

For a business to grow and succeed it needs a happy, healthy and thriving community around it. Your business has the power to support the community where it operates simply by engaging all employees, customers and community representatives and leaders.

Follow the steps below to advance **community engagement**, on the Pathway to **Net Positive Hospitality**!



1. Know your community

It is essential to develop your own knowledge and awareness regarding the community where your hotel is located to successfully engage with and contribute to the prosperity of the community.

Questions to consider, to know the local community better:

- What is the history of the local area and are there any interesting facts about this community / location?
- What are the local arts, crafts, and artefacts and how can visitors engage with them?
- Is there information available regarding local natural and cultural heritage?
- Are there local businesses, especially small or micro businesses, that are innovating on sustainable products or services?
- What are the local environment issues, especially waste and water management, biodiversity?
- What are the local livelihoods and are there particular groups (e.g. youth, homeless, indigenous people, people with disabilities, refugees) that need support?
- Which not-for-profit or social services organisations are working in the area and what are they doing to support the community?
- Are there local leadership or community representation groups active in the area? Is there an active DMO engaged with community wellbeing?



2. Set targets and develop a plan

When hotel employees are knowledgeable about the local community and include community wellbeing in their regular work, it becomes easy to engage customers in positively contributing to the wellbeing of the local community and environment.

Develop team and individual knowledge about the local community, including:

- Its history, natural and cultural heritage, arts, local businesses, environment and social issues, and the local impact of climate change.

Identify areas and set targets that the hotel wants to positively impact on, such as:

- Supporting local businesses that are contributing to sustainability.
- Increasing women's inclusion across all departments' work.
- Elevating appreciation for local arts and culture.
- Minimising waste that pollutes local areas and goes to landfill.
- Reducing homelessness and increasing local livelihood access.

Each department or team should explore how they, through their work, will contribute towards the hotel target for community support. **This includes you!** Supervisors & managers, communications & guest relations, procurement, HR, CSR leads, and all front of house and back of house staff.

- Find out about your hotel targets for sustainability and positive community impact.
- Think about how you personally / your team would like to contribute to community impact targets.
- Discuss and agree on your personal / team targets for positive community impact.



3. Take action

Incorporating positive community impact into existing roles doesn't have to be difficult or complex.

Simple and effective options to consider:

- Represent local art, culture and heritage across facilities, services, and communications.
- Source more from local suppliers, especially from micro, small and medium enterprises, for FF&E and F&B.
- Include information on local tours and innovative community support projects in information for guests.
- Include local community or value chain engagement and participation in your hotel's sustainability initiatives.

A hotel does not have to commit to many community projects. One or two well-developed initiatives that engage all relevant teams and guests will have a greater impact for the community. We recommend:

- Keeping teams informed and engaging them to find ways within their roles to contribute to work that supports community welfare. For example: when procuring local sustainable F&B products, ensure culinary, procurement, F&B, communications and guest relations teams are aware of the initiative and showcase it through their work.
- Providing opportunities for employees and guests to engage with community projects, through participation, volunteering, donations or visits. Try to make the most of employees' skills within any volunteering opportunities you offer.
- Exploring training opportunities for employees and for community groups, where skills and knowledge can be shared.

Be sure to avoid causing harm, by implementing the following steps:

- Accurately represent activities for guests to visit or engage in and ensure information is up-to-date and easily accessible to all.
- Ensure access and use of local resources do not impinge on local population and indigenous people's rights.
- Ensure business activities are not negatively impacting local communities' access to basic services and resources.
- Include a community wellbeing assessment in your sustainability programme.
- Sensitively and respectfully represent local culture and heritage.



4. Review progress

Remember to update your targets by checking how community welfare initiatives are progressing and reviewing their relevance.

Collect feedback from employees and guests:

- Are they aware of community initiatives and find it easy to participate?
- If not, what are the barriers?
- Are there additional opportunities employees or guests would be keen to be involved in?

Collect feedback from the community through partner organisations:

- Is the impact still relevant for the community?
- Are there any unintended impacts that need to be mitigated?
- Are there other issues or needs that have become a priority or present an opportunity?



Resource:

Discover further advice within the [Social Value International Standards and Guidance](#)