

## **Internship Report Suzlon Foundation**

Institution: Suzlon Foundation, Pune-India  
Time: 100816-110227, Full-time.  
Supervisor: Jasmine Gogia  
Address: Suzlon-Suzlon Foundation, One Earth sun lounge left wing opp. Magarpatta City,  
411028 Pune-Hadapsar, Maharashtra.  
Email: jasmine.gogia@suzlon.com  
Telephone: 00919763716672

### **Suzlon Foundation**

Suzlon Foundation is responsible for leading corporate social responsibility initiatives internally and externally for the Suzlon group of companies in India. The Suzlon Group is a multinational, family-run Indian wind power company that was founded in the state Gujarat in India in 1995. Today, Suzlon is Asia's market leading wind energy company with a presence in 21 different countries, covering four continents - the Americas, Asia, Australia and Europe. The mission of Suzlon Foundation is to ensure that the Suzlon Group is committed to ethical business practices that are fair to all the stakeholders, to ensure that the business is having a minimal impact on the natural environment, to enable local communities to develop their potential and to empower employees to be responsible civil society members. Some of the potentially negative impacts of the business that have been identified and that the foundation is working to address are land alienation, community conflicts, solid/water waste, impacts on health /livelihoods, inadequate safety for labor, loss of biodiversity, soil and water erosion and pollution. Suzlon Energy operates in eight states and two union territories in India and Suzlon Foundation is running CSR programs in all these locations.

Suzlon Foundation has around 20 employees, out of which 8 are based at the central office in Pune, Maharashtra and the rest in the remaining seven states. The central team is mainly responsible for CSR policies, strategies, communication and administration while state representatives take care of

monitoring, documentation and support of the CSR projects within the respective states, which are implemented by local NGO partners. The NGO partners are partly funded by Suzlon Foundation to carry out the different CSR projects in cooperation with local communities and authorities. The projects are in turn designed to address the specific needs of the local communities and have various different objectives, such as empowering women, improving health and education, enhancing livelihood opportunities, protecting the environment, enhancing agricultural practices and improving natural resource management.

## Internship at Suzlon Foundation

As interns at Suzlon Foundation, we have primarily been working with project evaluation and documentation. This has involved traveling to different states where Suzlon Foundation conducts CSR projects and visiting the implementing and collaborating NGOs, government departments and agencies and meeting the project beneficiaries in order to assess the extent to which the project objectives have been fulfilled and the stakeholder perceptions of the project outcomes. After having visited the projects, we used the material collected to write state-wise reports concerning the projects, the various stakeholder perceptions of them and their outcomes. The reports are aimed to help Suzlon Foundation and their partners to improve project plans and documentation procedures and also to contribute to the sharing of knowledge and experience of the projects between the various stakeholders.

## The internship from a political science perspective

An internship at Suzlon Foundation is from a political science and especially a development studies perspective very interesting and relevant due to a number of factors. Multinational corporations are today increasingly forced to widen their agendas to include responsible practice in terms of labor conditions and environmental concerns, commonly referred to as corporate social responsibility (CSR), and can thus no longer focus solely on profit. In recent years, some corporations have started to expand their work with CSR so that it no longer is limited to issues related to labor conditions and the immediate effects of their production, but also includes broader concerns that incorporate communities and civil society as a whole, and thus issues that lay beyond the corporations' immediate interests. This

has resulted in new so called public-private partnerships (PPPs) which raises new interesting questions concerning the relationship between business, civil society and the state, especially in developing countries where the state typically is weak. In this context, CSR results in the private sector turning into a development agent that bridges conventional business agendas, civil society concerns, community empowerment and poverty alleviation. This raises new questions concerning the prospects for business taking on the role of a development agent and the implications of this for civil society and empowerment.

As interns at Suzlon Foundation, we have had the opportunity to in practice see how a private actor can act as a development agent. We have been able to follow the positive and negative impacts that business operations can have on local communities and how the Foundation is working to address those, as well as other development issues, in collaboration with civil society groups, the government and the local communities. The internship has hence provided us with insights into the dynamics of public private partnerships and the advantages and disadvantages of civil society organizations and the state engaging with private actors. This can in turn be related to the traditional civil society debate; the degree to which civil society organizations can engage with the state or private actors without losing its autonomy and ability to work as a resisting force in society. Moreover, since many of the CSR projects run by Suzlon Foundation aim to empower local communities, and especially women, the internship has given us an enhanced understanding of how civil society organizations in practice work with empowerment in general and women's empowerment in particular. The internship has hence from a political science perspective given us further understanding of how various actors in society relate to and work with CSR, civil society and empowerment. Furthermore, a major part of Suzlon Foundation's work, as well as of our assignment, relates to the evaluation and monitoring of projects, which in turn is a subfield within political science. The internship has hence also enhanced our understanding of how funding agencies practically can evaluate projects in relation to objectives.

### Personal reflections on the internship

Due to the factors discussed above, the internship at Suzlon Foundation has constituted an excellent way of learning about development work in practice, which has complemented as well as contributed to an enhanced understanding of the development theory covered in the master program. Approximately

one third of the internship was spent in the field, which provided us with valuable opportunities to meet development field workers, community based organization representatives and local government representatives and learn about ways in which these actors can work together for common goals through PPPs. As Suzlon Foundation is collaborating with various different implementing NGOs, the encounters with these have allowed us to learn about various perspectives on and different ways of working with development. The large amount of time spent in the field also implied that we got to travel to most of the eight states that Suzlon Foundation conducts CSR projects in, which brought with it a great opportunity to see the country and experience its diversity. It also provided us with insight into the various forms of discrimination, based on factors such as caste, gender, class and ethnicity, characterizing the Indian society and ways of working to combat these. Due to the qualified work assignments and the high degree of independence when it came to our work, we also learnt a lot when it comes to project planning and execution.