Retailers and development
Lessons from supply chain standards

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Overview

• A model to think about business and development

• What ever happened to HEBI?

• What are the lessons about how retailers can contribute to development?
Business engagement with development

Focus on business case; Contributions to society; A choice

How business shapes society and vice versa; Responsibilities of business
Concepts of development

reductionist

- Uni-dimensional
- Removal of “lack”
- Measurable

holistic

- Complex
- Transformation
- Difficult to measure
B: Institutionalising

A: Managerialist

D: Politicising

C: Pragmatic

Source: Edward and Tallontire 2009
What ever happened to HEBI?
HEBI

• Stated aim: ‘to promote ethical social behaviour in the horticulture and floriculture industry in Kenya’

• Improve labour standards

• Multi-stakeholder in design

• Sharing and institutionalising good practice in (participatory) social auditing
HEBI - timeline

- 2001-2: Nation and then international civil society campaign
- 2002: Private sector working group
- Late 2002: Threat of official complaints mechanism at ETI
- 2002/3: ETI delegation
- 2003: Formation of multi-stakeholder initiative; donor funding
- 2003/4: Training on social auditing and pilot audits
- 2005: Development of strategic plan
- 2006/7: Board members dwindle
- 2007: Secretariat housed in industry association building
- 2008: Last staff member leaves
Why did it all go wrong?

3 kinds of explanation….

a) Blamed on local politics

b) “there were some good ideas but…”

c) “did not get organised fast enough”

“HEBI hasn’t kept up …participatory social auditing is dead…”

New “partners of choice”
Does it matter?

Social dialogue vacuum and continued mistrust

Continuing need for local capacity in monitoring and resolving labour standards issues

Lost opportunity to build up partnerships
School of Earth and Environment
SUSTAINABILITY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Questions

A: Managerialist
B: Institutionalising
C: Pragmatic
D: Politicising

Concepts of development

Business engagement with development

Collective codes

Source: Edward and Tallontire 2009

Instrumental

Interdependent

Holistic

Reductionist

C: Pragmatic
B: Institutionalising
A: Managerialist
D: Politicising

Source: Edward and Tallontire 2009
Questions

A: Managerialist

B: Institutionalising

C: Pragmatic

D: Politicising

Worker voice? Realisation of rights?

Source: Edward and Tallontire 2009
Questions

A: Managerialist

B: Institutionalising

C: Pragmatic

D: Politicising

Source: Edward and Tallontire 2009
Lessons for retailers and development

• Development is a political process
• Don’t fear politics
• Recognise the reality of politics and all its messiness
  • Take time to understand the local situation
  • Don’t run away too quickly
• The more we are “managerial”, the less we are able to promote major structural or systemic change
Sources

Peter Edward and Anne Tallontire (2009 forthcoming) “Business and Development – towards re-politicisation”, *Journal of International Development*

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DFID-ESRC project, The Governance Implications of Private Standards Initiatives in Agri-food Chains, 2007-2010 (POPS project)

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