

## Partners not Foes?

Business-Community Synergies, the London School of Economics, the International Finance Corporation's CommDev (Sustainable Community Development Fund for Oil, Gas and Mining) and the Alcoa Foundation organized a week of training for 12 representatives from NGOs from eight different countries. The objective was to train them to work with corporations using BCS's successful methodology to promote sustainable development. The workshop was hosted by AngloGold Ashanti and Lonmin.

BCS founder Rani Parker facilitated the workshop. "BCS is pleased to share its Community-Company Assessment and other tools with civil society organizations here. We have successfully worked with companies using these methods for corporate-community engagement that generates positive results. The method is rigorous and compelling in its depth and nuance. The approach helps civil societies and other stakeholders create greater respect, mutual understanding and cooperation than each might have accomplished alone."

"The objective of this week" says James Van Alstine, LSE project director, "is to equip civil society organizations with tools to work collaboratively with oil, gas, and mining companies for the benefit of local communities."

CommDev's Veronica Nyhan Jones points out the demand for this kind of training "Our corporate clients are searching for qualified local NGOs to help deliver positive community impact. "When investing millions in local development, they have trouble finding partners who understand the company and the community perspective. We're joining forces with companies, NGOs, consulting firms and academia to create a cadre of civil society organizations with practical expertise in implementing community development in challenging extractive contexts."

Participants echoed this need. Jacob Manyindo of the Uganda Wildlife Society observed, "We've been approached by many industries asking how we can work together and we've been very guarded. This training helps us to see how to work with them." Isak Pretorius of Joint Aid Management concurs. "The training has provided a platform for honest, open information-sharing between extractive companies, NGOs and other service providers...to work more harmoniously and serve one another better... increasing sustainability and improving services for communities affected by extractive industries."

Neto Veieria of the Brazil Sustainability Juruti Council says, "We have seen how different communities have similar problems -- weak government, poorly organized civil society. We have new ideas for institutional strengthening and empowerment, and see the importance of working with extractive industries in Juruti." Vviane Penna, Alcoa's representative in Brazil remarks, "This program has reaffirmed a practice in our unit to strengthen civil society partners for engagement between communities and companies."