Green Empowerment Organizational Theory
Public Summary
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INTRODUCTION

Since 1997, Green Empowerment (GE) has worked with local partners around the world to strengthen communities by delivering renewable energy, safe water, and complementary health, economic, and environmental projects. The organization's work addresses two of the most pressing issues of our time: poverty and climate change. Greater access to clean energy and potable water, coupled with watershed restoration, are important means for improving health, stimulating income-generating activities, increasing opportunities, and enhancing overall quality of life in ways that respect the natural environment. Recognizing the critical role of ecosystem services and natural resource management to sustainable economic growth, Green Empowerment prioritizes integrated projects that incorporate agroforestry, watershed protection, and sustainable agricultural initiatives in addition to the provision of water and energy services. Green Empowerment's projects aim to improve human well-being, are sustainable over time, limit the impacts of climate change, and have the potential for broad impact beyond any one community.

The purpose of this document is to present the overarching framework and logic of Green Empowerment's organization, as carried out through its projects and supporting work. The document's organization is as follows:

1. Context: Describes the problems and issues the organization is attempting to solve and address.

2. Organizational Diagram: A visual representation of Green Empowerment's overall organizational theory that presents key values and assumptions which guide GE decisions regarding activities and program areas to achieve the results (outputs) needed to fulfill the organization's objectives (outcomes).

3. Organizational Theory: Describes in detail the logic behind Green Empowerment's work, the assumptions upon which decisions and activities are based, and the overall objectives of program areas at different levels.

    a. **Core Values & Key Assumptions**: Explains important features of GE's organizational theory and how they are connected to the organization's activities and the global context.

    b. **Program Areas**: Describes the different areas of programming (Project Implementation and Impact Expansion) and outlines the activities and outcomes for each.

SECTION 1: CONTEXT

Across the globe, approximately 663 million people - 1 in 10 - lack access to safe water, and 2.4 billion people - 1 in 3 - lack access to adequate sanitation[1]. 1.2 billion people are without access to electricity, and more than 2.7 billion people rely on the traditional use of biomass for cooking, which is associated with the approximately 3.5 million deaths annually from indoor air pollution[2]. Without basic infrastructure, communities confront higher mortality and morbidity rates from waterborne diseases (such as diarrhea, cholera, and giardia), as well as respiratory ailments. Women and children suffer the most from this situation, as they typically spend more time at home and provide up to 90% of a household's effort in collecting water and fuel for cooking fires, representing 11-14 hours of work each week[3]. These conditions can have devastating effects on human health, as well as future opportunities. Repeated instances of diarrhea, for example, can lead to dehydration, malnutrition, and can stunt childhood development. Diarrhea and upper respiratory infections from airborne pollution caused by wood burning cookstoves are two leading causes of disease and death in children under age five in the developing world. Consistent illness and lack of access to clean water and electricity also prevent adults and children from taking full advantage of economic and educational opportunities that could improve their quality of life.

Poverty and environmental contamination and degradation exacerbate these problems further. Poverty prevents many people in the developing world from accessing even the most basic healthcare services, and also acts as a barrier for community infrastructure improvements in poor, rural villages. Environmental degradation (such as the pollution of air and water sources) can not only cause health problems for local populations, but can increase poverty and cause conflict. For example, the continuing decline of the quantity and quality of natural resources and of ecosystem functions is likely to exacerbate the likelihood of conflict over resources, particularly water.

Research in the field of international development has demonstrated that growth, poverty, and the environment can no longer be treated as loosely connected components of development. Recognizing their interdependence is at the core of improved and sustained development for all[4]. Green Empowerment's programs aim to address challenges such as these through an integrated approach to community empowerment.
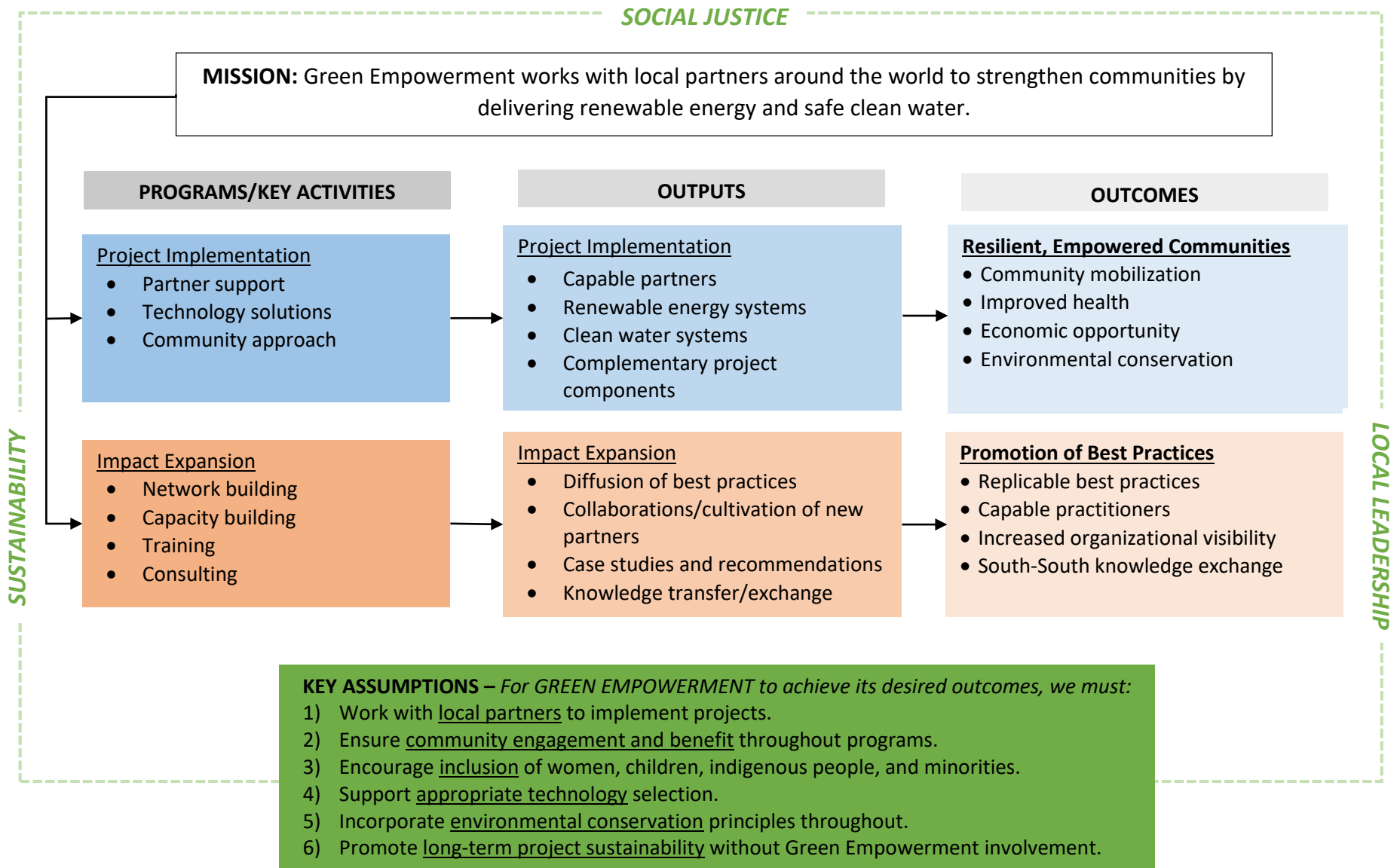
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[1] "Progress on Drinking Water and Sanitation, 2015 Update and MDG Assessment." World Health Organization and UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP). http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/monitoring/jmp-2015-update/en/

[2] "World Energy Outlook 2016." International Energy Agency. http://www.worldenergyoutlook.org/resources/energydevelopment/energyaccessdatabase/#d.en.8609

[3] "(The) World's Women 2010." *Trends and Statistics*. UNDESA, 2010

[4] "Dimensions of Inclusive Development." *Poverty in Focus, Issue #23.* International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth, Poverty Practice, Bureau for Development Policy, UNDP. http://www.ipc-undp.org/pub/IPCPovertyInFocus23.pdf

SECTION 2: ORGANIZATIONAL DIAGRAM

SOCIAL JUSTICE

MISSION: Green Empowerment works with local partners around the world to strengthen communities by delivering renewable energy and safe clean water.

SUSTAINABILITY

LOCAL LEADERSHIP

PROGRAMS/KEY ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
Project Implementation • Partner support • Technology solutions • Community approach	Project Implementation • Capable partners • Renewable energy systems • Clean water systems • Complementary project components	**Resilient, Empowered Communities** • Community mobilization • Improved health • Economic opportunity • Environmental conservation
Impact Expansion • Network building • Capacity building • Training • Consulting	Impact Expansion • Diffusion of best practices • Collaborations/cultivation of new partners • Case studies and recommendations • Knowledge transfer/exchange	**Promotion of Best Practices** • Replicable best practices • Capable practitioners • Increased organizational visibility • South-South knowledge exchange

KEY ASSUMPTIONS – *For GREEN EMPOWERMENT to achieve its desired outcomes, we must:*
1) Work with local partners to implement projects.
2) Ensure community engagement and benefit throughout programs.
3) Encourage inclusion of women, children, indigenous people, and minorities.
4) Support appropriate technology selection.
5) Incorporate environmental conservation principles throughout.
6) Promote long-term project sustainability without Green Empowerment involvement.

SECTION 3: ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY

<u>3a) Core Values and Key Assumptions</u>

The mission of Green Empowerment is to work with local partners around the world to strengthen communities by delivering renewable energy and safe clean water. Community empowerment is the central objective of Green Empowerment's mission. It is the primary outcome that GE seeks to achieve through its projects. GE defines <u>community empowerment</u> as *the strengthening of a community's ability to increase control over their lives for their benefit and development*. Within GE's programs, we work with partners to engage communities to jointly develop appropriate solutions.

GE's work is framed and shaped by three <u>core organizational values</u>:

- **Social justice** is the view that everyone deserves equal economic, political, and social rights and opportunities, including access to clean water, energy, and a healthy environment in which to thrive. Social justice drives GE's mission and vision. Along with sustainability and local leadership, it creates the framework within which GE works and is the "umbrella cause" (or global impact) to which GE's programs contribute.

- **Sustainability** is another principle that frames GE's work, and is viewed as a value, a strategy, and a desired outcome. GE believes that sustaining the improvements needed to realize its vision of social justice requires communities to be mobilized and equipped to play an ongoing active role in directing their own development, both in the mundane work of keeping the water and power systems functioning and maintaining their local natural environment, but also in sustaining initiative to meet other community needs and aspirations in the future.

- **Local leadership** is another key element of GE's organizational logic. Local leadership in the GE model includes two aspects: the leadership of the local implementing partner organizations within their region, and the leadership of local residents or groups within beneficiary communities. All implementing partners, including regional and national organizations, have strong ties to local communities and extensive community development and/or technology experience. GE works closely with these partners, both to ensure long-term sustainability of individual projects, as well as to broaden its impact beyond what GE alone can achieve. The partners engage local leaders within beneficiary communities and work through the communities' self-determined decision-making processes to design and deliver projects that meet identified needs and priorities. GE believes that sustainable contributions to social justice require such local leadership.

<u>Key Assumptions</u>

For GE to achieve its desired outcomes, we assume that we must:

1) **Work with or through in-country intermediary and/or implementing partner organizations whenever possible.** This approach ensures the incorporation of local knowledge, helps to gain the support and cooperation of beneficiary communities, and provides locally-based technical expertise to support the long-term maintenance of installed technologies.

2) **Ensure full and effective community engagement and ownership throughout every stage of the project, from planning to implementation and beyond.** If beneficiaries are able to express their views and set up projects that meet their needs, they are more likely to use and work to sustain the system.

3) **Encourage inclusion**. Many people are excluded from development initiatives because of their gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, disability, or poverty. The effects of such exclusion are staggering, deepening inequality across the world. Development can be inclusive—and reduce poverty—only if all groups of people contribute to creating opportunities, share the benefits of development, and participate in decision-making.

4) **Ensure appropriate technology selection**. Harmony between technology and context (social, environmental, and logistical) is important. GE and its implementing partners create customized system designs that cater to the needs of each beneficiary community utilizing appropriate, environmentally friendly technology solutions.

5) **Incorporate environmental conservation principles throughout**. Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Environmental sustainability requires communities to design activities to meet human needs while preserving the life support systems of the natural environment.

6) **Promote long-term project sustainability without Green Empowerment involvement**. Inadvertently cultivating local reliance on external aid is a major pitfall of many international development projects. GE seeks to avoid this trap by practicing <u>people-centered development</u>, an approach that focuses on improving local communities' self-reliance, social justice, and participatory decision-making.

3b) Program Areas

Green Empowerment has two distinct yet complementary program areas: Project Implementation, and Impact Expansion. The purpose of each of these program areas is defined by their intended outcomes, all of which contribute to the organization's central objective of community empowerment. Specific indicators to track these outcomes are included in the Results Framework of the three-year Green Empowerment Strategic Plan.

- **Project Implementation**: This program area lies at the heart of Green Empowerment's work. We work with local partners in developing countries to provide rural, underserved communities access to affordable and renewable energy, safe drinking water, sanitation systems, fuel-efficient cookstoves, and other complementary projects. GE's projects aim to create resilient, empowered communities as measured through four specific outcomes:
  - Community mobilization
  - Improved health
  - Economic opportunity
  - Environmental conservation

- **Impact Expansion**: GE aims to expand the impact of its work beyond individual projects and communities through the promotion of best practices, including its innovative approach. Activities in this area include the provision of relevant training for practitioners and consulting services for businesses; the documentation and dissemination of innovations and best practices; the organizing and convening of stakeholders and networks around certain technologies, issues, and regions; and the facilitation of connections and partnerships between complementary actors. The effectiveness of Green Empowerment's work in this program area is measured through four outcomes:
  - Capable practitioners
  - Replicable best practices
  - Increased organizational visibility
  - South-South knowledge exchange