality of life.

A1	<p>Do you belong to any of the following groups?⁸ <i>[The response categories are illustrative; expand to include all groups active in target communities.]</i> (MUTIPLE ANSWERS)</p>	<p>1= Credit/micro-finance 2= Savings/mutual help 3= Producers group 4= Trade or business association 5= Civic group 6= Charitable group 7= Religious 8= Political 9= Women's 10= Youth 11= School committee 12= Cultural arts group 13= Other _____ 77= I don't belong to any organization -8= DON'T KNOW -9= Refused</p>
A2	<p>Over the past year, how many times a month did you participate in these groups' activities by attending a meeting or an event?⁹</p>	<p>1= Never 2= Once 3= Two or three times 4= Weekly 5= More than once a week -8=DON'T KNOW -9=Refused</p>
A3	<p>In the past year, how many projects to benefit the community (e.g. infrastructure, sanitation, waste disposal, education, health services) did you contribute to?¹⁰ <i>[Contribution can be financial or volunteering time, for instance skilled labor or attending planning and oversight meetings. Attending events is not a contribution.]</i></p>	<p>1= None 2= One 3= Two 4= Three 5= Four or more -8= DON'T KNOW -9=Refused</p>

B: ATTITUDES TOWARD PARTICIPATION

Module B measures willingness to volunteer time to benefit the community (B4), whether the individual perceives that others share that willingness (B5), and have the capacity to come together to address a shared problem (B6). An individual's score is an indication of prevailing norms about contributing to group efforts and initiatives (i.e. social cohesion).

<p>B4</p>	<p>Consider the following scenario:¹¹</p> <p><i>There is a project aimed at improving your community (e.g. infrastructure, sanitation, garbage disposal, education, health services) planned in the next three months.</i></p> <p>How would you prioritize the opportunity to volunteer for this project among other activities in your free time?</p> <p>Rank each response options from 1 to 5, with 1 being the highest priority and 5 the lowest. Each number should only be used once.</p>	<p>__ Arts/recreation __ Relaxation with family/friends __ Social/cultural events __ Civic/church activities __ Volunteer for the community project</p> <p>77= I do not have free time/My free time is already committed -8= DON'T KNOW -9= Refused</p>
<p>B5</p>	<p>Do you agree or disagree with the following statement:¹²</p> <p><i>In your community, it is generally expected that people will volunteer or help in community activities.</i></p>	<p>1= Strongly disagree 2= Disagree 3= Neither disagree nor agree 4= Agree 5= Strongly Agree -8= DON'T KNOW -9= Refused</p>
<p>B6</p>	<p>Do you agree or disagree with the following statement:¹³</p> <p><i>In your community, when problems arise people work together to find a solution.</i></p>	<p>1= Strongly disagree 2= Disagree 3= Neither agree nor disagree 4= Agree 5= Strongly agree -8= DON'T KNOW -9= Refused</p>

C: WILLINGNESS TO TRUST¹⁴

Module C measures willingness to ask for help from people who are physically or relationally close (C8 and C9), and people in an individual's network (C10 and C11). An individual's score for this indicator is a measure of trust (i.e. bonding and bridging social capital).

C8	How likely is it that you would ask a neighbor for help if you were sick? ¹⁵	1= Very unlikely 2= Unlikely 3= Neither unlikely, nor likely 4= Likely 5= Very likely -8= DON'T KNOW -9= Refused
C9	How likely is it that you would ask a relative not living in your household for a small loan? ¹⁶	1= Very unlikely 2= Unlikely 3= Neither unlikely, nor likely 4= Likely 5= Very likely -8= DON'T KNOW -9= Refused
C10	How likely is it that you would ask a member of a group you belong to for advice on personal business? ¹⁷ (A GROUP IN THIS CASE REFERS TO AN ORGANIZED GROUP, SUCH AS A COMMITTEE OF PARENTS, CHURCH GROUP, WOMEN'S GROUP, ETC.)	1= Very unlikely 2= Unlikely 3= Neither unlikely, nor likely 4= Likely 5= Very likely 77= I don't belong to any groups -8= DON'T KNOW -9= Refused
C11	How likely is it that you would talk to a local teacher about a problem affecting children in the community? ¹⁸ <i>["Local teacher" is illustrative; replace as needed with a different local authority figure who is not an official.]</i>	1= Very unlikely 2= Unlikely 3= Neither unlikely, nor likely 4= Likely 5= Very likely -8= DON'T KNOW -9= Refused

D: NORMS OF ACCOUNTABILITY & INCLUSION

Module D is a measure of mechanisms for community engagement (D12), frequency of inclusion (D13), and actions to hold leaders accountable (D14). The scores of individuals in a given community give an indication of the community's capacity to influence local decision-making (i.e. capacity for collective action).

D12	<p>In the past year, how many community decisions did you participate in?¹⁹</p>	<p>1= None 2= 1 to 2 3= 3 to 4 4= 5 to 6 5= More than 6 -8= DON'T KNOW -9= Refused</p>
D13	<p>How have you participated in community decision-making?²⁰ <i>[The response categories are illustrative; replace with local mechanisms for participation in community decisions.]</i> (MULTIPLE RESPONSES)</p>	<p>1= Voicing my opinion in a group meeting 2= Meeting with a local leader 3= Voting 4= Voicing my opinion at an open meeting 5= Participating in a CSO-led initiative 77= Never participated -8= DON'T KNOW -9= Refused</p>
D14	<p>In the past year, how many times have you been part of an initiative requesting follow-up information about local leaders' actions (i.e. petition, visit to a local leader)?²¹</p> <p><i>["Petition" and "visit to a local leader" are illustrative; replace as needed with context appropriate examples.]</i></p>	<p>1= None at all 2= 1 to 2 times 3= 3 to 4 times 4= 5 to 6 times 5= More than 6 times 77= I am not aware of any actions taken -8= DON'T KNOW -9= Refused</p>

E: INSTITUTIONAL TRUST

Module E is a measure of perceptions of local government responsiveness (E15), and trust in public institutions at the local level, including administration (E16a), the legal system (E16b) and law enforcement (E16c). Taken together the scores of individuals in a given community are an indication of whether the institutional environment encourages or discourages citizen engagement.

E15	How often are the interests of ordinary people represented in local government decision-making? ²²	1= Never 2= Rarely 3= Sometimes 4= Frequently 5= All the time -8= DON'T KNOW -9= Refused
E16	How much do you feel that you can trust... ²³ <i>[Categories in E16a through E16c are illustrative; replace and/or expand as needed with key figures of local leadership and local institutions.]</i>	
E16a	a) Local/municipal government?	1= Not at all 2= A little 3= To some extent 4= To a great extent 5= Completely -8= DON'T KNOW -9= Refused
E16b	b) Judges in the local court system?	1= Not at all 2= A little 3= To some extent 4= To a great extent 5= Completely -8= DON'T KNOW -9= Refused
E16c	c) Local police?	1= Not at all 2= A little 3= To some extent 4= To a great extent 5= Completely -8= DON'T KNOW -9= Refused

F: STRENGTH & BREADTH OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

Module F measures the resources available to an individual for solving a problem or improving his or her economic well-being. The wider and more diverse the network, the better. F17 reflects whether an individual's network includes people who can share resources, time or advice, while F18 assesses the quality of those networks in terms of reach beyond the respondent's immediate circle. An individual's total score is an indication of ability to advance and safeguard his or her quality of life as a result of strong and broad networks.

F17	For each of the following needs, how many non-related individuals could you turn to ²⁴ ...	
F17a	<p>a) ...to borrow a small amount of money</p> <p><i>(rural: enough to pay for expenses for your household for one week; urban: enough to cover about one week's of wages)</i></p>	<p>1= No one 2= One or two people 3= Three to four people 4= Five to six 5= Seven or more -8= DON'T KNOW -9= Refused</p>
F17b	<p>b) ...to repair household/farming equipment</p>	<p>1= No one 2= One or two people 3= Three to four people 4= Five to six 5= Seven or more -8= DON'T KNOW -9= Refused</p>
F17c	<p>c) ...to get advice on a legal problem</p> <p><i>[Tailor this question to local institutional context, i.e. "to get help resolving a dispute with a neighbor"]</i></p>	<p>1= No one 2= One or two people 3= Three to four people 4= Five to six 5= Seven or more -8= DON'T KNOW -9= Refused</p>
F17d	<p>d) ...to get advice on licenses or government regulation related to a business opportunity</p> <p><i>[Tailor this question to the local market context, i.e. for a rural farming area: "to get information on market prices"]</i></p>	<p>1= No one 2= One or two people 3= Three to four people 4= Five to six 5= Seven or more -8= DON'T KNOW -9= Refused</p>
F17e	<p>e) ...to get advice on finances like banking and loans</p> <p><i>[Tailor this question to the local financial context, i.e. "to get advice on gaining access to micro-credit"]</i></p>	<p>1= No one 2= One or two people 3= Three to four people 4= Five to six 5= Seven or more</p>

-8= DON'T KNOW
-9= Refused

F: STRENGTH & BREADTH OF SOCIAL NETWORKS Continued

F18 Thinking about the individuals to whom you could turn to for help in case of hardship, would you say that most of them are...²⁵
[Adapt and/or expand the categories in F18c and F18d as needed to apply to internal divides in target communities, i.e. ethnicity, tribe, Internally Displaced Persons, etc. The first two, F18a and F18b, should remain as they are to see if the respondent's network extends beyond her/his immediate circle.]

F18a *a) Relatives*

1= No
2= Yes
77= I would turn to an organization, not an individual
88= I don't have anyone to turn to
(Skip to F17)
-8= DON'T KNOW
-9= Refused

F18b *b) Neighbors*

1= No
2= Yes
77= I would turn to an organization, not an individual
-8= DON'T KNOW
-9= Refused

F18c *c) Speak the same mother tongue*

1= No
2= Yes
77. I would turn to an organization, not an individual
-8= DON'T KNOW
-9= Refused

F18d *d) From the same religion*

1= No
2= Yes
77= I would turn to an organization, not an individual
88= I don't belong to a religious community
-8= DON'T KNOW
-9= Refused

Thank you for your participation!

¹ Tanner, Thomas et al. “Resilience Scan: A review of literature, debates and social media activity on resilience.” ODI, January-March 2016: 8 - 11

² “Resilience at USAID: 2016 Progress Report.” USAID Center for Resilience, 2016:

https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1867/082816_Resilience_FinalB.PDF

³ “Community Resilience: Conceptual Framework and Measurement.” Feed the Future, October 2013: iii - v

⁴ “Pathways from Peace to Resilience: Evidence from the Greater Horn of Africa on the Links between Conflict Management and Resilience to Food Security Shocks.” Mercy Corps, October 2015:

https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/pathways_evaluation_summary-brief.pdf

⁵ Putnam, Robert. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993

⁶ Fukuyama, Francis. “Social Capital and Development: The Coming Agenda” in SAIS Review vol. XXII no 1. (2002): 23 - 37

⁷ For instance, in the original formulation, levels of trust in individuals in one’s community were measured in the same module as levels of trust in local institutions. Ideally, both will improve as a result of the project; however, we need to track those two components separately in order to tell if the project is succeeding equally well with both. Another instance: willingness to volunteer in a project was originally measured in the same module as actual past behavior volunteering, even though these may be unrelated if opportunities to volunteer were not available for the respondent prior to the project. This is particularly a problem at baseline prior to the beginning of project activities (usually project activities involve volunteer opportunities). Regardless, it is overall more straightforward to track willingness separately from behavior to make sure both are improving.

⁸ Question design: Narayan and Cassidy 2001; Grootaert et al. 2004 – Integrated Questionnaire for the Measurement of Social Capital; European Values Survey. Response categories: Ethiopia PRIME assessment survey.

⁹ Question design: Narayan and Cassidy 2001; Grootaert et al. 2004 – Integrated Questionnaire for the Measurement of Social Capital.

¹⁰ Adapted from Grootaert et al. 2004 – Integrated Questionnaire for the Measurement of Social Capital: “In the past year, have you worked with others in your village/neighborhood to do something for the benefit of the community?”

¹¹ Adapted from World Bank 1998: “If there were a project in your community (e.g. infrastructure, sanitation, garbage disposal, education, health services) aimed at improving the community, would you participate?”

¹² Question design: Narayan and Cassidy 2001.

¹³ Question design: PROPEL-South Sudan household survey.

¹⁴ Module C measuring bonding and bridging social capital.

¹⁵ Question design: Narayan and Cassidy 2001 (adapted: “your neighbors” changed to “a neighbor”). This question is for measuring bonding social capital.

¹⁶ This question is for measuring bonding social capital.

¹⁷ This question is for measuring bridging social capital.

¹⁸ This question is for measuring bridging social capital.

¹⁹ Question design: South Sudan-PROPEL household survey.

²⁰ Question design: South Sudan-PROPEL household survey.

²¹ Question design: South Sudan-PROPEL household survey.

²² This question is drawn from the MISTI Afghanistan Wave 5 survey for measuring stability and resilience.

²³ Question design: Narayan and Cassidy 2001; Grootaert et al. 2004 – Integrated Questionnaire for the Measurement of Social Capital. Response categories selected and specified from a larger set.

²⁴ Modified from Grootaert et al. 2004 – Integrated Questionnaire for the Measurement of Social Capital; Van Der Gaag and Snijders.

²⁵ Modified from Narayan and Cassidy 2001. For each of these response categories, a response in the negative, “No,” will raise the individual’s score based on the assumption that a more diverse network is more resilient and provides access to a greater variety of resources.