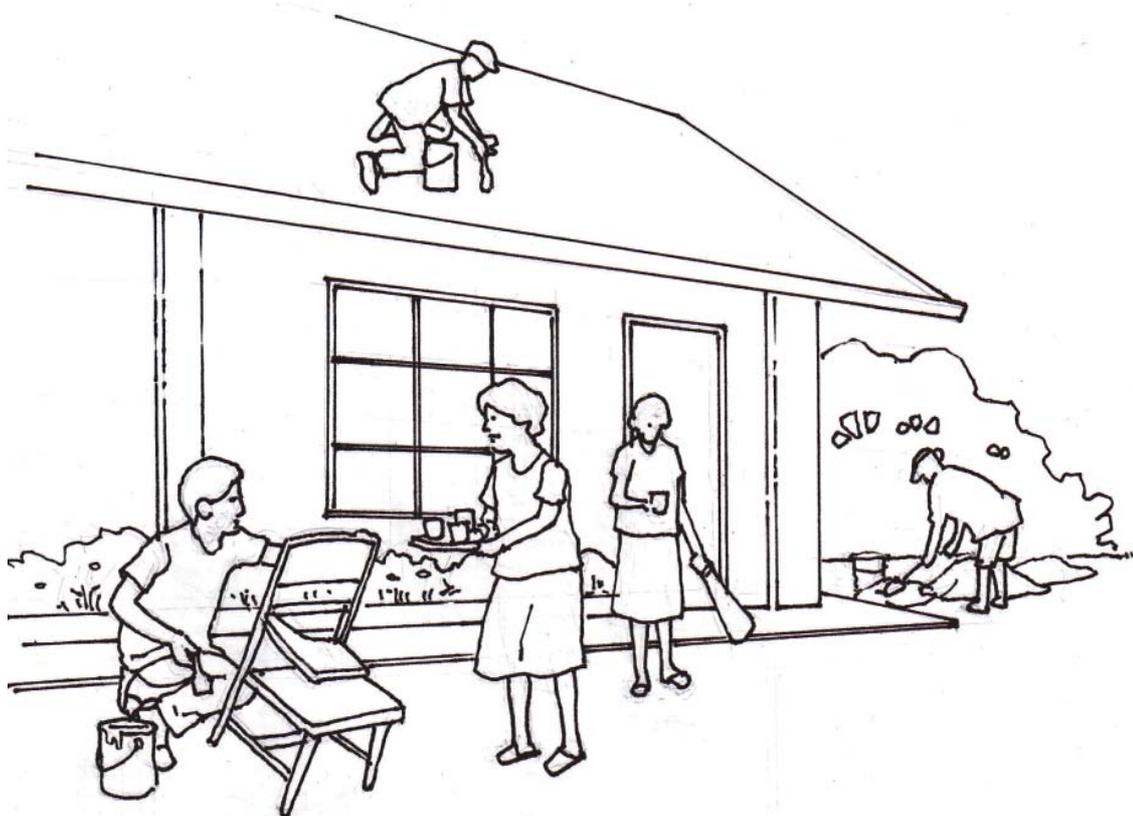


# Community-Driven Development: Treating Poor People as Partners



**C**ommunity-Driven Development (CDD) is an effective mechanism for poverty reduction, complementing market- and state-run activities by achieving immediate and lasting results at the grassroots level. Experience has shown that CDD can enhance sustainability and make poverty reduction efforts more responsive to demand.

#### SOURCE:

Dongier, P., J. Van Domelen, E. Ostrom, A. Rizvi, W. Wakeman, A. Bebbington, S. Alkire, T. Esmail and M. Polski. 1995. *Chapter 9: Community-Driven Development*. In *A Sourcebook for Poverty Reduction Strategies. Volume 1: Core Techniques and Cross-Cutting Issues*. The World Bank, Washington, D.C.

Well-designed CDD programs include the poor and vulnerable groups, build positive social capital, and give the poor greater voice both in their community and with government entities. CDD empowers poor people to decide for themselves and take charge of managing their community resources. Building on their institutions and resources, CDD treats poor people, not as targets of development, but as assets and partners in the development process.

In order for CDD to succeed in its goal to help poor people reduce poverty, it has to first prepare communities. Such preparation comes with strengthening and financing inclusive community groups, facilitating community access to information, and promoting an enabling environment through policy and institutional reform.

## Partnership as the Key Element of CDD

CDD gives control of decisions and resources to community groups. These groups often work in partnership with demand-responsive support organizations and service providers, including elected local governments, the private sector, NGOs, and central government agencies.

**Clear rules, access to information, and appropriate support can effectively facilitate poor men and women to organize and provide goods and services that meet their immediate priorities.**



## Core Techniques of CDD

At the heart of CDD are core techniques which include: providing social and infrastructure services, organizing economic activity and resource management, empowering poor people, improving local governance, and enhancing security of the poorest.

However, not all goods and services are best managed through collective action at the community level. Public goods that span many communities or that require large, complex systems are often better provided by local or central government.

Similarly, private goods or toll goods are often better provided using a market-based approach, relying more on individual enterprises than on collective action. CDD can, however, fill gaps where markets are missing or imperfect, or where public institutions or local governments fail to fulfill their mandates.

## Why Community-Driven Development?

Interviews with 60,000 poor people in 60 countries reveal that poor people demand a development process driven by their communities. When the poor were asked to indicate what might make the greatest difference in their lives, they responded:

- Organizations of their own so they can negotiate with government, traders, and NGOs.
- Direct assistance through community-driven programs so they can shape their own destinies.
- Local ownership of funds, so they can end corruption. They want NGOs and governments to be accountable to them.

### Benefits of Community-Driven Development

**a. Complements Market and Public Sector Activities.** Policies that promote national economic competitiveness and state-run public investment programs are essential, but insufficient for poverty reduction. CDD offers the opportunity to fill this critical gap by achieving immediate and lasting results at the grassroots level.

**b. Enhances Sustainability of Services.** Community-developed facilities such as health centers, schools, and water supply systems tend to have higher utilization rates and are better maintained than when investment decisions are made by actors outside the community.

**c. Improves Efficiency and Effectiveness.** Community management of development investments usually results in lower costs and more productively employed assets. In Asia, systems constructed and operated by the farmers themselves generate a higher level of agricultural productivity than more modern systems constructed by government agencies.

CDD can contribute to reduction of poverty and complement market- and state-run activities by achieving immediate and lasting results at the grassroots level. Experience has shown that CDD can enhance sustainability and make poverty reduction efforts more responsive to demand.

## Recommendations for Adapting CDD

**Scaling Up.** The challenge of scaling up is not about bigger projects or bigger organizations, but rather about achieving sustainable results in a large number of communities. Principles for scaling up CDD are, for the most part, the same principles for making CDD more sustainable.

**Invest in an Exit Strategy.** An exit strategy for external support is a critical component of all CDD interventions. Temporary services, such as initial intensive capacity building support to community-based organizations, may, however, not require sustainable financing. For such temporary services, explicit exit strategies need to be designed and implemented.



**In addition to market development, health care for the poor is also an essential service.**

## Suggested Readings

- Adato, M., T. Besley, L. Haddad and J. Hodinott. 1999. *Participation and Poverty Reduction: Issues, Theory and New Evidence from South Africa*. Discussion Paper No. 98. International Food Policy Research Institute: Washington, D.C.
- Lam, W. F. 1998. *Governing Irrigation Systems in Nepal: Institutions, Infrastructure and Collective Action*. Oakland, Cal.: ICS Press.
- Narayan, D. 1995. *Designing Community-Based Development*. Environment Department Working Paper 7. World Bank, Washington, D.C.
- Narayan D., R. Chambers, M.K. Shah and P. Petesch. 2000. *Voices of the Poor Crying for Change*. Oxford University Press. New York.
- Sara, J. and T. Katz. 1997. *Making Rural Water Sustainable: Report on the Impact of Project Rules*. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and World Bank Water and Sanitation Program, Washington, D.C.

Sourcebook on **Resources, Rights, and Cooperation**, produced by the CGIAR Program on Collective Action and Property Rights (CAPRI)