



# ROUNDTABLES

## Demystifying *fear of the* Communities

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“How to build dialogues with communities generating guarantees of success based on trust and not fear, through a long-term vision”

A black and white photograph of three individuals seated at a table with microphones. On the left, a man with dark hair and a beard rests his chin on his hand, looking towards the camera. In the center, a woman with long dark hair looks slightly to the right with a gentle smile. On the right, a man with a full beard and mustache looks directly at the camera. The scene appears to be a formal meeting or press conference.

# I INTRODUCTION and THANKS

# INTRODUCTION

PROhumana is an independent and self-sustainable, nonprofit, nonpartisan Chilean organization, created in 1997, which defines its identity as a DO TANK acting from a critical perspective. In October 2016 PROhumana carried out Roundtable discussions to dialogue and generate knowledge about community relations. General Managers, Sustainability Managers and Public Affairs Managers of the main companies in our country were convened, with emphasis on companies that require a relationship with the communities based on dialogue and trust, such as mining, forestry, sanitary, energy and other extractive industries.

To carry out this initiative PROhumana was sponsored by Aguas Andinas, BHP Billiton, Forestal Mininco and Transelec, besides the creation of a strategic alliance with Confederación de la Producción y el Comercio (CPC), and Sociedad de Fomento Fabril (SOFOFA).

We also want to highlight the support from Transelec and their Corporate Affairs and Sustainability area. They facilitated the process in logistic and operational terms, which was an important support for carrying-out the Roundtables.

The dialogue and reflection process was based on the premise that the communities are key agents in the vision of sustainable management, as promoted by PROhumana in the Model of Sustainable Business Strategy. In this framework one of the dimensions of integral management deals with communities, regarding the following sub-dimensions:

- > Relationships with the communities
- > Conflict prevention
- > Social Investment
- > Corporate Volunteerism
- > Responsible relationships strategy

The following are some references that show the importance of managing community relations based on trust and not on fear, and setting the reactive position aside.

- “The pressure from the communities is becoming more and more intense, and that has made the companies manage the relationship in a defensive way. Furthermore the decisions in the companies have started to become guided by fear of the community and of the pressure groups<sup>1</sup>.
- 45,16 % of the executives of big companies operating Chile believe that the greatest challenge of CSR and Sustainability areas is their relationship with the communities<sup>2</sup>.
- “To support and strengthen local communities’ participation in water and sanitization management improvement.”<sup>3</sup>.
- To ensure the adoption of inclusive , participatory and representative decisions that respond to the needs at all levels”<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Report “Roundtables on Business Sustainability” 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Study about “Perception of Business Sustainability 2015”, carried out together with the consultant Add-Value and the Faculty of Communications of Universidad de Desarrollo.

<sup>3</sup> Goal 6.b. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

<sup>4</sup> Goal 16.7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

# THANKS

The “Roundtables: Demystifying the fear of Communities” was a space of conversation that convened **47 General Managers, Sustainability Managers and Public Affairs Managers** about the importance of the communities in the business strategies.

This dialogue process was possible thanks to the support and participation of several companies and institutions that considered these roundtables as an opportunity to contribute to a sustainable development of the country and to create long-term relationships based on trust and dialogue.

They are part of the success of this initiative and we thank them for joining us and believing in the need of co-creating dialogues with the communities to guarantee successful outcomes. 4 Goal 16.7 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

4

ALLIES



SPONSORS



# SAID in the ROUNDTABLES 2017

*“We believe that our contribution to the community is just **to provide jobs and pay taxes**”.*

*“I do believe there is a need to learn how to communicate, which is easy said, but trying it **in practice is much more difficult**”.*

*“As a company we have failed incorporating something that we **incorporate** in all our relationships, which is **emotion**”.*

*“When the community is with you, **the politician will be with you**”.*

*“Because in the end experience shows that if you arrive at an early stage, if you put aside your perceptions and make an effort **to build relationships with the community**, the answers have always been positive”.*

*“I think we need to listen to the people, work with them and **do things for them with their best in mind**”.*

*“The community does not need more economic resources, but a **good dialogue**, a good **capacity to organize and to work together**”.*

*“I believe that all companies are trying to make an effort and I don't think the communities have to be demonized; **they don't necessarily act from ill will**”.*



## **II PARTICIPANTS in ROUNDTABLES**

# PARTICIPANTS in ROUNDTABLES

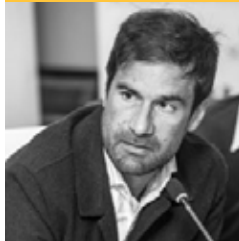
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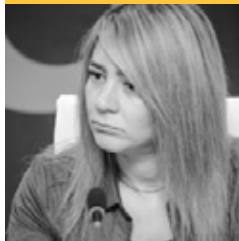
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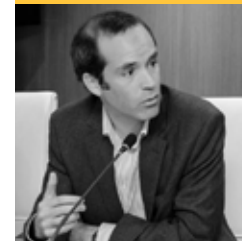
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\* The positions correspond to the date of the roundtables (October 2016).

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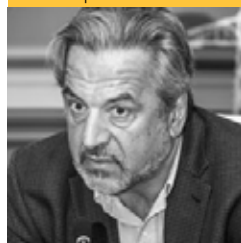
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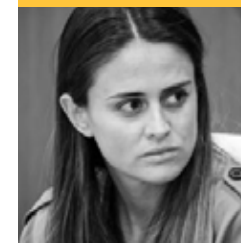
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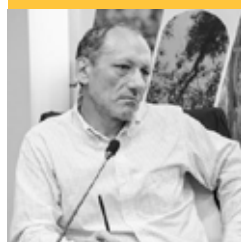
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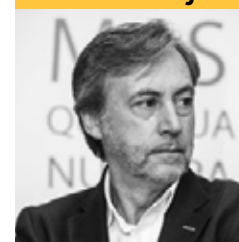
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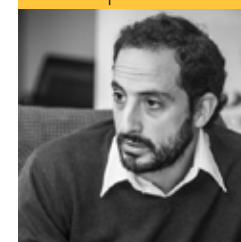
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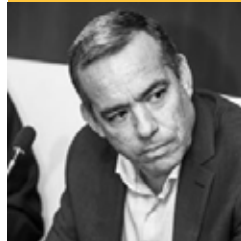
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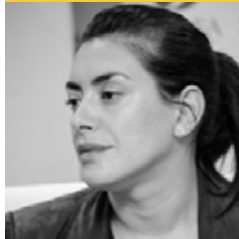
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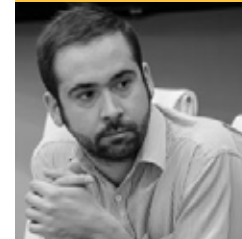
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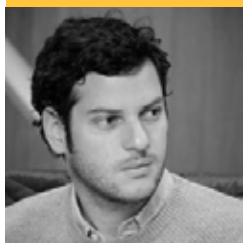
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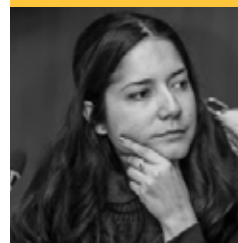
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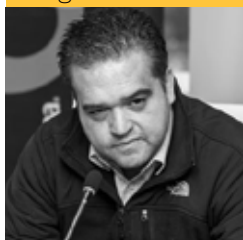
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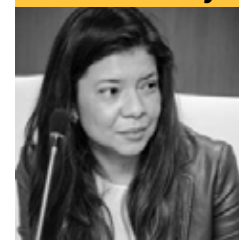
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\* The positions correspond to the date of the roundtables (October 2016).

# SAID in the ROUNDTABLES 2017

*“The logic is how I make my company to become a **development engine for the community**”.*

*“The communities want **dignity in their life** and they feel there is an opportunity that the State has failed in providing”.*

*“What does the community expect of the company? **Employment** or something beneficial, and secondly, that there won't be any harm. No road impacts, nor impacts on the environment”.*

*“**Communities want profits from the companies** and that is what we see in other countries. I think we're going in that direction and that hurts companies in this country”.*

*“The communities are people just like us, who know **much more about their pains and their needs**. They are not waiting for the company to tell them where to go and there, I believe there is a huge opportunity and sometimes we do not realize the power they have”.*

*“Why does it seem like the companies are trying to change the world instead of doing things right? Why is it harder for us to look at ourselves and find a way to be a good neighbor, rather than thinking about how to educate everyone or **how to build white elephants**”.*

*“The problems the world is **facing** are also the problems the companies are having”.*



**III  
METHODOLOGICAL  
BACKGROUND**

# METHODOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

This report contains the analysis of the reflections on five questions about community relationships and co-construction of the dialogue to ensure success by the group of **General Managers and Sustainability and Public Affairs Managers**. The questions were answered in the context of “**Roundtables: Demystifying Fear of the Communities**”.

## METHODOLOGY

The methodology used was Discussion Groups, conducted by a facilitator. The participants were divided in tables with a maximum of 14 people. The information collected was analyzed with the technique of discourse and content analysis. Total time for each Roundtable was approximately 90 minutes.

## GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To create a space for reflection and generation of knowledge about communities relationships.

## SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- > To convene leaders of different sectors to gather visions, opportunities and challenges in the context of community relations.
- > Co-construct dialogues with the communities to guarantee success based on trust and not on fear.

## DISCUSSION GROUPS

Discussion Groups is a technique to collect qualitative data, it has been used in different sociology research fields, and the possibilities to generate learning by using this method have been widely valued.

There are two ways of creating a discussion group to give an account of the different discourses and trends:

1. One in which homogeneity of the group is ensured, in other words, the participants have similar sociodemographic characteristics.
2. The second in which the purpose is to include representatives or key players from different fields provided they are involved in the subject that will be discussed.

# METHODOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

In the case of the “Roundtables: Demystifying fear of the Communities” the second methodology was used because the purpose was to identify the main characteristics of a specific group of actors’ discourse.

For this study 47 people were grouped in four roundtables, held on the 14<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of October 2016.

3. Why do not people, customers and communities trust the companies?
4. What factors have you failed to consider for creating constructive trust-based dialogs?

A discourse analysis was made for each question, by identifying the main points and reflections in each one of the answers.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The discussion was centered on four axes, and the questions, as well as the methodological and theoretical background regarding community relations and co-construction of dialogue to ensure success, were developed by PROhumana at least two months in advance.

The questions that guided the groups’ reflections and the research trend were:

1. Why are you reactive and fear the communities?
2. Why community relations are not successful in Chile?

# SAID in the ROUNDTABLES 2017

*“The communities are tired, bored of sitting in a fifth meeting, listening to the eighteenth project. They begin to have **less time, less availability, and less willingness to interact**”.*

*“I believe that there is a work that far exceeds what the companies can do, and that is to start making **Chileans like each other**, not only to make likable companies, but also likable Chileans, who trust their neighbor”.*

*“The question I ask myself is: **Do we dialogue with the community?** No, we don't. It's a monologue. The owner presents a project and gives a damn monologue to the communities”.*”.

*“A community that receives the support of a company, will probably not act against the company, but **align itself with the company's projects** and look at them with a different view”.*

*“The **money** one spends on community relationships often has **no relation at all** to the success of the relationship”.*

*“Our role is to **make the territory better with a project** than without a project. And we have to fight for that. It is the main goal”.*

A black and white photograph of three men seated at a roundtable. The man in the foreground is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The man behind him is looking towards the right. The man on the right is looking towards the camera. They are all wearing microphones. The background features a banner with the SOFOFA logo and the text 'K PROHUMANa' and 'Social para el Bien Común'.

## **IV ANALYSIS ROUNDTABLES**

1.

What we mean by  
community: definition  
of the concept

# 1. What we mean by community: definition of the concept

The definition of community generated diverse reflections and different points of view among the participants of the Roundtables, thus allowing us to understand that there is no unanimous conceptualization about it.

Although the most prominent idea is related to concepts like Area of Influence, Area of Interest or Impacted Territory; novel contributions such as Global Community, Digital Community, Sacrifice Zone, among others appear in their contributions.

Along the reflection there was one question that appeared constantly and transversally among the participants and oriented the answers towards new interpretations: **¿is the community the same as our area of influence or is it much more?**

*“At least my interpretation is that the communities are groups of human beings located around your activity. One could extend it beyond that by saying that the community is all the inhabitants, I would say that those who receive the strongest impact are the ones located near the place where the project or the investment is being developed,”*

*“But the point is that now the projects have extended their area of impact... then, whole Chile feels – and I believe it is a genuine feeling – the right to argue regarding those projects, because they impact on their territory, beyond de community where the project is located”:*

*“We have to see the community with a different logic; it is not only the people located nearby; community is the complete territory, even beyond the national territory. Nevertheless, the enterprises retain that the communities are the people that live in the area of influence. That is the definition companies usually have, that is the community directly affected. They are the ones that suffer the negative or positive impacts of a project.”*

Based on this logic a new concept appears, called “value of contingency”, which the participants of Roundtables explain as follows:

*“People value something even if they never visit it, even if they don’t know what it is, would never use it, or would never be affected personally. In some areas related to water resources or biodiversity, the value of contingency in Chile has increased. Today the possibility that hole Chile would be against those projects even if they have no idea where they are, is much higher than 15-20 years ago (...) Then, it is not necessarily a public affairs/ external affairs issue any more, but it is a community relations issue, in the sense of a global community in our country, where even the Supreme Court can end up arguing about your project”.*

This “value of the contingency” is associated to another definition of community, called “sacrifice zone”:

*“Having more energy, having more obstacles, also affects that other “community”, all those who not necessarily are affected, but anyway they*

# 1. What we mean by community: definition of the concept

*are aware of the perceptions and conflicts of other bigger communities that say “ok, something is still missing here”. But this is another way in which I can deal with the sacrifices that some localities have had to face for the rest of us to have electricity, or other resources”..*

However, the Roundtables participants view goes beyond that, suggesting that not only the communities on site have to be considered in the projects, but also the virtual ones that are mainly connected by social media.

*“The communities today are also digital communities and according to the same logic I believe it is also important to consider them, because today whatever you do is public in a second. It is instantaneous; it can take you more or less time depending on where the project is located. If you are in a remote area, it could take more time, but in the end everything we do has the sense of immediacy, of being public. I believe this change also has affected the relation to the communities.*

But beyond the different definitions, among the Roundtables participants a question arises; how could the enterprise be inserted in a given community? Because according to the participants “we do not feel we are part of the community”

*“It happens frequently today that we dig a hole and a person cannot take his car out... and that is because we do not understand that we are stakeholders of the territory and I believe that is the focus, you have to understand that you are part of the community and as you are part of the community, you have to build a proactive and formal relationship with those communities”.*

*“Sometimes it seems like we arrive there and struggle from a different trench. Why is it so hard for us to arrive, integrate and become part of that community? It is not about thinking of the needs of others, but thinking of how we, as part of the community want it to be; we are also involved in its future. I think that we are trapped in transactional relationships and we are not capable of feeling part of what we are part of. From there we can extend the circle, from the local to the national and the global circle and so on.”*

The answer to this controversy does not give rise to double interpretations and set up the basis for further reflections, regarding the forms of dialoguing and relating to the communities:

*“I assume that we as companies, from the moment in which we set up in a community we do it forever. We become neighbors and as neighbors we have commitments and responsibilities just as “Mrs. Juanita” that lives next to the enterprise or facility we have there. And the fact of having responsibilities and commitments is not only about the wallet you can offer, but also about the involvement, so I put between quotation marks this issue of the obligation or not obligation, to be understood or not, I believe that the mere fact of being neighbors constitute a responsibility and I have to take charge of that until I leave the place, if I ever leave”*

2.

Relationships based on  
trust and constructive  
dialogue

## 2. Relationships based on trust and constructive dialogue

Talking about trust and constructive dialogue in the context of Roundtables responds to the logic of searching for more effective and prosperous ways of relationship for both parties. This is also the way Roundtables participants understand it. They openly show their weaknesses and deficiencies in terms of generating that kind of relation. They say: *“We have to put a heart and a face to the dialogue”*.

*“We, the people at work in the area of Public Affairs and Sustainability, must be able to make that kind of dialogue be transversal in the institution. I mean that kind of approach, that way of looking at the community. Because eventually it is possible to generate a link with the people but not with the institution, and if that one person leaves the company it all starts from scratch. Then the challenge is how are we able to build as we go, and grow in this permanent mutual relationship of trust, how are we capable to permeate it in our target audience that is our organization”*.

*“Sometimes we say: How can we make our community understand if they know nothing about our business? But the community does understand when you are able to explain the project, to plan with them, to tell them how they can participate in the decisions, why they are important” (...)“Then here is where the dialogue is needed, creating that communication and creating that channel, going back to the rationale, having a clear roadmap, having clear guidelines with them, the community is not going to ask for things that are not on the roadmap.*

When talking about the causes why those dialogues based on trust do not exist now and mistrust controls the relations with communities; two lines of

analysis emerge, both linked to sociological topics: on the one hand it deals with the general kind of relationship in the Chilean society at large and on the other it deals with the perception of the enterprises at national level.

*“I believe that mistrust is an issue that is always present in our society, that in Chile it goes beyond the relationship with our communities and that is the issue at the moment of establishing a relationship with the community, it is always present.”*

*“I believe that the work that is needed goes far beyond what the companies can do. It is an educational problem in the country, which has to be dealt with a campaign at a different level to make the Chilean people love each other more, not only creating lovable companies but also lovable Chileans, to make us believe in our neighbor.”*

*“I believe that for many years the companies have had great shortfalls and finally we act without thinking of the communities or thinking of the territories in which we enter, there are many reasons for mistrust.”*

*“No, we didn’t relate as we should have done and we created a condition of huge mistrust in many communities. Here I connect to what you said, community versus enterprise”*.

Fear also appears as the axis of reflection in dealing with the debate about the generation of constructive dialogues and trust. In this context however, fear has different forms of expression and manifestation. One of them is about managing expectations.

## 2. Relationships based on trust and constructive dialogue

*“I believe that one of the issues that has caused the fear companies have of communities is related to not feeling capable to fulfill their expectations and to caricature the communities as a kind of insatiable being that will never be happy and each time I give something to them they will ask for more, next year it will have to be twice and the next triple... Then, sometimes, there is this caricaturing from our part”.*

*“I have witnessed many cases in which the obstacle is thinking that the community will never be satisfied, thinking that is only a monetary relationship”.*

*“That fear, I believe, has to be broken. We have to know we can manage expectations and that after reaching a point, if one generates a concrete dialog and a relationship of trust, the resources needed could be even less after solving some specific problems”.*

In this same line there are evident issues related to acting consistently, in connection to the success or good execution of the projects

*“Because you might be working... and suddenly something happens, you have to do something if not, it will affect the project. But the way you face it sometimes distances yourself from your community. Then, I believe it is fear of that permanent consistency you need to have; to that treatment, to that constant empathy we should have, sometimes the companies are afraid to face it.*

*“The fear is often located at engineering management or project management level, because there is this idea that if you open a conversation*

*with the communities, the communities will get involved and they will end up wanting to design your project.”*

Ignorance and lack of knowledge are other factors that generate fear.

*“Initially, before fear, it was ignorance rather than arrogance. Nobody payed attention to the impact it could cause to the community, you would put in a gas pipeline and goodbye”.*

*“I believe that fear emerges from lack of knowledge. When you don't know who is in front of you, the first and probably the most natural feeling is fear; fear of how to approach the community, fear of disappointing their expectations or fear of the communities possible reaction”.*

In this scenario the need for empathy from the companies' side becomes evident. Because considering everything said until now, the dominant position at the moment of starting a dialogue with the communities, in many cases, is an “enemy” approach.

*“I absolutely agree on the point about empathy. We do not arrive to them with an approach of empathy but as adversaries: they (the community) want something that is not fair”.*

*“How can they see us as friends if we see them as enemies? It calls my attention to hear the comment about how the community wants to take the biggest slice of the company. If we have that vision, obviously the community will also have that vision and will try to take advantage of it.”*

## 2. Relationships based on trust and constructive dialogue

*“When you listen from the perspective of empathy, trying to put yourself in the place of the other and to listen to what they really need and how can we help them. Sometimes help consists in helping them looking for mechanisms so they can solve their own problems and their needs more than us meeting their needs”.*

*“I believe that when one is really ready to enter into a community, to participate, to understand them, to get to know them, to understand the way they function, after that new paths open naturally”.*

Jointly with empathy, active listening is evidenced as a trend for the companies to achieve a dialogue and a more effective communication with the communities.

*“Today every company says that they listen to the communities, all of us make stakeholders mapping and look at our groups of interest and all that is much better than it was 10 years ago. But in the minute in which they have to talk to the communities, they tend not to hear what the community really wants, but stay in the more “marketer” message, they stay in the communicational kind of message and do not go to the bottom.”*

*“This is not a problem at Board of Directors or Top management level only but also at the level of collaborators who fail to understand that we are bursting into a place in which a culture already existed, it already existed a way of doing things, and the company arrives, somehow abusing of its power in that place. Then I think that makes it difficult to start relationships because we do not know how to listen. Because we do not pay attention to each other, because in reality we do not have our ears tuned”.*

Another factor that the participants in the Roundtables consider as a fundamental one to generate a trust based constructive dialogue is the capacity of the communities to influence.

*“The community feels that the representatives of our companies do not have the capacity to influence, and the community really wants influence. When you dialogue with someone you have not only the capacity to listen, you have the capacity to give your opinion and hopefully change the point of view of the other. In other words you have the capacity to influence in the subject. Well, what happens in project discussions and what affects the communities is that one of the parties has no capacity to influence. So it is not a dialogue at all.”*

*“When you start an affective relationship with a community, you should not detach later because that detachment could have a negative effect, even worse than before starting the relationship. For that reason dialogue is so important, to co-create; in other words this is the same conclusion as we had reached before: we cannot impose anything.*

*“If you really want to build a relationship of trust, only participation is not enough, there must be influence, but influence is difficult because it generates expectations: How much will they be able to influence, will they be able to influence on where the water catchment will be located, or on the size of the tunnel, or how many workers you will bring? No. Today much is talked about influence of communities in the projects, I agree, but we have to deal with it with great care, because there are expectations involved that you have to work with; and many times you have to say no - and this “no” does not always produce conflicts, it could generate trust.”*

## 2. Relationships based on trust and constructive dialogue

In terms of dialogue, no doubt language is a preeminent factor. According to the previous expressions by the Roundtables participants “there are millions of tools developed in the world for that theme, some are very well done, very well constructed, but this is also about language and how the company relates to the community in its own language”.

The diagnostic in this sense is that the connection in terms of language, of codes and even in terms of tongue when it is about indigenous communities is missing. That generates mistrust. “What is missing is to ground these tools to the local reality in a given community”.

Reflections on the construction of dialogue puts on the table different forms of approximation of companies towards the communities, according to different scenarios and realities, often determined by the industry and/or the project that is going to be developed.

In this sense it was possible to identify five different **Types of Dialogue**, specified as follows:

### 1. MONOLOGUE:

*“The question I ask myself is: what do we dialogue with the community? We don’t dialogue, it is a monologue. The owner presents a project and gives a damn monologue in front of the communities, no dialogue at all. Then when I say “we dialogue with the communities”, lie, we do not dialogue with the communities. We go and give a beautiful monologue to the communities because they have no possibility to tell us anything, to change anything, because that bothers us, because that changes things and we start the speech saying that delays cost money and there is where our project dies.”*

### 2. EARLY DIALOGUE:

*“We have to be somewhat more proactive. If we want to we can do it. There are mechanisms for that like the early dialogue instances, early participation etcetera. We have done it; there are other companies that have done it and it works.”*

## 2. Relationships based on trust and constructive dialogue

### 3. INSTITUTIONALIZED DIALOGUE:

*“In other countries there are platforms which offer a more institutionalized dialogue, for example, to create a dialogue agency which favors the dialogue among the parties with clear rules”.*

### 4. REAL DIALOGUE:

*“I believe that building trust starts from a real dialogue, that is to say, there is a great difference between marketing and communication or marketing and real dialogue and I think that dialoguing is not easy, not even in a 1 to 1 situation. It is not easy to communicate between two persons, so it is an even bigger challenge for the company to have the culture or to develop the maturity to dialogue as a company, as an entity. It is also difficult for a community that represents the interest of a group. That is a challenge and I think it is not something that can be solved overnight, I believe that all the companies are trying to make an effort and I don't think the communities have to be demonized; they do not necessarily act from ill will. But I believe that there is a need to learn how to communicate, that is easily said but in practice when you try to do it is much more difficult.*

### 5. REACTIVE DIALOGUE:

*“I believe that the attitude of the company is rather reactive in terms of dialogue with the communities because historically that dialogue for many reasons did not exist. It was probably because the company didn't have the need to relate with the community, because there was no institution that required that dialogue. Dialogue eventually occurred because one of the parties – namely the community-, knocked at the door and demanded some things. Then I believe that there is an active role and a passive role during the initial stage and the enterprise is exactly in the passive role, then, from the start one takes a defensive position and rather tries to put out fires and solve problems than proposing or implementing policies”.*

3.

Action or Reaction:  
how to manage the  
relationship with  
commitment

### 3. Action or Reaction: how to manage the relationship with commitment

The participants of the Roundtables take charge of the fact that the companies have been reactive in their relationship with the community in most of the cases. They ensure that *“currently companies find it difficult when they have to face a community”*, accepting that *“the first word that comes to my mind is problem”*.

*“The problem we will have with the community because in some way they will want to ask for some things or have access to things. Problems they will have with noises, with the roads, with theft, with parking lots, with a list of things that are generated at that moment”*.

And in front of this “problem” the companies choose to react in different ways, for different reasons, but most of the times with the intention of facing situations that can be uncomfortable, as mentioned in the beginning of topic 3.

Some of the reasons mentioned for having been (and being) reactive refer to historical and cultural subjects

*“Historically, as a society, we have found it very difficult to see each other as equals. In general the other is a being that is “there”, that practically is not human, that is only an enemy and it is very difficult for us to find the common ground”*

*“I think that we have not been able to respond adequately in the past; and now, with the communities out in the streets we have seen that we have a historical debt, we have unfulfilled commitments and we are brutally in debt”*.

*“A historical debt which is a problem related to the way how industries were developed in the past, not paying attention to the community, to the environment, etc. Today they are in debt; that one is the historical debt and this is the immediate problem; this it is a short term problem, the community complains, they don’t want more smoke, they don’t want more noise, they don’t want more things, and yes, it is a short term problem. And all the solutions are long term solutions. That is the first reason why is so complicated from the point of view of solving the problems with the communities. When you take into account that difference in time, you realize that frequently the main actors of both parties, the company and the community, are not aware of all this and many of them have a very short continuity.”*

*“We have been reactive also because basically we are faced with history, with an inventory of unfulfilled commitments or offers, which are related to promises made from the transactional logic which neighbors still remember now”*.

*“Probably then, one of the greatest debts we have is to find an equation that takes us to a healthy win-win situation, because I have the impression that for a long time it has not been a healthy situation and not because of corruption, but simply because of the informal way of relating to the communities and slowly solving the problems as they appear, sometimes because of time shortage, it has ended up in transactions that probably with more time or with a different approach, would not have occurred but on the contrary, they have also created internal problems at community level.”*

### 3. Action or Reaction: how to manage the relationship with commitment

But also the merely economic reasons are evidenced, linked to the growth of the business.

*“Why have we been reactive? I think it is because the first focus was always placed “in the business”, unable to see that there is a context, that we are in a territory, that we are stakeholders of the territory”*

*“A reactive approach is a short term view, because if I do not care about the long term, if we minimize costs today and leave the future in other hands, that will in the end make you reactive”*

And what is the result of those circumstances and realities from which the company manages its relationship with the community? Mainly assistance based on relations and transactions.

*“We have been reactive because we have not taken charge of the impacts, I mean, there has been a system based on donations and assistance. We have not given ourselves time, and that is the difficulty today: to recover the trust and repair the confidence, something that is very much related to transparency and providing information. Besides that the issue is lack of knowledge and misinformation from both sides: stakeholders and enterprises”*

*“We have slowly legitimized a system in which the ones complaining, the louder voices, are those who obtain things. Then, those who were quiet say “well, if I haven’t gained anything by behaving, now I will start to misbehave”. And slowly we have created that sort of system in every area, from the area of education to community relations”*

But also with an arrogant attitude and no interest to relate actively with the communities.

*“In general, at country level, we have been reactive and I believe it has been out of arrogance, because at the beginning the enterprises did not consider the communities as part of their business strategy”*

*“I think companies were not interested in interacting with the communities at all, that’s why when they do relate they do it in a wrong way, reactively. As a mere need, it is not that they say: “oh, I’d love to interact with the community, but I’m scared”; they tend to say instead: “no, why are we going to do that” or “what a bore, that is not my role”*

Another element in the analysis is the deficiencies that have made these relations more reactive than active. One of them is emotion.

*“As an enterprise we have failed to include something I have included in every relationship which is emotion and affection; because when you build any relationship you include affection, you include emotion, in this relationship instead we detract it, I don’t know why, we have built merely transactional relationships and I think that one of the keys is to include the emotions and the affections in this relationship, it is not different to any other relationship we have.”*

Lack of knowledge and mistrust also appear strongly

### 3. Action or Reaction: how to manage the relationship with commitment

*“It is fundamental to know the territory and we have today a wonderful tool that has evolved in its level of perfection and requirements, it is the environmental impact study or the environmental impact declarations that are more frequent than an environmental impact study. I believe that it is an instance in which the knowledge of the territory should be taken more seriously, not only from the natural characteristics point of view but also from the human approach. I think that knowing well the locality and making a proper survey, a good baseline, good knowledge about neighbors, and knowledge about the context to be able to get the environmental license is a key element.*

*“There has been a lot of improvisation and that generates lack of awareness which generates mutual mistrust, then, the actors like the companies have not created a link to the environment and that has generated mistrust and a gap of unawareness both from the operation and from the communities side”.*

In general terms, a diagnostic made by the Roundtable participants concludes: it is about the historic inertia that has linked relationship with transaction, leaving aside elements of higher value content. The main inconveniences evidenced in this dynamics are the lack of analysis, limited vision of the opportunities, unfamiliarity with the communities and lack of commitment in the relationship with the community.

4.

# Roles, Leadership and Representativeness

## 4. Roles, Leadership and Representativeness

Reflecting about the roles and how they articulate the relationship with the communities, the participants in the Roundtables agree on the need to approach the relationship in a different way, mainly because the characteristics of one of the actors has changed: *“I think the companies have understood the new treatment that is demanded by the communities today. In other words, leaving the assistance based model and going to a stage of more conversation where you can propose things”.*

*“The community suddenly gained great power and the companies were not accustomed to that, companies found themselves in a completely different scenario, with empowered communities which have the capacity to reach high level authorities, with communities capable of reaching the Congress eventually. I think that the feeling of fear arises because they have to confront empowered communities. Because on the one hand, companies were not prepared, they didn’t have human or professional capabilities that could face those communities and did not know what to do.”*

Perceptions around this new scenario are varied in terms of the form and the content of the story, but always with a common background indicating that “for many years there wasn’t a fair treatment between company and community”, and that is now changing.

*“The community got bored of this fictitious participation in the projects, that kind of citizen participation where they called the communities, they put them in a room, presented the project, they were told this is the project, after all decisions already were made and people looked at themselves and said “OH yeah”, ok then, that is the project”.*

*“They (the community) want to be part of the company, they want to profit from these enterprises; we see that happening in other countries such as Australia and Canada. And I think that we are going there and that hurts entrepreneurs, in this country.”*

*“The communities are demanding, increasingly they are more prepared to choose their destiny and manage it. Communities want framework agreements and they would like to manage their money; they don’t want to receive money little by little. They are looking for more and more shared monitoring, they want to know the results and learn how to read the results of water and air monitoring; that path is already there, we cannot do anything else”.*

Moreover, the participants in the Roundtables expose different views about the role of the company in the context of community relations.

*“I have always thought that our role is to be part of a virtuous circle and contribute to make this virtuous circle happen and not necessarily to build it from scratch”.*

*“I believe that our role is to make a better territory with the project than without the project. And we have to struggle for that. That is the big goal.”*

*“I see a very clear role of the company taking responsibility, because it is a duty to take charge of the impacts that one is generating in the communities where one is present”.*

## 4. Roles, Leadership and Representativeness

*“Many times and for a long time, we have heard from the business world that our responsibility was to give employment and that was what we had to give back to the community, employment. And we forgot that we were part of that environment and on the contrary side being a great pollutant, a big polluter, sometimes we are a negative actor in that environment and not because we generate employments we are necessarily a great person”.*

*“There is an important role for companies to meet, it is to help articulate. I mean that one can help so the process is carried out in the best possible way. And it doesn't need to be part of the company's own expertise, it can as well be a consultant that will help in this process, helping to articulate to the local government, the regional government, the rest of the companies, the NGO's, to civil society, to be well represented, we should have really good representatives”*

Moving forward on the ideas about the role of the actors involved in community relations, the participants of the Roundtables also express some concern about their role as companies versus the role of the State.

*“What is the role that corresponds to the company? I think this is a conceptual question that isn't very well answered, not even at academic level. I guess it depends also on the companies, if we think of the 100 large economies half of them are companies, then when one says “it does not correspond to me, it is up to the State”. I think is quite inevitably because when the company takes charge of its impacts - which is the minimum they can do - they step into a field that traditionally has belonged to the State. Education, infrastructure, sports, culture... Because there is a Council of*

*Culture and Arts, there is a Ministry of Sports, there is a Ministry of Health, but as a company we are in those fields as well, we are overlapping”*

*“I think that the role of the State and the role of the company are suddenly mixing up leading to uncertainty and distrust. It is necessary to distinguish very well what is the role of each, because when one starts to try to resolve the problems of the other, the incentives produced are sometimes not adequate”.*

In this context, some of the participants in the Roundtables consider that the deficit of infrastructure generated by the State would give rise to some confusion about roles among the members of the community and to the prevalence of fear in the companies.

*“When one arrives with a project the truth is that they (the community) see the opportunity of supplementing the deficits that the State, and many times the municipality or the relevant authorities, have left. Then they want to see what possibilities there are in the private entity to cover that deficit, infrastructure, parks, sports or whatever. In the studies made to develop a project often that is the first thing you notice; that you would be asked to make up for the insufficient infrastructure that the State should have provided”.*

*“I think that one of the fears that we can have as a company is to know how far we can go in the relationship with our communities, where to start and where our role ends. And to be explicit about it: many times we can feel that we are taking charge of responsibilities that are not ours, they correspond to the State of Chile”.*

## 4. Roles, Leadership and Representativeness

Another aspect that acquires significance is the role of employees. That is the “human dimension” that permeates the community relationship, because ultimately it is a relationship between people.

*“When one works in community relations plans, you come across a variety of internal actors in the company that obviously affect how plans are developed and the results they have”.*

*“There are some elements in community relations, which regardless of the results you could get produce an impact, because people do not know very well how to handle them. Therefore, there are two levels of internal actors, the management level and the workers themselves who have a daily link with the community, and I think that it is extremely important to keep that in mind at planning level and when trying to have a new type of relationship with the community”.*

In this line the importance of those who lead the community relations is emphasized, establishing the requirement to manage emotions, language and business expertise harmoniously, for the sake of the success of this relationship.

*“Besides the strategy, this people obviously need to know the business well. They have to be people who know how to use the language to achieve the goal and how to ask questions to help them find their own answers. It is an extremely complex role because it is not just meeting them, telling, listening, No! The one in charge of community relations is not any kind of person; it is not just any profile. This person must have an emotional*

*management that also allows them to create a culture within the company but at the same time needs to travel with complete freedom, solidarity and fraternity, through all sectors that integrate the multiple and distinct communities within the company”.*

*“These people are extremely tired, they are exhausted, and they have lots of data on their head and do not know very well how to handle the matter. They also feel the pressure of their board of directors and their managers. They think: ‘I have to get to an agreement’, ‘I have to achieve a positive participation’, ‘I have to get everyone to sign this document’. That person could indeed be afraid and he or she is the person who is working every day with the community”.*

As counterpart the Roundtable participants make the same reflection on the role of the community, their leadership and diversity, distinguishing different types of actors that influence the community relationship.

*“There is a great diversity of actors with which one relates. In the end, behind each community there are the neighbors, who are different, who have problems, wishes, doubts, interests, legitimate or not, also quite different”.*

*“There are other actors that I call “the tollbooth”. Those who call themselves community, but they are not necessarily a directly impacted community. But you just have to sit and get along with them, because it helps to have a real and complete link with the community. If you don’t talk to them, you do not pay the toll and cannot get in.”*

## 4. Roles, Leadership and Representativeness

*“There are the actors who form part of the community, but who are sitting in the Regional Secretariat of Environment, the Regional Secretariat of Public Works, in the Municipal Works Unit, in the Regional Government, with whom it can be difficult to create the setting to answer questions and find solutions”.*

*“Incidentally there are also instigators, who take advantage, as somebody said, of all the spaces that one leaves, they take advantage of the weaknesses of each one, and of the work that one has not done. They often have commercial interests, which can cause a lot of damage”.*

*“There are actors at regional or national, or even international level, who have a vested interest in what we do. That depends on each industry. They do not necessarily live in the territory, but we have to consider them as a community as well. And we need to start to make this reflection because the actors who are not directly in the territory are usually those that make relationships more complex, because we tend to keep them out of our strategy. It is very important to be aware of that”.*

As a result of this description of actors and roles, Roundtable participants appeal to the need for articulation and representativeness of the leadership.

*“The problem we have in Chile today is that the presidents of neighborhood councils are the people who have the time to accept the position. Then, if we do not have strong leaders on the other side of the civil society, it is difficult to articulate well, it is difficult to mobilize the society, because frequently*

*we reach agreements with these leaders, and when they are taken down to the grass root level people say: “But hey, his man does not represent us”.*

*“Then, I think that what cuts across all areas talking about projects, is the need to have capacity to identify well, beyond the position and the formality, who the local leaders are.”*

*“I think that no company, or very few, can generate a deep, effective, and long term change doing it by themselves. Without articulation, I believe, it will not happen; we, the companies, are called to have a conversation among us and to create a community among us in the territories, in those places where we have more things in common”.*

5.  
Solutions and Successful  
Experiences

# 5. Solutions and Successful Experiences

The spaces for reflexion generated during the Roundtables also opened the opportunity to see directly some successful experiences and proposals for concrete actions to move towards community relations based on trust and not fear.

In this regard, the Roundtable participants shared different visions and ideas in search for solutions, many of which could produce a turning point in the relationship with the communities.

Below we mention the selected ones and those which reached a greater level of development and consensus throughout the four days of interventions in the Roundtables.

## 1. TO PLAN AND PROMOTE EARLY RELATIONSHIPS

The idea that things “*are not well done*” in community relations, is present and underlying in all of the Roundtables meetings. The transactional and the assistance-based systems do not fit the present model of society, which leads to the idea that “*we have to do it in a different way*” - according to the Roundtables participants.-

*“First we have to decide who will be part of this due process. In other words, all of them must be represented. Secondly, which structures have to be governed, or, how often will we meet, which will be the way to do it, which are the big issues to discuss, what are the priorities, what are we going to do if a conflict is generated, how are we going to solve it... namely: **to establish a development governance**”.*

In addition to this idea of development governance, the concept of the road map, which goes in the same line of acting early that was proposed in the previous premise, also relates to the management of expectations.

*“Having a road-map that shows how we are going to interact with the community. When it’s OK to say yes and when it’s OK to say no”*

*“When one has a clear map, it is much easier to “generate agreements” and on the other hand, defend ourselves from these “instigators” or “actors” that suddenly come into the relationship to generate conflicts. And if we put on the table the agreements and the common interests with the community, the instigators lose strength allowing us to reach an agreement and have the social license”.*

*“When you get to a new place, introduce yourself, show yourself as you are, learn about the expectations of others and clearly indicate what you can and what you cannot do, if not, in the future, some of these expectations will fail and then trust will be broken.”*

The planning section also proposes the **usage of tools and platforms** provided by the State, which can help to improve projects management, as well as community relations.

*“There is a website of the Ministry of Public Property in which you can find the properties owned by the State; there is another portal which is also the State’s about the areas of disaster. The State is developing tools in such a way that one can get important information that can help thinking and planning the intervention in the territory”.*

# 5. Solutions and Successful Experiences

## 2. SYSTEMATIZE THE COMMITMENTS

The historic debt and lack of social license mentioned throughout the analysis of the Roundtables often came up hand-in-hand with unfulfilled promises or commitments. This point also appears as a working focus with the purpose of building relationships and generating transcendent bonds of trust, beyond the people who are the protagonists of the relations.

*“We need to systematize, because we forget the commitments. And as this was not important to the company, nobody registered the commitments. Then, the Community said ‘look, Juanito came and promised me such a thing, but they never fulfilled it’. It is necessary to generate platforms, systems, which allow systematizing the relationship with the community”.*

*It is important to create mechanisms and protocols, and places where documents are kept, to know who made the commitment towards the community.”*

*“It is important that each one of the promises that are made is documented over time, to keep those promises when people change.”*

## 3. TRAINING AND PREPARATION

The importance of dialogue in community relations is the key and thus is shown by the analysis of each one of the opinions expressed during the Roundtables. Such is its importance that one of the solutions proposed for improvement deals with how dialogue is approached and with the methodologies and tools associated with its development.

*“I think it is very important to be prepared to dialogue with the communities. It is not just coming in and start talking. We must prepare well, professionally, and in this sense each one of us must search the methodologies that exist because this subject has been studied a lot; nowadays there are techniques and frames of references to work better with the communities.”*

*“That point seems to be important; we don’t have to work in the dark nor work only based in our intuition. We can also learn from what has worked and what has not worked in other countries which are more advanced than us”.*

*“I think that we must be trained in the subject, but we must also train the counterpart. We forget that the other, who is a legitimate other, that I understand and appreciate and that is part of my community, sometimes does not have the tools to dialogue. It would be ideal to provide tools so that these people know more than you so that they are on the same level to understand and build together the topics addressed”.*

# 5. Solutions and Successful Experiences

## 4. COLLABORATIVE DIALOGUE

In the same line as the previous premise, there are proposals to promote the dialogue and the ways to do it, with a collaborative and joint vision of development.

*“I believe that these agencies for dialogue could be generated by the State, being more independent they could properly encourage dialog”*

*“The big challenge is how to generate a collaborative society, which has to do with the feeling that we are all part of the community. Then if we can have a table that gathers all of us, we will have a view towards development in the territory, which will go beyond my project, which is about a vision of the future and then possibly we will have many more points in common. If we create a table to think of the future of a territory and articulate freely within that territory, somehow we change this transactional relationship to create a collaborative one in which we all sit in the same boat and start rowing in the same direction. If we succeed, we all succeed, if we fail, we all fail. If we do not change, I believe we will continue failing”.*

## 5. LOCAL ALLIANCES, THE KEY FOR SUCCESS

The need to generate partnerships arose from several parallel realities that come together in the same solution: to look for associativity, which strengthens trust and balances the roles and knowledge of all their members, beyond the social / business status.

*“The Alliances made to approach the community are very relevant and crucial to the success of the project. Partnerships with local actors, with the municipality and the municipal corporation, allow to achieve high impact and low investment activities”*

*“In general, it is important to know very well who they are , and approach them by forming alliances, to humbly come closer to those who know, which are those who live in each one of the areas.”*

*“We have to seek local alliances to align the interests of the community with the interests of the company, and check that they don’t decouple”.*

*“That link you generate with the community makes them become your allies, and those allies will help you to address in a better way certain negative external influences.”*

However, partnerships are not intended only at the level of the members of local communities; other companies that may also be impacting the same territory should be considered in this formula which, ultimately, asks for collaborative and articulated work.

*“What happens to us, the companies, when we are present in the same area of influence? Our experience is that in some geographic areas where one or more companies work, each one having powerful programs, we do not organize well even being neighbors. And maybe together we*

## 5. Solutions and Successful Experiences

*could create a collaborative environment that goes beyond what we can do by ourselves, merely coordinating, joining forces; we can carry out more powerful programs for the same community. However we have not been able to make a common offer beyond our individual capabilities. Then I also think of an articulation among the companies where there's a collaborative workspace that hasn't been really explored".*

*"It is extremely important to make progress in creating collaborative spaces where the individual ego drops a little bit to generate bigger gains and impacts by joining other companies in the same sector, because we will be able to generate a project that produces more impact by the fact we are working together".*

### 6. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT VISION

Finally the Roundtables participants call for a change in the way how community relations are dealt with, they call for a comprehensive approach to the communities. They say we should go beyond monetary links and make good interventions, with a vision of long-term supervision.

*"I think that what should and what shouldn't be done is not about the material contribution, but about the form and the content and the mechanism with which we work with the community and make contributions."*

*"We must generate much wider instances, a broader dialogue and a vision for the development of the territory and when one speaks about that, it is possible to take the bucks out of the table. Because the problem is that the bucks produce distortion".*

*"We have fallen many times in the shortcut to believe that we could buy relationships with gifts, when the key is to be able to have a common project and understand that a small gift given with love is worth more than a big gift given with contempt. Doing it with love, doing it of a genuine interest of doing it well is very different from fixing problems by giving out money."*

*"We must begin to move from the intervention in the territory to its development, to have a real concern for it, to accompany the interventions. The intervention is not just coming in, giving something and going away. Relationship processes are no longer relationship only, but a process of development. The community now values that and we never did."*

*"And there arises the concept of local development, where the base is to seek ways in which the community will not depend eternally on what one does or what one gives, and that the things we give become the seed or the engine so that one day the community can develop and do things by themselves. Then one will be a simple neighbor that generates presence or specific contributions, but not co-dependency".*

# SAID in the ROUNDTABLES 2017

*“I do believe there is a **need to learn how to communicate**, which is easy said, but trying it in practice is much more difficult”.*

*“But the basic thing is to find a way in which the community does not depend eternally on what one does or what one contributes, but a way in which the company is simply a neighbor who generates presence or specific contributions, **but no co-dependence**”.*

*“**It is a long term work** in which, many times, what we think they need is absolutely different from what they really need; even if we have been with them for 10 years”.*

*“People are aware that we can be wrong, but they don’t forgive us if **we don’t react in time**. That’s the key to how trust is built”.*

*“I think that 95% of the communities show understanding, but there is a **5% that does not want the development of the project** and which goal is to not go ahead with it”.*

*“As a country **we are in debt in terms of institutional structure** because it is not made to encourage dialogue. But the business world cannot wait for the institutional structure to catch up”.*



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