

# The Level Market Sustainability Report

April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017

## The Level Market's Commitment to Stakeholders

The Level Market's (TLM) primary stakeholders include the suppliers, buyers, and users of aid and relief products.

- TLM's commitment to *Suppliers* is to provide a platform through which they can market and sell their products to appropriate businesses that then provide them to people in need (i.e. during emergency relief efforts or poverty alleviation programs). The products featured on The Level Market provide users with access to basic human rights (i.e. clean drinking water), improve their safety (solar lights, clean cook stoves), and/or enable them to thrive in difficult environments (solar panels).
- TLM's commitment to *Buyers* is to provide a secure platform through which they can better find, assess, compare, purchase, and review the aid and relief products they need to serve their customers and/or beneficiaries. In addition, TLM holds suppliers accountable for their products by serving as a financial intermediary and enabling buyers to review supplier/product performance.
- TLM's commitment to *End Users* is to ensure they receive quality, appropriate products and to provide them with a means to review the products they receive. By enabling buyers to make more informed purchase decisions, TLM is helping improve the quality and usefulness of the products delivered to end users.

The Level Market launched on June 22nd, 2016. The platform currently has 260+ products listed from 60+ curated suppliers. TLM is fully transactional with sales and quotes taking place. We continue to improve the functioning of the platform by actively recruiting suppliers to expand the product offering, attracting additional customers to the site, and increasing the features available to the users. By releasing this platform to the world, TLM has made the first major step in delivering on its commitment to stakeholders.

## United Nations Global Compact

As a company that works in the international arena, and focuses specifically on the humanitarian, aid, and development industries, The Level assesses itself against the *United Nations Global Compact Guide to Corporate Sustainability*. This decision is based on the relevance to TLM's focus areas and the environments in which its stakeholders operate.

## The Five Defining Features of Corporate Sustainability

### Principled Business

The Level Market is highly principled business with a deep respect for its responsibilities in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anticorruption. The company curates the buyers and suppliers with which it works and will not work with any institution or individual that engages in unsatisfactory practices, including but not limited to slavery, child labor, bribery, discrimination, unsafe working environments, etc.

## Strengthening Society

The Level Market has far bigger goals than improving the procurement of aid and relief products. The company seeks to stop poor products from being 'dumped' on people in need and instead help those individuals to access quality, appropriate products that can help them survive, rebuild, and thrive. The company works in emergency response, humanitarian crises, and poverty alleviation, confirming our goal to strengthen society and support the disadvantaged groups that are so often forgotten. Lastly, TLM supports many of the campaigns and initiatives of the United Nations, including but not limited to World Water Day, World Toilet Day, Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves, and the Sustainable Development Goals.

## Leadership Commitment

The Leadership team at The Level Market is whole-heartedly and openly committed to the goals of the UN Global Compact. Members of this team have previously dedicated years, and decades, to combating poverty and suffering in the agriculture, energy, WASH, and health spaces. The team brings work experience in 30+ developing countries and a deep respect for the diversity in context and cultures that influence a businesses ability to make a positive impact. This same commitment is expected from all TLM staff and a key driver of the organizational culture that will help the company succeed.

## Reporting Progress

Achieving and reporting impact is key to The Level Market. We are interested in changing humanitarian procurement for the better so more life improving/saving products get into the hands of people that need them. Our work over the last year has enabled us to have a substantial online presence and we will continue to build on this through marketing, advertising, and social media efforts. TLM remains in contact with the key actors on the platform to understand the impact it is having on their business and the end user. Not only is this important from a social responsibility perspective, it is essential for The Level Market's core business as it will help the company better understand the challenges and success of its customers.

## Local Action

The Level Market is an online platform available to users around the world. By providing the same access to both the developed and developing world, the company hopes to 'level the playing field' and allow local businesses to thrive alongside their larger counterparts. Given the young stage of the company, most suppliers and buyers are currently based in the USA and/or the EU. However, we continue to add suppliers from the developing world, such as Kenya and India and we are attracting buyers globally. As a continuing goal, TLM hopes to provide

suppliers throughout emerging economies with access to new markets. This can increase the economic activity in their country, with positive ripple effects throughout their communities. Furthermore, by enabling buyers in emerging economies to access goods produced around the world, The Level Market will provide access to innovative and life saving technologies that were previously unavailable to many. TLM intends to be an international player that still allows local stakeholders to thrive.

## The Principles of the UN Global Compact

### Human Rights

- The Level Market, and all institutions with which it works, abide by all international human rights laws. As a woman-led company, TLM is especially committed to gender equality and women's empowerment both within its business and the world.
- The company has a zero tolerance policy for human rights abuses. Any individuals, companies or organizations that are reasonably suspected of completing human rights abuses will not be allowed to use The Level Market.

### Labour

- The Level Market does not knowingly work with any company or organization that practices child labor, indentured servitude, and/or slavery.
- As a platform for suppliers of aid and relief products, The Level Market is aware of the risk of engaging with companies that do not abide by the UN Global Compact's labour principles. TLM is making every reasonable effort to ensure these companies cannot list on The Level Market. By vetting suppliers thoroughly, TLM makes every effort to ensure labour law abusers are not engaged and prevented from listing on the site.

### Environment

- Many of the natural and human disasters that occur are the result of climate change and battles of limited resources. The Level Market is meant to aid and support the victims of these events, and thus understands the importance of these environmental concerns and challenges. TLM has the potential to reduce green house emissions by:
  - Providing a virtual platform that connects buyers and suppliers of aid and relief products, reducing companies' need to travel to attend trade shows to learn about and sell new products.

- Working with buyers and suppliers of these products to aggregate shipping around the world, thus cutting down on the number of partially empty shipments moved around the world.
- Many of the products listed on The Level Market also offer notable environmental benefits. Clean cook stoves reduce the amount of smoke released into the atmosphere, solar lights and chargers run off the power of the sun, and water purification/filter products increase the amount of drinkable water available to people in harsh environments. By increasing the availability and use of products like these, The Level Market is helping to make better use of the environment and the limited resources available.

## Corruption

- The Level Market provides a transparent online marketplace for the purchase of aid and relief products. This transparency helps to combat corruption by allowing for reviews of both supplier and product performance.
- The Level Market also works closely with relevant industry bodies, such as World Bank Lighting Global and Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves in an effort to ensure the suppliers that list products on its site do not partake in corruption.