
WE Villages:

An Examination of WE Charity's
International Community
Development Model

Mission Measurement, LLC

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Introduction

WE Charity describes itself as “the world’s largest network of children helping children through education”. It has served more than one million youth involved in education and development programs in 45 countries. WE Charity’s domestic programs educate, engage and empower youth, creating greater awareness about global social justice issues and providing opportunities for youth to be part of the solution to global problems.

WE Villages is WE Charity’s international community development model; it seeks to empower communities to break the cycle of poverty and currently operates in rural communities in seven countries: China, Ecuador, Haiti, India, Nicaragua, Kenya and Sierra Leone. The WE Villages program supports communities where there exists a high incidence of child labour, exploitation of children and minimal opportunities for girls. The model is built around four “pillars” of development: Education, Water and Sanitation, Health Care, and Alternative Income.

WE Villages is implemented holistically and in closer partnership with local communities, as they are actively consulted and involved throughout the development process. WE Villages programs are designed to be sustainable in both the short and long-term.

The purpose of this study is to examine the model in three areas:

1. **Effectiveness:** Is the design of the WE Villages model appropriate for and effective at lifting communities from poverty?
2. **Sustainability:** Is WE Villages sustainable?
3. **Cost-Effective:** Is the WE Villages model cost-effective?

Through an examination of the practices of leading international development agencies and organizations, review of academic literature on best-practices in human and economic development and in consideration of results from WE Villages communities, we have found that:

WE Villages is effective:

- WE Villages programs and approach are aligned with the practices espoused and practiced by the leading development organizations
- WE Villages’ communities have demonstrated growth in each of the four pillars of impact

WE Villages is sustainable:

- WE Villages is designed around accepted core tenets of sustainable development
- WE Villages’ communities have demonstrated increased ownership over their continued growth

WE Villages is cost-effective:

- WE Villages programs and activities have been identified as cost-effective activities/programs
- WE Villages is structured to maximize the return on investment as activities/programs produce complimentary, reinforcing outcomes

Study Approach

Human and Economic development sit at the nexus of the many social sciences: Sociology, Political Science, and Psychology and, of course, Economics to name a few. Accordingly, the strategies and approaches of development have never lent themselves well to classic evaluation using methods such as experimentation and randomized control trials. Contexts vary significantly, it is difficult to control for every variable and the highest value impacts may not be apparent for years, if not decades, after a program ends.

Often, evaluations of interventions such as WE Villages are studied on a longitudinal basis across many different implementation sites. The WE Villages model is relatively young and still developing. Additionally, different sets of programs are implemented in each community based on that community's unique circumstances and programs within a community are implemented with different, overlapping, groups of community members.

This study presents an opportunity to assess the WE Villages model in both concept and in consideration of progress observed based on the short, mid and long-term outcomes data that are currently available. We can get significant insight in to the effectiveness, sustainability and cost-effectiveness of WE Villages through a close examination of the design of the model in comparison with best practices in international development and by supplementing that analysis with evidence from WE Villages communities, where it is available.

To do this, Mission Measurement took a three-step approach over a four month period between December, 2011 and March 2012:

1. Identify the best practices and standards advanced by leading international development organizations
2. Review academic literature related to specific concepts and interventions
3. Analyze the approach and results of WE Villages in the context provided by the above

The study began by identifying organizations across the globe that set the standards for high quality development work. This includes multi-lateral organizations, such as the United Nations and the World Bank, that take an extremely broad view of development and serve to set standards and coordinate efforts. We also reviewed the work of other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that implement specific programs or sets of programs that address specific development goals. A full list of organizations whose work this study considered can be found in the Appendix.

Given a frame of the issue provided by these organizations, we reviewed published research and case studies. This literature provided a more detailed, nuanced examination of specific issues or development interventions, giving us a richer context of comparison. Many of these resources also serve as reference material for the leading organizations described above.

Lastly, Mission Measurement analyzed the WE Villages approach and its available results to assess alignment with the accepted standards and practices from sector leaders and researchers.

Program Overview

History

In 1995, 12-year-old Craig Kielberger was startled by a headline in his local newspaper, “Battled Child Labour, Boy, 12, Murdered.” Identifying with a boy his age on the other side of the world and shocked by what he learned in the article, Craig developed a passion for learning more about the issue of child labour and of what he could do to make a difference.

Craig travelled to South Asia where he saw first-hand the working conditions of child labourers. For seven weeks, Craig journeyed through slums, sweatshops and back alleys where so many children lived in servitude, often performing the menial and dangerous jobs.

Upon returning home, Craig, along with his brother Marc, founded WE Charity, a nonprofit organization with the mission of empowering youth across the world. WE Charity set out to build a rescue home in India where freed child labourers could go for rehabilitation. However, the team quickly realized this wasn't enough; they had to start at the root of the problem. So they shifted focus to what it believed would prevent child labour in the first place: education. They started building schools. To this day, WE Charity believes that education creates the greatest returns of any investment in development and truly addresses the root causes of poverty.

But the WE Charity team soon learned that in many countries, girls did not attend school at all. They had household responsibilities like fetching water—a task that had to be performed multiple times each day and could take hours. So, WE Charity began building water wells near schools, allowing girls to fulfill their responsibilities and get an education.

After building schools, WE Charity learned that until children were healthy they couldn't be attentive in class, if they were able to attend at all. So, they introduced health care programming. Finally, they realized that even with schools, wells and health care, children missed school for financial reasons. So, they created alternative income programs to empower mothers with financial independence that allows them to support their families and keep their children in classrooms and out of situations of child labour.

With these four pillars in place, WE Charity formalized its WE Villages program. In close, direct partnership with its communities, WE Villages has built over 650 schools and school rooms, improved water and health care access for over 1,000,000 people and economically empowered over 30,000 women. As of 2012, WE Charity is implementing WE Villages in seven countries¹ world-wide. In most countries, local teams comprised of both North American and local team members work alongside the men, women and children who every day strive to free themselves from poverty, exploitation, disease and thirst. These teams work side-by-side with community members, long-term, overseeing quality and integrity and creating holistic and sustainable solutions for education, health, clean water and alternative income.

¹China, Ecuador, Haiti, India, Kenya, Nicaragua and Sierra Leone

Approach

WE Charity describes the process of building a healthy community as like building the framework of a house. Each pillar provides crucial support, without which the whole thing would eventually crumble. The WE Villages four pillars for community development are all based on the idea that no problem and no solution stands alone.

WE Charity seeks a similar impact in all of its WE Villages communities: To empower communities to break the cycle of poverty. To do this, WE Charity seeks to advance outcomes in each pillar that in combination lead to sustainable impact. This generally begins with a focus on education. WE Charity believes that accessible, high-quality education for both boys and girls is the most crucial element of breaking the vicious cycle.

However, WE Charity also recognizes that communities grow at their own pace – and that sustainable growth takes time. Within each pillar, WE Charity has articulated short-, mid- and long-term outcomes: Improve Access, Change Behavior, and Change Status respectively. Initially, WE Charity lays the foundation for change by improving access to the basic knowledge and resources families need to make the changes in their lives. With this new access and knowledge, community members adopt new practices in their daily lives. Over time, they experience the fundamental changes that combine to improve the quality of their lives.

WE Villages Impact Framework

	Improve Access (Short-Term)	Change Behavior (Mid-Term)	Change Status (Long-Term)
Education	All youth have access to a quality primary education	All youth regularly attend quality schools	All youth complete primary school completion and improve academic performance
Water and Sanitation	Community members have access to clean water and sanitation facilities and have knowledge of healthy behaviors	Community members practice good water use and sanitation behaviors	Reduced incidence of water borne disease
Health Care	Community members have access to basic nutrition and health care services and have knowledge of healthy behaviors	Community members practice healthy behaviors	Health outcomes improved and disease incidence significantly lowered
Alternative Income	Households have access to the means to produce income	Households are actively engaged in sustainable income producing opportunities	Household incomes rise to above poverty-level

Principles

WE Charity follows a number of basic principles in the design and execution of Adopt a Village. Among these are: Children's Rights, Gender Equality, Environment and Sustainability.

Children's Rights: In 1989, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) established that everyone under the age of 18 has certain rights—no matter where they come from or what they look like. These rights were established to make sure that children are provided the basic necessities of life (water, food, shelter), and have access to an education and other things they need to reach their full potential. This is reflected in WE Charity's "rights-based" approach, which uses the fulfillment of human rights as the primary driver of development activity.

Gender Equality: Gender equality programming is interwoven into all of the WE Villages components. For example, the basis for WE Charity's alternative income programming is to create a source of income for families who would otherwise not have such opportunities. As a result, women become empowered to make positive changes in their (and their family's) lives.

Environment: Protecting the environment is crucial to the sustainability of many rural communities' livelihoods. Recognizing this, WE Charity integrates environmental programming into programs across the four pillars and in some cases, has implemented projects explicitly for the purposes of improving environmental conditions.

Sustainability: All elements of WE Charity's WE Villages model are designed to be community-owned and maintained, and self-sustaining within five years after project implementation is completed.

WE Charity is a learning organization. Overseas staff regularly **monitor** and **evaluate** every WE Villages community. On a bi-monthly basis, regional teams report on the progress of various programs and initiatives, ensuring high-quality implementation. Semi-annually, the teams report a standard set of data against the Impact Framework, detailing the implementation of specific programs and the resulting outputs and outcomes quantitatively. The regional teams also provide regular qualitative assessments, describing impact in the community in greater depth and detail, providing context for the quantitative results and highlighting particular successful projects.

Effectiveness

Is the design of the WE Villages model appropriate and effective for lifting communities from poverty?

As discussed in the Study Approach above, the question of effectiveness in economic development is complex. We must examine the program holistically, to understand both its design and results. This suggests a series of more direct questions:

- Given its mission, does WE Villages pursue the appropriate short and mid-term **goals**?
- Given its goals, does WE Villages implement **activities** and programs that create the type of results needed and in the most effective manner?
- Given its programs, has WE Villages produced **results**?

Alignment of Goals

Throughout the past twenty years, some of the world's largest and most influential institutions have been working together to address global economic and political challenges. The United Nations, along with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the World Bank, the International Development Fund (IMF) and others have individually and in various combinations created initiatives seeking to address poverty.

These conversations came to a head in 2001 with the development of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Agreed upon by all 193 United Nations member states and followed by NGOs world-wide, the MDGs outlined specific development targets for the global community to achieve by 2015. These goals are:

Millennium Development Goals

1. Eradicate extreme poverty & hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce children mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

The goals are detailed with specific performance targets, measured at the country level. In sum, they describe an ambition to halve extreme poverty by 2015. Full details on the goals and performance targets can be found in the Appendix.

As we consider the effectiveness of the WE Villages model, our first question is whether or not the model is aligned with the accepted components of successful development. While the goals are advanced and supported by activities across the WE Villages model, an examination of the WE Villages framework shows clear alignment with the Millennium Development Goals.

	Improve Access (Short-Term)	Change Behavior (Mid-Term)	Change Status (Long-Term)
Education	All youth have access to a quality primary education MDG: 3 MDG Target: 4	All youth regularly attend quality schools	All youth complete primary school completion and improve academic performance MDG: 2 MDG Target: 3
Water and Sanitation	Community members have access to clean water and sanitation facilities and have knowledge of healthy behaviors MDG: 7 MDG Target: 10	Community members practice good water use and sanitation behaviors	Reduced incidence of water borne disease MDG: 6 MDG Target: 8
Health Care	Community members have access to basic nutrition and health care services and have knowledge of healthy behaviors MDG: 1 MDG Target: 2	Community members practice healthy behaviors MDG: 4, 5, 6 MDG Target: 5, 6, 7, 8	Health outcomes improved and disease incidence significantly lowered MDG: 4, 5, 6 MDG Target: 5, 6, 7, 8
Alternative Income	Households have access to the means to produce income	Households are actively engaged in sustainable income producing opportunities	Household incomes rise to above poverty-level MDG: 1 MDG Target: 1, 2

As seen in the updated Impact Framework graphic above, goals 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 are explicitly listed in the WE Villages impact framework. Meanwhile, goals 3 and 7 are advanced in various ways throughout WE Villages programming.

Goal 8, Develop a global partnership for development, focuses on national-level institutions and policies, which fall outside the scope of the WE Villages approach. However, through empowerment of local community leaders and given the partnerships formed with local government, the WE Villages model creates a grass-roots demand for the types of change articulated in goal 8.

Alignment of Activities

The establishment of the Millennium Development Goals and the subsequent commitment of billions of dollars by world leaders signaled a real commitment to change. However, a fundamental challenge remained. While large-scale interventions have certain advantages, there are certain places in the world where there is insufficient governance, infrastructure etc. for the seeds of top down approaches to grow.

While politicians and economists focus on changes in national policies, markets, and other arenas, the non-profit sector has traditionally operated at a more local level. Many form around a single issue, such as a particular health condition or water access. These organizations build schools, install water pumps, treat diseases and teach agricultural practices, among many other things. Others provide aid to those in need, seeking to alleviate symptoms of poverty, but do not necessarily affect the cause. Few take a holistic approach to development at the community level.

The most prominent example of a program similar to WE Villages is the Millennium Village Project, an outgrowth of the process that produced the MDGs and designed specifically to advance the MDGs at the community level. The Millennium Village Project draws on the expertise and experience of a wide range of development organizations and thus represents one of those most well-informed, advanced approaches to development. While WE Charity organizes WE Villages programs by pillar rather than the Millennium Development Goal (as the Millennium Village Project does), there is very clear alignment in the types of activities they pursue.

Shared strategies² include, but are not limited to:

- Removing social barriers that limit access to primary education, particularly for girls
- Creating clean-water access points
- Expanding provision of perinatal care
- Encouraging use of clean, energy-efficient cook stoves
- Developing local clinics and increasing access to regional hospitals
- Introducing school meal programs
- Growing and planting tree seedlings
- Connecting local entrepreneurs to savings and loans programs

A more comprehensive listing of WE Villages programs can be seen below. However, it should be noted WE Charity does not consider its program to be bound by a particular set of activities. Rather, new activities that are proposed by the community or which have been proven effective elsewhere and which are appropriate for a given community may be introduced over time. The specific sets of activities which are pursued vary from community to community.

Common WE Villages Projects and Activities

Education	Water & Sanitation	Health Care	Alternative Income
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of schools and related Infrastructure • Provision of educational supplies (e.g. books) • Community education workshops • Teacher training • School Performance Incentive Program • Education Modules • Summer Leadership Program • School grounds improvement/maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of water & sanitation infrastructure • Water clubs at schools • Community education workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of health system infrastructure • Mobile health clinics • Community education workshops • Health and environment clubs at schools • Provision of health kits • School lunch program • Agriculture and food security programs (e.g. medicinal, household and school farms/gardens) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women’s, Men’s and Youth Clubs • Financial literacy training • Animal husbandry • Village savings and loans program

² As described at: http://www.millenniumvillages.org/sector-strategy#holistic_approach, April 2012

There is no single model for Adopt a Village, no set sequence of activities. Rather, implementation starts with the community itself. WE Charity only works in communities to which it has been invited and relies heavily on the guidance of community members to select and prioritize the most appropriate projects and activities – those that not only address specific community needs, but which can be implemented sustainably and in concordance with local custom and culture.

This approach leads to a variety of specific approaches across the seven counties in which WE Villages currently operates. Below are a few examples of how the unique circumstances drive the design of WE Villages in that community.

For example, since the devastating 2010 earth in Haiti, WE Charity made the strategic decision to support decentralization, the movement of people and services out of Port-au-Prince, with particular focus on supporting communities throughout the remote Central Plateau region. However, with sparse and often damaged transportation infrastructure, this can be difficult. The community of Manac lies in the mountains, without road access. Due to its poverty, isolation and lack of clean drinking water, Manac continued to suffer from a high rate of Cholera, which had broken out country-wide. Upon arriving at Manac, the WE Charity team set up an impromptu workshop regarding clean-water usage and prioritized the construction of a water project that will significantly increase access to a clean water spring. Additionally, they have recently broken ground on a new school building which will be built to be paraseismic to protect students from future earthquakes and the resulting risk of building collapse.

In China, WE Charity works in communities that are much larger than elsewhere, averaging more than 6,000 people. Because of the size of the communities, school buildings are designed to accommodate all school aged children in the community and open with water projects and latrines completed and ready for use. Additionally, because of the amount of resources needed to support such a large community, alternative income is a top priority in Chinese communities. This often takes the form of distribution of income-generating livestock such as pigs and goats. The animals are owned collectively by the community and some of the income they generate goes to pay teacher salaries and support school operations.

The West-African country of Sierra Leone is well known for being rich in alluvial diamonds. Unfortunately, the “resource curse” as it has come to be known has a tendency to lead to political instability. In Sierra Leone, this included a bloody civil war 1991 to 2002. WE Charity has worked in Sierra Leone since the end of the war. As described in a 2011 New York Times article (Baruchin, 2011), Sierra Leone suffers from a particularly high rate of epilepsy. Local custom holds that epilepsy is caused by demons and sufferers are treated accordingly. In communities in Sierra Leone, Adopt a Village’s community education programs provide outreach to create awareness and its health care programs include the distribution of anti-convulsion medication. Additionally, they have recently started a poultry farming project at a school for hearing impaired students that will provide additional income and educational opportunity to students who would not otherwise have them while also serving as a source for an increasingly nutritious diet for the whole community.

Results

WE Charity has historically measured the results of WE Villages through regular collection of qualitative information and semiannual collections of outputs and short-term outcomes produced by individual programs such as the number of schools constructed, the number of people with access to water, participation in alternative income programs, etc. These outputs are a critical sign that the programs have been properly implemented and have created the conditions or laid the foundation for long-term change. WE Charity also collects and disseminates substantial amounts of qualitative evidence of the impact of WE Villages through individual testimonials of participants.

More recently, the WE Villages team has expanded their measurement approach to more explicitly collect data against the full range of development outcomes described in the Impact Framework. In this evolving process, communities are asked to provide data related to each of the phases of change: Increase Access, Change Behavior and Change Status, in each of the four pillars. The specific data points captured through this process significantly overlap with those used as targets for the Millennium Development Goals and will eventually allow WE Charity to benchmark its success in WE Villages communities.

Local teams are still developing the capacity to fully capture and report these data. Structural limitations of working in poor, rural communities (e.g. limited local communications infrastructure, lack of formal census information) have made it challenging for WE Charity to obtain reliable long-term, community-wide outcomes data. However, WE Charity has been able to obtain outcomes data from a number of their communities, such as those in Kenya, India and Sri Lanka. To illustrate the impact of Adopt a Village, we'll first look at the range of outcomes that can be produced in a single pillar, looking at the Education and Water and Sanitation pillars within two different communities. These two pillars have the greatest availability of community-wide data.

Education

The community of Lai in northwest India has a population of approximately 700 people, of which 250 are children. In 2008, the community had one local school with two classrooms serving just grades 1 through 3. The school was served by a single teacher and had no furniture or learning materials such as books or pencils. Due to the poor quality, enrollment was quite low, with just 40 students enrolled. Attendance was also poor.

WE Charity has built 5 classrooms in the community and implemented all four pillars of Adopt A Village. It also expanded the school to grade 5, which is a full primary education in India and brought in 4 teachers. As a result of these efforts:

	Improve Access	Change Behavior	Change Status
Education (Lai, India)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enrollment has increased 302%, from 40 in 2007-08 to 161 in 2011-12. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The attendance rate has increased from 55% to 68% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of students performing at the highest level (1st division) has nearly doubled, from 29 to 57.

Water and Sanitation

In Sri Lanka, increased government expenditures on defense in support of a series of ongoing civil wars have lowered investment in the social sector. This has resulted in a general economic slowdown leading to rapid inflation and a rise in poverty. In Sea Street, a fishing community, restrictions on mobility had limited access to fishing grounds, resulting in the loss of livelihoods and an increase in poverty levels. Women and girls in the community spent multiple hours each day fetching water from the nearest water source. Due to the scarcity of water, community members would use the same water for multiple purposes including bathing, drinking, and doing laundry. This resulted in widespread illness, such as chronic diarrhea.

WE Charity engaged in a water project to provide access to clean water for 500 families that previously went without, representing more than 1/3 of the community. A municipal collection system was created and then delivered directly in to the homes from the central storage tank via a network of pipes. A survey of 300 of the impacted homes revealed:

	Improve Access	Change Behavior	Change Status
Water & Sanitation (Sea Street, Sri Lanka)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 114% increase in the quantity of water used per day • A 164% increase in households with proper sanitation systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 123% increase in child caregivers who wash their hands with clean water and soap when attending to a child • A 90% increase in proper hand washing after using the washroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significantly decreased risk of bacterial contamination to the water source • Significantly reduced risk of spreading disease person-to-person

We can also see the results of the WE Villages model across the pillars by looking at a few communities in depth. We'll first look at Eor Ewuaso, a community where WE Charity has just recently begun to work.

Community Case Study: Eor Ewuaso

Eor Ewuaso became a WE Villages community in 2011 and just completed its first year of programming. The community has poor education infrastructure, consisting primarily of wood structures that were reconstructed after a windstorm destroyed the previous facilities in 2000. Access to clean water is a particular challenge; the nearest water source is over 4K away, meaning women and girls spend much of their time fetching unsanitary water during drought times. Similarly, access to health care is difficult, as there are no trained medical personnel within 10 kilometers. And in regards to income, 70% of the community lives on less than \$2/day, primarily via small scale farming and charcoal selling.

Education

The first year of WE Villages focuses on increasing access to basic services and building the awareness, skills and knowledge community members need to take advantage of these opportunities. In the first

year, WE Charity formed the School Management Committee, which includes representation of community members, school faculty and students. To date, the committee has experienced a 90% attendance rate, evidence of the community's commitment. This commitment is also reflected in the community's regular volunteerism at the ongoing school build sites. WE Charity has completed the construction of two permanent classrooms and conducted teacher trainings. As WE Charity will report in their soon to be released grant report to the funder of this work:

- Pre-school enrollment increased 43% from 2010 to 2012
- Grade 8 female dropout rate dropped by 39% in 2011; female grade 8 enrollment increased from 3 to 16 in 2012.

Water and Sanitation

WE Charity's water-related efforts in 2011 were focused primarily on education regarding sanitary practices. This is done through additions to the school curriculum and via community workshops. 2012 will see the construction of a borehole and latrine facilities at the school. This will significantly increase access to clean water, reducing the burden on women and girls. In 2011:

- The practice of key health water-usage habits in the home increased from 23% in 2010 to 32% in 2011.

Health Care

The focus was on education and training extended to health care as well. WE Charity has conducted community health education workshops, facilitated the formation of a school health club with 40 student participants (approximately 15% of the student population) and provided access to the mobile health clinic. The health club serves to reinforce school-based health education, encouraging students to apply their lessons at home. Additionally, a school lunch program introduced nutritious food, which can be difficult to obtain during the drought and a quarterly de-worming treatment was provided to students. In 2012, the health services will expand to include the construction of a demonstration garden and first aid training for teachers. In 2011,

- Mobile health clinics report increased utilization of their services
- The percentage of youth with knowledge of healthy habits and with regular access to nutritious food increased from 66% to 79%
- 333 students were de-wormed
- The percentage of households practicing key healthy habits increased 4%

Alternative Income

The alternative income pillar takes the longest to show results, particularly in societies like Eor Ewuaso where men have traditionally earned the income and controlled spending. WE Charity recognizes the need for women to have a strong foundation of skills to navigate this dynamic and create a lasting change in behavior. In 2011, WE Charity facilitated the formation of two Women's Groups, reaching 40 women who represent 20% of the households in the community. The groups have begun to participate in the "Merry Go Round" program and received training on leadership, teamwork, conflict resolution and financial principles, among other skills. This training will continue and expand in 2012 and the women will begin income generating activities in 2013.

In the first year of implementation in Eor Ewuaso, WE Villages has shown results in each of the four pillars of impact and has laid the groundwork for continued improvement.

Community Case Study: Salabwek

WE Charity began working in Salabwek, Kenya in 2007. School buildings in the community were primarily mud structures. The average child walked 3-4 kilometers to school, though some walked as far as 8K. There was no local source of clean water. The community had an illiteracy rate of over 90% and had an average family income of less than \$1 USD per day, produced via production of maize. Socially, gender equality is a particular challenge, with female circumcision and early marriages commonplace.

The examples below are a sample of the activities and results that have occurred in the community over the past 4 years.

Education

Since joining Adopt a Village, WE Charity has built over twenty concrete-block, tin-roof school buildings for students up to grade 8 and the school continues to expand. Teacher accommodations have been significantly improved, making the community a more attractive location for good teaching talent. Most recently, the graduating 8th grade class sent more female students to secondary school than males, a sign of quickly declining gender inequality.

- Student retention and academic performance on standard has shown consistent improvement.
- The percentage of female graduates able to attend secondary school has increased from 27% to 50%.
- Despite the drought conditions which typically drive down attendance (due to increased pressure on children to fetch water), the average attendance of enrolled students has held steady around 97 to 98%.

Water and Sanitation

As with all WE Villages communities, education programs regarding the use of clean water and sanitation facilities was introduced early on. Additionally, a Water Management Committee was formed to ensure water systems received regular maintenance and were used sustainably and equitably.

The school contains an on-site water catchment system to provide clean, fresh water to the students. However, with the onset of the drought, this proved insufficient and a borehole was constructed to provide additional water piped directly to the school and to a local clean water access point. This has also allowed for the use of drip-irrigation system at the school farm. This has been a particularly beneficial investment given the current drought and resulting widespread crop failures.

As a result of WE Villages water and sanitation programs:

- Access to clean water has increased from 0% of households living with 3K of a clean water access point to 88%.
- The practice of healthy water-usage habits at home has increased from 48% of households to 91%.

Health Care

As with all WE Villages communities, health care education is embedding in the school curriculum and community workshops are held regularly. The introduction of drip-irrigation is of particular importance in Kenya due to recent droughts and is an example of the flexibility of the WE Villages model. The farm provides nutritious food such as kale for student lunches and the introduction of the drip-irrigation irrigation system has resulted in both higher crop yields and reduced costs. Excess crops from the school farm are sold at market, which has facilitated the purchase of a dairy cow for the school – a rarity for the region and significant source of pride for the community.

Community-level health outcomes are particularly difficult to track, as there are no local comprehensive health care providers to track community-wide incidences of illness. However, a nearby clinic founded by WE Charity and operated by trained medical staff from the region provide care of disease and illness, as well as perinatal care for new and recent mothers. The number of cases of diseases such as malaria that have been reported and treated has increased over recent years, but community members informally report decreased disease incidence on a community-wide basis.

Since 2008, when health data was first available:

- The percentage of households practicing healthy habits at home, such as hand-washing and dish-drying has nearly doubled, from 45% to 89%.
- The percentage of children with regular access to well-prepared, nutritious food has increased from 66% to 83%.
- The number of known cases of child malnutrition has decreased from a peak of 12 in 2009 to 2 in 2011.

Alternative Income

In the alternative income pillar, WE Charity has provided financial literacy training through men's and women's groups. Over time, the women's groups have joined the Merry Go Round program and begun to engage in income generating activities. Additionally, in 2011, a group of 12 households began a Volunteer Savings and Loans program (VSLA) whereby the participants purchased fixed-price shares that serve as the base of capital from which group members take out loans to start small business. The loans must be approved by members of the collaborative and borrowers must report progress and pay fees if funds are misused. The loans are paid back in full with interest. This produces additional income to the participants in two ways: directly through the creation/expansion of businesses and through increased shared value resulting from the earned interest. All shares are paid back out proportionately at the end of the year.

Through alternative income programming:

- 33% of households participated in alternative income generating activities in 2011, up from 20% in 2008.
- VSLA participants were able to invest 10% of their annual income in the VSLA program and received a 15% return on their investment through the increase in share value.

As one of the longer-established WE Villages communities, Salabwek has experienced positive outcomes in each of the four pillars of the WE Villages model with continued expansion/growth in each area.

Individual Case Study: “Mama Jane” Marindany

Lastly, we can see the impact of WE Villages at the individual level. As described above, WE Charity also collects regular testimonials from community members. One such example is “Mama Jane” Marindany, who has become a leader in the Emori Joi community through Adopt a Village.

A subsistence farmer and mother of five, Mama Jane lived with her family (and livestock) in a traditional small, mud hut. Mama Jane had the good fortune to have a 6th grade education – unusual for women of her generation in her community. However, despite her education, she lacked the specific knowledge and opportunity that would allow her to provide a substantially better life for her family than she herself experienced.

Mama Jane’s children attended school in mud structures that were open to the environment and did not protect the students from the occasional passing elephant herd. She and her family drank, cooked and cleaned with water collected from the Mara River, a river polluted by agricultural and livestock waste (Karani, 2005, p. 33). The family also access to regular medical care and, as a woman of the strongly patriarchal Kipsigi tribe, Jane had relatively little control over her family’s meager income.

After learning that WE Charity would be working with her community, Mama Jane quickly volunteered to participate as a stakeholder to help guide the development of Emori Joi’s action plan. The first major initiative in Emori Joi was the construction of concrete school buildings, creating a safe learning environment for her children. The school also included a water collection and storage system, reducing reduced the family’s reliance on the Mara River. Through community education programs, Mama Jane learned of and implemented the “7 Habits of a Healthy Home”³. The use of clean water and adoption of the 7 Habits significantly reduced her families risk for a variety of illnesses and access to the local Barak Clinic supported by WE Charity has provided access to direct medical care.

Perhaps the biggest change in her family’s life has come as a result of Adopt a Village’s alternative income program. Through the “Merry-Go-Round” program in her Women’s Group, which Mama Jane leads, she received the training and resources to start a small bee-keeping enterprise. With her increased income, Mama Jane has constructed a brick home, the first of its kind in the community. Additionally, with the support of training provided through the Adopt a Village, she was elected to a leadership position in a cross-community group of groups where and provides leadership and guidance to her fellow mamas. With Mama Jane’s leadership, the Emori Joi’s women’s group is largely self-sustaining now, with little direct involvement from the WE Villages team.

Summary

³ Household latrine with hand washing station, bathroom, clothes line, trash pit, boiling of drinking water, dish drying rack

The available data from WE Villages communities, including both quantitative and qualitative information shared publicly and to WE Villages funders shows that that WE Villages communities have experienced success across the full range of outcomes articulated in the Impact Framework.

Education: As school infrastructure is improved, communities more fully embrace the importance of education and as structural barriers to regular attendance are removed, enrollment and regular attendance in WE Villages communities has increased. Notably, there have been significant increases in enrollment and attendance by girls, particularly in the latter grades. Students have also shown signs of increased academic performance as indicated by standardized test performance. As time progresses and as more students progress through the curriculum supported by Adopt a Village, we would anticipate further increased rates of primary school completion and secondary school matriculation.

Water and Sanitation: The construction of new/improved water infrastructure and the dissemination of knowledge have led to increased access to clean water and more widespread adoption of sanitary practices. From the research, we know that the behaviors espoused by WE Villages in water education programs, such as the proper boiling of meat, use of latrines and hand washing will lead to decreased incidence water-borne diseases over time; this has been observed anecdotally in a number of communities.

Health Care: Training and education related to the practice of healthy behaviors has driven their adoption in WE Villages communities. As with water- borne illnesses, it may be difficult for WE Charity to identify community-wide reductions in rates of disease and illness due to the challenges associated with collecting that data. However, the research suggests that the activities included in WE Villages and the practices espoused by health programming will lead to improved health outcomes in the community. Again, health outcomes have been reported to have significantly improved in some communities and further data collection should support this in greater detail.

Alternative Income: The Alternative Income programs have had their broadest reach in the form of increased knowledge of financial literacy. The long-term impact of this increased knowledge is not immediately evident. However, it does prepare community members for participation in WE Villages supported alternative income activities. The households that participate in these activities have shown increased rates of savings and income through the creation of small business and participation in savings and loans programs.

Sustainability

Is the WE Villages model sustainable?

Sustainability has long been a core concept in the world of development. In 1987, the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) published *Our Common Future*, commonly known as the Brundtland Report. The report sought to expand upon the growing concern regarding environmental health and ultimately reframed the notion of sustainability entirely, beyond just the physical environment. It defined sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

The report continues,

The satisfaction of human needs and aspirations in the major objective of development. The essential needs of vast numbers of people in developing countries for food, clothing, shelter, jobs - are not being met, and beyond their basic needs these people have legitimate aspirations for an improved quality of life. A world in which poverty and inequity are endemic will always be prone to ecological and other crises. Sustainable development requires meeting the basic needs of all and extending to all the opportunity to satisfy their aspirations for a better life. (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987)

This clearly begs the question, what does sustainable development entail? An examination of the approaches being taken by leading development organizations showed similar thinking regarding the components of sustainable development programs. These include:

- **Create Ownership:** The people/community impacted should have influence on the design and implementation of the intervention.
- **Build Capacity:** Individuals, communities, governments, etc. must have the knowledge, skills and resources to maintain the programs in the long-term.
- **Holistic Approach:** Address the full system of barriers to poverty reduction – singular solutions have not been effective or sustainable.
- **Develop Partnerships:** Effective projects develop partnerships with other stakeholders such as national or local government ministries, local civil society organizations, private sector groups and the general public.
- **Advocate:** Projects are not aligned with national/international priorities have been found to be unsustainable. Advocacy puts public pressure on authorities to align their priorities to the needs of those living in extreme poverty and create a supportive environment in which to sustain the program.

To better understand the sustainability of the WE Villages model, we will examine the model through each of these lenses.

Create Ownership

WE Charity's relationship with a potential WE Villages community begins when a member of that community invites WE Charity to learn to about the community. After initial conversations to establish the community as a viable candidate, WE Charity country staff conduct an on-site needs assessment.

The needs assessment process is designed to:

- Gather essential knowledge about local political, economic, social and cultural structures that influence the implementation and impact of any project
- Establish a baseline understanding of the context, including community demographics and the status of key indicators in each of the four pillars: education, water and sanitation, health care and income
- Identify those improvements most important to the community
- Determine how best to bring about those improvements, given the unique circumstances of each community
- Confirm that the community is fully invested in the implementation of the model

The first item above is particularly important. In an analysis of the design of the Millennium Village Project, Edward R. Carr (2008) describes what he argues are possible key design flaws, including what may be an insufficiently inclusive planning process that fails to appreciate the variety of perspectives in a community. Carr cites nearly two dozen studies in the past twenty years that argue in support of a purposeful approach of community engagement that seeks out voices from not just the village elders, but also from socially marginalized members. The problems and concerns of those in power may not adequately represent those of the community as a whole and may, at times, be counter to the best interests of the broader community.

WE Charity further builds collective ownership through the development of inclusive social institutions, such as the School Management Committee. The Committee is representative of the varied interests of community members and increasingly (over time) places the responsibility for the maintenance and further development of the school with community members. This serves multiple purposes, including increasing political buy-in and ensuring that investments are made in ways that benefit the broader community.

Further, WE Charity only supports infrastructure development on community owned land, land often purchased from local leaders. This requires investments of time, money and/or labor by community members. This ensures that the community values the investments being made to the property, builds pride, and because the deed is held by a committee and not an individual, it protects the investments from capture by local elites.

Ownership is often demonstrated through the support of community members in constructing new infrastructure. In Ecuador, WE Villages schools are constructed using an environmentally friendly method using adobe bricks. Materials are not only locally sourced, but provide added insulation against the cold Andes mountain air. In the San Miguel community, they elected to expand the school by adding a secondary story. But rather than utilize outside machinery, which would have been quicker and easier, they called a "minga" instead. For 10 days, over 200 community members joined in

the construction by hand. With the community's support, the school has since tripled in size and includes latrines, hand washing stations and a dining hall.

Build Capacity

The WE Villages model utilizes an asset-based approach that emphasizes the mobilization of individual talents, skills and assets. The asset-based approach allows communities to build on existing, indigenous knowledge, customs and traditions that have been formed in their unique historical, cultural and environmental context. Through this process, solutions and approaches which WE Charity may not have otherwise been aware of, let alone considered, are brought forward and incorporated.

Workshops, educational and capacity building seminars are at the heart of WE Charity's sustainability strategy. Seminars and trainings take place over a number of years to develop community leadership and build the capacity of the participants across the pillars of impact. Workshops and seminars teach community leadership. Men, women and children all learn about leadership and financial literacy and households are taught to utilize specific health indicators at home. In addition, local teachers receive pedagogical training, increasing the quality of instruction within the new classrooms.

In addition to building knowledge and skills, alternative income programs build the capacity of community members, especially women, to provide for their families for years to come, while at the same time contributing to a communal fund for project maintenance. For example, in Kenya, for a "merry go round" to work, participants determine an amount of money that they can regularly contribute (i.e. weekly) to a communal pot, an overall savings goal, and set a goal for a specific investment that they want to make. The communal pot, minus the savings amount, is then gifted to one participant one week at a time and they can use the funds to finance their personal project (i.e. putting a new roof on their hut, digging a latrine, purchasing a goat or a sewing machine, starting their small business, etc.). The members of the group continue contributing week by week until all have received the pot and then they can decide to dissolve the group and use the savings for school maintenance or enter into a second stage of lending and savings.

Holistic Approach

In a March 22nd, 2012 message to the Global Human Development Forum, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon urged attendees to recognize and embrace the importance of a holistic approach,

"Sustainable development recognises that our economic, social and environmental objectives are not competing goals that must be traded off against each other, but are interconnected objectives that are most effectively pursued together in a holistic manner"

As shown earlier, WE Villages is strongly aligned with the Millennium Development Goals, the undeniable standard in defining a holistic approach to development. Rather than identifying individual needs in a given community and addressing them through independently administered projects, the WE Villages model approaches development from a rights-based perspective that seeks to empower individuals through the development of institutions that support ongoing development. And because

the set of projects and programs is not prescribed in advance, WE Charity and community representatives tailor the WE Villages program to changing priorities.

For example, in many communities, the lack of school infrastructure is a pressing need. And constructing new classrooms is a necessary step to increasing access to education. But construction of a new classroom will not increase attendance if youth still must fetch water or are too sick to attend. So WE Charity does not just build the school building, it works with the community to identify the full set of challenges that prevent students from attending school and develops approaches to removing these barriers.

And it does this in parallel with addressing other challenges. With increased enrollment and attendance, school-based programs that teach sanitary health practices and household gardening provide knowledge to a generation of students that share and apply their new knowledge at home. Without the new school, it would be much more difficult to disseminate new information about behaviors and practices that drive health outcomes community-wide. And without the adoption of healthy behaviors, more effective agricultural practices, etc. families are forced to spend more of their limited income on mere subsistence, unable to make investments that increase a family's ability to generate income.

In Lai, India, the school curriculum was expanded to include basic horticultural practices and a medicinal garden was planted at the school, managed by a committee of school children. Plants like tulsi and aloe vera are grown by families at home and provide sustainable sources of treatment for minor ailments like coughs and skin rashes that may otherwise go untreated and lead to more significant (and costly) health problems.

In Kenya, boreholes are built on school property. This has many advantages. Firstly, the plot of land was purchased from a local chief and the title is held by the community itself, removing any claim to the water source by an individual seeking profit, power and control. Secondly, by locating the water source at the school, children (usually girls) who might otherwise need to fetch water during the day are able to instead attend school and bring water home with them. This not only increases attendance at school, but creates a broad base of ownership and pride for both the school and pump.

Develop Partnerships

While WE Villages operates at the community level, partnership with local governments serve a critical role in sustainability. While the local community guides the development effort, WE Charity builds relationships and obtains commitments from local governments, Ministries of Education and community leadership to ensure sustainability of the program. Once initial infrastructure is developed, the government takes on a large role in ongoing maintenance once initial infrastructure is developed. Through trainings, communities are also able to build their own programs to dream and execute their continued vision for their community. This enables communities to build partnerships with local experts and institutions to develop additional solutions – these partners include local universities, government ministries, community elders, and entrepreneurs.

In India, WE Charity has helped communities build health centre infrastructure which is subsequently supplied by the local government. The WE Villages team facilitates a monthly visit from a government-provided nurse and increase utilization of the service by spreading the word of her visit through schools, as well as in women's groups.

Advocate

WE Charity takes a rights-based approach to development that seeks to empower participants. It is based on a fundamental recognition that charity is insufficient motivation for meeting people's needs and is ultimately unsustainable as a solution. And it ultimately frames success in different terms than a more traditional, needs-based approach. Improvement at a community level is to be celebrated, but it is the obligation of the organization to use an approach that seeks to ensure everyone in the community is able to take advantage of their basic rights – to basic education, to clean water, to basic health care and to the dignity that comes through self-sufficiency.

The rights-based model addresses inequity based on gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic status. This is particularly relevant in India where the lingering impact of the caste system still denies so many people access to basic human rights.

In regards to what may be considered traditional advocacy, WE Charity does not seek to directly influence policy at the national level. While it recognizes the importance of alignment between local goals and the broader political context and commitments by the national government, the focus of WE Villages is at the community level. However, WE Charity addresses this issue in two ways.

Firstly, WE Charity chooses to implement WE Villages in countries that have the capability and willingness to support their work. The countries in which it operates share WE Charity's mission, but don't always have sufficient resources and/or sufficiently well-developed political structures for the central government to provide the necessary support to rural communities.

But with WE Charity's support, WE Villages communities become better equipped to take advantage of government programs and priorities. For example, in Kenya, a federal program made funds available to communities through an application process. With WE Charity's support, the community of Sikirar applied for and won federal funds to build a nursery school for the youth in the community who were not quite of age for primary school.

Summary

The WE Villages model contains the key elements of sustainability described by development experts. The results of this approach have been evidenced in the experience of WE Villages communities over time.

Cost-Effectiveness

Is the WE Villages model cost-effective?

Undoubtedly, it is important for both the funders of development work and for its beneficiaries to recognize the most value possible from the investments made. However, while it is relatively straight forward to measure the costs of a given intervention, assessing “effectiveness” in the cost context is more challenging due to issues such as variations in purpose, approach and context. The cost-effectiveness research we reviewed consistently warned of the limitations of their analyses.

We will first discuss what the research literature says about the WE Villages approach before briefly describing two standard approaches to measuring cost-effectiveness and their possible application for Adopt a Village.

Cost-Effectiveness in the WE Villages Model

In the conclusion of *Water Quality Interventions to Prevent Diarrhoea: Cost and Cost-Effectiveness*⁴, authors Clasen and Haller describe the limitations of cost-effectiveness analysis at great length, including multiple sources of uncertainty (a misleading degree of precision), the necessary myopic focus on a single outcome, differences in program design and the lack of broader context.

Thus, a more reasoned approach for assessing the cost-effectiveness of the WE Villages model is to consider categories of interventions and their effect on a broader set of outcomes.

Regarding Education, the pillar most central to the WE Villages model, a 2008 meta-analysis by David Evans and Arkadipta Ghosh identified four categories of interventions that have proven to be both effective and low-cost in improving school enrollment, attendance and test scores:

- *Quality improvements* in the school environment and instruction through policies such as classroom construction, provision of blackboards, teacher training, remedial education, etc.
- *Preventing illness and malnutrition* through school-based programs such as deworming, iron supplementation, and school meals.
- *Reduction in school costs* through the provision of indirect fellowships, uniforms, textbooks, etc.
- *Providing incentives* to teachers as well as to students through monitoring, scholarships, food-for-education programs, etc.⁵

Each of these components can be found in the portfolio of WE Villages education programs.

In the areas of Water and Sanitation and Health Care, it is widely acknowledged that prevention of illness is cheaper than treatment, particularly over time. The WE Villages model generally recognizes this; water and sanitation is inherently geared towards prevention while activities in the health care pillar target both prevention and treatment, with an emphasis on the former.

⁴Clasen, Thomas, and Laurence Haller. *Water Quality Interventions to Prevent Diarrhoea: Cost and Cost-Effectiveness*. 25-27.

⁵Evans, David K and Arkadipta Ghosh. *Prioritizing Educational Investments in Children in the Developing World*. 21-22.

As with Education, cost-effectiveness studies generally focused on a very specific intervention, such as specific choice of medicine or method of cleaning drinking water. Such analyses are highly contextual and do not lend themselves to broad generalization. While we can take general insights from the cost-effectiveness literature, we hesitate to assess each activity in isolation.

The aforementioned study by Clasen and Haller conducted analysis of a variety of source and household-based water quality interventions across 10 WHO epidemiological sub-regions, covering all of the WE Villages countries. They find that the household-based interventions of chlorination and solar disinfection are the most cost-effective, but that source-based interventions such as boreholes and wells also meet the Commission on Macroeconomics definition for “highly cost effective” and provide the added benefit of improved access. WE Villages has generally used a source-based approach, because of the dual benefit, but has supplemented this with cheap household-based interventions such as the use of the Moringa plant in Kenya.

Regarding health approaches, Adopt a Village’s focus on hygiene education is particularly well-supported by the research. In *The Value of Hygiene Promotion: Cost-effectiveness Analysis of Interventions in Developing Countries* (Sijbesma and Christoffers, 2009) the authors find that “Hygiene promotion can avert the death of a child under the age of five at 4–6% of the unit cost of an improved water supply or sanitation facility” (426) and noted the particular effectiveness of community health clubs which focus on education and home-based behavior changes – both aspects of the WE Villages model.

Ultimately, placing specific figures on the cost-effectiveness of WE Villages would require dedicated study of the costs and results produced in WE Villages communities. Below are brief summaries of two approaches to measuring cost-effectiveness.

Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA)

Cost-Benefit Analysis analyzes interventions by placing a dollar value on the outcome(s) produced and presenting the results in what can be considered a return on investment figure. This approach allows for standardization of the interpretation of value across disparate outcomes and positions the measured programs to be considered against many other policy options.

However, these calculations require significant assumptions regarding the value produced and susceptible to significant variations across contexts where economies differ. As discussed in a 2004 paper by Hauck, Smith and Goddard, the process for assigning value to the benefit is fraught with challenges.

Cost-Effectiveness Analysis (CEA)

The cost-effectiveness approach seeks to address some of the challenges of cost-benefit by using the intended outcome of the intervention as the denominator in the calculation. Rather than producing a dollar figure that shows the economic return on investment, it considers the cost to achieve a fixed increment of progress on a given outcome and compares this cost ratio between interventions.

For example, in the health sector, CEA often takes the form of measuring health outcomes using the Quality Adjusted Life Year (QALY) or the Disability Adjusted Life Year (DALY) metric. This approach places a value on the quality of life one experiences (between 0 and 1) and then aggregates the changes people experience over time due to a given intervention. By approaching the issue in this fashion, the CEA method is more amenable to comparisons of holistic interventions that drive broader sets of outcomes.

Summary

Further study of cost-effectiveness in WE Villages using Cost-Effectiveness Analysis would be needed to more precisely assess the cost-effectiveness of the model as a whole.

However, the activities that comprise the WE Villages model are broadly supported as cost-effective by research conducted on similar approaches. Furthermore, the cost-effective literature is very clear regarding the imprecision of comparisons across contexts. The holistic nature of WE Villages suggests opportunities for additional cost efficiencies and/or increases in effectiveness due to the interrelatedness of outcomes, such as in the interconnectedness between the availability of water and school attendance.

Studied in isolation, a given intervention may appear to be slightly less cost-effective when compared to a program designed solely to advance a single outcome. But because WE Villages projects are done in considered combination with other projects and because they include aspects of sustainability which may not be part of the comparison projects, the outcomes produced in WE Villages may not be as readily apparent but in fact could be more substantial in the long-run.

In regards to specific costs, a 2005 report by the United Nations Millennium Project estimated that it will cost \$120-\$160 USD annually per-capita to achieve the MDGs by 2015. In a WE Villages community such as Eor Ewuaso, Kenya, with a population of approximately 1,400 people, this equates to \$168,000-\$224,000 USD annually between the time the report was released and the target date for achieving the Millennium Development Goals – a period of 10 years and a total investment between \$1.68 million and \$2.24MM USD. Current investments from WE Charity in this community are less than half of this figure annually; however, this does not account for supporting investments made (or to be made) by local government. This is comparable to the level of investment made by the Millennium Villages Project, which operates within a per person budget of \$60-90 USD per year.

It should also be noted that the Millennium Development Goal estimates presume significant national-level interventions, affecting both urban and rural communities across countries of varying readiness and sophistication. Thus, if WE Villages communities can demonstrate comparable effectiveness to approaches designed to advance the MDGs, a comparable investment would likely signal greater cost-effectiveness.

Conclusion

WE Charity's WE Villages model is designed to empower rural communities with a history of poverty, child labor and gender inequality to break the cycle of poverty. The WE Villages approach, as articulated in its impact framework and reflected in its activities and principles, is aligned with the approach taken by the leading comparable organizations and the recommendations of human and economic development research.

After examining the practices of leading international development agencies and organizations, reviewing academic literature on best-practices in human and economic development and in consideration of results from WE Villages communities, we have found that WE Villages is effective at producing a range of development outcomes that puts communities on a path to economic self-sufficiency, prioritizing education and gender equality. This is particularly true in the communities where the WE Villages model has been fully implemented (across all four pillars) over multiple years.

The WE Villages model embraces the principles of sustainable development: Firstly, WE Villages involves the entire community in the selection/development of interventions, building ownership both literally and figuratively. Community-wide education and training programs provide a basic foundation of awareness and knowledge that allow community members to run programs and maintain infrastructure in perpetuity in WE Charity's absence. The breadth of programming ensures that solutions are not undermined by the complex nature of the underlying challenges and creates virtuous cycles of support. By leveraging regional and national programs and resources where possible, WE Villages also ensures that community-level interventions gain long-term financial and political support from within the country. And lastly, Adopt A Village's rights-based approach empowers community members to advocate for themselves; while WE Charity does not directly lobby for changes in national policies, through a focus on education of both youth and the broader community, it helps build grass-roots demand for the kinds of national policies that support sustainable development.

Ultimately, assessing cost-effectiveness of a holistic program such as WE Villages can provide quite difficult. The long-term outcomes will take years to fully take root and it is in the sustainability of these outcomes that true-cost effectiveness lies. However, the costs of WE Villages are comparable to those of the Millennium Villages, a similar development program designed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The focus on holistic, sustainable approaches suggests that the WE Villages has the potential be extremely cost-effective in the long, but a formal cost-effectiveness analysis should be conducted in the future to confirm this.

The interconnectedness of the global economy has perhaps never been as evident as it is today. With economies in the western world still lagging behind their pre-2008 highs, the importance of human and economic development in other areas of the world is clear. While the landscape of organizations and their practices continually evolves, it is our belief that WE Charity's WE Villages model is an effective, sustainable and cost-effective approach to breaking the cycle of poverty in rural, marginalized communities world-wide.

Appendix

Key Institutions

Multilateral Organizations

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) | www.acdi-cida.gc.ca

CIDA is Canada's lead agency for development assistance. CIDA's aim is to: Manage Canada's support and resources effectively and accountably to achieve meaningful, sustainable results and Engage in policy development in Canada and internationally, enabling Canada's effort to realize its development objectives.

International Monetary Fund | www.imf.org

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is an organization of 187 countries, working to foster global monetary cooperation, secure financial stability, facilitate international trade, promote high employment and sustainable economic growth, and reduce poverty around the world.

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) | www.oecd.org

“For 50 years now, the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) has grouped the world’s main donors, defining and monitoring global standards in key areas of development. The Development Co-operation Directorate (DCD) supports the DAC, contributing to developing better policies for better lives through transparent data on development finance, and improved development co-operation practices and policies. The DAC has played a role in forging major international development commitments, including the Millennium Development Goals and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.”

United Nations | www.un.org

“The United Nations is an international organization founded in 1945 after the Second World War by 51 countries committed to maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations and promoting social progress, better living standards and human rights.”

The World Bank | www.worldbank.org

“The World Bank is a vital source of financial and technical assistance to developing countries around the world. We are not a bank in the ordinary sense but a unique partnership to reduce poverty and support development. We comprise two institutions managed by 187 member countries: the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association (IDA). The IBRD aims to reduce poverty in middle-income and creditworthy poorer countries, while IDA focuses exclusively on the world’s poorest countries.”

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA) | www.coopscanada.coop

“The Canadian Co-operative Association provides leadership to promote, develop and unite co-operatives and credit unions for the benefit of people in Canada and around the world. Our members come from many sectors of the economy, including finance, insurance, agri-food and supply, wholesale and retail, housing, health, and the service sector.”

Millennium Villages Project | www.millenniumvillages.org

“Millennium Promise is a United States-based non-profit organization working to achieve the Millennium Development Goals in Africa. Millennium Promise was created in part to engage the public and donors in support for the Millennium Villages project. Core activities include raising funds from the private sector, working with partner organizations to support the project and engaging the business community in the development of markets around the Villages.”

Oxfam Canada | www.oxfam.ca

“Oxfam Canada builds lasting solutions to global poverty and injustice. We work with allies in Canada and around the world to change the policies and practices that perpetuate human suffering. We support organizations in poor communities overseas in their struggle to secure basic rights. Oxfam's advocacy and campaigns for just policies are rooted in the knowledge and experience gained in that struggle.”

(Oxfam Canada is a member of Oxfam, a confederation of 15 national Oxfams around the world)

Plan | plan-international.org

“Plan aims to achieve lasting improvements in the quality of life of deprived children in developing countries, through a process that unites people across cultures and adds meaning and value to their lives, by: enabling deprived children, their families and their communities to meet their basic needs and to increase their ability to participate in and benefit from their societies, building relationships to increase understanding and unity among peoples of different cultures and countries and promoting the rights and interests of the world's children.”

Save The Children | www.savethechildren.org

“When disaster strikes around the world, Save the Children is there to save lives with food, medical care and education and remains to help communities rebuild through long-term recovery programs. As quickly and as effectively as Save the Children responds to tsunamis and civil conflict, it works to resolve the ongoing struggles children face every day — poverty, hunger, illiteracy and disease — and replaces them with hope for the future.”

World Vision | www.worldvision.org

“World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice.”

Millennium Development Goals & Targets

1. Eradicate extreme poverty & hunger
 - T1: Halve % who live on income less than \$1/day (goal = <25%)
 - T2: Halve % who suffer from hunger (goal expressed in stunting/wasting)
2. Achieve universal primary education
 - T3: Children everywhere (boys & girls) will be able to complete a full course of primary schools (net primary attendance >90%)
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
 - T4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary & secondary education (girls:boys ratio of > 0.9)
4. Reduce children mortality
 - T5: Reduce by 2/3 under-five mortality rate (<40/1000)
5. Improve maternal health
 - T6: Reduce by 3/4 maternal mortality ratio (Maternal mortality < 150/100000, Skilled birth attendance >70%)
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
 - T7: Halt/reverse the spread of AIDS (mother to child transmission <5%, ARV coverage >85%)
 - T8: Halt/reverse the incidence of malaria and other diseases (TB treatment success >85%, Malaria prevalence <5%)
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
 - T9: Integrate sustainable developing in to country policies/programs
 - T10: Halve % without sustainable access to safe water & basic sanitation (Access to improved drinking water >90%, Improved sanitation >75%)
 - T11: Significant improvement in lives of 100MM slum dwellers
8. Develop a global partnership for development
 - T12: Develop open, rule-based, predictable, nondiscriminatory trading and financial system
 - T13: Address special needs of Least Developed Countries
 - T14: Address special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing states
 - T15: Deal comprehensively with debt problems of developing countries
 - T16: In cooperation with developing countries, develop & implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth
 - T17: In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, develop and implement strategies for affordable essential drugs
 - T18: In cooperation with private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications

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