

Donal O'Neill – Short CV

Donal O'Neill graduated from the National University of Ireland in 1968 with degrees in Mechanical Engineering and he later studied at the Stanford Business School in the US. He is now a partner in Resources Advisors, which provides advice in the area of impact of industry on host societies, with emphasis on socio-economic factors and long-term effects, and also runs his own consultancy, Hoptoad Enterprises. Prior to founding Resource Advisors with Australian associates O'Neill spent some 36 years with Shell International, almost a third of them in Sub-Saharan Africa. He lived for long periods in eight countries and undertook shorter assignments in a dozen others. The first half of this career was spent in technocratic roles, ranging from living and working in tropical swamp and bush environments to coordinating and directing cutting-edge projects for development of oil and gas resources in deep water offshore. The second half of his Shell career involved general management of major business ventures, including interfacing with governments, other companies and host communities. O'Neill held many senior positions, including running Shell's Exploration and Production companies in Turkey and Venezuela. In the latter country he was responsible for an investment of \$1.2 Billion in three years. His last role in Shell, from 2000 to 2004, was Vice President: External Affairs and Social Performance, a position specifically requested by him so that he could plough back and institutionalise the experience he had gained in managing oil and gas ventures in challenging environments and implement his belief that "Management of the energy industry's impact on its host societies is as important as its technical and economic management of its oil and gas assets".

O'Neill came to this topic through his fascination with how societies as diverse as the Netherlands, Norway, Great Britain, Nigeria and Venezuela had reacted socially, culturally and economically to the presence of extractive industries, and with how incapable – or often unwilling – private business often was of appreciating or managing the impact that its presence had. He is convinced of the need for strong but imaginative - not bureaucratic - government regulation to ensure "win-win" outcomes for both business and host societies. One result of this interest was development of scenario-based role-playing simulation tools, for use both for industry and in universities, including Oxford (UK), Columbia (New York City) and George Washington University (Washington DC), the Catholic University of Guayaquil (Ecuador), Whitman College (Washington State, USA), the University of Valencia (Spain), the Asian Institute of Management (Manila, Philippines) and the municipal government of Bilbao (Spain). Such simulations address the interplay of Social, Economic and Political drivers in complex investment and strategic decision-making by government and industry, while also taking into account the direct and indirect influences that can be brought to bear by opposition groups, multilaterals, NGOs, media and local communities. Simulations created in recent years are based on situations as diverse as discovery of oil and gas reserves in African or Central American countries, the reactivation of the mining industry in the Philippines, nationalisation of the mining and gas industries in a South American nation, the challenges of economic recession in a European city and the expansion of an urban transport system in one in Latin America. Use of such simulations permits players – whether from government, business, NGO, community or media backgrounds - to understand how the other stakeholders feel, think and operate and to develop better strategies than previously for reaching mutually satisfactory outcomes.

O'Neill's philosophy is that "Business is in business to make money – but to do so decently and ethically". He knows from experience that it can be done – but that it does not happen automatically and that it demands intellectual rigour in analysis, imagination in planning, open-mindedness in alliance building and endless vigour and sensitivity in execution. O'Neill is resident in England.