THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION
IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

As population growth accelerates, there are new strains on agricultural production and a growing consideration for sustainable development. Within the field of sustainable development, collective action models or collaborative processes have been favored as a way to engage multiple stakeholders and address complex issues. Collective and collaborative action studies have emphasized communication, but little specifics have been offered about the role of communication. Using a qualitative interview process and ethnographic analysis, this case study explores the role of communication in collaboration. In addition to developing insights into specific communication practices, the research reveals a significant emphasis on mutually supportive relationships that link to Buber’s theory of existence and Conduit’s theory of communication as relationality. These findings present new thinking on the original collective action model developed by Hargrave and Van de Ven, which centers on conflict, and introduces the idea that collective action can be motivated and sustained through relationships founded upon mutual respect and objectives of creating shared value.
We the undersigned, certify that we read this thesis and approve it as adequate in scope and quality for the degree Master of Arts.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In 1987, the United Nations published the Brundtland Report, which describes a “deepening and widening environmental crisis” (p. 14) and issues a challenge for governments, citizens, non-governmental organizations, businesses, educational institutions and the scientific community to collectively address growing environmental challenges and develop a path for sustainable economic development (United Nations, 1987). This call for global and collective action defines a platform for sustainable development—that is a shared challenge, for which the global community shares responsibility and for which the global community must work together to address. Sustainable development has since grown into a large and important field and there is considerable emphasis on collective action or collaborative processes to engage diverse stakeholders in developing solutions. Collaboration on a global scale inherently relies on communication. International and intercultural communication, group and interpersonal communication, communication technology, dialogue, and relationships all factor into a collaborative process. The communication challenge is immense and complex, yet there is very little information on the specific role communication plays within collective or collaborative action in sustainable development. This thesis adds to existing research by exploring the specific role of communication and the nuances of successful communication, such as those that occur within individual relationships. Using interview and ethnographic observation to gain an in-depth view of practices, this is case study of an
organization that relies on collaborative processes for sustainable supply chain development.

**Importance of the Study**

The challenges of sustainable development show up acutely within agricultural fields. Jeffrey Sachs (2010) outlines the global challenge “already, about 1 billion people are undernourished yet to feed the global population expected by 2050, more than 1 billion hectares of wild land will need to be converted to farmland if current approaches continue to be used” (p. 558). Sustainability leaders are calling for a transformation of food production in order to keep pace with growing global demand and protect existing environmental resources and “this would involve stakeholders—policy-makers, farmers, consumers, corporations, non-governmental organizations, and research and educational institutions—coming together” to develop strategies (Sachs, 2010, p. 558).

The idea of convening a vast and diverse network of stakeholders poses significant communication challenges and opportunities. The ability to collaborate effectively across national and cultural lines as well as across specific agendas requires an immense amount of communication process and skill. Communication within sustainable development has not been thoroughly studied. Most research focuses on communication process and not communication practice or individual skill. If a problem as complex and challenging as feeding the world is to be solved, then individuals who participate must be equipped to also tackle the inherent communication challenges. The purpose of this research is to gain insight
into specific communication practices and relationship factors that would support individuals engaged in sustainable development.

**Definition of Terms**

The following definitions have been provided to clarify terms used throughout this study:

**Sustainable Development:** “Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (United Nations, 1987, p. 15).

**Agricultural Sector:** The broad system of food production that includes growers, intermediaries, corporations, and related suppliers.

**Coffee Sector:** Within the broad system of agricultural, the growers, intermediaries, corporations, and related suppliers that produce, distribute, and sell coffee.

**Supply Chain:** The entire set of actors responsible for supplying food to the final consumer. For coffee, this includes the coffee producer (also referred to as coffee grower or farmer), intermediaries, buyers (generally a coffee roaster), and retailers.

**Intermediary:** Within agricultural and coffee sectors, these organizations function to transport and distribute product. They do not produce or manufacture product, but rather ensure supply flows between various points in the supply chain.

**Collective Action, Collaboration, and Multi-Stakeholder Processes:** In this study, these terms are used interchangeably to describe processes by which different
actors convene to address issues and opportunities in consideration of all involved.

The points introduced in this chapter are expanded upon in the following chapters. Chapter 2 explains the theoretical and philosophical basis for this study and reviews literature applicable to the topic. Chapter 3 details the scope and methodology of the study and Chapter 4 elaborates on the findings. The final chapter summarizes conclusions, limitations, and opportunities for further study on topics related to communication in sustainable development.
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

According to a recent World Wildlife Fund report (2012), “we are using 50 percent more resources than the Earth can provide, and unless we change course that number will grow very fast – by 2030, even two planets will not be enough” (p.6). The strain is particularly evident in food and agriculture. Pretty et al. (2010) estimate a 70-100% increase in food production is needed to feed a growing global population and outline that “despite a significant growth in food production over the past half-century, one of the most important challenges facing society today is how to feed an expected population of some nine billion by the middle of the 20th century” (p. 220). Conventional thought has focused on increased production as the solution, but growing environmental and social concerns complicate the matter. As Sachs explains (2010), feeding the world requires more than a focus on yields and profitability. Sachs describes a new vision where “in the future, the monitoring of agriculture systems should address environmental sustainability, food security, human health, and economic and social well being” (p. 558). With vast challenges facing the world and agriculture, sustainable development is an important topic of research.

**Theoretical Basis**

Kates, Parris, and Leiserowitz (2005) present sustainable development as a social movement (p. 18). With that view, the subject of sustainable development has often been approached using methods of social movements, namely collective action models. The collective action model “…explains change as emerging from
a dialectical process in which opposing actors in the organizational field frame issues and construct networks in an attempt to introduce new institutional arrangements” (Hargrave and Van de Ven, 2006, p. 865). The approach has been cited (Hargrave and Van de Ven, 2006) as particularly useful in creating and instituting change—challenging power structures and existing social constructs by elevating perspectives of certain stakeholders and introducing dialogue as an important part of the process.

The emphasis on dialogue in collective action or collaborative models links theoretically to Conduit’s theory of communication as relationality (2009). Celeste Condit describes communication as a process of relating and presents communication as something intricate, involving “…the weaving and reviewing of visible and invisible four dimensional webs…” (2009, p. 3). She defines communication in a way that forces a consideration of relationship. Through dialogue, relationships form and individual people and the quality of their relationships will affect the quality of communication. Thus, individual exchanges and relationships are a critical part of the broader idea of collaboration.

**Philosophical and Ethical Assumptions**

Philosophically, the concept of dialogue in a collaborative process relates to Buber’s “narrow-ridge” attitude, which illuminates the need for balance between concern for self and concern for others (Arnett, 1986). In the context of sustainable development, where challenges are serious and solutions are not fully evident, Buber would likely interpret the situation as even more support for his theory of existence. Arnett describes:
Buber recognized the world as sometimes chaotic, confused and veiled from understanding, but he did not conceptualize the world as forever absurd. Ultimately, for Buber, life worth living together would be meaningful. Buber believed that meaning was discovered by actively meeting others, not by waiting for others to meet us (1986, p. 128). Buber calls for individual responsibility and action toward balance, openness, and a willingness to step into the chaos. As individuals, the call for collaboration requires a personal commitment to enter into a dialogue with others.

Dialogue within the context of sustainable development carries some additional complexities. Collaboration is broad and often global in nature. Nambisan (2009) asserts “social innovation increasingly requires collaboration among diverse networks of nonprofits, government agencies, corporations, and private citizens” (p. 46). By calling for collaboration, leaders and sustainability experts are pushing the global community to engage and find new ways of relating with one another and to ultimately solve complex problems. Dialogue is much more complicated when context, perception, cultural beliefs and values, verbal and non-verbal behaviors, and patterns of cognition are factored (McDaniel, Samovar, and Porter, 2009). Developing relationships and promoting dialogue in collaborative settings is an involved process and given the importance of those two components within sustainable development, it is important to fully understand the process.
The Literature

Collective action models have been referenced for addressing broad, complex issues such as sustainability and social change (Figueroa, Kincaid, Rani, and Lewis, 2002). Collaboration is promoted as a way to “…frame the problems fully and accurately” (Nambisan, 2009, p. 46). Kania and Kramer (2011) present collaboration as an inherent part of sustainable development and emphasize “no single organization is responsible for any major social problem, nor can any single organization cure it” (p. 5). As businesses engage in sustainable development, they also lean on collective action models as levers for implementation of corporate social responsibility as a way to unlock innovation, capture efficiencies, and bring about organizational change (Kiron, Kruschwitz, Haanaes, and Von, 2012; Rama, Milano, Salas, and Liu, 2009).

Within sustainable development for agricultural and related food industries, there is considerable emphasis on collective action models or collaborative solutions (Foote, 2009; Källström and Ljung, 2005; Manning and von Hagen, 2010; Pretty et al., 2008; Pretty et al., 2010; Sachs, 2010). Business application of collective action models or collaborative approaches also extends to specific disciplines such as supply chain management (Awaysheh and Klassen, 2010; Ganesan, George, Jap, Palmatier, and Weitz, 2009; Hopkins, 2010). Benefits of collaboration range from supply chain innovations (Hopkins, 2010), deepened understanding (Pretty et al., 2008), and strengthened identity (Källström and Ljung, 2005). Major firms such as Unilever are using collaborative approaches to develop sustainable supply chain strategies (Pretty et al., 2008). A
new term has even emerged, “pathological collaboration”, to describe the intensity surrounding collective action or collaborative approaches (Foote, 2009).

Collective action models or collaborative approaches place an emphasis on communication. The collective action model theory is based on dialogue (Hargrave and Ven de Ven, 2006). Sachs (2010) calls for a global network of information exchange. Hsiu-Chun Cheng, Mu-chen, and Chi-Kuo (2010) describe the need for communication infrastructure aided by technology. Nambisan (2009) highlights a participatory process, Ganesan et al (2009) emphasize relationships as a precursor to innovation within retail supply chains, and Mueller, Dos Santos, and Seuring (2009) conclude discourse is a valuable component of corporate social responsibility and sustainable supply chain development. Figueroa et al (2002) detail capacity requirements for bringing about social change and describe, “…a model of communication is required that is cyclical, relational and leads to an outcome of mutual change…” (p. iii). Whenever collaboration is called for, there is a corresponding call for dialogue, exchange, and ongoing communication.

**Collective Action and Relationships**

Communication in collective or collaborative action involves the development of relationships and understanding. Emmett and Crocker (2007) make a comprehensive case that relationships are critical in a global economy, but point out that “we have been taught to compete, but no-one has taught us how to work together” (Emett and Crocker, 2007, p. xiii). They detail how critical collaboration and relationships are to supply chain management, linking the two facets to business performance and survival.
There is underlying support for systems that encourage interpersonal and group communication. As Pretty et al. (2008) describe, “agricultural systems with high levels of social and human assets are more able to innovate in the face of uncertainty” (p. 39). Collaborative structures create social dimension and “the social dimension is central to sustainable development of agri-food systems” (Källström and Ljung, 2005, p. 376). There is an emphasis on understanding (Eakin et al, 2011). Källström and Ljung (2005) describe the value of understanding in terms of esteem and “being recognized by others in a collaborative process strengthens the identity of the participants—both as a person and as a group” (p. 381). These studies give insight into terms frequently used to describe communication in collective action models or collaborative processes—a dialectic process, the need for dialogue, the importance of relationships are really about social fabric. Thus, a different complexity emerges. Engaging in dialogue and developing relationships is a process in and of itself.

These findings reinforce Condit’s theory of communication as relationality (2006) and imply that developing an understanding of various perspectives is important to the process of collective action or collaboration. Conduit points out that it is not simply about information transfer, but understanding the referential properties—the context upon which an exchange takes place. Conduit writes “relationship is an interdynamic force” (p. 4) and thereby illuminates how in a process dependent on relationships and communication, such as collective or collaborative action, relationship becomes a central activity not simply a point in a series of activities. She raises critical points about influence and how
“communication has been dominated by the Western vision of the individual” (p. 11). Research on collective or collaborative processes under-estimate this point. While most studies mention the need for relationships and dialogue, they do not address the complexities of relationship, influence, and context. It is as if to suggest people magically know how to collaborate. Particularly in a field such as sustainable development, where the issues are complex and global in nature, understanding how to form, develop, and maintain relationships is vital.

Before specific relationships can be considered, it is important to understand which individuals are entering relationships and under what terms. Context is an important consideration. The issue of context in collective and collaborative action models in sustainable development has drawn criticism. Servaes, Polk, Shi, Reilly, and Yakupitijage (2012) outline a Western-led mentality for sustainable development that fails to fully incorporate local culture and participation. They found that a “commitment to participatory process is often rhetoric rather than meaningful or appropriate practice” (p. 100). Carol Gilligan provides a useful framework for considering the implication of a one-sided framework (1982). While her work mainly focuses on differences of values and experiences based on gender, Gilligan illuminates the limits of interpreting a situation from one perspective. If sustainable development has been approached from a Western perspective, then it is very likely a limited one. Understanding how context is established is an important part of understanding how power and social structures might influence relationships and subsequent communication.
As issues of influence are considered, it is necessary to also consider how influence is exerted. Hargrave and Van De Ven’s collective action model centers on conflict. They describe “a dialectical model in which a synthesis emerges from conflict and contestation among colliding groups espousing opposing theses and antitheses” (p. 865). With this point, Buber’s notion of the essential We, emerges as an important philosophical consideration. Buber’s description of “a style of communication that seeks change in perception, not by forcing people to comply, but by offering new insights that can be accepted after the establishment of trust” (Arnett, 1986, p. 160), provides an image of the role of communication might play in collective or collaborative action. Buber’s view is far less conflict-ridden than Hargrave and Van De Ven’s collective action model and by emphasizing exchange, insight, and trust, Buber reveals a method of conduct. Collective action models rarely address conduct or how effective dialogue is promoted and achieved.

Collective action is a dominant approach in sustainable development and the collective action model centers around the idea of challenge. Yet, Conduit’s theory of relationality and Buber’s philosophical notions provide a basis to question Hargrave and Van De Ven’s emphasis on conflict. Conflict may occur in a collaborative process, but Buber’s view suggests it is not necessary as a catalyst. Conduit’s theory supports a method for moving through conflict by deepening understanding. Addressing and managing conflict may be an element of collaboration, but Buber and Conduit offer an alternative to the idea that conflict is essential to the process.
Collective Action and Impact

There is a great deal of literature on the need for collective or collaborative action in sustainable development, but very little on the result. This can be seen acutely within the coffee industry. Collective action models initially emerged through third-party environmental and social certification initiatives (Raynolds, Murray, and Heller, 2006) and have since grown to encompass other types of multi-stakeholder collaboration. Third-party environmental and social certification initiatives have been criticized for lack of impact. In a study among coffee farmers, Mendez et al. (2010) raise questions about how well affected farmers understand the codes around certifications and more importantly, despite aims of improved remuneration, how much farmers receive in additional payments.

Manning and von Hagen (2010) examine another model of collaborative processes in the coffee industry where businesses played a more direct role in the initial action. They emphasize a dialectical process where multiple stakeholders work together to mobilize, establish common ground, create shared vision and goals, and engage in joint activity. Manning and von Hagen (2010) make a reasonable case that joint projects provide a practical opportunity for multiple stakeholders to work together, build trust, and identify ways to scale their efforts but they do not address how effective this collaboration was in addressing its aims to “…abolish the worst forms of child and forced labor, improve general working conditions, and regulate product quality and growing practices in the coffee sector” (p. 398).
In the broader agricultural context, there is acknowledgement that collaborative attempts do not necessarily yield intended results. Unilever used a collaborative supply chain approach to develop indicators, methodology, and pilot projects for agricultural sustainability. The collaborative approach did not produce the intended objectives, but it was deemed as “essential for Unilever’s understanding…. [and] had a positive impact on all the project partners, whose views changed significantly over time, because annual results were discussed together and co-invention of new treatment ideas was a joint activity” (Pretty et al., 2008, p. 57). A great deal of value has been placed on communication as both a contributing and resulting factor for collaboration, and it is important to fully understand its role. Additionally, given the emphasis on communication, it is important to consider how communication affects results. Failures in collective action could very well be failures in communication.

**Rationale**

Collective action models or collaborative approaches rely on relationships, dialogue, and understanding yet the application of communication structures and processes is understudied. Figueroa et al. (2002) offer a process framework and other platforms (Kania & Kramer, 2011; Nambisan, 2009; Rama et al., 2008) outline capacity requirements for communication, but none offer applied perspective. Pullman and Dillard (2010) also present a framework based on structuration theory and call for a formalization of relationships, but there is little extension of their conclusion.
Within applied approaches, there are references to communication but a lack of detail on the nature, frequency, or effectiveness of the communication. For example, Pretty et al. (2008) discuss collaboration across several agricultural sectors within the Unilever supply chain, but focus on the results of the collaboration versus the process of collaboration. The study offers no description of who was involved, how those people engaged, how frequently, or how effective communication was among the collaborators. The project did not produce the intended results, although increased understanding was deemed a successful by-product. It would be useful to understand how that was achieved.

There is also a deficit of studies matching application to outcome. Manning and von Hagen (2010) describe an approach, but fail to connect the multi-stakeholder collaboration with desired impact. Collaborative approaches also face criticism for lack of impact (Mendez et al., 2010), skewed context (Servaes et al., 2012), and what Tang (2007) describes as a flawed assumption that people in a collaborative process will make simple cost-benefit analyses, not considering that the issues are more complex and decisions will be influenced by individual values. Given the emphasis on communication in collaborative processes and questions about how processes are enacted, it is important to understand more specifically how communication is applied and how communication may affect outcome.

There is vast agreement that the process of working collaboratively and deepening understanding of individuals and groups involved is critical to tackle the broad, complex challenges of sustainable development, but there is little
questioning about how engagement takes place. There is an opportunity to define concepts of communication and relationships within collective action models and other collaborative approaches and consider how communication might be used to improve results.

**Research Questions**

This study considers more deeply the role of communication and relationships in sustainable development by exploring a business in the coffee sector that emphasizes collaboration or collective action as a means to achieve its goals for sustainable supply chain development. Using the structure presented by Figueroa et al (2002) as a benchmark, communication processes and relationship development are evaluated. The goal is to understand the practical application of communication in an organizational setting and specifics of how relationships are formed and maintained. Specifically, this research focuses on two main questions:

RQ1: What are the specific communication practices within a collective action or collaborative model?

RQ2: How do relationships factor into the collaborative process?

Given the importance of sustainable development and emphasis on collaboration within the field, it is important to gain further insight into communication components of collective action models and other collaborative approaches.
CHAPTER 3: SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

Scope

Collective action or collaborative approaches have frequently been used in sustainable development. Within these approaches, there has been a great deal of emphasis on communication; however, the specific role of communication has not been well documented. This study examined the practical application of communication in an ongoing collaborative process focused on sustainable supply chain development in the coffee sector. Specific communication practices were outlined and then evaluated against models for collective action in order to assess opportunities to enhance communication in collaborative settings. This was case study research of Sustainable Harvest Coffee Importers, an organization focused on sustainable supply chain development. The study was limited to the practices of Sustainable Harvest in order to uncover practical and nuanced information that would help illuminate how communication could further support collective action or collaborative processes toward sustainable development.

Methodology

This was a qualitative study using interviews and ethnographic technique to develop an intensive case study of an organization, Sustainable Harvest, focused on sustainable supply chain development. As Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) explain, “the aim of intensive case study research is to learn how a specific and unique case work. This is done through contextualized and ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 1971) of one or a few cases” (p. 120). Case study research allowed for a specific examination of communication in the context of collective action or
collaboration. Since the purpose of this study was to gain insight, case study research was a useful method to yield a “real-life” view of how communication is applied in a collaborative setting. Methods of selecting the subject, data collection, and analysis are detailed in the following sections.

**Subject**

The subject, Sustainable Harvest Coffee Importers, was targeted based on their activities toward sustainable development in the coffee sector. The organization utilizes collective action or collaborative models to enroll various individuals in the process of developing sustainable supply chain solutions. Sustainable Harvest Coffee Importers is a coffee importer and their activities involve coffee farmers, producer representatives, non-profit organizations, and coffee roasters or retailers. As an importer, Sustainable Harvest plays the role of a trading intermediary and in the context of sustainability they are the convener of various actors in their defined supply chain. The primary interview subject, the founder of the organization, was known to the interviewer and while this pre-existing relationship could present some bias challenges, the enhanced degree of comfort and trust allowed for more in-depth questioning.

Beginning with a personal interview, the first part of the study focused on understanding the foundation of the collaborative approach—how was the approach designed and specifically, what communication considerations were factored in the design? The highest-ranking executive was interviewed and he was informed that his participation was entirely voluntary and responses would not be published beyond submission of this thesis.
Procedure

The interview used positivist and emotionalist technique (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008), designed to extract both facts (e.g., specifics of design, methods, frequency, and nature of communication) as well as subjective assessments of challenges, opportunities, and overall effectiveness. The interview format was primarily structured; however, some open concepts around the role of communication, challenges, and opportunities were included to allow the subject’s points of view to guide the narrative (see Appendix A).

Questions were structured to identify how collaboration takes place within the organization, the specific processes for collaboration, and practical execution points. A series of questions were included to determine level of participation and depth of dialogue. Several points about communication management were also included in order to develop an understanding of reach, frequency, and mediums. Open-discussion topics centered on the role of communication, challenges, opportunities, and relationship between communication and desired outcome.

An ethnographic review was also employed to observe the collaborative process in practice. This component of the research was conducted during an annual event where supply chain partners (including coffee producers, intermediaries, buyers and coffee roasters, and related service providers (finance agencies, transportation firms, etc.) gathered for structured presentations, formal dialogue sessions, and informal networking and information sharing. The event, *Let’s Talk Coffee*, was designed and hosted by Sustainable Harvest Coffee Importers and brought together nearly 500 people within the Sustainable Harvest
global coffee supply chain and related stakeholders. Attending the conference allowed for participant observation, which was intended to yield “an analytical description of the social situation or organizations, moving from specific observations to generalizations about the situation” (Rubin, Rubin, Haridakis, and Piele, 2010, p. 222). In this case, participant observation afforded the opportunity to observe structure and specific interactions among event attendees across a range of activities, including structured discussions, facilitated meetings, informal networking events, and casual social occasions.

This phase can be considered interpretive research (Rubin et al., 2010) and added to the understanding of practical application. Ethnography provided a method of evaluating normal patterns of behavior (Rubin et al., 2010) within the collaborative approach employed by this particular case study subject. Given there is very little applied work in the field of communication and sustainable development it was a useful method to gain insights into the practice.

Analysis

The aim of this research was to systematically assess practical application of communication in a collective action model, thus evaluation was selected as the analysis methodology. The findings were evaluated against structures of collective action models, namely the communication for social change platform presented by Figueroa et al. (2002) to assess how communication in practice is similar or differs from what the authors presented. An assessment tool was developed (see Appendix B) to frame some of the key components for communication in a collective action setting: catalyst, dialogue, collective action,
individual change, social change, and impact. Reviewing and documenting the real-life approach utilized by Sustainable Harvest against a framework for communication in collective action models revealed useful information and feedback regarding processes.

**Validity and Reliability**

The interview subject was asked to project possible affects of communication on outcome in collective action, but outcome was not directly studied thus correlations could not be included in this study. Case study research has been criticized for being too anecdotal (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008), however this method was useful for extracting insight in a subject area with a paucity of applied research. Because of interviewer familiarity with the subject and the nature of qualitative and ethnographic studies, there were some limitations related to interpretation and applicability to a larger population (Nueman, 2006); however, existing frameworks for collective action and communication in collaborative settings provided a basis for evaluation credibility and to identify opportunities for strengthened communication within the process of collaboration. The ethnographic component added the opportunity to capture situational data—to consider how actors actually behaved in collaborative settings versus only how they were described to behave.

**Ethics**

The interviewee and cultural informants in the ethnographic review were briefed on the nature and scope of this work prior to participation and participation was explicitly voluntary. The interview structure allowed for
discretion of response—the interviewee was free to share whatever information he was comfortable sharing. The use of responses was explained to both the interviewee and cultural informants and permission was gained to publish in this thesis. The following chapter details the study further and elaborates on results.
CHAPTER 4: THE STUDY

Introduction

This case study research, using a combination of interview and ethnographic analysis, revealed important insights into communication practices within collaborative settings. The subject, Sustainable Harvest Coffee Importers employs a relationship-based model for developing supply chain sustainability within the coffee sector and “as of 2010, Sustainable Harvest had worked with nearly 200,000 farmers in 14 countries” (Keim, 2011, p. 61). The relationship-based model was designed to shift coffee trading from an anonymous, commodity-based activity to one where seller and buyer are acquainted and all partners in the supply chain are working together to improve supply chain function and ultimately, farmer livelihood. The model was built on principles of long-term relationships, transparency and reinvestment, all of which lean on a system of constant collaboration, and the approach was described as one where “everyone is at the table and connected” (Keim, 2011, p. 62). The questions and observation were intended to understand the specifics behind the concept of “everyone is at the table and connected” by evaluating communication practices and the role of relationships within Sustainable Harvest’s collaborative model.

Data Analysis

Interview

Sustainable Harvest Coffee Importers founder and president, David Griswold, was interviewed using the guide presented in Appendix A. The interview took place on November 1, 2012 and lasted approximately two hours.
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The first question (How does your organization collaborate or work collectively to achieve its goals?) was developed to capture an overview of how the organization collaborates. Griswold described collaboration as an essential part of business functions. The organizational structure, which utilizes field offices, requires internal collaboration. Sustainable Harvest continuously collaborates with coffee producers and they facilitate collaboration between coffee producers and coffee buyers. They often coordinate multi-stakeholder collaborations where in addition to seller and buyer, other actors such as financing organizations, transportation specialists, agronomists, or non-profit organizations are part of the conversation.

The second question (Can you please describe your process for collaboration?) was aimed at processes of collaboration and Griswold outlined a variety of ways in which the organization leans on collaborative processes. The capstone effort is an annual event, Let’s Talk Coffee, where the organization convenes nearly 500 of its suppliers, customers, and support partners for face-to-face exchange. There are also sub-collaborations that happen a few times a year between supplier representatives, Sustainable Harvest staff, and customers. This facet of communication rests on a platform of technology that measures key outcomes, distributes responsibility for managing and utilizing data, and provides access for everyone involved in the supply chain.

Griswold also described a process for collaboration whenever a new opportunity or challenge presents itself. While less structured in terms of frequency and exact approach, Griswold explained a set of values and
management style that guides the process on a continual basis. He emphasized the need for transparency, constant coaching, and intercultural understanding or emotional understanding. He cited fear as a barrier to collaboration and emphasized a commitment to transparency as the anecdote. Griswold offered a variety of examples of how he coaches staff to bring more people into the conversation, not shy away from sensitive situations, and to constantly go deeper in their questioning. In hiring, he explained a preference for those who have traveled, lived abroad, and who are multi-lingual. Collaboration in Griswold’s description was about sensitivity, understanding, and adaptability.

Griswold’s comment under the second question about the process of collaboration beginning with a new opportunity or challenge led to further discussion about how the process of collaboration begins (How do you typically begin the process of collaboration?). The response was difficult to capture as a specific action. The tendency for collaboration seemed to be embedded as a cultural element for the organization. The people involved were described to naturally lean toward group identification of possibilities or problems and group processes for planning. Therefore, the process of beginning a collaborative effort did not emerge from a distinct catalyst but rather as a standard operating practice.

The next series of questions (Which stakeholders are represented? How many people are typically involved in collaborative processes? How many people are typically affected by the collaborative work? How are representatives selected?) was designed to understand further about the relationship aspects of collaboration—who and how many are involved, how representation is
considered, and how equity is determined. In general, with supply chain issues, someone from the producer or seller side, someone from Sustainable Harvest, and someone from the customer or buyer side are involved. Griswold described another active coaching process where he encourages his staff to always identify and invite one more person—encouraging them to actively think about who else might be able to contribute. Often a collaborative process will involve financing partners, representatives from government, or non-profit organizations so the collaboration might involve 10-20 people. Generally, producer or seller representatives were elected by those they represent, which can be hundreds of other coffee producers. As part of Sustainable Harvest’s commitment to transparency, they only work with suppliers who commit to a democratic process of election. Still, Griswold makes it a point to get to know as many people as possible within the producer organization and will often suggest someone outside of the elected representatives to become involved in the collaborative process (e.g., a female manager or a young coffee technician). Through this step, Griswold can encourage diversity and inclusion beyond his own organization.

In terms of outcome (How are outcomes measured?), Griswold expanded on the role of technology as an aid to communication. Within the supply chain, the seller, the intermediary (in this case, Sustainable Harvest), and the buyer agree on parameters of success. These can include factors such as quality, consistency, delivery time, and communication. The technical platform is designed to measure progress and all parties have access to that data. If something is not meeting the expectations, then that is generally the catalyst for dialogue among the
stakeholders. Because the process of defining objectives is a collaborative one, as is defining and measuring success, and any issues are addressed through dialogue, Griswold represented communication and dialogue critical to success and achieving desired outcomes.

Given the emphasis on collaboration and dialogue, Griswold was asked to elaborate on challenges and opportunities (What are the challenges and opportunities within a collaborative process?). Griswold pinpointed individual characteristics as a primary challenge. Regardless of how collaboration was structured or coaching offered, ultimately individuals are responsible for engaging. He mentioned a variety of challenges such as a fear of conflict, or lack of cultural sensitivity, and even shyness as potential barriers. Structure, management commitment, and individual commitment and readiness were revealed as important requirements.

As far as opportunities, Griswold responded that collaboration brings business efficiencies, an empowered and motivated staff, and he also went on to describe a level of meaning. Rather than supply chain partners, Griswold believes his organization operates as a family. He described an instance when Sustainable Harvest was first starting and struggling financially where his supply partners offered their support. They helped him through a difficult time in the same way he has helped them in challenging times, such as when coffee prices were low. To Griswold, collaboration is very much about building mutual opportunity and reward, which then creates a natural support system.
Summarizing the role of communication (How would you summarize the role of communication, specifically around dialogue and the role of relationships?), Griswold referred back to the annual event, Let’s Talk Coffee. He described it as an efficient and fair way to do business where all partners along the supply chain are given the opportunity to define success. He also elaborated on some less tangible outcomes. Farmers achieve a level of dignity by “being at the table”, buyers deepen their understanding of issues, and all involved are able to incorporate things like caring and friendship into a business that tends toward transactional.

Ethnographic Analysis

As part of the study, there was the opportunity to attend and observe Sustainable Harvest’s annual event, Let’s Talk Coffee, held in Medellin, Colombia, October 4-7, 2012. This event was designed as a core part of the collaborative process and to encourage dialogue among various stakeholders involved in sustainable supply chain development. There were over 500 people in attendance and numerous communication interactions, which allowed for a broad observation of participation and level of dialogue. The goal of this observational component of the study was to observe the process of collaboration in practice. Using participant observation, attendance during presentation sessions, meetings, and other conversations were observed to evaluate the level of participation and interaction.

Organization. The event was organized into three main components: presentation sessions, facilitated meetings or structured discussions, and
networking. Attendance during presentation sessions was recorded—approximately 80% of the sessions appeared to be at least 75% full. All sessions included 10-15 minutes for questions and it was noted that attendees consistently interjected questions. Individual meeting rooms where facilitated meetings or structured discussions were held were surveyed throughout the event and at each observation point the rooms were occupied with groups of approximately 5-8 people. There was an opportunity to observe conversations in the individual meeting rooms and participation among members appeared balanced. Interpreters were provided in the individual meeting rooms to minimize language barriers. In networking sessions, people were generally engaged in one on one conversation or within small groups of no more than five or six people.

The setting was casual. The event was held at a small resort hotel, approximately 40 minutes by car outside of the city of Medellin, Colombia. The property and rooms were modest and comfortable, but there were very few amenities. The relative remoteness and sparseness were described as deliberate organizational choices to encourage attendees to stay present with the process.

There was a welcome station set up to greet attendees upon arrival and Sustainable Harvest staff donned fluorescent orange event shirts, making those on the 45-person staff easy to identify. In the interview, an element of the training process was described. The staff was required to review and research attendees in advance to strategize about conversations they could help initiate. Several introductions were observed. Someone doing consumer research on the importance of environmental and social responsibility and purchase behavior was
introduced to a large coffee roaster. A financial institution representative was introduced to a producer group exploring alternate financing options. A young woman affiliated with a producer group was introduced to a female buyer that prompted a discussion about career opportunities. The staff was trained to watch the walls and corners during networking events and ensure no one was unengaged. During the evening welcome cocktail, there was a young man in the corner and a staff member from Sustainable Harvest was observed initiating conversation and then subsequently bringing him into a group. During this first event, interpreters were announced and identified as a resource. The instructions given by Sustainable Harvest founder and president, David Griswold, were explicit, “Don’t allow language to be a barrier”.

Participants. The diversity of participants was notable. Sustainable Harvest reported attendees from over 15 different countries and there was clearly a mix of Latin, East African, and North American attendees. There were slightly more men than women, but the proportions appeared to be in the range of 60% male and 40% female. Ages appeared to range from mid-twenties to over sixty. Dress was uniformly casual. Both men and women wore blue jeans or khaki slacks and t-shirt or polo style shirts and everyone wore sneakers or hiking boots. There were very few labels and economic status was virtually impossible to identify.

Program and Interaction. The event began with cocktails and casual dinner. Held in the lawn and underneath a tent, the surroundings were again simple. Cocktails and food leaned toward Colombian traditions—Club Colombia
beer, rice, beans, and grilled meats. Conversation was quiet the first evening, but Sustainable Harvest staff continued to make introductions. Most conversations during the cocktail were among 3-4 people but dinner tables were round and accommodated ten people each, so more mixing was observed later. It was not uncommon to see 2-3 people approach an almost full table and ask if there was room. Once accommodated, introductions and casual exchanges ensued.

The day was organized with morning presentation sessions, scheduled coffee breaks for networking, and late afternoon facilitated meetings or structured discussions. In the evening, there were group dinners that varied in location but remained similar in format—traditional Colombian food and roundtables for dining. The presentation sessions were difficult to analyze in terms of collaboration, but the amount of questions signaled a strong level of engagement. There was one session that featured buyers from larger corporations and several producers asked questions about their economic models. Another session focused on consumer demand for more transparency and a lively question and answer session followed about how coffee certifications such as Fair Trade or Rainforest Alliance aid that process. On the second day, after a presentation from a Colombian Governor, questions were minimal but the coffee break conversations audibly increased. The Governor had described growing challenges of urbanization in the coffee sector and a new threat to sustainable production: rising labor rates. While the presentations only allotted 10-15 minutes for question and answer, their primary purpose seemed to be fueling the coffee break conversations.
Afternoons were devoted to facilitated meetings and structured discussions. The facilitated meetings were designed to convene coffee producer representatives (the seller), intermediaries (in this case, Sustainable Harvest staff), and coffee roasters (the buyer) to discuss business performance and future objectives. The sessions typically started with a review of metrics captured in the technological platform. All parties were able to look at how actual performance compared with the original goals and discuss gaps. In one case, the buyer was upset about pricing irregularities and the seller acknowledged it was a mistake on their part and assured it would be corrected. What could have lead to a serious misunderstanding was resolved in a very short discussion. In a short exchange afterward, the buyer was questioned and she responded that working through less than perfect moments was how trust formed. In facilitated meetings, there was a clear patience with the process. Facilitators often interjected with statements like “it seems like we haven’t addressed everyone’s concerns, let’s go through another round of clarifying questions” There was a visible push for deeper exchanges.

There were also subtler moments that illustrated how relationships form and develop. Comfort zones were more visible by the evening and at dinner, as people tended to segregate to those people they already knew or had met or at least spoke the same language; although, people found ways to overcome these barriers. Over meals, pictures of children, pets, and farms were shared. One coffee buyer showed photographs from a store display to the farmer whose coffee was featured. He and his partners were clearly proud to see their coffee featured so prominently—their smiles widened, the pace and volume of their conversation
increased, and they struggled to pass the photographs around quickly enough for everyone to see. The most striking parts of observing collaboration in practice were these human elements, particularly when contrasted with other exchanges. The buyer and farmer mentioned in the previous example were involved in a structured discussion earlier in the day. The two and a staff member from Sustainable Harvest were engaged in a discussion about some unmet shipping deadlines. The conversation seemed respectful, but tension could also be observed. The buyer continued to emphasize the importance of shipping deadlines while the farmer continued to assert more flexibility was needed. The facilitator kept pushing for a solution and finally, one was reached. The scenario reinforced that collaborative solutions are not always easy to achieve, but the process can be open and respectful and not upset the relationship.

From the observation, it was possible to conclude that collaboration is an intensive process that requires organizational thought, individual commitment and skill, and a heavy amount of facilitation. While there were certain design and process considerations, the approach could not easily be reduced to process steps. There was a level of nuanced planning and skill involved as well. In addition, a deeper analysis of collaboration suggested that interpersonal relationships play an important role. Trust emerged over time and through difficulty. Meaning seemed to emerge from more subtle connections where individuals could take about their families or experience and share a moment of pride.
Results

To help evaluate the findings and achieve the research goals of understanding the specific communication practices within a collaborative process and the role of relationships, an assessment tool (Appendix B) was developed based on the social change platform presented by Figueroa et al. (2002). The purpose of this tool was to frame some of the key components for communication in a collective action setting: catalyst, dialogue, collective action, individual change, social change, and impact. Against the integrated model for measuring the process and outcomes of communication for social change (Figueroa et al., 2002), the approach employed by Sustainable Harvest generally aligned.

Figueroa et al. (2002) emphasized the need for a catalyst in collaborative action—something must prompt the action and motivate actors to participate. Griswold described the catalyst for each collaborative discussion as a new objective to pursue or a problem to solve. There was a system to include key stakeholders (seller, intermediary, and buyers) and a cultural tendency to actively recruit additional stakeholders. While a catalyst is evident in Sustainable Harvest practices, it did not appear as a conscious consideration. Collaboration was part of doing business. That suggested that in practice the catalyst is not a process point, but rather an element of leadership, values, and organizational culture.

In terms of dialogue, Figueroa et al. described “a cyclical process of information sharing which leads to mutual understanding, mutual agreement, and collective action” (2002, p. 2) and outlined a framework that includes steps for participation, clarity of roles, freedom of expression, and a system for addressing
conflict and achieving consensus. In practice, the Sustainable Harvest approach aligned; however, Griswold also discussed individual readiness. He raised issues about individual personalities and intercultural understanding that are missing from the model presented by Figueroa et al. The authors outlined process points, but failed to account for individual attitudes and skills required to engage the process.

Figueroa et al. outlined specific steps for the action itself, such as defining roles and responsibilities, supporting mobilization, implementation plans, measurements, and a participatory evaluation process for continual improvement. In Sustainable Harvest, roles and responsibilities were determined by job function and shared objective setting through the collaborative process. Mobilization occurred mostly on a team basis and was supported through the annual event as well as the technical platform described in the interview. The technical platform also supported implementation by tracking progress metrics. Technology was employed for evaluation as well. Sustainable Harvest initiated a program to supply iPads to its supply partners and that technology opened up online collaboration, video conference calls, and more frequent information exchanges (for example, through instant messaging). This illuminated another aspect of communication practices in collaborative processes that has not been addressed in models for collection action—collaboration requires communication, which is aided by tools and technology.

Change and impact were not directly assessed in this study; however, the interview and ethnographic review provided some insight into the potential for
individual and social change. In the interview, Griswold was careful to emphasize that while Sustainable Harvest buys coffee from producers and sells those coffees on behalf of the producer, they do not represent the producer. The producer has access to the final customer and is involved in price negotiations, performance evaluation, and continual improvement planning. The intention of making the producer an equal partner was carried through the design of the event, *Let's Talk Coffee*. The setting was casual and it was relatively easy for producers to engage in conversation with various buyers. The example cited in the ethnographic analysis, about the producer seeing photos of his coffee on display in a store, illustrated the value of connection in business transactions. An orientation toward partnership and respect was visible.

**Discussion**

Emmett and Crocker (2007) described collaboration and relationships as an important part of business performance in a global economy and the Sustainable Harvest business philosophy embodied that concept—collaboration and relationships as a factor of success. Compared to Hargrave and Van de Ven’s model for collective action, which emphasized opposition and challenge, Sustainable Harvest’s approach appeared free of conflict. There were some tense conversations, but the focus was more about developing solutions that worked for everyone and continuing to move toward whatever represented shared value for those involved. The way people interacted socially and shared personal stories and photographs was reflective of Conduit’s theory of communication as relationality. Even in the more structured meetings, communication was rarely
observed as a transfer of information, but rather a back and forth exchange that allowed participants to better understand other points of view.

A deepened understanding was raised by Pretty et al. (2008) as a benefit of collaboration, but the point was not developed in their research. A few other studies (Eakin et al., 2011; Källström and Ljung, 2005) have drawn out the role of relationships and understanding in collective or collaboration, but as part of findings and not a subject of research. Collective action models and research on the subject has not addressed how relationships are developed and effective communication is achieved. The Sustainable Harvest case study revealed an intensive and involved process. The insights about what is really involved in planning, structuring, and developing relationships and understanding among participants in a collective or collaborative action suggested there is much more that could be defined about the role of communication.

Findings:

RQ1: What are the specific communication practices within a collective action or collaborative model?

In terms of the first research question, the specific communication practices of Sustainable Harvest Coffee Importers were similar to the process points outlined by Figueroa et al. The study found that collaboration was prompted by an opportunity or challenge and there was a conscious process to include as many relevant stakeholders as possible. Collaboration in the Sustainable Harvest model leaned heavily on dialogue, which was further defined by a commitment to transparency and open and respectful exchange. The organizational structure
supported collective action by defining responsibilities, detailing plans, utilizing technology for measurement, and evaluating supply chain performance annually. While similar in structure, the case study revealed additional considerations such as leadership, corporate values, organizational culture, technology, and individual capability. These factors illuminated a far more intensive communication process than what has been outlined in collective action frameworks.

RQ2: How do relationships factor into the collaborative process?

The second research question was intended to further understand the individual and interpersonal factors involved in communication in a collaborative setting. In both the interview and ethnographical analysis, relationships emerged as an important consideration. In the interview, the president and founder of Sustainable Harvest, David Griswold, described his supply chain partners, first as partners and not suppliers or customers, and then as family and a support system. The example of the producer seeing his coffee on display is a simple one, but suggests that relationships also provide personal fulfillment and meaning to others involved. In terms of how relationships factored, they seemed to support the process by promoting dialogue and deepening understanding. In addition, this study suggested they also provide motivation and reward for individual involvement.

The findings suggested the role of communication and individual relationships within collaborative settings is far more involved than what has been outlined in previous studies. Building on that point, the next chapter identifies areas for further research. Chapter 5 also addresses limitations of this study and concludes by summarizing the role of communication in sustainable development.
CHAPTER 5: SUMMARIES AND CONCLUSION

Limitations

Before summarizing the findings of this study and drawing conclusions, it is important to acknowledge limitations. While the case study method allowed for more in-depth questioning, the findings were limited to one organization. The insights gleaned are useful for developing further studies, but it is difficult to extend the findings to a larger population. Interviews were conducted with only a few actors and while ethnographic observation provided an opportunity to expand the evaluation to a larger number of people, the findings are based on a rather narrow set of perspectives.

Recommendations for Further Study

This study focused on just one example of communication in a collaborative process, but it revealed a number of communication considerations including leadership philosophy, organizational structure, management and training, technological systems, and individual capability. There is an opportunity to further understand and isolate communication requirements and consider how communication links to outcome. It is possible that success or failure in collective action can at least be partially attributed to communication so it stands to reason that if sustainable development relies on collaboration and collaboration relies on communication, the role of communication must be understood.

Specifically, the case study highlighted the role of leadership and organizational values and culture. It would be useful to understand how organizational leadership can be developed further to encourage and foster
collaboration. Individual attributes were identified as factors for success and it is important to understand how to cultivate individual willingness and effectiveness. Technology was also mentioned as an important aid and there is an opportunity to better understand how communication technology links with the field of sustainable development. Finally, relationships seemed to provide meaning to the process and as individuals are increasingly called upon to engage collaboratively, relationships may provide important motivation and reward.

**Conclusions**

With growing global challenges related to sustainable development and specifically, feeding the global population, sustainable development is a hugely important field. The considerable emphasis on collective action or collaboration is appropriate given the scope and complexities of the issues. While the field of sustainable development readily incorporates concepts of collaboration, there is little practical support for the process. Communication is often mentioned as an element of collaboration and there are a few frameworks that outline process points for communication, but there is a paucity of work that details specific communication requirements or individual skills needed to engage effectively. Process frameworks, such as the one developed by Figueroa et al. (2002), are useful; however, there are limitations. The case study revealed specific practices (e.g., leadership requirement, management and coaching, hiring criteria, training) far more nuanced than what has been outlined in process frameworks. Furthermore, in practice, some elements identified as a process step (e.g., the
catalyst) emerged more as an element of leadership philosophy, organizational structure, and management.

The case study research of Sustainable Harvest punctuated individual skill requirements, such as cultural sensitivity, technological aptitude, and facilitation skill. The range of tasks described for just one event—reviewing and researching attendees in advance, developing conversation starters, actively making introductions, facilitating meetings, and gathering feedback—highlighted individual communication requirements. Prior research has not addressed these requirements for collective or collaborative action.

There is also an important foundational consideration. Sustainable development has relied on collective action models and the collective action model posed by Hargrave and Van de Ven (2006) assumes conflict is a necessary component of creating change. This focus on conflict contradicts what Buber asserts in his theory of existence, which calls for a balance between concern for self and others that in turn, leads to a “life worth living” (Arnett, 1986, p. 15). This shifts the emphasis from engaging in conflict with another to one of personal responsibility and self-fulfillment. In the case study, there was little discussion of conflict but various examples of fulfillment (for example, the pride exhibited by the farmer when seeing his coffee on display in a store). It is difficult to imagine conflict as a motivating and sustaining element and it may very well be an unnecessary one. The opportunity to encourage open and respectful collaboration that leads to personal fulfillment may be a more productive foundation for collaboration.
Philosophically, Buber’s “narrow-ridge” attitude, which centers on balance between concern for self and concern for others, becomes newly relevant in the context of sustainable development. The challenging questions facing the world right now—how do we encourage economic growth without depleting our resources, how do we ensure prosperity for all, how do we balance multiple and sometimes divergent issues—are contained within the field of sustainability. Buber says, essentially, step into that chaos and complexity because that is where meaning is found. That is an interesting call to action for individuals. He did not call on the world to act, but rather he called upon individuals to engage. By emphasizing an earlier quote from this study, “Buber believed that meaning was discovered by actively meeting others, not by waiting for others to meet us” (Arnett, 1986, p. 128), a new thought can be introduced to sustainability leaders. Rather than calling on vague entities to act—policy-makers, farmers, consumers, corporations, non-governmental organizations, and research and educational institutions (as referenced by Sachs, 2010, p. 558)—perhaps the call should be directed toward individuals. Sustainable development is a social movement, but possibly better motivated by incorporating Buber’s views. If the process is meaningful on an individual level, then individuals will be more motivated to engage in the process. The role of communication in sustainable development remains multi-faceted, but linking the process to the potential for personal fulfillment and ensuring those who engage have the skills to communicate effectively emerges as one of the most important facets to consider.
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APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW GUIDE
(Created by Tracy Ging)

Introduction

This interview is part of a study that examines the role of communication in collaborative processes (also referred to as collective action or multi-stakeholder work). The purpose of these questions is to understand how communication is conducted within collaborative approaches. This research is being conducted as part of the degree requirements for the Master in Communication and Organizational Leadership program at Gonzaga University. The results will be presented as part of the course, but no further publication is intended.

Questions

1. How does your organization collaborate or work collectively to achieve its goals?
2. Can you please describe your process for collaboration?
3. How do you typically begin the process of collaboration?
4. Which stakeholders are represented?
5. How many people are typically involved in collaborative processes?
6. How many people are typically affected by the collaborative work?
7. How are representatives selected?
8. How are outcomes measured?
9. What are the challenges and opportunities within a collaborative process?
10. How would you summarize the role of communication, specifically around dialogue and the role of relationships?
In their working paper series, Figueroa et al. (2002) presented an integrated model for measuring the process and outcomes of communication for social change. Using their framework, this assessment tool was created to evaluate communication practices within an applied setting:

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Evaluative Considerations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catalyst</td>
<td>• What prompts the collaboration?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Are all actors willing participants?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dialogue</td>
<td>• Who is involved in the collaborative process?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Do they each understand their value and role in the process?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Are individuals free to express and share ideas?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• How is conflict handled and resolved?</td>
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<td>• How is consensus achieved?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collective Action</td>
<td>• How are responsibilities determined?</td>
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</table>
## The Role of Communication in Sustainable Development

| Individual Change | • What do individuals gain from the collaborative process? |
| Social Change | • What is achieved through the collaborative process? |
| Impact | • What communication resources are needed to support communication in a collaborative setting?  
         • What communication processes are critical to success? |

- How do actors mobilize?
- How is action implemented?
- How are outcomes measured?
- What is the continual improvement process?
- Is there participatory evaluation?