

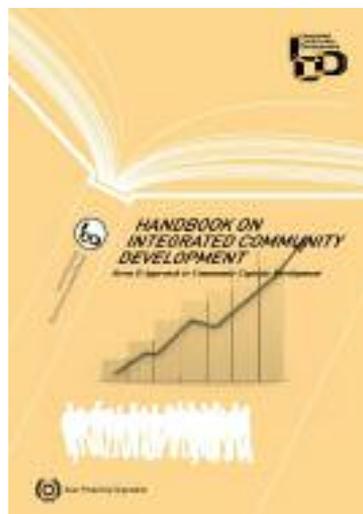
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## **Handbook on Integrated Community Development – Seven D Approach to Community Capacity Development**

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served as the author.**



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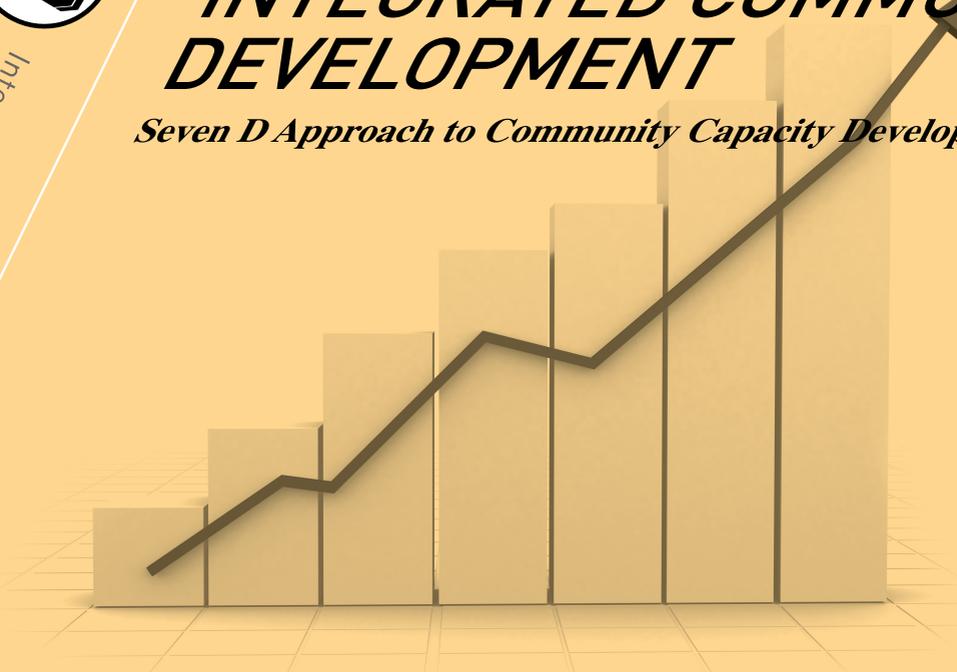
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Integrated Community  
Development

# ***HANDBOOK ON INTEGRATED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT***

*Seven D Approach to Community Capacity Development*





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Development*

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## **FOREWORD**

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Community capacity is the collective ability of residents to respond to social, economic, and environmental stresses and meet the needs of the community by drawing on as much local capital as possible. Community capacity building empowers communities by enabling them to own and control the processes that influence their day-to-day lives. Capacity building involves all stakeholders, including individual residents, community-based organizations, public agencies, NGOs, and the private sector.

The Asian Productivity Organization (APO)'s Integrated Community Development (ICD) Program has been in place since 1996 with the aim of assisting member countries to promote community-based productivity enhancement activities, including entrepreneurial development and employment generation. Under the ICD Program, a "community" is considered not only to be the object of development but also the most important actor in the process.

The aim of this publication is to support community dwellers in taking a leadership role in managing affairs at the local level and utilizing resources for increasing productivity and meeting community needs. It introduces the Seven D Approach to community capacity development, which is the outcome of 12 years of experience in the APO's ICD Program. The basic concepts and various tools for utilizing the Seven D Approach are described for use by national productivity organizations, government agencies, NGOs working with communities for capacity development, and others involved in community-based development activities.

In 2008, the APO commissioned German-based Consultant Mohan Dhamotharan to develop this handbook. The APO is grateful to him and all the experts who took part in the APO ICD Program for their contributions.

Shigeo Takenaka  
Secretary-General  
Tokyo  
October, 2009

## **WHAT THIS HANDBOOK WILL DO**

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This publication is intended to assist National Productivity Organizations (NPOs) and responsible governmental, as well as non-governmental organizations, in promoting sustainable community development with special focus on capacity development.

The handbook describes especially the APO perspective on Integrated Community Development summarizing insights gained through expert meetings, study missions, and training programs. A detailed description of key challenges as well as key concepts relevant for community capacity development provides a thorough understanding of issues related to community development.

This handbook also describes in detail a methodology for strengthening community capacities called the "Seven D Approach." The Seven D Approach is the outcome of an intensive learning process initiated by APO among NPOs, leading community development agencies, training institutes, and communities in Asia. The methodology has been tested in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Iran, Laos, and Nepal at community level. The Seven D Approach was successfully applied within the national framework of Fiji and has significantly contributed to bringing attention to community development and enhancing the capacities of government officials and facilitators, as well as to support initiatives by communities in Fiji.

The handbook is further intended to provide professionals from various sectors working with development issues a deeper understanding of the challenges involved with community capacity development. However, recognizing the fact that community capacity development is a complex process influenced by the cultural, social, and economic contexts of specific communities, this handbook cannot provide a blueprint for a standardized procedure. Past experiences with mechanical application of fixed methodologies have failed especially in the area of capacity development. Therefore, the handbook provides key insights, principles, and a step-by-step methodology on how to organize community capacity development processes, along with options for appropriate tools.

This handbook consists of six parts:

- Part 1: Integrated Community Development – An APO Perspective
- Part 2: Defining Terms
- Part 3: Key Concepts of the Seven D Approach
- Part 4: The Seven D Approach – Developing Capacities of Communities
- Part 5: Case Study: Community Capacity Development in Fiji
- Part 6: Appendixes – Bibliography and Glossary

# **INTRODUCTION**

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## **SHAPING THE FUTURE THROUGH COMMUNITY CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT**

We experience at the present a time of contradictions and challenges in realizing a world in which all citizens can enjoy a life of human dignity. Hundreds of millions of people are deprived of their basic social human rights to live a life of human dignity in Asia and worldwide. Huge progress in the area of science, health, nutrition, and productivity has not automatically reduced the number of poor people in Asia. Even the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals is jeopardized. The 2009 economic crisis will present to the governments in Asia a more challenging situation to find appropriate mechanisms to support poor communities in times of decreasing budgets. Increasing productivity and improving access of the poor to the benefits generated are going to be key challenges of the coming decades.

The process of modernization at an escalating speed leads to erosion and collapse of traditional values, structures, and social capital of local communities. The loss of historically established bonds and the erosion of the social fabric, along with a fading out of identity, is a phenomenon being widely analyzed by researchers, and is a growing concern for government institutions leading to community building and developing initiatives worldwide.

In general, community development is regarded as a domain of less developed countries, but since 1990 many developed countries such as Japan, England, Germany, Australia, and the U.S. have been trying to stimulate community engagement in public affairs as well as support local development through a wide variety of policies.<sup>1</sup>

### **From Service Delivery to Capacity Development**

Our understanding of the key challenges and how government institutions and international organizations can contribute to effective solutions is presently undergoing a profound change. National governments are increasingly focusing on managing general processes at the macro level and initiating a process of decentralization and devolution of power and delegating the management of local issues to local-level authorities and communities.

This is based on the insight that centralized agencies cannot deal appropriately with the diverse, complex, and dynamic nature of changes experienced by its citizens at the local community level with ready-made “blueprint solutions” developed and delivered from the top. Especially if the communities do not have the capacity to deal productively with the solutions provided from the top, even well meant solutions can create a negative impact on community livelihood. This insight has led to a rethinking and reorganization of the role of government agencies from full-fledged delivery of services to enabling communities to manage their affairs at the local level. Communities are strengthened in their capacities to manage their livelihood, and to

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<sup>1</sup> Fukuyama, F. *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*, NY: Free Press

take leadership in demanding necessary support from the external agencies instead of waiting to receive external services.

### **Community Capacity Development – Promises and Challenges**

As part of this wider paradigm change, external agencies are more and more focusing on community capacity development through changing their role by becoming more and more facilitative and enabling. However the shift to an enabling role requires a complex, paradoxical, and partial transfer of power and responsibility.

Such a major shift of responsibilities and resources to communities can only be successful if the community and local authorities have the capacity to deal with rising tensions and take the necessary leadership. Community development is suddenly again at the forefront of development agendas, this time with the perspective of capacity development. Community development enables citizens and public institutions to respond positively to rapid transformation processes by creating additional avenues for participation and collaboration between communities and government agencies. It creates the foundation for the dispersal of power at the grassroots level by strengthening the community's capacity to manage the affairs of its members efficiently and utilize funding provided by the central government for increasing productivity and meeting community needs.

Multinational organizations and international organizations involved in bilateral cooperation, as well as national agencies, are increasingly recognizing the importance of capacity development, while at the same time stressing that there is no easy solution in sight.<sup>2</sup>

Experiences reveal that genuine community development focusing on capacity development is primarily an endogenous process that cannot be designed and implemented by external agencies with the same methods used, say, for the construction of a road or hospital. Leading organizations such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) frankly admit that capacity development is regarded as the most challenging arena in supporting countries to overcome poverty and move toward sustainable development.

Government initiatives to overcome poverty can only be fruitful if external agencies find motivated and skilled partners within the communities. Community capacity development is a crucial missing link for efficient and effective collaboration between citizens, government, and non-governmental agencies.

To this end, the Asian Productivity Organization's Integrated Community Development (ICD) Program has been deeply involved in supporting its member countries and its leading agencies in the area of community development for more than a decade. This involvement has resulted in valuable lessons learned from the member countries and has led to the formulation of an ICD framework, as well as the development of a community capacity development strategy called the Seven D Approach.

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<sup>2</sup> The UNDP Strategic Plan 2008–2011 positions capacity development as the organization's core contribution to development.



***PART-1***

***INTEGRATED  
COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT -  
AN APO  
PERSPECTIVE***



# **ASIAN PRODUCTIVITY ORGANIZATION AND INTEGRATED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

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## **BACKGROUND**

Of those making up the poor population? of APO member countries, the great majority live in rural areas. The continuing migration of rural dwellers, especially young and productive workers, to cities inside the country or to other countries, contributes significantly to the erosion of the traditional social and intellectual base of rural communities. The recent economic crisis of 2009, with the forced re-migration of young migrants back to their communities, will create additional stress for both the local communities and the national economies.

Even those APO member countries that have undergone dynamic economic development in the past few decades are facing problems in improving the livelihood of their rural communities due to increased income disparity between urban and rural areas and increased imbalance within rural areas in terms of living standards, available resources, and capabilities to improve their situation.

### **Rethinking the Approach for Transfer of Knowledge and Technology**

For a long time development theories and practices emphasized mainly the role of financial and infrastructural assets for development of the poor and underprivileged. By investing money and creating new infrastructure within rural areas, it was hoped that development would happen and all communities in Asia might benefit from modern knowledge and technology. National and international agencies focused on a “transfer of knowledge approach,” which sought to transfer modern knowledge to the rural communities with the best intention of improving their lives. However, even in those countries that have invested huge amounts of resources for the transfer of technology, funding, and knowledge to rural areas, the impact in terms of improved livelihood has been dissatisfying. During the last two decades the importance of development and creation of knowledge and technology by the respective societies has been highlighted, as only this will genuinely contribute to sustainability and strengthening their ability to find appropriate solutions.

### **Globalization Versus Localization**

Only recently the effects of the extremely powerful homogenizing forces of globalization are being critically reflected: international trade, foreign investment, labor migration, global consumerism, tourism, and the Internet, which are all putting extreme pressure on local communities, leading to a “loss of social connectedness.” (?) Asia may still benefit from its rich source of social capital, which is regarded as an essential part of its cultural traits. But the impact of globalization on cultural values is also here more and more visible.

Developed countries in Europe have started to initiate community capacity development programs that focus especially on strengthening social capital and refer to norms and trust, emerging through fruitful relationships among members of a community and society, and nurtured through interactive processes, leading to joint benefits.

## **APO ICD PROGRAM**

The APO ICD Program has identified the development of local communities as an important strategy for poverty alleviation as well as for sustainable development of economy, society, and culture. Considering this situation, the Integrated Community Development (ICD) Program, which was launched in 1996 with financial support from the Government of Japan, has focused on sharing knowledge and developing strategies to support community development in member countries. By the end of 2009, the ICD Program has successfully implemented around 100 international events such as symposia, study meetings, seminars, observational study missions, and training programs, and supported numerous national capacity development programs. In summary, they have focused on sharing insights from the practice of community development in APO member countries and have analyzed recent theoretical concepts on human capacity development, resulting in the deepening of our understanding of community capacity development, as well as developing a methodology for supporting key stakeholders to support community development initiatives.

### **ICD Program's Underlying Ideas**

In intensive collaboration with representatives from the member countries of APO, the ICD Program developed the following ideas regarding the APO's ICD Vision, Mission and Integrated Community Development Concept.

#### **VISION**

"Self-managed local communities with equitable and sustainable well-being."

The APO envisions that local communities in member countries will become free from poverty and enjoy appropriate living standards in harmony with ecological and economic conditions. It is further believed that such a development can be attained and sustained through an approach that balances between the self-determination of communities and fair interactions in an open economy. Another important aspect of the vision is that local communities have to be strengthened in their capacities to manage themselves, as this will enable them to find continuously innovative solutions. This strong capacity base, especially in cooperative management, is regarded as crucial to move toward a more equitable and sustainable livelihood at local level.

#### **MISSION**

"To promote a holistic and dynamic process through which local people continuously improve their productivity and, consequently, the quality of life through efficient and sustainable utilization of internal and external resources."

Having this clear vision and mission, the APO focuses on strengthening the capacities of key stakeholders to contribute effectively in the promotion of community development. Considering the APO's specific strengths and wide experience with productivity promotion, enhancement of productivity at the community level is seen as a core measure to improve the livelihood of people within the community.

In the context of community development, the productivity concept must also include mobilization and sustainable utilization of resources for the welfare of all community members. Key to productivity enhancement is development of the ability of communities in a sustainable way so that they can implement small and large projects efficiently and effectively. In addition, communities have to be strengthened to discover and mobilize internal resources and blend them with external resources<sup>3</sup> and the development and procurement of relevant knowledge and technology.

## **INTEGRATED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (ICD) CONCEPT**

Reflecting the past experience of the ICD Program, the APO considers **capacity development, sustainable development, productivity enhancement, integration, and people's participation** as the core elements of Integrated Community Development.<sup>4</sup>

### **Capacity Development**

The concept of *capacity development* has gained enormous momentum during the last decade and stresses the fact that development interventions have to focus on strengthening the capabilities of individuals, organizations, and societies. Only such a capacity development-focused approach can contribute to an endogenous and sustainable process of development. In the context of ICD, the capacity of communities to manage their affairs successfully has to be the ultimate goal of community development efforts and not just the provision of products or services.

### **Sustainable Development**

*Sustainable development* has become one of the mainstream paradigms of many development organizations and can be in general defined as:

"...a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development, and institutional change are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations."<sup>5</sup>

Moreover, the U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) defines sustainable development as:

"...the management and conservation of the natural resources base, and the orientation of technological and institutional change in such a manner as to ensure the attainment and continued satisfaction of human needs for present and future generations".

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<sup>3</sup> "Resources" refers to financial capital, physical capital, human capital, social capital, and natural resources.

<sup>4</sup> Munakata, A. The ICD Program Framework. In Successful Community Development. Tokyo: APO; 2000

<sup>5</sup> WCED. Our Common Future. Oxford; 1987

Especially in our context of Integrated Community Development, it is important to highlight that the concept of sustainability not only refers to the natural resource base (water, forest, animals, etc.), but also includes biological, physical, financial/economic, socio-cultural, institutional/organizational, environmental, and cultural aspects. In general, the ICD Program considers that a sustainable process of development should be environmentally sound, economically viable, socio-culturally acceptable, and importantly, it should strengthen the capacities of communities.

### **Productivity Enhancement**

In the light of the strength and mandate of the APO and NPOs in the respective member countries, the ICD Program puts special attention on productivity enhancement. Experience with application of concepts and instruments developed for enhancing the productivity of private enterprises in a community context reveals special challenges. Communities are in general characterized by great diversity among their members in terms of their aspirations, goals, knowledge, and skills in productivity improvement. Within the community, productivity is embedded in a wider context of livelihood and has to be addressed in an integrated and holistic manner.

Therefore productivity enhancement processes at the community level have to involve stakeholders from government agencies and non-governmental organizations as well as private enterprises in sharing their ideas on this newly emerging field of community productivity enhancement and finding effective and feasible ways of integrating productivity concepts and methods with community development concepts and methods in an innovative way. For this endeavour, the extensive experience and knowledge of NPOs with productivity as well as with organizing multi-stakeholder learning and sharing meetings will be of special value.

### **Integration**

Past experiences reveal clearly that communities cannot be supported with isolated approaches but need an integrated approach that addresses the complexity of livelihood at community level. The past ICD Program activities have identified the following four major areas where integration plays an important role in community development:

- a) Synergy between top-down policies/programs and bottom-up planning;
- b) Coordination between different sectors and organizations;
- c) Multi-stakeholder cooperation;
- d) Rural-urban linkages.

#### *a) Synergy between Top-down Policies/Programs and Bottom-up Planning*

In many Asian countries, rural and community development implemented with a top-down approach leads to inefficient utilization of funds and generates poor outcomes. Reflecting on this negative impact, the importance of a bottom-up approach for successful community development is increasingly recognized. Application of participatory methods such as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), aimed at strengthening bottom-up planning, has nowadays become mainstream in many Asian countries. Moreover, APO member countries have also started to search for an effective combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches. Successful coordination among central government, local government, and community organizations, and formulation of an appropriate policy framework for participatory development are crucial.

The synergy created through a holistic community development program and strong capacities of communities to plan and manage their livelihood with strong support from external agencies creates the foundation for productive use of external support by communities. This guarantees that communities become the main actor of their development and that the support provided by government leads to the improved welfare of its citizens.

*b) Coordination Between Different Sectors and Organizations*

Various departments at national, regional, and district level (health, agriculture, education, SME development, etc.) focus on addressing specific aspects of development with their own personnel and specific methods. In addition, in many Asian countries non-governmental organizations and private foundations with their own agendas engage also in community development. In some extreme cases government agencies and non-governmental organizations even compete with each other to provide similar services and products to the communities. However from the perspective of sustainable community development, this can lead to a loss of synergy and the stipulation of communities to develop a receiving mentality toward external agencies.

A proper coordination mechanism linking the various plans and activities of different community development organizations and institutions can catalyze the fulfillment of community development needs and contribute significantly to a holistic development of communities. Such genuine coordination cannot simply be realized by merely creating a coordinating body at the central or regional level. Moreover, it is important to develop among key stakeholders appropriate knowledge and attitudes regarding community development. In addition, establishment of appropriate coordination structures and effective channels for sharing information, joint decision-making, and collective action are necessary. Communities with strong capacities to manage their affairs successfully are indispensable in moving toward a demand-driven and coordinated strategy.

*c) Multi-stakeholder Cooperation*

In an integrated approach as described above, many different stakeholders become involved in the community development process, such as community people, local leaders and organizations, local and central government authorities, training institutes, NGOs, etc. The challenge is to establish a cooperative attitude among all those involved in community development in order to develop actions and approaches all leading in the same direction. For this, it is essential to create an open atmosphere among the concerned parties that promotes free discussions, dialogues, and agreements. Another important task lies in clarifying the function and responsibility of everybody, reflecting the interests, abilities, and strengths of each stakeholder so that existing potentials are utilized and synergy optimized. The role of facilitators is crucial in generating such an atmosphere of trust and catalyzing cooperation among the stakeholders.

*d) Rural/urban Linkages*

Problems in rural and urban areas are closely interlinked. For example, rural-urban migration is a major cause of urban over-population. Weak links between agricultural production sites in the rural sector and large markets in the urban sector result in stagnant agricultural production in the rural sector and high living costs in the urban sector. Therefore, community development cannot tackle problems by just focusing

either on rural communities or on urban communities. An integrated and holistic approach addressing rural-urban linkages promises rich potential for development.

### *People Participation*

Participation of people has become a mainstream aspect of the national and international development arena. However, there are different understandings of what is meant by participation; the understanding ranges from limited consultation of citizens in analysis, planning, and implementation up to collaborative planning of interventions, collective decision-making, and joint evaluation of the outcomes of the interventions that occur. In the context of Integrated Community Development, the participation of ultimate beneficiaries of development interventions — namely the community — in all processes of management is regarded as essential. However the participation of communities throughout all management processes has to go hand-in-hand with strengthening their capacities in managing their affairs. If not, increasing participation will lead to inefficiency and conflict.

### **Community Development Cycle (CDC)**

Leading researchers and development theorists have highlighted that the engagement of community people at all stages of development interventions is the foremost success factor. Community members with extensive indigenous knowledge of their natural, social, and historical context can contribute valuable ideas on available resources, potentials, solutions, and challenges, and make locally viable suggestions regarding project design from the very beginning. Such an engagement throughout the process initiates ownership by the community and ensures sustainability of projects.

Community development is a collective process involving a group of community members with the aspiration to improve community life collectively. This can only be successful if key processes of management such as analysis, decision-making, steering, and reflection on achieved results are organized in such a way that the community can participate.

Experiences with successful community development initiatives reveal that ideas and projects emerging from the community as a whole have a higher potential for implementation, since they are emerging from the reality as perceived by the local communities. Moreover, when people themselves decide on the modalities and strategies of a project, they are motivated to give their best efforts to achieve the goal and move toward their vision. The final outcome of such a participatory process contributes greatly to the capacity building of the concerned people, regardless of its immediate success or failure.

Analyzing existing community development approaches, we can identify in general a community development cycle<sup>6</sup> with the following steps: Awareness and Confidence Building; Social Mobilization for Collective Action; Participatory Analysis, Planning, Action, and Monitoring; and Evaluation.

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<sup>6</sup> The community development cycle has great similarities with the life cycle of projects. In project cycles we can identify the following steps: situation analysis, planning, implementation and evaluation, and monitoring as an accompanying process.

The nature of community development requires that during the initial phase special attention has to be paid to creating confidence and awareness within members of the community to take their future in their own hands. In addition, social mobilization processes are needed so that the whole community is motivated for collective action. Once this has been achieved, the customary steps of project management cycles such as Planning, Implementation, Monitoring, and Evaluation can take place.

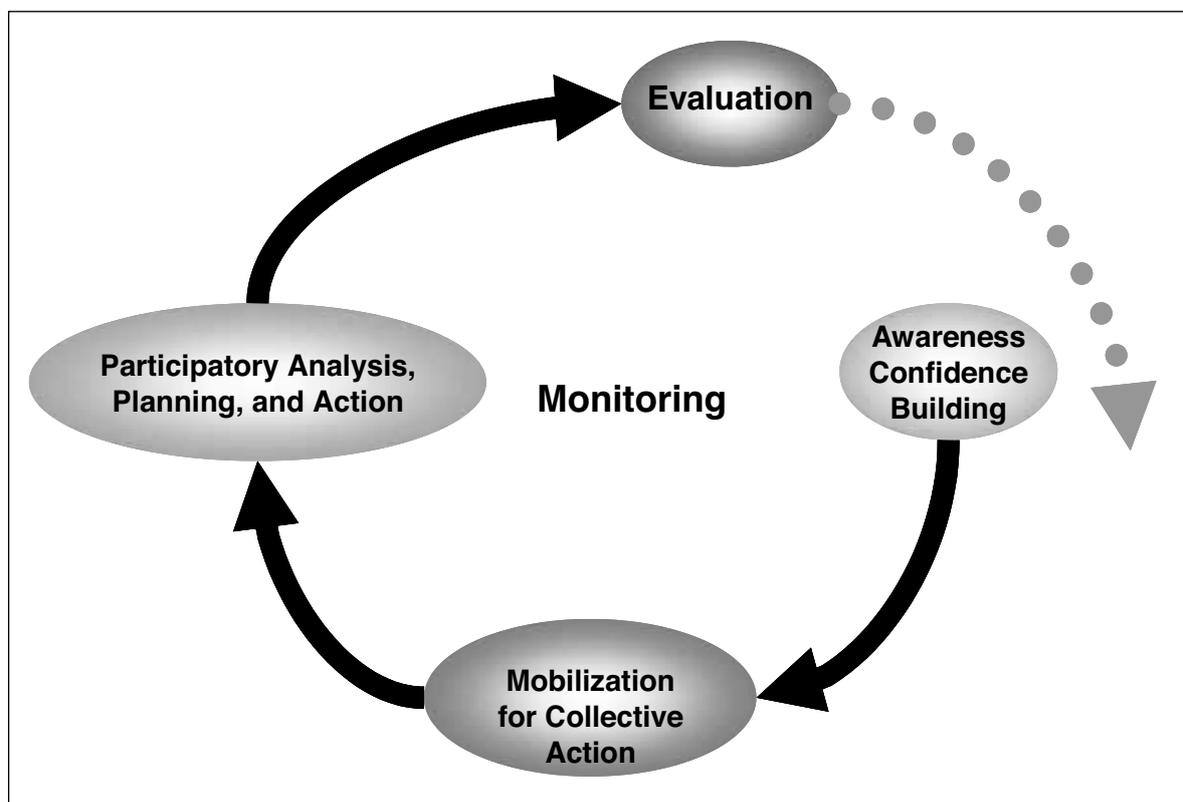


Figure 1. Community Development Cycle

#### *Awareness and Confidence Building*

Confidence of community members in their own strength and the ability to act and improve their situation collectively creates the motivation for becoming more productive and moving in the direction of their vision and aspirations. Such self-confidence is the foundation for all further steps of community development. Especially if communities have developed a handout or receiving mentality, which refers to the phenomenon that they wait for government and other external agencies to come and provide them with the services and products to fulfill their basic needs, such an awareness creation process is essential. Their will to shape their life through an energetic and collective self-help process has been weakened through a long history of deprivation and delivery of goods. Breaking this vicious cycle of dependency and apathy is the first crucial step in community development. The development theorist Paulo Freire has developed his concept of "conscientization" as a method, of supporting the oppressed to critically reflect and analyze their situation, so that they can overcome their apathy and discover their power to change reality. Another important approach is to strengthen the capacities of the community to discover or rediscover their resources and abilities and to identify clearly their potentials and challenges.

Confidence-building activities between external agencies and community institutions and leaders are essential to create the necessary confidence among community members, government officers, NGO staff, and other stakeholders so that they can jointly tackle the challenges and mobilize necessary resources to improve the situation in the respective communities.

*Social Mobilization for Collective Action*

Social mobilization for collective action enables communities to solve those problems that are beyond their individual capacity. Social mobilization may include the following activities: reflecting collectively on attitudes and behaviors prevailing in the communities and hindering them from being productive; encouraging roles and responsibilities favorable for collective and productive activities; fostering mutual respect among all sectors of the community; strengthening or creating institutions, groups, and organizations needed for improving the community situation; and promoting leadership at various levels. A major challenge in solving their problems is to initiate social mobilization in such a way that it is strong enough to create the necessary internal dynamics for change without enforcing alien values and ideas that may create tensions within the community or lead to erosion of their identity.

*Participatory Management — Analysis, Planning, and Action*

Once awareness and confidence building within the community and with external stakeholders is completed and organizational development through social mobilization has been initiated, the next phase of participatory analysis, planning, and action can be tackled effectively. During this phase, the community is facilitated to analyze the situation and formulate development plans and activities for implementation. Especially during this phase, facilitators from outside play an often-necessary supportive role by initiating and guiding the community through the various steps using appropriate tools. However, the role of such change agents is not to provide the community with ready-made solutions such as a “model organization” or a “blueprint plan” of a project or program, but to support them to experience an intensive process of joint critical thinking, reflection, and decision-making. The leading role has always to be played by the communities, because their members are the ones who have an unconscious but deep awareness of the specific conditions and challenges in the area, and are the ultimate implementers and beneficiaries of the project. Respecting and valuing the ideas and knowledge of the people and facilitating a joint learning process can contribute significantly to solving their problems.

*Monitoring*

Monitoring is an accompanying process throughout the various steps of the community development spiral, and is essential to adjust the process so that the ultimate goal is achieved. It involves critical observation and analysis of emerging phenomena throughout the process and provides insights to take corrective measures as necessary. The community has to be encouraged to concentrate not only on the immediate outputs of their activities, but also on the contribution of the achieved outputs regarding desired outcomes and impacts. The development of the capacity of the community to practice outcome-oriented monitoring can contribute significantly to improve their livelihood. In some cases unexpected outcomes that are not desirable arise and corrective measures have to be taken. Again, it is the community that has to develop the necessary monitoring abilities, always supported by facilitators. Continuous monitoring by different stakeholders, including external actors, contributes

to continuous improvement of community development activities, and to the achievement of short-, medium-, and long-term goals.

#### *Evaluation*

At the end of such a community development cycle, systematic evaluation is helpful to improve the next projects, but also to systematically strengthen the abilities of communities and other involved actors to work more and more effectively in improving the situation at the community level. Insights gained through such evaluations can also contribute to improvement of community development practices in general and to the formulation of guidelines or policy frameworks at a higher level.

## **SUMMARY**

The Community Development Cycle summarizes key insights from more than six decades of community development worldwide. During this long period many methodologies have been developed to support community development. Some important approaches are: Freirian Approach of Conscientization, Participatory Action Research (PAR); Participatory Learning for Action (PLA<sup>7</sup>); Farmer Field School (FFS); Grameen Bank Approach; and Rural Livelihood Improvement Approach (RLIP). However, often rural development approaches have not been systematically blended with project management approaches such as Project Cycle Management (PCM), Deming Cycle (PDCA), *Kaizen*, and psychological and organizational development approaches specifically focusing on strengthening confidence of clients and inducing change as an internally driven process (Appreciative Inquiry).

The concept of Community Capacity Development as well as the Seven D Approach, which will be explained in the next chapters, aims at blending those insights with the experiences made with such approaches.

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<sup>7</sup> PLA has been developed from Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA).





***PART-2***

***DEFINING TERMS :  
COMMUNITY,  
CAPACITY, AND  
COMMUNITY  
CAPACITY  
DEVELOPMENT***



## **COMMUNITY**

---

*"There is more than a verbal tie between the words common, community, and communication... Try the experiment of communicating, with fullness and accuracy, some experience to another, especially if it be somewhat complicated, and you will find your own attitude toward your experience changing."*

**– John Dewey**

Community is often perceived of as a group of people bound to a specific geographical location, such as a neighborhood, hamlet, estate, village, or city. But a careful reflection will reveal that a community need not be bound to a certain location; it can also be a group of people having common interests living in several locations, based on ethnicity, religion, age, occupation, or cultural practices. What makes it even more complex is the fact that human beings can also be part of several communities at the same time. For example, an individual can be a member of a religious community, a geographical community, a professional community, and an international community such as Amnesty International, all at the same time.

### **INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY VERSUS NATURAL COMMUNITY**

In the context of community development it is important to realize that we are not dealing with intentional communities that are communities built around an intention and their members become members of this community as they share this specific intention. Examples of intentional communities are a company, cooperative, club, or interest group such as Amnesty International.

Rural communities are natural communities, as the members are part of the community, just as they are born in this community. The members of a village community may have different intentions or differing opinions, but they are bound through a common history, shared culture and values, and are part of a community. Community development of such natural communities faces challenges that are distinct from those of organizational development or the development processes of a cooperative.

Community, in general, means a network of people shaped by joint experiences, sharing certain common values, having specific concerns, feeling bonded to each other, and often living in a particular geographical area.

In summary, community refers to a collective of people having common interests, often living in the same place sharing the same institutions, laws, and regulations. Sometimes we find various communities within a single geographic region without much interaction between them; for example, different religious or tribal communities in a village dominated by other communities, or a fishing community in an agricultural community.

This should caution us against working with a simplistic definition of community for our purpose of community development. Community development focuses on strengthening a community's capacity to clarify common interests and act toward realizing objectives derived from their collective vision, taking into consideration the interests of the neighboring communities. It would be easy to use existing administrative boundaries for defining communities; often this is exactly what is done

in the area of community development. However, such a procedure often can only be successful when these administrative boundaries overlap strongly with the socio-cultural characteristics of the community within that boundary, and when the individuals within that boundary have an identity of belonging to the same community.

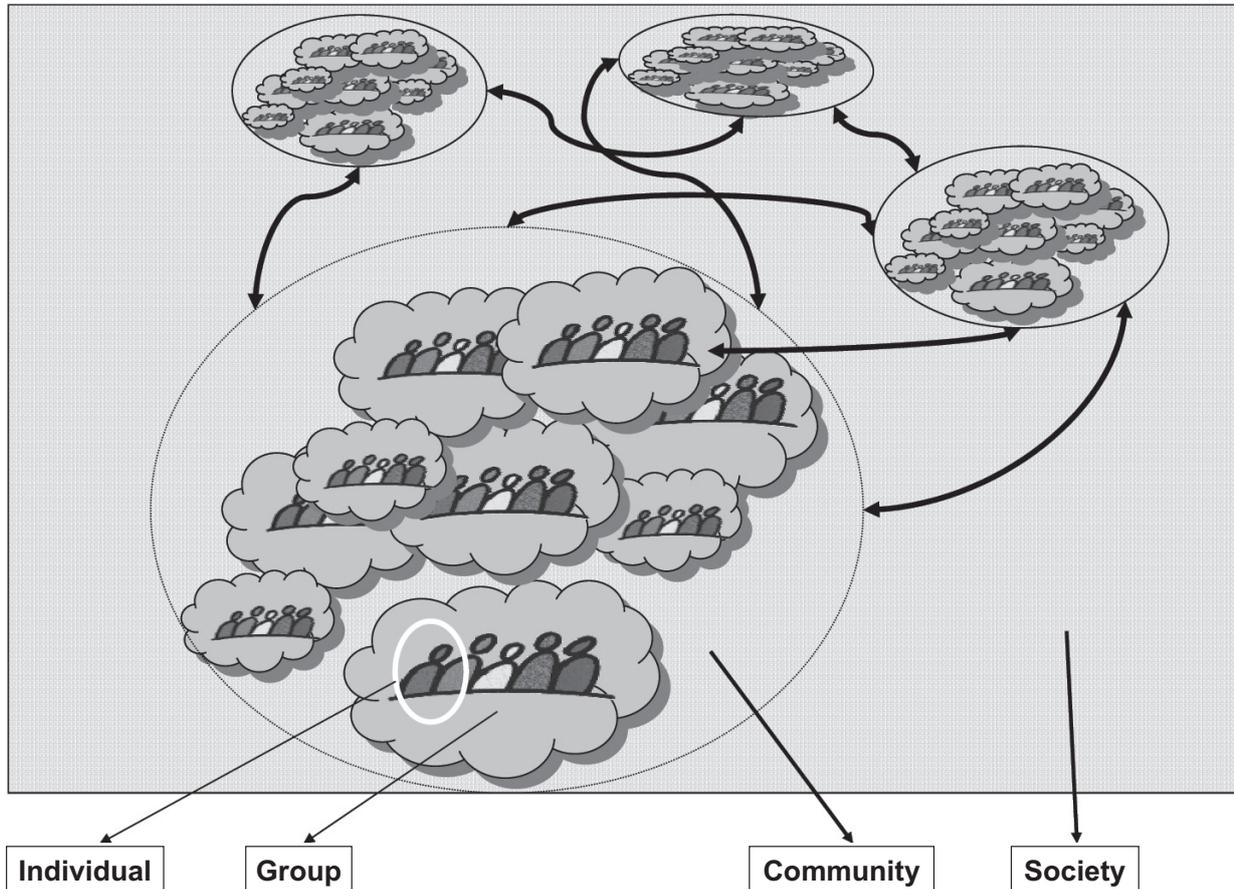


Figure 2. Community as a system

### COMMUNITY AS A "LIVING" SYSTEM

Experiences with community development reveal that paying close attention to the historical and socio-cultural aspects of community formation is crucial. A possible pitfall lies in perceiving communities as static and closed entities, neglecting their dynamic nature and their strong interrelationship with the environment. Such a misconception of community can guide us to mislead community development as a process of protecting a community from outside influences.

However it is a fact that communities are interlinked with other communities, are continuously in a process of dynamic change, and are part of a wider community such as societies at the national and international level. Careful reflection of history teaches

us that communities in Asia were already in intensive and fertile relations with each other hundreds of years ago.<sup>8</sup>

A systemic perspective helps to conceptualize communities as a living system embedded in a wider social and natural environment with exchange between both. Therefore, community development has to focus on both, that is, supporting the community as a small system to develop in interaction with the environment.

The nature of communities is best understood by character as nested autopoietic systems; they are embedded in other systems, and contain smaller systems such as sub-communities, households, groups, and organizations, and as an autopoietic system they regenerate themselves. Communities are, since their origin, engaged in a process of creation and recreation by continuously clarifying the direction they want to move through communication and decision-making. What differentiates the human community from any other community is the autonomous will of community members to make decisions and their aspirations and imagination to develop directions where they want to go and which path they want to take.

Living systems seek self-reliance within a nested system of ever-larger communities. That seems only contradictory, if we do not realize the true dialectic nature of living systems, out of which the evolution is born. Communities have to maintain at the same time a certain degree of self-reliance and interaction with their environment, in order to develop continuously.

It would be too simplistic not to recognize this dialectical tension of communities, which forces them again and again to find a balance between change and maintaining their identity by adapting to changing conditions through improving efficiency and effectiveness, and creating and recreating relationships of trust and individual security within the community and in cooperation with neighboring communities.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Indonesia, for example, hosts one of the biggest Buddhist monuments in Borobodur and a famous Hindu temple in Prembanan and at the same time is the biggest Muslim country in the world. The influence of Persian culture in India is clearly visible and the monuments in Cambodia refer to both Hindu civilization and Buddhism.

<sup>9</sup> "At the higher levels, you get a more abstract, encompassing view, without attention to the details of the components or parts. At the lower level, you see a multitude of interacting parts but without understanding how they are organized to form a whole." (Principia Cybernetica 1999)

## **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

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*"Community development is the process of developing active and sustainable communities based on social justice and mutual respect. It is about shifting power structures to remove the barriers that prevent people from participating in the issues that affect their lives."*<sup>10</sup>

### **CHALLENGES OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Initiatives that have traditionally come under the heading of "community development" have not always automatically led to strengthening the capacity of communities. Consider a situation where government agencies and NGOs are in control of the economic and social development of a community, with little or no input by the community itself. Such a top-down development process may lead to increased job creation, improved infrastructure, better social justice, and better income for the members of the community. However, when community development is not driven by the community itself, but dominated by external agencies, the ability and capacity of the community members to manage their affairs by themselves may be weakened. In other words, there might be community development in terms of economic improvement, but without genuine community capacity development.

On the other hand, marginalized communities are sometimes supported by outside agencies to develop their capacities, especially in the area of reflecting jointly on their situation and developing a common vision and goal. Again, such awareness creation and critical thinking may create the foundation but not lead automatically to an improved economic and social situation within the community. Partial community capacity development may, therefore, take place but without genuine social or economic improvement.<sup>11</sup>

### **HOLISTIC COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

A deeper form of integrated community development blends both the process of bringing collective social change and justice and improving productivity and improving livelihoods by working with communities to strengthen their capacities to:

- Identify their needs, opportunities, rights, and responsibilities;
- Plan, organize, and take collective action; and,
- Evaluate the efficiency and outcomes of their actions, vis-à-vis tackling inequalities and moving toward the vision created by the community.

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<sup>10</sup> Federation for Community Development Facilitation (<http://www.fcdl.org.uk/about/definition.htm>)

<sup>11</sup> Local Government Publications. *The Community Development Challenge. West Yorkshire; 2006* (<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/communitydevelopment>)

A more evolved perception of, and approach to, community development focuses on strengthening the abilities of individuals and organizations within the community to be efficient and effective in taking collective action for improving the quality of life in a productive and sustainable way. Community development is a holistic process contributing to the development of individuals and the community as a whole.

**Community Development has to Address Whole System**

Practitioners stress that for community development to be successful it has to address two areas simultaneously: improving the conditions inside the community itself, and improving the ability of organizations and individuals to support communities in the development process. Community development, therefore, involves dealing with the government authorities and non-governmental agencies that support communities. Successful community development efforts have to enhance the ability of such supporting agencies to strengthen, engage with, respond to, and work jointly with communities.

Community development therefore focuses on two key interrelated elements of the society: the communities themselves and the agencies supporting them as well as the interaction between the two. Facilitators and community workers play a key role at the interface of these interrelated systems.

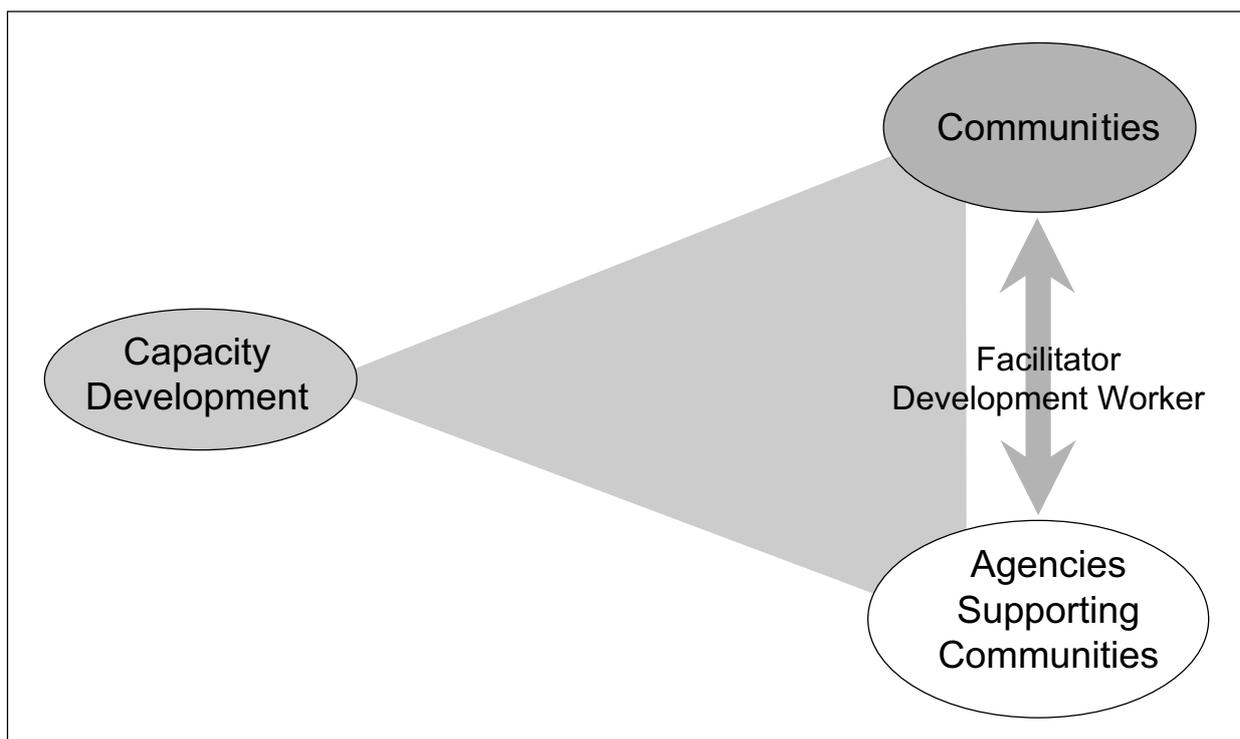


Figure 3. Community development — two important areas of action

Community capacity development is a complementary process. Strengthening capacities of individuals, groups, and organizations within the community needs appropriate leadership, long-time thinking, and collaborative development of strategic plans and skills to implement specific projects that contribute to the long-term vision.

## **CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT**

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*"The most authentic thing about us is our capacity to create, to overcome, to endure, to transform, to love and to be greater than our suffering."*

**– Ben Okri**

Capacity development is much more than well planned and managed interventions by international or national agencies. In fact, capacity development is a part of human and community life and a continuous process since the beginning of mankind. People take actions and reflect on results, thus learn continuously to improve their actions in light of their aspirations. Such action and reflection cycles, both individual and collective, may be erratic and unsystematic. Nevertheless, individuals, communities, and societies have their own history of successes that are worth exploring for the community itself as well as external agencies. Strengthening such endogenous capacity development processes should form the basis of any capacity development programs.

### **CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AN EMERGING DISCIPLINE**

Until recently, development professionals viewed capacity development often as a technical process, involving the simple transfer of knowledge or organizational models from north to south or from cities to communities. During the last few decades, the focus was mainly on large projects and programs that initiated the transfer of technology and knowledge with the intention that these would contribute to the improvement of situations worldwide and eradicate poverty.

Not enough thought was given to the broader political, institutional, and social context within which capacity development efforts take place. For related reasons, there was insufficient appreciation of the importance of country, region, and community ownership in designing and implementing capacity development initiatives.

A neglect of local context and the strong belief in technological solutions developed in powerful centers led to an overemphasis on what were seen as "right answers." Such blueprint standardized solutions transferred worldwide were in best cases ineffective, and in worst cases a disaster for those who applied the solutions. But in all cases it did not strengthen the capacity at the receiver side, but only the capacity of those who developed the attempted solutions. Such an approach may be suitable for private enterprises that profit by developing products and selling them to customers. But this is not an approach promising to strengthen the capacities of communities and empower them.

It is obvious that the great diversity of communities and countries requires approaches that best fit their special conditions and circumstances and this is best developed locally through a process of participatory knowledge and technology development.

Critical analysis of UNDP, one of the leading organizations in capacity development, reveals that development support is “often provided in such a way that little, if any, capacity development occurs.”<sup>12</sup>

Especially communities, the smallest natural organizational unit of a country, have in the past often been provided with ready-made solutions, or packages of products and services developed outside the community with little or no consultation and collaboration with the community itself. This has invariably led to the erosion of their capacity to develop endogenous solutions.<sup>13</sup>

The new consensus, articulated strongly in the 2005 Paris Declaration, understands capacity development as a necessarily endogenous process, strongly led from within a country, with donors playing a supporting role. According to this vision, political leadership and the prevailing political and governance system are critical factors in creating opportunities and setting limits for capacity development efforts. Country policy ownership is not a simple yes/no issue, but a matter of intelligent processes and critical reflection and continuous actions ensuring increasing ownership. It is also not a monolithic and fixed approach. Under certain conditions it may be right for donors to support locally owned processes of improvement in certain organizational spheres even when the conditions in the wider system are suboptimal.

### **Difficulties in Implementing Successful Capacity Development Programs**

Analyses by the UNDP on capacity development have identified the following challenges in this area:

- Ineffectiveness of conventional development processes in inculcating in people and institutions the capacity to sustain development;
- Excess emphasis on short-term projects with finite impact, rather than on investment in human capital, leading to poorly sustained results;
- Focusing mainly on government organizations rather than on the society as a whole, which has not strengthened the capacity of local people and communities to participate in development processes.
- Excess dependence upon foreign experts, leading to a lack of ownership and sustainability.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> UNDP: United Nations Development Program. (<http://mirror.undp.org/magnet/cdrb/CAPDEV.htm>)

<sup>13</sup> This aspect is well described in the Fijian Case of Community Development.

<sup>14</sup> Capacity Development For Sustainable Human Development: Conceptual and Operational Signposts (<http://mirror.undp.org/magnet/cdrb/CAPDEV.htm>).

## MEANING OF CAPACITY

According to the OECD-DAC<sup>15</sup> *capacity* “is understood as the ability of people, organizations, and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully.”<sup>16</sup>

One may be surprised and perhaps disappointed at the shortness of this definition. But OECD-DAC has intentionally come up with such a “deliberately simple” definition, as it avoids prejudgment on the visions and objectives that respective stakeholders such as communities may choose to pursue. The definition also intentionally restricts itself from predefining what should count as success in the “management of their collective efforts.”<sup>17</sup>

Another leading agency, UNDP, defines capacity similarly as “the ability of individuals, institutions and societies to perform functions, solve problems, and set and achieve objectives in a sustainable manner.”

Both definitions highlight the fact that capacity can refer to different levels in a society such as individuals, institutions, organizations, communities, or the society as a whole. If we look closer into the context of community, we can also identify within community different levels such as individuals, organizations, or the community as a whole. Focusing only on the capacity of a single actor in a complex system may not lead to the expected outcomes.

A second important aspect of capacity is the ability of stakeholders to manage their affairs,<sup>18</sup> which has to be developed by the community in a collective and legitimized process. It is important to stress that in the context of community development, only the members of the communities can define what should be their vision and objective and what they assess as success. The role of outside agencies, at best, can be to facilitate the communities’ collective process toward their goals.

### Capacity Development

Genuine capacity development has to overcome concepts of knowledge transfer as well as capacity building, which are still widely used and were quite prevalent in the past. The term *capacity building* evokes the idea that communities either do not have capacities, or else the capacities available to them are not valuable. As now increasingly emphasized, capacity development pays attention to the fact that all

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<sup>15</sup> Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) with the Development Assistance Committee (DAC).

<sup>16</sup> The Challenge of Capacity Development — Working Towards Good Practice, OECD/DAC, 2006 (p.12).

<sup>17</sup> “*Capacity* is the ability of people, organizations/institutions and society as a whole to successfully manage their affairs. *Capacity development* is the process of unleashing, conserving, creating, strengthening, adapting, and maintaining capacity over time.”

Source: OECD/DAC Task Force developing a generic Good Practice Paper on Capacity Development. November 2004.

<sup>18</sup> *Manage* refers to a whole series of processes such as clarifying vision, objectives, activities, mobilizing resources, monitoring, and evaluation. *Capability* reflects a person’s ability to achieve a given function (doing or being). For example, a person may have the ability to avoid hunger, but may choose to fast or go on a hunger strike instead. Note that Sen typically uses the term “capability” in a much broader and more general sense to refer to capabilities in plural or the actual ability to function in different ways.

human beings and organizations as well as communities have capacities that are organically developed through context-specific and appropriate processes.

Another critical aspect of capacity development is related to the use of the terms “knowledge transfer” versus “knowledge development.” Experiences show that an un-reflected transfer of external knowledge can lead to the erosion and destruction of the community knowledge base. Capacity development initiatives have to pay careful attention so that communities are nurtured to generate relevant knowledge continuously by assisting them in making their implicit knowledge explicit, and combining that knowledge with external knowledge toward tackling identified challenges.

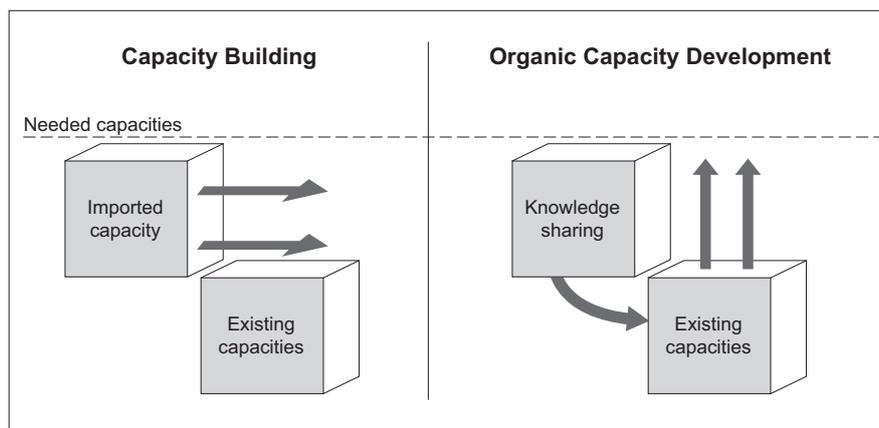


Figure 4. UNDP concept of organic capacity development

Experiences with community capacity development reveal that knowledge and skills are only one aspect of capacity development; other important aspects of capacity development are strengthening motivation and self-confidence of community members, their ability to network with actors inside and outside the community, nurturing their ability to mobilize necessary resources, and, very importantly, developing their ability to gain legitimacy for their decisions through processes of dialogue and consensus. Further, it is important to keep in mind that the capacity of actors to achieve their objectives or to perform their functions is enhanced or restricted by external and internal factors such as institutions, laws, regulations, cultural beliefs, mindsets, motivations, and relationships.

*From "Universal Right Answers" to "Context Specific Solutions"*

Until recently, capacity development was conceptualized mainly as a technical process, involving simple knowledge, skill transfer or transfer of organizational solutions, and even predefining the goals from those regarded as developed to those regarded as underdeveloped. This led to overemphasis on what were regarded as “right answers,” and the transfer of ready-made solutions and blueprints. Such an approach has led to a lack of ownership by those “being developed” and to the unsustainability of development efforts, which is characteristic of large-scale programs funded by international agencies as well as small projects aimed at supporting communities. The emerging understanding of capacity development stresses the importance of ownership by the beneficiaries and focuses on a “best fit” specific to the circumstances. Hence, capacity development is primarily an endogenous process, led by the local actors with a supportive role for external agents. One of the key success

factors for CD is that the processes are owned, actions taken, and the lessons learned, all locally, even if the environmental conditions are suboptimal.<sup>19</sup>

### Designing Capacity Development

Decades of planning and implementation of community development projects have shown that the ultimate goal of enhancing the capacity of local communities to improve their livelihood is seldom achieved. One of the main reasons for this shortcoming has been identified as the domination of external experts in designing project plans, and allowing community people only a limited role in planning and decision-making processes. External experts (government officers, NGO representatives, etc.) identify and analyze the problems and develop a “nice” plan to be implemented for the community. They see themselves as experts and neglect the crucial function of facilitation needed in ICD projects. The overriding belief in such a strategy is that a technically sound project plan would guarantee success in implementation and would lead to the desired outcomes of the project. The following steps and default principles of CD developed by the UNDP are helpful in developing community capacities.

### Steps of Capacity Development

Various organizations have developed systematic models with well defined steps of capacity development. The following are the steps suggested by UNDP. However, the application of “steps” in development cooperation is criticized for being too mechanical while not paying sufficient attention to the dynamics emerging in human systems. In response to this valid concern, it is argued that a generic description of the steps does not impose or dictate very specific or fixed ideas on how each step should be implemented, so that the steps can evolve and be followed more or less in line with the principles.

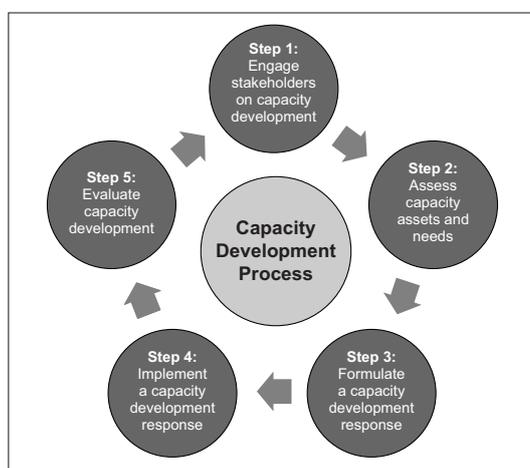


Figure 5. Steps of Capacity Development

<sup>19</sup> Paris Declaration, UNDP: Capacity development involves much more than enhancing the knowledge and skills of community members, it depends crucially on the quality of the groups, institutions, and the community in which they live and work, and on the environment, especially the structures of influence and power and the institutions in which community members are embedded or the whole community is embedded. Capacity is not only about skills and procedures; it is also about incentives and governance.

### **Principles of Capacity Development (from UNDP)<sup>20</sup>**

Considering the critique on fixed sequential models, which try to develop human capacities with concepts developed in the area of curriculum development, UNDP has formulated the following principles. These principles try to pay attention to the fact that capacity development is mainly a human process driven by self-emerging phenomena. By reading the principles one can clearly see the challenge of supporting the communities in capacity development.

#### *Don't rush*

Capacity development is a long-term process. It eludes delivery pressures, quick fixes, and the search for short-term results.

#### *Respect the value system and foster self-esteem*

The imposition of alien values can undermine confidence. Capacity development builds upon respect and self-esteem.

#### *Scan locally and globally; reinvent locally*

There are no blueprints. Capacity development draws upon voluntary learning, with genuine commitment and interest. Knowledge cannot be transferred; it needs to be acquired.

#### *Challenge mindsets and power differentials*

Capacity development is not power neutral, and challenging mindsets and vested interests is difficult. Frank dialogue and a collective culture of transparency are essential steps.

#### *Think and act in terms of sustainable capacity outcomes*

Capacity is at the core of development; any course of action needs to promote this end. Responsible leaders will inspire their institutions and societies to work accordingly.

#### *Establish positive incentives*

Motives and incentives need to be aligned with the objective of capacity development, including through governance systems that respect fundamental rights. Public sector employment is one particular area where distortions throw up major obstacles.

#### *Integrate external inputs into national priorities, processes, and systems*

External inputs need to correspond to real demand and be flexible enough to respond to national needs and agendas. Where national systems are not strong enough, they should be reformed and strengthened, not bypassed.

#### *Build on existing capacities rather than creating new ones*

This implies the primary use of national expertise, resuscitation and strengthening of national institutions, as well as protection of social and cultural capital.

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<sup>20</sup> UNDP. *Ownership, Leadership and Transformation*. NY; p. 13. 2003.

*Stay engaged under difficult circumstances*

The weaker the capacity, the greater the need. Low capacities are not an argument for withdrawal or for driving external agendas. People should not be held hostage to irresponsible governance.

*Remain accountable to ultimate beneficiaries*

Any responsible government is answerable to its people, and should foster transparency as the foremost instrument of public accountability. Where governance is unsatisfactory it is even more important to anchor development firmly in stakeholder participation and to maintain pressure points for an inclusive accountability system.

## **SUMMARY**

Reflecting on the above-described definitions, principles, and steps for community capacity development (CCD), it can be concluded that CCD is a process of developing the ability of individuals, groups, institutions, and organizations to tackle their developmental challenges and move toward their vision by managing resources efficiently and implementing actions effectively.

CCD is a complex and dynamic human process that involves changes of behavior and attitude while building fruitful relations between members within and outside the community, always focusing on those capacities that contribute to increasing the productivity and quality of life.

Another important aspect of CCD is empowering and energizing communities so that latent human ability and potential can be translated into dynamic collective action. The importance of the human and relational nature of CCD makes it necessary that any approach to CCD has to pay considerable attention to aspects of mutual learning, trust, and respect between the stakeholders within and outside the community.

CCD involves shifts in power and identity, the community acting together, and the community members taking control over their own lives. Because such a process can lead to conflicts and tensions within the community, community capacity development processes have to entail appropriate and effective communication and consensus.

Community capacity development is a special area of the human development process, which cannot be implemented from outside; it is genuinely an endogenous process – a process created and sustained from within. It requires that the key actors own as well as take responsibility for the change.

Successful community capacity development addresses challenges in dealing with hard-to-imitate attributes and capacities. These include community values, collective knowledge, trust, personal behavior, competencies, and ways of doing things that are unique to specific communities.

Capacities that are difficult to develop with a blueprint strategy are:

- the ability of the community to motivate, attract, and retain talented members;
- the community's ability to create continuously a shared identity and culture under changing conditions;
- the community's *agility* and *flexibility* in responding to and managing change; and
- the community's ability to generate and apply knowledge, encourage creativity, and embrace innovation.

CD tools and processes need to be explicitly adapted to the local context and culture; as the UNDP puts it, it is about achieving the “best fit” to a particular situation.

Strategies and plans that are often developed by outsiders do not lead automatically to the strengthening of the capacities of communities, to increasing their motivation to take action for change. The following Seven D Approach presents a methodology for genuine community capacity development.





***PART-3***  
***KEY CONCEPTS OF  
THE SEVEN D  
APPROACH***



## **BACKGROUND**

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*"The ability to think straight, some knowledge of the past, some vision of the future, some urge to fit that service into the well being of the community – these are the most vital things that education must try to produce."*

**– Virginia Gildersleeve**

### **THE NEED FOR AN APPROPRIATE COMMUNITY CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH**

During more than a decade of the APO ICD program the situation of community development in member countries has been intensively analyzed and the following reasons for failure or weaknesses of ICD projects and programs could be identified:<sup>21</sup>

- Local community does not develop ownership for the outputs of the project and does not feel responsible for implementation of plans, due to their marginal involvement in planning;
- Knowledge and experience of local communities, and their capacity for analyzing, planning, and self-organizing were ignored or underestimated;
- Understanding of the situation and identification of the problems were dominated by the views of external planners/experts rather than the visions, needs, and problems of the local community;
- Unclear understanding about the nature and phases of a project, and the interrelationships between the phases;
- Focus on managing technical inputs, rigid application of tools, and neglecting soft aspects and principles of management;
- Insufficient consultation and participation of all stakeholders in project planning, analysis, and implementation;
- Blueprint rigid planning, making it difficult to adjust the project to the rapidly changing socio-economic and political environment; and
- Implementation of projects often does not increase the capacity of communities to manage their situation but creates even more dependency for more projects.

These factors indicate that the success and sustainability of projects need more than just a technically sound plan and efficient management of natural, physical, and capital resources. Classical project management instruments such as Gantt Diagram, Logical Framework, Problem Tree, and Fishbone Diagram do not guarantee success of project management at the community level, as they do not create the necessary motivation and enthusiasm at this level. Studies of successful cases of development projects at community level reveal that a key factor is collaborative working of concerned individuals, groups, and organizations in developing a collective vision,

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<sup>21</sup> Say, R.: Report of the Training Course on "Advanced Seminar on Planning Methods for Integrated Local Community Development: PPCM" 19–29 April 1999, APO, Tokyo.

addressing immediate challenges, and mobilizing resources in a dynamic and accelerating way. Desired changes have evolved through creative and genuine participation of all stakeholders in the planning, analyzing, steering, and decision-making processes. Finally as such processes are always accompanied by tension and conflicts, the participants in successful projects managed to deal with the tensions in a productive way and find acceptable solutions to deal with them.

In light of the lessons learned from the past, there is a wide acceptance among community development practitioners to ensure dialogical communication among all stakeholders and encourage their active involvement from the beginning to the end of the planning, conceptualization, and implementation phases of development projects. Project management is seen more and more, not mainly as management of a technical system mastered by sophisticated tools, where only resources have to be mobilized and utilized to produce predefined outputs. Rather, projects are seen as collective and dynamic endeavors of human beings to create certain outputs, which are intended to contribute to achieve desired outcomes leading toward a vision. Managing diversity of views and opinions, a sense for flexibility and continuous reflection, and the ability for generation of knowledge and continuous learning become the core of such a human-centered project management. Projects provide a learning arena for the community to learn new ways of creative problem solving, joint working, organizational development, and community capacity development. Any methodology for community capacity development has to have clarity on key challenges faced in the area of community capacity development, so that these challenges can be addressed accordingly.

## **KEY CHALLENGES OF COMMUNITY CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT**

Intensive discussion with professionals involved in community development in APO member countries revealed the following seven key challenges.

### **1. Low motivation and self-confidence of communities**

Often communities are conditioned and their expectations framed by repeated experiences with externally driven development, characterized by service provision and centralized top-down planning. This has contributed to a receiving mentality on the side of communities. Communities wait for services to be offered by external agencies, instead of proactively taking actions to fulfill their own real needs. Even if the opportunity for self-driven development arises, communities lack the necessary motivation and confidence to shape their future by themselves.

### **2. Neglecting own resources and knowledge**

Communities concentrate their efforts on obtaining resources and knowledge of external agencies and do not realize how much resource and knowledge is already available within the community. By continuously focusing on external resources and knowledge, they lose their own assets and knowledge base, and the external agencies increasingly face the problem of providing more and more resources to the communities.

### **3. Actions driven by an external agenda and not internal vision**

Communities jump onto "running trains, without checking the destination" carefully. Focus on external resources forces them to make their decisions based on the provision of resources by external agents, leading to a mentality of "let us take

whatever comes and let us be quick.” Few influential actors within the community capture the major part of externally provided resources, creating conflicts, erosion of cohesiveness, and ineffectiveness. If external agencies provide funds for irrigation, community members will start immediately to think about how to capitalize on that for their own personal benefit. Thorough analysis of their own needs as well as the expected results at the output and outcome level is seldom undertaken. Communities seldom develop a collaborative vision, nor are they usually guided in their decisions by their long-term vision.

#### **4. Erosion of social capital**

Even though communities in Asia are characterized by strong social relationships and richness in traditions of neighborhood support and collective reciprocal actions, in recent decades communities have broken apart, and different groups and individuals have sought their own benefit even at the cost of community welfare. This leads to increased disparity and tension within communities, and erosion of social capital with far-reaching consequences for the communities.

#### **5. Projects and programs focus on products and neglect capacity development**

External initiatives often tend to focus on the increase of production of goods by the communities. Through radical and quick changes of the community production, it is hoped that they can improve their livelihood within a short period of time. Such a strategy increases the economic and natural vulnerability of communities, as they become dependent on a few products that they have to sell in the fluctuating markets. Their capacity to react to the changing environment in a flexible way, and to utilize their own resources for achieving collective vision, is not strengthened.

#### **6. Insufficient collaborative reflection**

While the strength of communities in the past lay in their ability to be in continuous conversation among themselves as a community – sharing stories about past achievements and future dreams – they now face extreme constraints and pressure in maintaining a collective co-creation of their history. Migration of the youth, modern communication forms, diminished respect for the elders, and orientation toward individual benefits, all have their visible negative impact on community cohesiveness. Communities are lacking the capacity to analyze situations in a collaborative way and to find solutions based on such collective analysis. If the community, as a whole, does not have avenues and forums where its members can share their dreams and challenges faced, and where they can identify solutions based on consensus, they cannot regenerate a positive collective identity based on mutual benefit, which is, after all, a key characteristic of a community.

#### **7. Importing solutions from the past and from other regions**

Decisions in community development are often based on experiences of the past, and past experiences and solutions are used mechanically to deal with the challenges of tomorrow. However in times of dynamic and radical changes, solutions of the past may not be the best option to shape the future. Another dangerous strategy is to transfer solutions from one country context to another, without careful reflection and adaptation. Instead of transferring solutions from another space and time, it seems more effective to encourage communities to generate necessary solutions and knowledge locally, with inspiration from outside. Studying innovative companies reveals that small actions inspired by a vision, and a sense for the future as it

emerges, are not only successful, but also strengthen the innovation capacities of the communities. A continuous reflection on the outcomes helps identify the innovations that are appropriate for wider application. Too often, such an innovative culture of continuously strengthening the community capacity is not systematically supported by a clear vision among community support agencies, nor by a clear methodology.

Since 1998, the APO ICD Program has been deeply engaged in developing and experimenting with a methodology suitable for strengthening the capacities of communities in Asia. Successful cases of community development such as Micro Credit Programs in Bangladesh, Farmer Field Schools in Indonesia, Rural Life Improvement in Japan, Samael Undong in South Korea, PDA in Thailand, Indigenous Systems in Iran, RKSS in Pakistan, Community Forestry in Nepal, and RDP in India are some of the examples analyzed. Case studies and intensive discussions with professionals working in research institutions, as well as in government and non-government agencies working with communities, have led to the identification of seven key concepts that are extremely relevant to dealing with the challenges faced in community development. What follows is a short description of these seven concepts that have fertilized the development of the Seven D Approach.

## **KEY CONCEPTS OF THE SEVEN D APPROACH**

Since 1998, the APO ICD Program has been deeply engaged in developing and testing a methodology suitable for strengthening the capacities of communities in APO member countries. At the initial stage Participatory Rural Appraisal was blended with Project Cycle Management, and Participatory Project Cycle Management (PPCM)<sup>22</sup> was developed and intensively tested in cooperation with CIRDAP<sup>23</sup> in Bangladesh. Subsequently, careful study of the successful cases of community development involving intensive discussions with professionals working in research institutions as well as in the area of government and non-government agencies working with communities led to further modification of the PPCM methodology in two directions:

- A more vision and solution orientation proved to be powerful in motivating and encouraging communities to develop ownership for self-driven change processes.
- Blending PPCM with key ideas of *Kaizen* and PDCA Cycle revealed a great potential for genuine community capacity development.

This led around 2004 to the development of the Six D Process, which was applied in Fiji, and based on the experiences the Seven D Approach was developed.

The following seven key concepts have significantly influenced the Seven D Approach, which will be further described in the next chapter.

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<sup>22</sup> Advanced Seminar on Planning Methods for Integrated Local Community Development: PPCM, Dhamotharan, M. Gaertner, U. Say, R. Tokyo: APO; 1999

<sup>23</sup> CIRDAP (Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific) applied PPCM in several South Asian Countries.

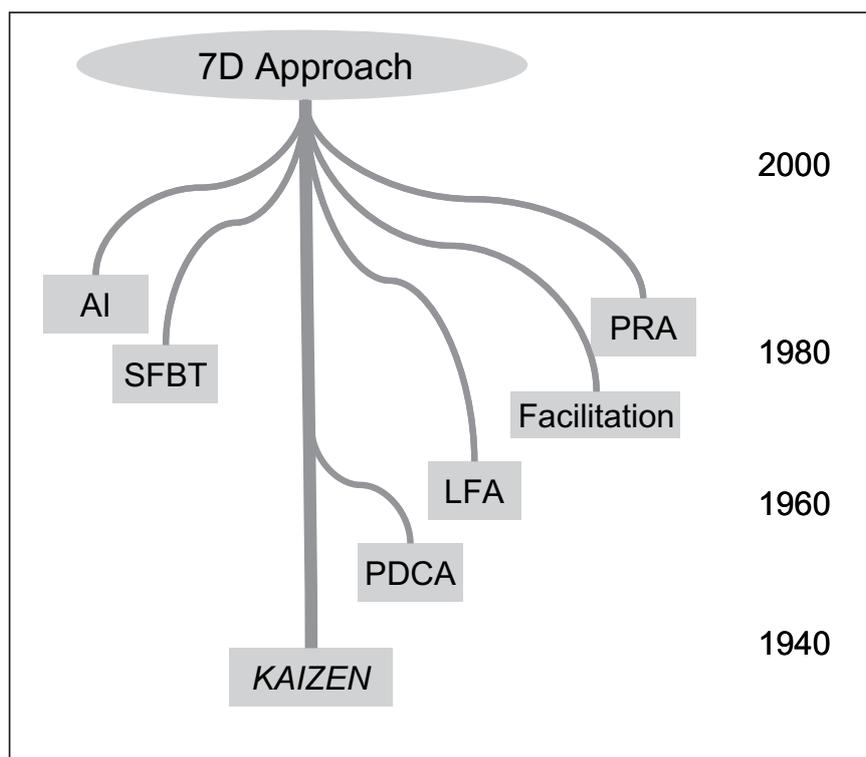


Figure 6. Progression of the Seven D Approach

**1. Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) and Appreciative Inquiry (AI)**

provide valuable insights on how to enable communities to discover their potentials and to motivate and energize individuals, groups, and the whole community to unleash their energy for improving the situation of a community.

**2. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)**

This approach has been widely applied in rural development and has proven its contribution to enabling the rural community to identify and analyze their situation, map their existing resources, and develop appropriate solutions. Of particular significance are the principles and tools developed by PRA.

**3. Kaizen**

with its core idea of starting small and improving continuously, encourages communities toward small quick interventions for continuous progress.

**4. PDCA (Plan, Do, Check, Act) Cycle**

as developed by Deming provides crucial insights on how the processes should be designed and implemented so that continuous learning can take place.

**5. LFA (Logical Framework Approach) & PCM (Project Cycle Management)**

provide systematic and analytical approaches for strategic planning activities and for monitoring the implementation of activities and their outcomes. They also provide excellent frameworks for mobilizing external funds necessary for community development.

**6. Experiential Learning and Knowledge Spiral**

provide key insights on how to design a community development process as a knowledge-generation process and to promote learning so that the community is

ultimately able to generate necessary knowledge for their benefit by utilizing their implicit and explicit knowledge.

### 7. Facilitation

provides a rich body of experience and knowledge on how external actors can contribute effectively to internal self-development and capacity development of human systems. These insights are extremely helpful in supporting communities to strengthen their own capacities.

The **Seven D Approach** carefully blends key insights from those seven key concepts systematically in a novel way so that community capacity development is paramount throughout the process.

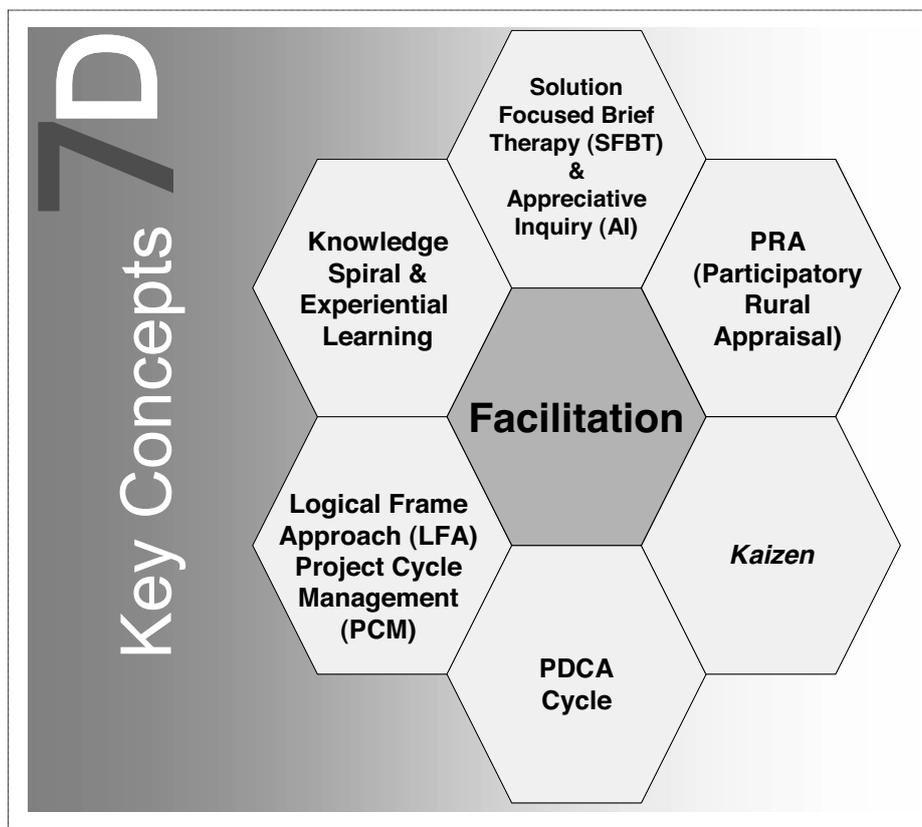


Figure 7. Key concepts of the Seven D Approach

## 1. SOLUTION-FOCUSED BRIEF THERAPY & APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

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*"I learned this, at least, by my experiment: That if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours. He will put some things behind, will pass an invisible boundary; new, universal, and more liberal laws will begin to establish themselves around and within him; or the old laws will be expanded, and interpreted in his favor in a more liberal sense, and he will live with the license of a higher order of beings. In proportion as he simplifies his life, the laws of the universe will appear less complex, and solitude will not be solitude, nor poverty poverty, nor weakness weakness. If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them."*

**– Henry David Thoreau**

### **SOLUTION-FOCUSED BRIEF THERAPY (SFBT)**

*"Problem talk creates problems – solution talk creates solutions."*

**– Steve de Shazer**

*"Future is created and negotiated, and not a slave of the past events in a person's life, therefore, in spite of past traumatic events, a person can negotiate and implement many useful steps that are likely to lead him/her to a more satisfying life."*

**– Insoo Kim Berg**

One of the key challenges of Integrated Community Development is the lack of motivation and low self-confidence of communities to develop creative solutions and improve their life. An interesting solution to this challenge is provided by the Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT), which was developed around 1978 by Steve de Shazer, Insoo Kim Berg and others.<sup>24</sup> Since the early 1980s, key ideas of SFBT have been applied in a variety of contexts including organizational change. Solution-focused therapy is committed to a solution-nurturing mode instead of a problem-solving mode.

#### **Solution Focus Instead of Problem Fixation**

According to de Shazer, traditional therapies focused mainly on identifying and analyzing problems and finding appropriate solutions to the identified problems. Such "problem centeredness" became the dominant paradigm since Freud, not only in therapy but also in management approaches and change processes in general. According to such a problem-centered paradigm, intervention strategies start always with identification of a problem, followed by analyzing root causes of that problem, and designing actions geared toward removing the identified causes.

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.brief-therapy.org>

Well known management approaches in the development area such as Logical Framework Approach (LFA) or Project Cycle Management (PCM) are fundamentally built around the assumption that problems have to be identified and analyzed before objectives and appropriate strategies are developed, which are then implemented with the objective of solving the problem identified. In community development even participatory approaches with a clear agenda on empowerment of communities have often started with an analysis of community problems and subsequently developing solutions based on the problem analysis. Such a focus on *problems* instead of on *solutions and potentials*, according to the solution-focused approach, does not empower human beings and communities, but demotivates and discourages them from improving their situation.

### **Shadow Sides of Problem Fixation**

A problem-solving approach as described is logically convincing, and can lead, in certain contexts especially in a business environment, to excellent improvements. However, such a process has revealed a crucial disadvantage, namely that of discouragement and demotivation of actors who already lack self-confidence. In addition, such an approach can lead to the strengthening of externals' status as experts and to an increase of apathy and low self-confidence on the side of the supported communities. The external facilitators confronted with such a situation easily tend to fall back into their traditional role of delivering "good advice" to the community, and trying to help them improve their situation through ready-made and quick fixes. The experts start to move the "elephant to the river," so that it can drink instead of supporting the elephant to make a move toward the well.

In particular, experiences from different Asian countries have shown that such a problem-centered approach may be analytically brilliant, but in terms of human relationships, it can be a nightmare for both the external facilitator and the community, leading to frustration, demotivation, and lost face. This has created a vicious cycle of communities increasingly perceiving themselves as full of problems and captured in a web of negative causes, which they cannot solve by themselves and require massive interventions through external agencies.

### **Shifting the Focus Toward Solutions**

Steve de Shazer criticizes the traditional forms of psychotherapy for weakening the self-help potential of clients by diverting their attention mainly on their perceived problems, rather than focusing on the richness of potential and problem-solving capacity also residing with the client. Therefore he suggests an approach that focuses radically on supporting clients to clarify their future and track solutions already existing within themselves to improve their situation. The clue of his approach lies in assisting the client to focus on "exceptions." According to de Shazer, even if a problem is severe and chronic, "there are always exceptions and these exceptions contain the seeds of the client's own solution."<sup>25</sup> As the practice of solution-focused brief therapy has evolved, the "problem" began to play a less and less important part in the therapeutic process. The focus turned on available small seeds of solutions and the potentials of the clients, to the extent that it might not even be known.

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<sup>25</sup> Iveson, C. *Solution-focused brief therapy*. (<http://apt.rcpsych.org/cgi/content/full/8/2/149>)

The therapist supports the client to develop a rich picture of the “solution” and to discover the resources to achieve it. Usual steps of this process are:

- Clarifying hopes and expectations: that is, what does the client hope to achieve from working together with the therapist?
- Encouraging the client to clarify changes in his or her life in detail, if the above-identified hopes are realized;
- Supporting the client to discover what the person is already doing or has done that might contribute to the realization of those hopes;
- Enabling the client to imagine what might be different if he or she made a small step toward realizing these hopes.

Below are some of the key assumptions and insights of SFBT, which provide interesting insights for community capacity development:

- Clients, even if they are suffering from severe problems, embody a rich source of resources and implicit solutions for desired change. A key role of the therapist is to facilitate the process of the client discovering his or her own resources and mobilizing internal resources for a desired change. Such a self-discovery and development process is best supported by focusing on the client as a person with high potential, rather than on problems and deficits. The client is regarded as an expert in all aspects of his/her life, and SFBT aims at strengthening the ability of the client to manage his/her life successfully with only brief external interventions.
- As a systemic approach, SFBT regards human beings as part of a social system, such as family, professional network, or community. By changing the behavior of any individual in such a system, either those who are most susceptible to change or have high influence in that system, will lead to a significant change in the whole system. That means dysfunctions and problematic behavior of an individual is not necessarily best solved at his or her level; one has to pay attention to the entirety of the system.
- Contrary to many other therapeutic traditions, SFBT minimizes the problem exploration phase or even avoids this phase totally. If a person comes to a SFBT session and starts to talk mainly about his problem, the therapist gradually shifts the conversation of the client to those times when the problem was absent or was minor. This process of shifting attention from problematic situations to those moments in life that were not dominated by the problem is key to raising the self-confidence of the client.  
The immediate effect of this is that the client can begin to realize the discontinuity and dynamics of life. No problem is *always* there, nor does it have a continuous effect on the life of the client. The client will have experienced, in spite of the most chronic problems, times when they were less dominant or were even absent.
- The SFBT approach questions the prevailing assumption that the causes of a problem have to be analyzed and identified for an effective solution. The attention of the client is directed toward potentials and solutions already applied. By focusing on those times in which the problem was absent, and identifying the reasons for the absence of the problem, a solution can be found without even

analyzing the problem. The *exceptional situation* is the clue to finding answers to problems, not the analysis of the problem itself.

- The relationship between the therapist and the client is envisaged to be a collaborative one. That is the reason why the client is rehabilitated as “an expert” of his livelihood. While the old medical model, based on the modernist approach, provides legitimate power to the professional to give problem-solving advice, the post-modernist model of SFBT seeks to achieve a self-empowering collaborative relationship by even downplaying the role of theory and models.<sup>26</sup>

In summary, SFBT is a pragmatic and minimalist approach focusing strongly on potentials and strengthening capacities of clients to find appropriate solutions. The following three key features of SFBT are used in the Seven D Approach of ICD.

### **1) Tracking Solutions and Potentials**

SFBT focuses on identifying solutions and potentials by diverting the attention of the clients from problem fixation toward available solutions. Even if the problematic situation seems at all times to pertain to the matter at issue, the client is encouraged to track those exceptional moments when such problems were absent. A classical question of SFBT sounds like: “Tell me about the times when this problem was not there...” Such an invitation encourages human beings and communities to explore those situations in which the problem was absent and identify the reasons why such a positive situation was possible, and to then explore how such a situation could be recreated and strengthened.

### **2) Exploring the Vision**

Another key aspect of SFBT is to explore future hopes, rather than focus on problems and underlying causes leading to that problem. SFBT encourages clients to develop a clear picture of a situation when the problem has been solved. Contrary to the typical “visioning process,” this pragmatic approach supports the client to imagine a future without the problem. For this to happen, SFBT uses a “miracle question” to explore in detail the situations when the problem was absent. This helps to form a clear understanding of the benefits of solving a problem, as well as an understanding of the benefits of such an exploration. The miracle question could be like: “Suppose you go to sleep tonight and a miracle occurs, and the things that have been troubling you are all resolved. What would life be like for you? How would you know that things have been resolved? What would you find yourself doing? What would others notice?”

### **3) Positive Feedback**

SFBT recognizes the enormous power of positive feedback for change. The therapist makes the client appreciate every little success toward the final goal. Moreover, the therapist does not criticize the client for his weakness, but shows empathy with the perspective of the client and accompanies the client in his/her struggle for a positive change with an encouraging attitude.

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<sup>26</sup> De Jong / Berg have brilliantly argued against the paradigm of helping professions.

### **What Do We Learn from SFBT for CCD?**

The way the SFBT deals with the “problem” provides many insights into community development processes. For decades, western thinking has been obsessed with the idea that problems can only be solved by a deep understanding and analysis of underlying causes. Only a thorough analysis could be the basis for any strategy to solving problems, it was argued.

Well known management approaches such as Logical Framework Approach or Project Cycle Management approaches are fundamentally built around the assumption that problems have to first be identified and analyzed before objectives and appropriate strategies are developed, which in turn have to be implemented with the objective of solving the problems identified. In community development, even participatory approaches such as PRA, with a clear intention to empower communities, invested a lot of energy and time into encouraging communities to take stock of their problems and to analyze causes. Even though this approach is logically convincing and leads in certain contexts to excellent solutions, it has shown to have a big disadvantage in that communities can become discouraged and demotivated and thus not engage in activities geared toward improving their livelihood.

Particularly experiences from Asia have shown that such a problem-centered approach may be analytically brilliant, and in intellectually dominated individualistic societies even applicable, but in societies that do not customarily address problems in public, and place emphasis instead on cordial relationships and harmony, the focus on problem analysis can become a nightmare for both the external facilitator and the community. This problem-centered approach can create a fatalistic attitude as communities are forced to perceive themselves as full of problems and captured in a web of causes, which can only be solved by outside interventions.

### **What Does This Mean for Community Capacity Development?**

Solution-Focused Brief Therapy provides the key idea of diverting the community’s attention from focusing mainly on their manifold problems to solutions and to mobilizing their own capacities to implement the solutions. Translating the claim of SFBT, we can formulate that all communities have resources, and the key task of external facilitator is to assist the community to discover and utilize them. By doing so again and again, the motivation of the community members’ is increased, self-confidence strengthened, and their capacity to take their affairs in their own hands is developed.

Another interesting finding of SFBT is that clients who are clearer about their goals take more systematic actions to achieve them. The motivational aspect of having a clear, attractive future is also an important insight for community capacity development. Communities with clear vision and clarity about the benefits of having all the experienced problems solved develop energy and engage collectively in taking appropriate steps to achieve that goal. These two insights are endorsed and applied in the two initial steps of the Seven D Approach called *Discovery* and *Dream*.

The role of the external expert is mainly to facilitate a self-empowering process through methodological interventions guided by the paradigm building on solutions and encouragement. SFBT allows individuals to find solutions, offers optimism for the future, and provides a continuous evaluation of development.

The identification of exceptional moments, in which a community did in fact excel in the past, could reveal valuable insights to developing solutions for current challenges, and provide ideas to move toward their vision.

The theoretical foundations of SFBT, namely social constructionism and positive feedback offer a good foundation for encouraging communities to develop their own path leading to their vision, and to strengthen their capacities through an endogenous process.

## **APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY (AI)**

*"The most inspiring stories, the most passion-filled data, the most textured and well illustrated examples, the most daring images of possibility – are conducted by the children. The intergenerational dynamic of the dialogue made the data collection stage soar. One is reminded of Margaret Mead's hypothesis that the best societal learning has always occurred when three generations come together in contexts of discovery and valuing – the child, the elder, and the middle adult. Where appreciation is alive and generations are re-connected through inquiry, hope grows."*

**– David Cooperrider**

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) was developed by David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva in the 1980s and builds on the premise that human systems "change in the directions in which they inquire." This means that communities exploring their problems and dwelling on identifying their conflicts, analyzing the causes of poverty and the lack of productivity, will not necessarily be able to solve them. Instead, they will even face more conflicts and problems in the future. They will be demotivated, and the negative images developed through investing time in finding out the reasons for problems will lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy, namely the negative images will become reality.

In opposite to the above-mentioned vicious cycle, the concept of Appreciative Inquiry postulates that positive images will lead to positive action, similar to the "placebo effect" known in the area of medical cures. In addition, they argue that imagination is a key for shaping reality, and that organizations and communities that appreciate what is best within will discover more and more what is good and will be able to create a clear vision and find ways for improving their situation. AI is an intervention focusing on discovering what works and can be used in building a new future. The main thoughts of AI have several commonalities with Solution-Focused therapy, but AI provides a clear design and instruments for application in an organizational context providing many ideas for potential-oriented capacity development in a community development context.

### **Key Features of AI**

#### *Appreciative*

Looking for the "positive core," and using this as the foundation for development. Appreciation of the existing fundamentals on which all other steps build.

#### *Applicable*

AI is grounded in stories of what happened, and was applicable, in the past, and seeks what is already there on which to build upon what might be.

*Provocative*

AI encourages people to imagine the future and redesign their community, life, or organization. AI mobilizes the power of imagination, which provides the motivation and desire for change.

*Collaborative*

AI is always a collaborative inquiry, as it involves the whole community or an organization, so that all voices of the system can be heard and everyone's contribution valued. It focuses on mobilizing the intelligence distributed in the system and finding a holistic solution through collaboration.

During the last decades, AI has emerged as a powerful design for change processes, and not only in the context of organizational development. Many international agencies involved in development cooperation are also trying to use an appreciative approach, or at least elements of an AI process, to create energy and motivation for planning processes, especially if they involve deep changes in social and human systems.

In particular, the tool "Appreciative Interview," which focuses on systematically exploring moments, projects, and successful actions, has proven to be very powerful in creating a paradigmatic shift to perceiving one's own community as a rich source of solutions and a wonderful center of energy with the potential to move toward its vision.

**Key Steps of AI**

AI has developed a 4 D model for change processes in organizational development:

*Discover*

People talk to one another mainly using structured interviews to discover the times when the organization was performing well. Generation of rich stories on successful experiences is the base for further improvement.

*Dream*

Members of an organization are encouraged to envision the organization as if the discovered peak moments were in fact the norm.

*Design*

A small team within the organization is given the mandate of designing ways of creating the organization envisioned in the dream phase.

*Destiny*

The organization is engaged in implementing necessary changes.

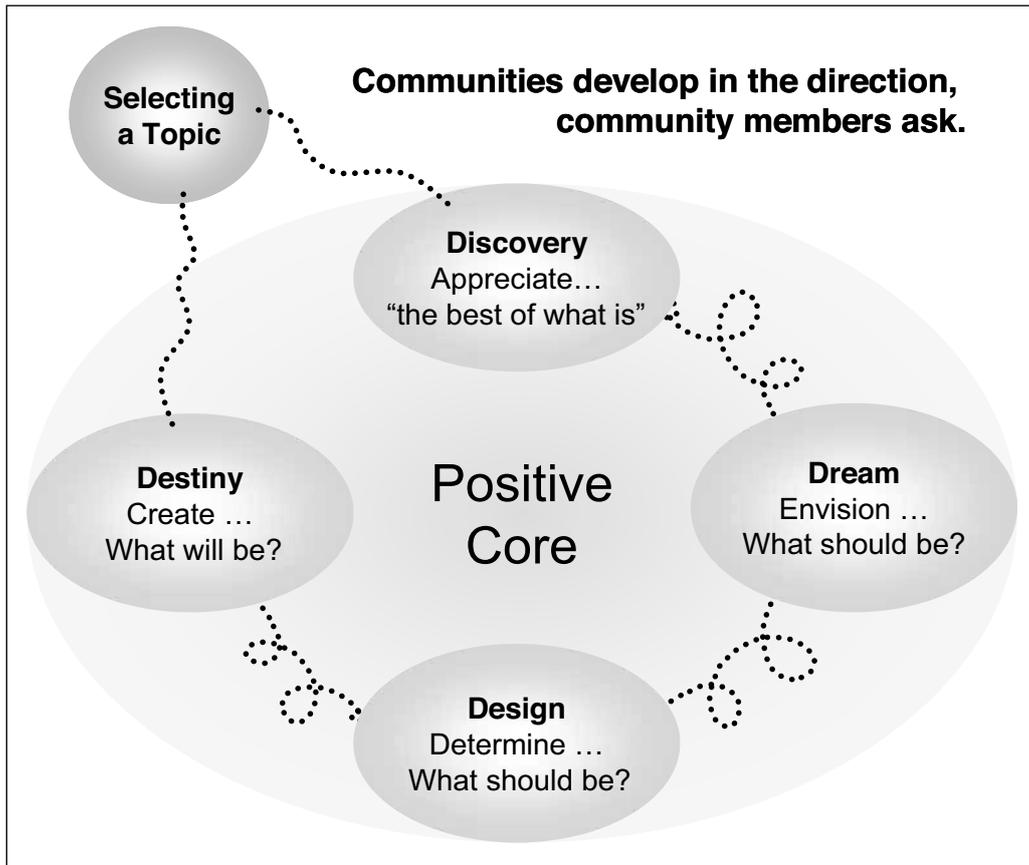


Figure 8. The 4 Ds of Appreciative Inquiry

Translating key insights of AI to ICD, we could describe successful communities as:

*"... vision-guided, principle-driven social organizations that focus on the "7 Ps of community excellence" – Purpose, Principles, Performance, Profit, People, Planet, and bold Possibilities. They serve the needs of their members, their communities, external stakeholders, and the world, as a creative, entrepreneurial, and constructive force for individual, organizational, and global change. By applying the concepts of Appreciative Inquiry, these leading-edge communities soar to new heights of success while simultaneously seeing their role in society through a new lens."*

In summary, Appreciative Inquiry focuses on identifying the best examples of the experiences of the community. In a second step the community focuses on understanding what creates such excellent experiences, the forces that lead the community to exceptional performance in terms of people and their contribution, the organization, and the context that contributed to the exceptional peak experience. Such a process of positive inquiry will reinforce the aspect that contributed to the exceptional performance. If the community explores, for example, that successful leadership contributed to the exceptional performance in the past, the inquiry will reinforce positive leadership.

**What Do We Learn from Appreciative Inquiry for Community Capacity Development?**

Appreciative Inquiry provides a systematic approach for discovering potentials of the community and engaging communities in such a motivating conversation. It can thus provide communities with inspiration and energy, and by tracking successful achievements of the past and deriving lessons from them, help implement new activities geared toward the achievement of a community vision. A meaningful blend of potentials and a collective vision can provide the communities with energy, motivation, and a clear focus for activities to achieve the desired goals.

## **2. PARTICIPATORY RURAL APPRAISAL<sup>27</sup>**

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*"It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see."*

**– Henry David Thoreau**

From 1985 onward, local knowledge of communities was increasingly recognized as valuable for improving their situation. A whole range of scientists and development workers were searching for methodologies to blend the professional knowledge of outsiders with the knowledge and expertise of rural people, consequently developing Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA), and later Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)<sup>28</sup> and Participatory Learning and Action (PLA). PRA refers to "a family of approaches and methods that enable rural people to share, enhance, and analyze their knowledge of life and conditions, to plan and to act." (Chambers 1994).

However, PRA focuses not only on supporting the development of communities, but also on empowering rural communities to analyze their situation, and improving them by strengthening their self-help capacities. PRA is applied in all phases of a project from planning to evaluation, but its specific strength lies in facilitating communities to discover their resources, to analyze their situations, and develop solutions mainly through action-oriented planning, while focusing mainly on the weaker and poorer sections of the community. In the tradition of Participatory Action Research, PRA clearly focuses on strengthening the weaker sections of communities and challenging strongly the top-down planning approaches practiced at that time in governmental organizations.

The strength of PRA lies in its potential of providing communities with appropriate communication tools for analyzing their situation and developing appropriate strategies to overcome problems, driven by the community mobilizing internal resources. In addition, PRA organizes the interaction between the communities and outsiders in a way that the communities play a dominant role in the joint analysis and planning processes to ensure that they are empowered to take decisions and initiate action for their own development. In the long run, the capacity of communities to analyze problems in a systematic way and to develop joint collaborative actions are promoted.

### **KEY PRINCIPLES OF PRA**

Important for PRA has been the focus on key principles that provide the orientation for shaping the interaction process between communities and external facilitators. Below are some key principles relevant for community capacity development:

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<sup>27</sup> PRA emerged from RRA (Rapid Rural Appraisal) and is at present also called PLA (Participatory Learning and Action), however as it is still well known under the term PRA, this term is used in this handbook.

<sup>28</sup> PRA is also sometimes used for Participatory Rapid Appraisal.

### **Visualization**

Instruments developed by PRA need to be appropriate for marginalized people, including those who are unable to read or write. This led to the development of a whole range of tools building on visual literacy, using symbols and diagrams for documenting observations and insights, and enabling systematic reflection. Documentation is a necessary step for deeper analysis and systematic planning. It is argued that by using visualized presentations, power differences are reduced, thus enabling more power-free communication.

### **Optimal Ignorance**

Another principle is called "appropriate imprecision," meaning that PRA tries to avoid the trap well known in development cooperation: that of too much analysis leading to paralysis. Responsible authorities invest too much time and energy in collecting data, without confirming that it is really needed. Such detailed and precise data collection methods lead to placing more emphasis on analysis, rather than on changing the reality by taking action. PRA prescribes collecting only data that is necessary for an appropriate depth of analysis, and avoiding making measurements more precisely than is needed. By doing so, it tries to optimize the trade-offs among time, cost, relevance, and precision. PRA stresses that the data has only to be of the quality needed for community change, and not for compliance with scientific standards. This provides a greater opportunity for working with qualitative data. As Keynes has written, "it is better to be roughly right than precisely wrong."

### **Triangulation**

This principle is derived from the social sciences, and refers to a combination of methods, such as observation, mapping, personal interviews, etc. (a minimum of three, therefore triangulation) through which data is collected and a specific situation is analyzed. Such a mix of methods increases the validity of data and reduces mistakes resulting from a bias created by using just one method such as a questionnaire or by doing interviews with only one narrow group of people. By combining different perspectives, using different methods, and changing the timing of data collection and analysis, it is possible to obtain a broader, deeper, and more holistic understanding of the situation analyzed.

### **Reflecting On and Changing Roles**

PRA tries to change the traditional ways of doing social research or development intervention. It stresses that the community members not be denigrated to objects that provide just data for external experts to interpret and analyze to form the base for top-down planning and implementation of activities. By "handing over the stick" to the community, the external actors focus on facilitating a learning process driven by the community itself. In order to do this, the external team participates in everyday activities of the community, listens carefully, observes and tries to take an emic perspective in order to see the world as perceived by the community. The community should always be the leading actor, analyzing, reflecting on their situation, and coming up with appropriate solutions.

### **Learning Rapidly and Progressively**

PRA focuses on learning through explorative methods and encouraging communities to rediscover their reality through a flexible application of methods, iteration, and cross-checking. Dialog and sharing is given priority, instead of the transfer of knowledge and developing fixed plans based on blueprint models. Face-to-face interactions between

facilitators and communities focus on sharing knowledge and documenting the insights for further learning and for taking action.

### **Sequencing**

PRA suggests a step-by-step process starting with analyzing the situation, identifying problems, and solving problems by mobilizing necessary resources. During the last decade PRA has developed a toolbox with many tools such as Transects, Seasonal Diagram, Daily Routine, Mapping, Timeline, Birthdays and Memories, and the Venn Diagram. In addition, methods developed by ethnography and the social sciences, such as observation and the interview, or modern methods such as use of satellite images, have become part of the PRA Toolbox. Actually, any method that can be used with a community of people in an empowering way could be termed a "PRA method."

### **What Do We Learn from PRA for Community Capacity Development?**

PRA provides a rich body of knowledge and experiences in enabling communities to analyze their situation, to map existing resources, and to develop ideas on how to improve the situation. PRA has developed key principles that are helpful in developing a dialogical relationship between external facilitators and the community and improving the quality of the data generated by the community. Another contribution of PRA is the many tools developed to support communities to express their implicit knowledge and thereby blend their own knowledge with other available explicit knowledge. This is a necessary step in becoming a knowledge-creating community.

### 3. KAIZEN

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*"We can do no great things; only small things with great love."*

**– Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**

*"A means of continuing improvement in personal life, home life, social life, and working life. At the workplace, Kaizen means continuing improvement involving everyone – managers and workers alike. The Kaizen business strategy involves everyone in an organization working together to make improvements without large capital investments."*

**– Masaaki Imai**<sup>29</sup>

#### **KAIZEN**

In general we can identify two different approaches in improving a situation applied by human systems: radical change through a *revolutionary* approach, or smooth change through an *evolutionary* approach.

A *revolutionary* approach focuses on innovation and radical change of existing systems and processes through introduction of new structures, redefinition of objectives, or development of a new vision. These changes are often combined with massive inputs from outside, and also require radical changes in management skills as well as a culture that appreciates radical change.

An *evolutionary* approach values a smoother process; attention is paid to maintaining the existing structure, vision and objectives, and concentrates on improving continuously the processes within the system. It avoids radical changes as this may lead to unpredictable and undesired outcomes.

The approach of evolutionary change has been refined in Japan under the name of *Kaizen*, *kai* = change and *zen* = to become good. *Kaizen* focuses on process improvement and the utilization of existing resources and locally available assets such as financial capital, natural resources, existing human capital, and indigenous knowledge and skills, as well as building on existing social capital. Outside Japan, *Kaizen* is nowadays mainly referred to as an approach focusing on incremental (gradual, continuous) change (improvement).

*Kaizen* is also a philosophy appreciating life as continuous change, and focuses on improving all aspects of life as a holistic approach. Within management, key focus areas of *Kaizen* are quality, effort, involvement of all employees, willingness to change, and effective communication. It is obvious that *Kaizen* can only evolve its power if it resonates with a social system embracing change, and one that is collectively engaged in change processes, that is, in "continuous improvement through change."

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<sup>29</sup> Imai, M. *Kaizen: The Key to Japan's Competitive Success*. New York: Random House, 1986.

### **Key Features of Kaizen**

In general the following five key elements are identified as the success factors of *Kaizen*: 1. Teamwork, 2. Personal discipline, 3. Improved morale, 4. Quality circles, and 5. Suggestions for improvement

#### *Start with What You Have...*

By focusing on small incremental steps of improvement by starting with what is already there, *Kaizen* is a soft approach to change: respecting the existing structure, and bringing about incremental change processes leading to efficiency, which can be implemented at any level of a system without facing resistance resulting from power or hierarchical structures.

#### *Start Small and Sustain the Improvements...*

*Kaizen* stresses starting with small improvements, as these are easy to implement and the quick implementation leads to motivation and strengthening of capacities, which can be used for the next bigger change. By continuing such a process even bigger and more complex changes can be tackled, as the community is prepared by a good foundation of experienced knowledge, and the situation can be improved continuously so that significant improvements result from small incremental changes, and the capacity of the involved actors is developed.

#### *Learn by Initiating Changes...*

As Kurt Lewin has written eloquently, one learns more about a system by initiating a change and observing the reaction of the system than by studying it for a long time. We cannot seek or claim to develop the "perfect solution" by studying human systems, which are complex and dynamic. While we are studying the system carefully and analyzing the components of the system and the relationships among the elements, the system is in fact changing. So by the time we have the perfect solution to the issues we have studied, the system has already changed and we face the danger that the solution that has been developed is in fact no longer relevant.

A more appropriate approach seems to be what *Kaizen* is suggesting. Dynamic systems need continuous incremental improvements by the actors steering that system. This process will never end, as the system will change continuously due to external factors and internal dynamics. Continuing improvement strengthens the ability of the actors to improve the system according to the emerging situations.

#### *Focus on Internal Resources...*

*Kaizen* focuses on mobilizing internal resources and building on that. Strengthening the existing innovative base by reducing waste and cost and mobilizing internal resources is ideal in situations where there is no external input available or external resources are getting scarce. However, the *Kaizen* concept is not necessarily bound to a purely self-sufficient community economy. The approach can be also applied for building on existing links to administrative structures or to non-governmental organizations outside the community.

#### *Changing Behavior and Attitudes, and Strengthening Capacities...*

Once a community of people starts to practice *Kaizen* over a period of time, it has far-reaching impacts on all members of the community. Everybody starts to observe carefully the processes they are involved in, as well as the whole organization. The focus of everybody is on observing processes carefully, improving and maintaining processes leading to improved quality, and applying measures continuously to improve

a situation. The continual collective process improvement at family, organization and community level leads, no doubt, to the improvement of certain products, but more importantly to the development of a behavior and attitude conducive for high quality production. *Kaizen* leads to the strengthening of capacities needed for efficient production.

*Improve Collaboratively...*

*Kaizen* can develop its full power only if all the key actors of an organization brainstorm jointly, free from hierarchical barriers, on how the processes can be improved and actions taken quickly. Based on the motto "fail early to progress quickly," the ideas are implemented without necessarily analyzing everything very deeply. This simple methodology can improve productivity significantly, as through applying continuous improvement the collective system can correct mistakes and failures quickly. The motivation for the actors to engage in such an improvement process arises from the benefit provided by the company (or community) as it guarantees that the organization will profit from the improved process.

**Application of *Kaizen***<sup>30</sup>

Often *Kaizen* is described as an easy process compared to other methods of improvement. However, one has to consider that the *Kaizen* philosophy evolves its power only if it is applied over a long period of time with discipline within a collective culture, and with open communication. Another challenge of applying genuine *Kaizen* lies in the sharing of benefits resulting from improvement processes. If the members of the company or a community do not benefit, then they may not really contribute with valuable ideas for improvement as part of *Kaizen* processes.

**What Do We Learn from *Kaizen* for Community Capacity Development?**

Application of *Kaizen* and continuous improvement within community development has the potential for quick improvement of the living conditions of the population in the community. By focusing on continuous process improvement, the community strengthens its capacity for improving processes and becoming an efficient community.

Another feature of *Kaizen* is to start the process of development from within the community by beginning with those small actions and projects that can be implemented by utilizing local resources and minimizing inputs and interference from outside. In this sense *Kaizen* is diametrically opposite to externally driven development approaches, which bring large amounts of capital and knowledge as well as methods from outside and invade the community with a totally new form of management, creating new products and services.

The strength of *Kaizen* lies in strengthening the local resource base and confidence of the communities, and nurturing their capacity development by starting with small projects, which can be almost fully controlled by them. Once the *Kaizen* process has created sufficient capacity to manage complex projects and deal with the challenges of

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<sup>30</sup> The workplace is viewed with a great deal of reverence in Japan. The place where your product is being manufactured is sacred. It is common, for instance, to call a manager in Japan and be informed by his secretary that he is "in *gamba*" and therefore cannot be disturbed. It is almost as if he is in meditation or in the temple!

integrating outside funding and management expectations, the community can start to use external support, but always for endogenously managed improvements and initiatives.<sup>31</sup>

As the analysis of the Rural Livelihood Improvement Program in Japan has revealed, the “Japanese miracle” of rapid economic growth in the 1960s was paved by intensive *Kaizen* processes at the community level facilitated by extension workers. *Kaizen* “prepared rural people’s attitudinal change from traditional to modern, [and] women’s thinking from that of acceptance to activity. By extending the *Kaizen* spirit and improved way of living and thinking,”<sup>32</sup> rural communities became ready to contribute to the economic development of the country, as well as accepting and benefiting from the economic development. The preparedness of the communities and the development of community capacity through a slow and thorough process made it possible for the benefits of modernization to “...infiltrate into every rural village so rapidly and with equity.” In addition, the capacity developed through such a *Kaizen* process enabled the communities to also play a partnership role with government institutions.

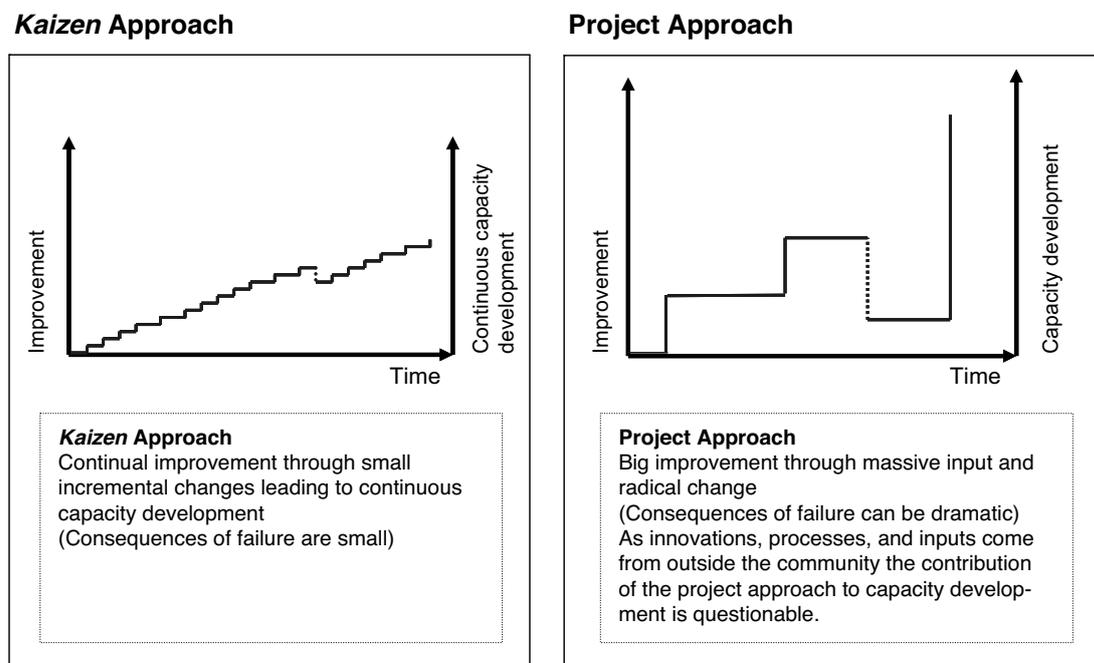


Figure 9. *Kaizen* vs. Project Approach

<sup>31</sup> Hirana, K. and Sato, H.K.: *Globalization Carried on Human Feet*, 2003 IDE – JETRO (p.10-11)

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.* (p.11)

## 4. PDCA CYCLE

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### PDCA CYCLE

The Plan, Do, Check, Act Cycle, also known as the Deming Cycle, was originally developed by Walter Shewhart in the 1930s. But late in the 1950s, almost the same time as Management by Objective emerged as a powerful method of project management, W. Edwards Deming propagated this cycle as a key concept for improving quality. Now, it is known all over the world as “the Deming Wheel” and is often combined with *Kaizen* processes.

The key idea of the PDCA Cycle is to conceptualize changes in a system as a sequence of activities, which have to be implemented as a continuous spiral process in order to improve quality. While *Kaizen* is very general in its concept and just focuses on small manageable changes starting with the use of internal resources, the PDCA Cycle provides more clarity on how to organize change and improvement processes in a system such as a community. Similar to *Kaizen*, the PDCA Cycle proposes a small first cycle in which improvement starts with careful planning of a small action or a pilot project that is assumed to contribute many detailed insights into a desired change, and to implement that plan. After the implementation, careful reflection leads to insights that are used to act on a higher level so that the quality and situation improves.

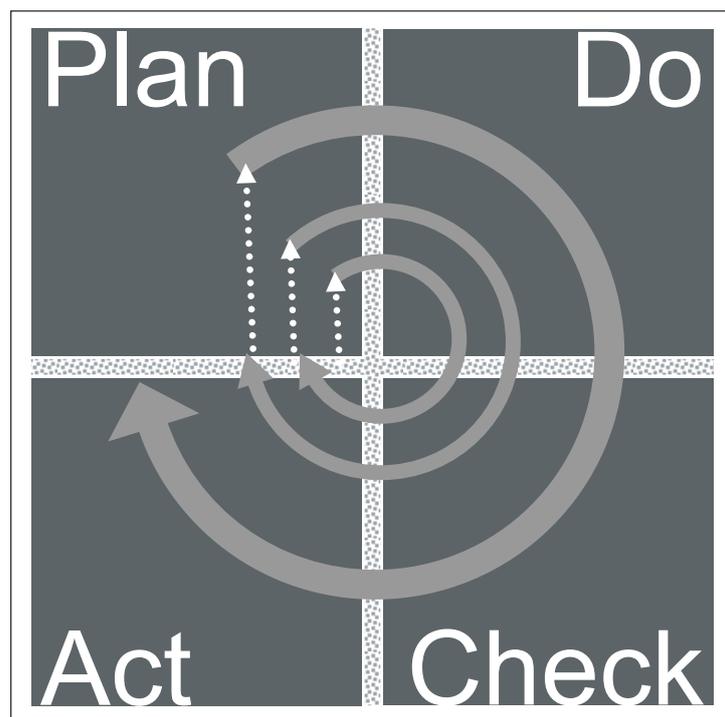


Figure 10. The PDCA Cycle

#### **Plan**

During this phase you have to identify what is not working properly, and based on such an analysis you have to develop ideas and make a plan to solve the problem and improve the situation.

**Do**

The plan developed is implemented as a prototype on a small scale as a pilot or experiment. Such a small intervention enables the complex system to continue with the performance, while at the same time the small intervention helps make it possible to observe the changes happening in the system due to the intervention. The reactions provide you in-depth insights of the system, as well as into the outcomes of the plan.

**Check**

During this phase you check what happened due to the implementation of the activities, and whether desired results have been achieved. You have to check if any unintended results emerged and decide how to go about tackling that new issue. Also, you continuously check selected key activities (regardless of any experimentation going on) to ensure that you know what the quality of the output is at all times, and to identify any new problems as they crop up.

**Act**

This step is the implementation of changes on a larger scale if the experiment is successful. This means setting the changes as the new standard and new routines of the management processes. *Act* can also refer to involving other actors such as other stakeholders, groups, or members of the community affected by the changes, and those whose cooperation may be needed to implement the prototype on a larger scale.

**What Do We Learn from PDCA Cycle for Community Capacity Development?**

The beauty of the PDCA Cycle for community development lies in its modesty, that is, to accept that community life is a complex one, and that changes can start on a small scale, and only in the case of success are those changes used for creating a new standard. By moving along such a cyclic process of planning, implementing, and reflecting on the results, the capacity of the community for management is strengthened. PDCA can be easily combined with the *Kaizen* process and provide an excellent methodology for endogenous capacity development by starting with small projects building on own resources and expanding to more and more complex projects and programs. If this is done as a continuous process of action and reflection, it changes also the attitude of the community toward productivity and quality.

## 5. LOGICAL FRAMEWORK & PROJECT CYCLE MANAGEMENT

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*"If we can really understand the problem, the answer will come out of it, because the answer is not separate from the problem."*

**- Jiddu Krishnamurthi**

*"The solution of every problem is another problem."*

**- Johan Wolfgang Goethe**

### PROJECT CYCLE MANAGEMENT (PCM) AND LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

#### Role of Projects and Programs in ICD

Integrated Community Development<sup>33</sup> (ICD) is often pursued through the design and implementation of projects. National and international agencies, from the World Bank and the ADB (Asian Development Bank) up to small NGOs, use a project approach to developing the livelihoods of people in communities. A whole armada of initiatives – from MDGs, PRSPs and specific programs – target rural communities. Recent debates initiated around capacity development and aid effectiveness have contributed significantly to sharpening the understanding of professionals working in this area, on how projects could be managed in a way that development results are achieved. Careful analysis of a project approach and a project management cycle provides key insights for ICD.

Projects are a short but intensive learning arena, in which often actors from outside the community design interventions to support communities in their development. One form of enhancing integrated community development is by implementing projects and programs supported by various actors. This has resulted in project management methodologies offering valuable insights into strengthening capacities of communities. Let us examine what a project is and what are the main ideas developed for Project Cycle Management as a key approach to project management in development cooperation.

*"[A] project exists only to disappear as soon as it is carried out."*

**- Christoph Bredillet**

### WHAT IS A PROJECT?

Project management literature offers a wide range of definitions on project and the management of projects. In general the concept of project and project management in the early periods (1960–80) stressed hard factors such as utilization of resources and breaking down an objective into sub-objectives, developing a logically consistent plan and monitoring the implementation through objectively verifiable indicators and

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<sup>33</sup> Development is understood as a process of self-determined growing, progressing, and developing not only in terms of material, but also individual and social aspects.

evaluating the project at the end in terms of achievement of the original goal by using indicators. In the last two decades major paradigm shifts in science (positivism – constructivism), society (homogeneity – plurality), and values (top-down versus bottom-up decision making) have had their impact on projects and project management. Modern project management focuses also on soft issues such as creativity enhancement, team building, communication, conflict handling, human resource development, and group thinking skills among others. Qualitative methods such as story telling and focus group discussions have gained importance within management.

*Project* can be defined as “any task which has a definable beginning and a definable end and requires the expenditure of one or more resources in each of the separate but interrelated and interdependent activities which must be completed to achieve the objectives for which the project was instituted.” (Martino, R.L. p.17)

Key aspects highlighted in definitions of project are:

- Limitation in terms of available time, resources, scope, and location;
- Goal orientation;
- Novel way of utilization and organization of resources;
- Human beings working together to achieve certain goals and solving problems;
- Application of methods and tools to enhance joint thinking, decision making, etc.;
- Embedded-ness in a bigger politico/socio/economic system;
- Blending logical thinking and careful observation of reality; and,
- Cyclic progressive movement toward a clarified goal through developing plans, implementing activities, reflecting on the results, and modifying plans.

Summarizing the various ideas, a project can be defined as: “...an interactive endeavor of human beings in which resources are organized in a novel way to undertake a unique scope of work. Project activities are limited in time and space, inserted in, and in interaction with, a politico/socio/economic environment, aimed at and tended toward a goal progressively redefined by the dialectic between the thought laid down in a plan and the reality observed throughout the implementation phase.”

In any project, resources (natural, physical, financial, human, and social) are mobilized and utilized to achieve a goal. However, the planning and implementation of a community-centered project has an additional goal: to catalyze the development of human and social capital of a community.

### **Project Cycle Management**

There are many ways to manage a project, however in the context of development cooperation the Logical Framework Approach (LFA) and Project Cycle Management (PCM)<sup>34</sup> approach are predominant. Even though project methodologies such as Logical Framework are nowadays regarded as too rigid, they still play a crucial role as an instrument for logical planning of a project and as a format for eliciting external funds for communities. The further developed methodology of Project Cycle

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<sup>34</sup>Europe Aid ([http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/multimedia/publications/publications/manuals-tools/t101\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/multimedia/publications/publications/manuals-tools/t101_en.htm))

Management recognizes the fact that development projects are non-linear social interaction processes embedded in dynamically changing environments with the participation of multiple stakeholders. In order to cope with this challenge, continuous cyclic planning with feedback loops throughout the different phases of a project cycle is regarded as necessary.

Project Cycle Management is widely applied by international and national organizations to plan and implement projects. The methodology and process developed by the Logical Framework approach provide an analytical path with clear steps to analyze existing problems and develop, from those, clear objectives which are then broken down into results and activities. Formulation of indicators helps to monitor the project.

### **Roots of PCM**

The roots of PCM can be tracked back to Logical Framework (LF), which was created in 1969 by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) as a helping tool in the creation, structuring, development, and administration of its projects in developing countries. It was widely used by the bilateral donor community in the '70s and '80s,<sup>35</sup> and today by many international and national agencies to plan both smaller and bigger projects and programs. Its strength lies in formulating clear objectives, and if done with partners jointly, to create the foundation for commitment and ownership among the stakeholders involved in the process. Its importance lies in its potential to combine a set of logical steps leading to a logically consistent plan before its initiation. Due to this logical and efficient feature, LFA has been used regularly by organizations all over in tailored outlines, especially in the context of administration. Administration has in general a preference for logical and well structured products, as this is often associated with credibility. In the last decades many organizations have called their planning methodology Project Cycle Management.

## **KEY FEATURES OF PROJECT CYCLE MANAGEMENT**

### *Linking Objectives to Activities*

Essential for thinking in logical frameworks is to first decide on where one wants to go and then decide how to reach that goal. Based on this approach, objectives first have to be formulated, then each objective is broken down into results or smaller targets, and to achieve such results activities are formulated. The strength of such an approach is the efficient use of resources to create predefined outputs, as well as exact planning of activities and budget.

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<sup>35</sup> In the early 1980s, German Technical Cooperation introduced ZOPP (*Ziel Orientierte Projekt Planung*) and in the early 1990s, Japanese Development Cooperation introduced PCM. At present, Europe Aid, ADB, FAO and other major development agencies are also using PCM as their main planning methodology.

*Objectives Derived from Intensive Problem Analysis*

Another characteristic of the Logframe approach is its focus on collecting and analyzing problems and identifying root causes. The process of PCM usually starts with the creation of an idea, followed by identification and thorough analysis of a problem, and then the identification of specific causes. Based on such an analysis, root causes are identified, specific objectives formulated, and appropriate activities designed to achieve selected objectives. Such a problem-based approach ensures that project activities contribute to improving the actual situation by focusing on specific perceived problems of the community.

*Collaborative Team Process*

Usually the PCM process focuses on bringing different key stakeholders into a collaborative planning process. This ensures that different perspectives are used for the design of a project, and that the ownership by those involved in the process is enhanced.

*Realism and Consistency*

Logframe thinking is more than just output orientation; it requires clear (or at least plausible) specifications of the intended impact of planned projects. Thus, the "hierarchy of objectives" is linked by a set of hypotheses indicating the intended impact, i.e., the utilization of *outputs* and, ultimately, the resulting benefits. The linkages have to be "tight," i.e., the chances of reaching the higher-level objectives as a consequence of realizing the lower-level outputs must be sound. Realism and consistency refer to scientifically sound hypotheses and to available resources. By linking resources, outputs, and impacts in a realistic and consistent manner, logframes create a high degree of transparency, and thus become the basis for efficient management, meaningful evaluation, and enhanced credibility.

*Considering External Environments and Factors*

The logframe process includes a reflection on important external factors that are crucial for the success of a given project. "Assumptions" are hypotheses about factors that are outside the managerial control of a project, but have influence on the achievement of results and objective of the project.

*Logframe – Program Planning Matrix*

Within PCM, the logframe is a summarized presentation of relevant information of a project. Basically the logframe is a table for summarizing the key features of a project design at the time of project identification (*What is it?*), during definition (*What should we do?*), and appraisal (*Should we do it?*). It is an up-front planning tool that provides key stakeholders of the project with essential planning information.

The first column of the logframe describes the intervention logic or the strategy of the project: What is the overall goal of the project and what is its specific objective? What are desired and intended results that are to be created through certain activities?

The second and third columns provide key information on indicators for measuring the achievement of project objectives and results as well as where to find the data to check the indicators.

Finally, the last two columns provide information on assumptions and risk factors that have a crucial effect on the success of the project, as well as indicators to monitor these key factors in the environment.

Intervention Logic	Monitoring Performance		Monitoring Environment	
	Indicators	Sources of Verification	Assumptions	Indicators
Overall Objective				
Project Objective				
Results				
Activities				

Figure 11. Logical Framework Matrix (Project Planning Matrix)

### Operational planning

The strategic planning of any project, which is summarized in the first column of the previous logframe, has to be translated into operational planning so that coordinated actions can be taken at the appropriate time. In general an *action plan* is a format applied for planning and monitoring actions. Below is an example of a simple action planning format.

Activities	Timeframe												Resources time	Resources money	Resources others	Responsible	Involved	Important Aspects
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December						
Activity 1	.....																	
Activity 2	.....																	
Activity 3			.....															

Figure 12. Action Plan

### Monitoring and Evaluation

As a management tool, the project planning matrix is the scaffolding that allows timely monitoring of achievement levels. Targets are set by defining *indicators* and *milestones*, the attainment of which is measured. However, the idea of elaborating a logframe is not one of “filling boxes in a matrix” and then filing it away. It is, rather, one of constant iteration and feedback of information into the implementation process. This information will lead to management decisions that may include plan adaptations, a revision of priorities, or even the termination of a project. The “logframe matrix,” which summarizes all important planning decisions, assumptions, and resource allocations, is a frame that has to be specified for operational purposes. It has,

therefore, to be supplemented by detailed operational plans specifying activities, milestones, responsibilities, time schedules, and resources.

### Project Cycle

There have been many attempts to visualize project phases and key management processes throughout projects. The following graphic depicts the four key phases of a project, namely Identification, Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation. Monitoring is visualized as a phase accompanying mainly the implementation. At the heart of PCM are key management functions such as decision-making, communication, adaptation, motivation, and learning, which require constant attention. The PCM framework recognizes the fact that development projects are non-linear social interaction processes embedded in dynamically changing environments, with the participation of multiple stakeholders. In order to cope with the challenge resulting from this, a continuous cyclic planning, with feedback loops throughout the different phases of a project cycle, is deemed necessary. The selection of tools is dependent on the socio-cultural environment, project type, and the nature of involved stakeholders, as well as other issues. PCM recognizes that projects are only successful if management pays attention to the human aspects as well as the technical aspects of the project.

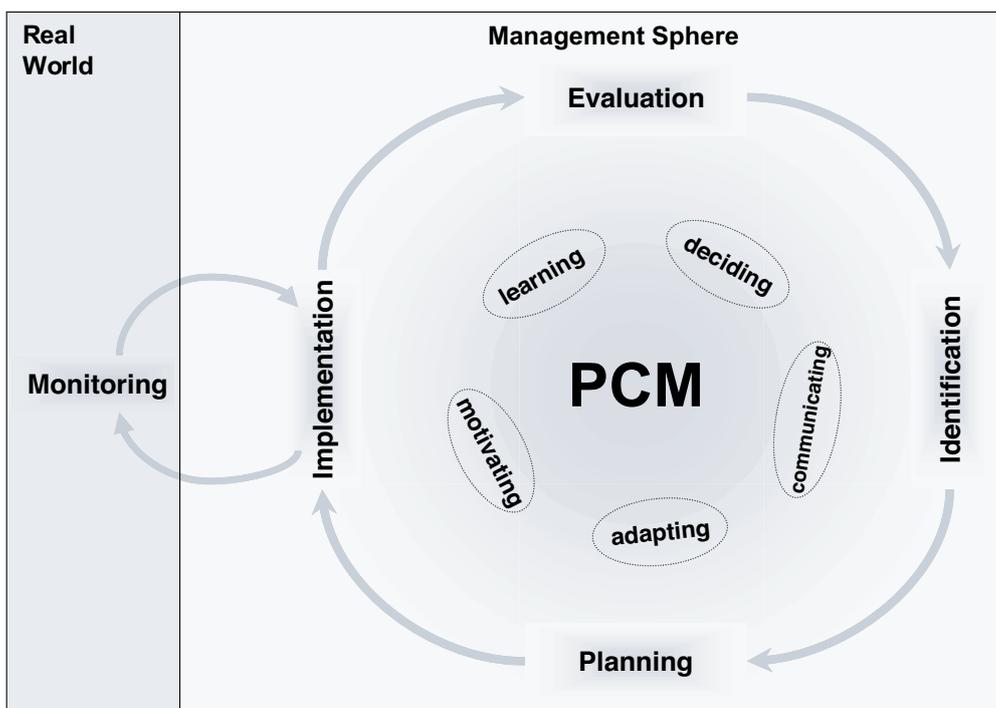


Figure 13. Project Cycle with key phases and important processes

### What Do We Learn from PCM for Community Capacity Development?

Project cycle management provides clear ideas on how to plan and implement a project in a systematic way. PCM is a widely accepted format among national and international agencies. Communities can use PCM, or some of its key aspects, to develop project ideas to be sponsored by external agencies as well as to implement projects in a systematic way. In particular, instruments such as action plans as well as strategic reflection on small projects, and their contribution to desired outcomes and impacts, are useful for communities interested not only in implementing successfully projects but also in their contribution to their vision.

## 6. EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING & KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

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### EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

*"Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is not to stop questioning."*

**– Albert Einstein**

At the core of CCD is the intention to strengthen the abilities of communities to learn systematically from their experiences. Community members are in a continuous process of learning grounded in their experiences, and this is a process happening with or without external support. The challenge of community capacity development is to strengthen the ability of communities to reflect carefully and systematically on their experiences and generate relevant knowledge conducive for productivity and sustainability in a dynamic way. Two concepts on learning and knowledge generation are helpful in our context: Experiential Learning Cycle (Kolb, D., 1984) and Knowledge Spiral (Nonaka, I. & Takeuchi, H., 1995).

### EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

*Experiential learning* is a key concept to clarify processes involved in learning from experiences. However let us first clarify some important terms of experiential learning:

#### **ACTION, REFLECTION, EXPERIENCE...**

##### **Action and Experience**

*Action* can be defined as something done or performed by somebody. In any given community, people, individuals, groups, and the entire community continuously engage in performing a wide range of actions. However an action or encounter only becomes an "experience," if a person *actively, with body and mind*, internalizes the action so that the event becomes part of his or her self. Only by reflecting on actions and the outcome of the actions the events become an experience and are embodied in our personality.

##### **Reflection**

In our context we understand reflection as a process whereby we focus our thoughts on something, e.g., an action or experience, and develop through critical thinking some insights into that matter. This is an active, subjective process that can be supported by another individual or team. Such an understanding of reflection is different from a reflection of our image in a mirror: we do not look at our actions and experiences and see only what is or was there, but more importantly we see a myriad of possibilities of what might be. Reflection in this sense carries with it always the potential to provide insights on how to improve our actions or practice.

##### **Experience**

Through our continuous interactions with other human beings and natural environment by inclusion of perception, thoughts, feelings, doing, suffering, and enjoying,

experience emerges mainly through a process of interpretation and narration. Experience is always emerging out of our own previous experiences or experiences of our community. Previous experiences shape our personality with all the assumptions, values, feelings, and thoughts that together influence all new actions and experiences. Each new experience links the threads of past experiences with the present and lays the foundation for future experiences.

Dewey has highlighted that experience arises from the interplay of two principles: continuity and interaction. *Continuity* refers to the fact that each experience a person has will influence his/her future, for better or for worse.

*Interaction* refers to situational influences on one's experience. Each experience is a function of the interaction between one's past experiences and the present situation.

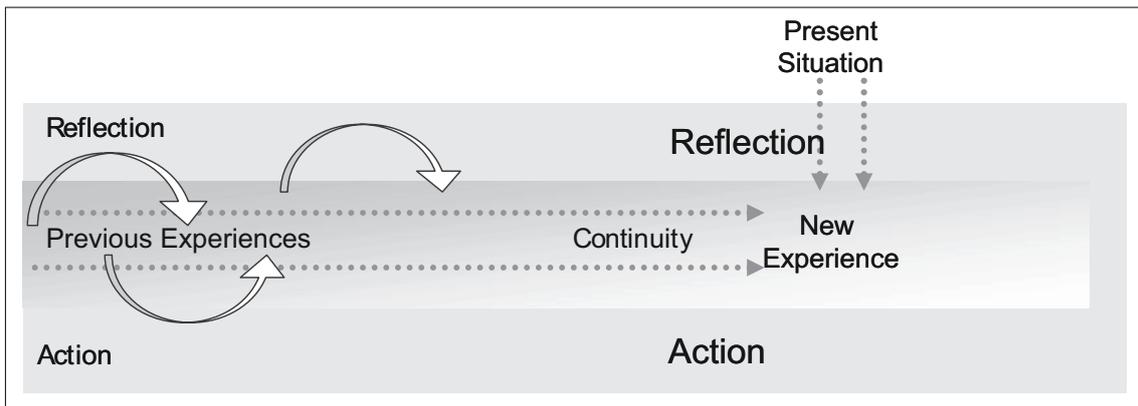


Figure 14. Continuity and Interaction

Developing a concept on learning for CCD has to be appropriate to the totality of the community experience, involving perceiving, thinking, feeling, and behaving. Such a holistic learning concept has been proposed by David Kolb, who provides a simple but powerful concept for CCD. Kolb correctly emphasizes that learning is a key process of human adaptation. Learning is something that accompanies our entire life from early childhood up to old age, from professional domain to everyday life, touching everything from nurturing relationships up to learning how to handle complicated situations.



Figure 15. The Kolb Experiential Learning Cycle

According to Kolb, "learning is the process of creating knowledge," and knowledge is the result of the interaction between social knowledge and personal knowledge. Social knowledge is the accumulation of a human cultural experience and Individual knowledge is the accumulation of the individual person's subjective life experience. Of course both are interrelated and influence each other. Learning is a process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge is continuously created and recreated, transformed in a social process, and transforms experience in both collective and subjective forms.

Immediate concrete experience is the basis for observation and reflection – these observations are consolidated into hypothesis and theory from which new implications for action can be deduced. When human beings share an experience, they can share it fully, concretely, and abstractly.

### **What Do We Learn from PCM for Community Capacity Development?**

The concept of experiential learning provides insights on how learning in a community takes place and how this can be strengthened through external support. Especially the importance of experience and building by learning on experiences made by the community members are extremely important for any kind of community capacity development. Through careful reflection, the community members can derive from their actions and experiences valuable insights and develop principles and concepts that provide them a way to become a learning community, thus achieving their goals. The concept also pays attention to the various aspects playing a key role in experiential learning, such as thinking and feeling as well as spiritual dimensions, while playing a role in a community.

## **KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT**

*"What we think, we become."*

**– Buddha**

### **Communities Know Much More Than They Can Tell**

True learning is always a process of creating knowledge, and this process of learning is as important as the knowledge created by this process. According to Polanyi, "Knowledge is an activity which would be better described as a process of knowing." By reflecting on past experiences and on inquiring into yet uncomprehended experiences, human beings are continuously engaged in a process of knowing. The appreciation of the continuous knowing process within the community is crucial for strengthening community capacity development processes.

Individuals, groups, and organizations within the community and stakeholders involved in any community development project have to be engaged continuously in a process of knowing. The creation of knowledge and more importantly the capacity to co-create knowledge is key for communities if they want to be successful in a complex and dynamic environment. As we have discussed earlier, "blueprint" or ready-made solutions are not going to work; communities have to develop situation-specific solutions appropriate for the situation.

A key for successful knowledge generation lies in understanding the two types of knowledge as defined by Polanyi: *tacit* and *explicit* knowledge.

Table 1: Tacit Knowledge – Explicit Knowledge

<b>Tacit Knowledge</b>	<b>Explicit Knowledge</b>
Knowledge of experience	Knowledge of rationality
Not easily visible and expressible	Can be easily expressed in words and numbers
Highly personal, difficult to communicate or share with others, and hard to formalize	Easily communicated and shared, because it is already formalized and available as hard data, formula, or other codifiable products

**Tacit Knowledge**

“We know more than we can tell.” Community people, including their leaders, have developed their knowledge as a part of practical experiences, and therefore know much more than they can easily tell or explain. All human beings acquire a great portion of their knowledge through practice, observation, and experience and are seldom aware of this. Such knowledge Polanyi terms *tacit knowledge*.

Tacit knowledge is subjective and experience-based knowledge that cannot be communicated easily in words, sentences, numbers, or formulas, because of its embeddedness in the subject and context-specificness. Tacit knowledge is deeply rooted in practice and experiences of individuals and strongly interconnected with the ideals, values, and emotions that she or he embraces. It may be exemplified, for instance, by the expertise of a well functioning women’s group leader in the community who has acquired it through various experiences in working with her group or within her family. This group leader has rich knowledge and skills that she uses in her professional work and applies to inspire and guide a team and is successful. She has the capability to lead a group successfully. But she may face great difficulties in explaining her ideas of how to guide a team to be successful to the community or to other leaders within and outside the community.

The way in which tacit knowledge is shared is through socialization, a process of sharing experiences where one learns through observation, imitation, intuition, and individual and collective practice. Socialization takes place in a specific context, such as the team or cooperative she works with, prevailing cultural and social conditions, and the options available to the members of the community. Because tacit knowledge is mainly not expressed and communicated, the people and the organization may often be unaware of the richness of the knowledge existing within the members of the organization.

**Explicit Knowledge**

Knowledge that can be expressed by using symbols such as words and numbers is termed by Polanyi as *explicit knowledge*. Explicit knowledge is articulated in formal systematic language and can be recorded and documented and shared through data, scientific formulas, specifications, manuals, guidelines, and the like. Such knowledge can be easily communicated between individuals systematically even if they do not share exactly the same context. Explicit knowledge is part of scientists’ professional life, as exemplified by books, files, manuals, etc.

**Knowledge Creation Cycle**

Building on Polanyi’s ideas, Nonaka and Takeuchi have developed the *knowledge spiral* as a model for understanding the process by which knowledge is created in companies. Their model uses the differentiation made by Polanyi on tacit and explicit knowledge, but develops in a creative way a concept of how both forms of knowledge can enrich each other and set a process of knowledge generation in motion. Their

knowledge creation cycle concept is a two-by-two matrix creating four quadrants that represent different areas of knowledge transfer or conversion.

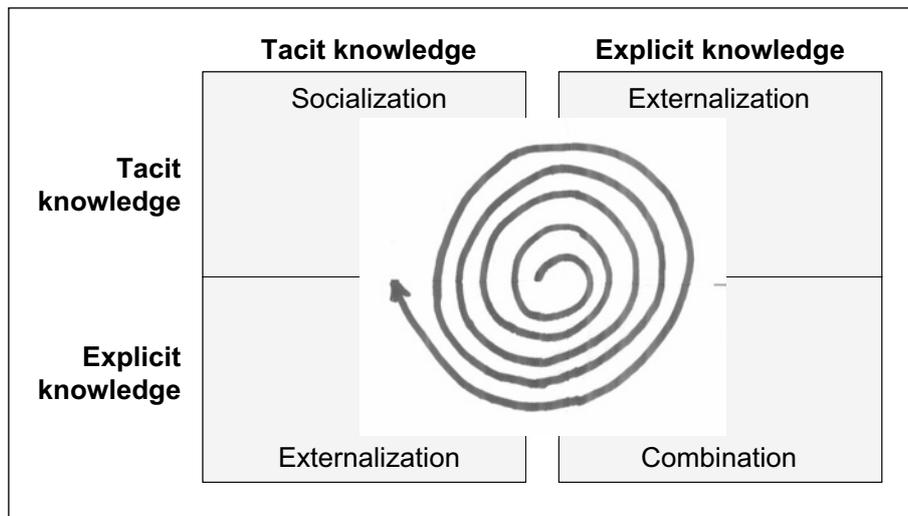


Figure 16. Knowledge Spiral

### **Socialization**

Socialization is a process of sharing experiences and thereby creating tacit knowledge. This powerful learning process happens through observing and imitating practices and behaviors of others. Even in professional life socialization through apprenticeship is regarded as the most efficient way of knowledge sharing.

### **Externalization**

The process through which tacit knowledge is made explicit is termed by Nonaka as externalization that is a conversion process. Externalization is a process in which a subject expresses the tacit knowledge and translates it into comprehensible forms that can be understood by the others involved in the interaction. The individual transcends the inner and outer boundaries of the self and starts to make his/her knowledge available to the group. If externalization is successful, the intentions and ideas of a person are successfully communicated to other persons.

Nonaka differentiates two kinds of externalization: one kind is the articulation of one's own tacit knowledge; the second kind is eliciting and translating the tacit knowledge of others into an easily understandable form. Important techniques are using metaphors, analogies, visualizations, writing up one's own experiences, dialoguing, listening, questioning, etc.<sup>36</sup>

Key to externalization is dialogical face-to-face communication, in which people learn to better articulate their thoughts through immediate feedback and the simultaneous exchange of ideas.

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<sup>36</sup> Many tools developed by PRA/PLA such as Mapping, Ranking, Transect, and Key Informant Interviews mainly focus on enabling communities to make their rich implicit knowledge explicit and to analyze collectively for action.

### **Combination**

Once knowledge is explicit, it can be easily communicated across groups and can be freely combined with other available knowledge through intellectual processes. Combination is the process whereby explicit knowledge, which is collected and stored, is blended by using documents, databases, meetings, and briefings, and developing new combinations. This allows generation of new knowledge.

### **Internalization**

Internalization is a process of understanding and absorbing explicit knowledge into tacit knowledge, so that it becomes part of individual knowledge. Knowledge which becomes tacit is actionable by its owner without thinking first and recalling explicit knowledge. Knowledge is embodied and ready for swift action. Internalization needs deep involvement of a person with concepts and methods (explicit knowledge), either through practice or through deep intellectual and emotional involvement.

### **What Does this Mean for CCD?**

The concept of Nonaka and Takeuchi enables us to conceptualize communities as knowledge communities or communities of practice and design a process focusing on strengthening knowledge development of communities. By creating continuously new relevant knowledge, communities are motivated not to wait for external knowledge and products, but to create their own situation-specific knowledge and projects based on such endogenous knowledge.

Communities as a group of human beings with intensive interactions have great potential to create collaboratively new relevant knowledge for improving their situation. As a community of practice, they often have in-depth implicit knowledge about their social and natural environment, and the role of external facilitators is to enable the community to move along the knowledge spiral so that its members can dynamically develop knowledge by blending their implicit knowledge with external knowledge.

Successful projects in community development such as the "Farmer Field School" and "One Village, One Product" are examples of initiatives enabling rural communities to become knowledge-creating communities.

## 7. FACILITATION

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*"The noblest pleasure is the joy of understanding."*

**– Leonardo da Vinci**

*"To effectively communicate, we must realize that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others."*

**– Tony Robbins**

### FACILITATION

Literally, "facilitate"<sup>37</sup> means "to free from difficulties or obstacles; make easier, aid, assist." In our context, facilitation refers to a process that assists groups to accomplish their work efficiently and effectively. The term "facilitation" is also often associated with a special function performed by a person in a group or community. Often the facilitator is regarded as a neutral person who takes an active role in supporting the community to structure the process without defining the contents (i.e., identifying the objectives, analyzing certain issues, making a plan, etc.)<sup>38</sup>

#### **Some Important Areas of Facilitation Are:**

- creating a conducive environment (psychological, social, and physical) for good communication and dialogue;
- catalyzing joint learning and knowledge creation by creating a conducive climate and applying processes and tools for fostering critical thinking;
- promoting consensus-building processes and productive dealing with conflicts within the community as well as with outsiders; and,
- enhancing effective teamwork applying mechanisms for appropriate synergy to diversity within the group.

#### **Why Facilitation?**

In past decades there has been renewed interest in engaging community members in social development. Those who have worked with organizations promoting community involvement have experienced the following two important lessons: "If people don't participate in and 'own' the solution to the problems or agree [with] the decision, implementation will be half-hearted at best, probably misunderstood, and, more likely than not, fail. The second lesson is that the key differentiating factor in the success of an organization is not just the products and services, not just its technology or market share, but the organization's ability to elicit, harness, and focus the vast intellectual capital and goodwill in their members, employees, and stakeholders. When these get energized and focused, the organization becomes a powerful force for positive change

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<sup>37</sup> *Facilitare* (Latin): Make things easier.

<sup>38</sup> Iowa State University Extension: <http://www.exnet.iastate.edu/communities/tools/facilitate/fac.html>

in today's business and societal environments." (Kaner, S.)<sup>39</sup> Facilitation plays a key role in increasing motivation and participation of diverse stakeholders to engage jointly in shaping their future.

### **Facilitation in Integrated Community Development**

Since the 1950s, we have seen the emergence of various successive development themes: institution building (1950–60s), institutional strengthening (1960–70s), development management (1970s) and human resource development (1970–80s) and since the 1990s, capacity building or capacity development. Facilitation plays a crucial role in strengthening capacities, as it catalyzes processes that help communities achieve their visions while providing insights in mobilizing potentials and minimizing problems within the communities and in interactions of the communities with governmental and non-governmental organizations. In Integrated Community Development often different stakeholders (community leaders, subject matter specialists, government and non-government staff, scientists, and foreign donors, etc.) join their efforts in improving the situation of communities. It is obvious that each of these stakeholders has his or her own perception of problems, solutions, potentials, and limitations. At the same time, everybody is driven by vested interests, which can lead to conflicts. Facilitation in this context means enabling productive communication across mental boundaries, mobilizing knowledge, wisdom and skills of everybody, helping ensure the appropriate use of techniques and methods, and catalyzing team-building processes.

### **Key Areas of Facilitation**

In the context of community capacity development, facilitation focuses mainly on enhancing the following three areas:

- communication among various stakeholders,
- support team development, and
- balancing between different needs in interactions focusing on improving the situation at community level.

Following are three key concepts useful for facilitation:

#### **1. Communication**

Communication is fundamental for learning and decision-making, team development, and effective problem solving-processes. Communication enables collective understanding, development of trust, and taking appropriate action to achieve a vision. Even though we use communication throughout our life, effective communication especially in multi-stakeholder settings can be a challenge. The following ideas and concepts help to provide clarity and provide ideas for tackling communication challenges.

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<sup>39</sup> Foreword to *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision Making* by Sam Kaner (further details: <http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/citizenship/DH7429.html>)

*General Communication Model*

In a particular communication situation people exchange views and ideas using verbal and non-verbal signals. However, understanding between the two subjects "A" and "B" can only happen if various conditions are given.

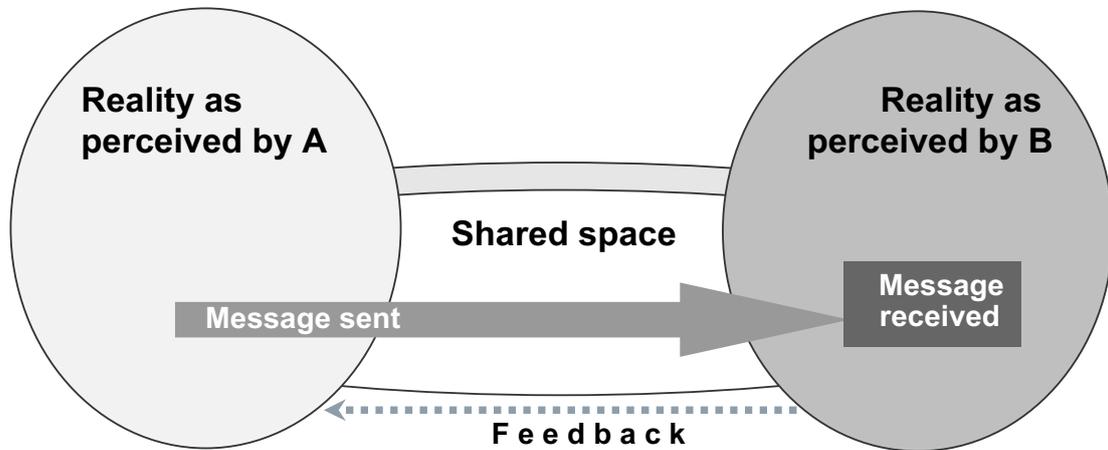


Figure 17. Communication Model

- Any message sent by A is shaped by the reality as constructed and perceived by A, and of course the receiver B is also deeply influenced by the way B constructs reality and perceives the message of A according to his/her own reality.
- The success of understanding between A and B depends crucially on shared space (in terms of experience, symbols, signs, language, and knowledge), which is strongly influenced by the ways both perceive the realities.
- An effective way of checking the perceived meaning of sent messages is through feedback.

The facilitator can improve communication significantly by increasing shared space, by catalyzing feedback, and developing awareness on both sides regarding the different perceptions of reality and the importance of dialogical communication, which focuses on understanding each other better. In addition to the basic communication model described above, it is important to understand that communication is also influenced by psychological aspects.

The following psychological model of interpersonal communication<sup>40</sup> has been proven to be helpful in understanding these aspects. Communication is not only a process of exchanging signs and symbols, it is also and primarily a way of establishing and sustaining interactions and relations. The consideration of the following four aspects that are simultaneously influencing communication can significantly improve communication. Let us first examine these four aspects:

**Content:** This aspect of communication is quite obvious – in communication people of course intend to convey messages. Often we assume that this is the only function of

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<sup>40</sup> Friedeman Schulz von Thun has developed this communication model, which is also called the "Four-Ear Model."

communication. But the explanation of the following other three aspects will reveal that this assumption may be incomplete in understanding real-life communication situations. For example, A says to B: The community hall is dirty.

**Self-revelation:** All messages contain information not only about the content but also about the character of the sender. The concept of self-revelation comprises both the intended portrayal of the self and the involuntary exposure of the self. This aspect, like the next one, has strong psychological implications. For example, the emphasis by which the person says "The community hall is dirty!" The person may be expressing that the hall is dirty and is further perceived as asserting, "I want this hall cleaned but I am not the person who is going to clean it."

**Relationship:** A message also contains information about the relationship between the sender and receiver. This is often expressed in the way the message is formulated (intonation, non-verbal expressions, etc.). The receivers particularly are sensitive toward this aspect of communication. Through it we feel respected, hurt, appreciated, or ill-treated. Communication is therefore always the expression (reaffirmation, building, etc.) of a specific kind of relationship with the person or group addressed. For example, the use of intonation and non-verbal expressions may indicate "I am the boss and you should follow my orders."

**Appeal:** We may appear to be saying things in a straight-forward way, but messages are mostly intended to fulfill a particular purpose, for example, to influence people or to stimulate them to action. The appeal aspect of communication often reflects back on the relationship, because it can be imparted in such a way that the receiver feels either respected or belittled. For example, the way the sentence is spoken: "The community hall is dirty!" which may be understood that the receiver of the message should himself or herself clean the hall and that the person had failed in his or her duty to the community.

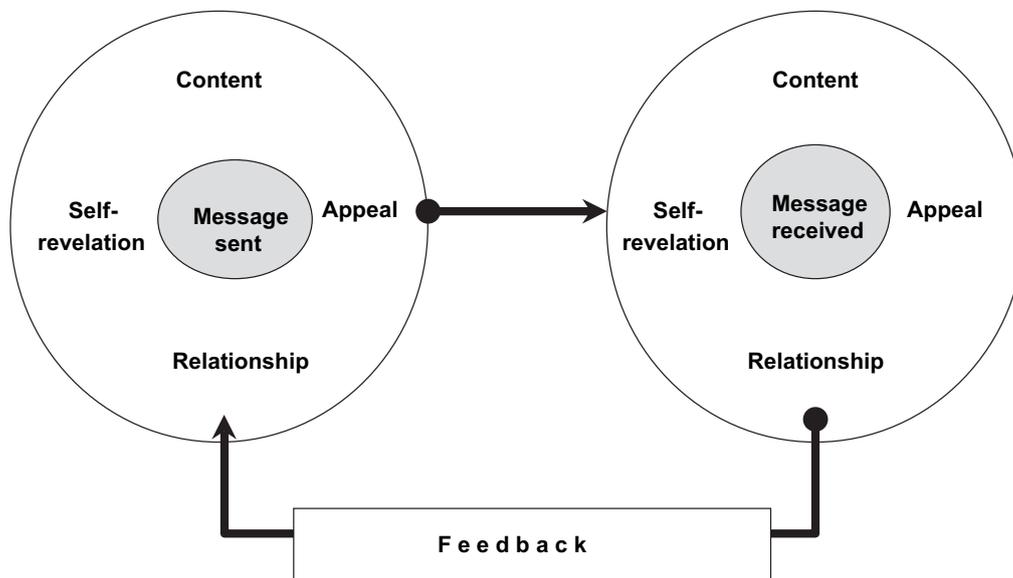


Figure 18. The Four Sides of Communication

Reflecting on these four aspects, we can summarize that interpersonal communication is characterized by a basic characteristic of ambiguity and the consequent difficulty of interpretation. Since at least two people are necessary for communication to take place, this problem actually arises twice. The sender of the message has the difficult

challenge of formulating and expressing his message through the combined use of verbal content, gestures, facial expressions, and intonation in a way so that the difficulty on the receiver side in interpreting the message is reduced. Only a correct understanding can enable a correct response. The receiver on the other hand must find ways to perceive and interpret every single aspect of the message (text, intonation, gestures, and facial expressions) in relation to the four aspects of communication (content, self-revelation, relationship, and appeal).

Since the reply of the person spoken to normally refers to the previously sent message, it contains indications of whether the sender can assume that his message has been understood correctly. When information is passed back this way, it is called feedback. Because of the ambiguity of communication, the proper use of feedback is crucial in improving the quality of communication.

Unfortunately, the four aspects underlying interpersonal communication are often not considered in everyday communication. A revealing example of this lack of appreciation of the non-factual aspects is expressed in the often-observed request to participants in a discussion: "Please keep to the facts of the matter." By doing so, one expects that only factual statements can contribute to productive communication when factual subjects are being discussed and that the other aspects of self-revelation, relationship, and appeal can be simply eliminated by trying harder to exclude them from the interaction.

Facilitation assists in improving communication by providing ways and techniques to obtain clarity about communication processes.

## **2. Group Development and Effectiveness of Teams**

Teams differ from committees, groups of colleagues, and other groups. Teams have performance goals that they want to achieve and members of the teams feel mutually accountable for achieving their goals. Teams consist of a group of people who bring together a set of complementary and appropriate skills for achieving their goals. If individuals perform as a team, they can produce better-quality decisions and the sense of commitment to the agreed solution will be high. Groups are not always effective; they can often be dysfunctional. Decisions can be taken under pressure of a "group mentality," leading to arguments and conflicts. At the end, group work can be a waste of people's time and energy.

Experiences with teamwork shows that the following features are important for effective teams:<sup>41</sup>

- Commonly agreed-upon GOALS
- 

<sup>41</sup> Key attributes include the following:

The team must have diversity (skills, knowledge, etc.) among its members. The right mix of skills including technical, problem-solving, and interpersonal skills are necessary.

Teams must be able to agree on a strategy (clear definition of the problem and knowing their resources and limitations). Based on thorough analysis teams have to develop a plan to tackle the identified problem.

An effective team must develop good synergy. It has to find creative ways to solve misunderstandings and conflicts and realize efficient communication.

Teams have to agree on a set of rules to ensure that their efforts are purposeful and that all members contribute to the work.

- Commonly agreed-upon INTERACTION (communication, cooperation, coordination)
- Commonly agreed-upon STRUCTURE
- Commonly agreed-upon ROLES
- Common, agreed-upon NORMS (rules, values, regulations, and standards)
- A “WE” feeling (feeling of togetherness)

### Stages of Group Development

The following five stages of group development are adapted from Tuckman and Jensen (1977) and can be used to provide appropriate facilitation assistance based on the formation stage of the group.<sup>42</sup>

**Forming:** In the *Forming* stage, group members rely on safe, patterned behavior and look to the facilitator or group leader for guidance and direction. Group members have a desire for acceptance by the group and a need to be comfortable and safe in the group. They start gathering impressions and data about the similarities and differences among them and forming preferences for future sub-grouping. Rules of behavior seem to be to keep things simple and to avoid controversy. Serious topics and feelings are avoided.

Members attempt to become oriented to the tasks as well as to one another. Discussion centers around defining the scope of the task, how to approach it, and similar concerns. To grow from this stage to the next, each member must relinquish the comfort of non-threatening topics and risk the possibility of conflict.

**Storming:** The next stage, *Storming*, is characterized by competition and conflict in the personal-relations dimension and task-functions dimension. As the group members attempt to organize for the task, conflict inevitably results in their personal relations. Individuals have to bend and mold their feelings, ideas, attitudes, and beliefs to suit the group organization. Although conflicts may or may not surface as group issues, they do exist. Questions will arise about who is going to be responsible for what, what the rules are, what the reward system is, and what the criteria for evaluation are. These reflect conflicts over leadership, structure, power, and authority. There may be wide swings in members’ behavior based on emerging issues of competition and hostilities. Because of the discomfort generated during this stage, some members may remain completely silent while others attempt to dominate.

In order to progress to the next stage, group members must move from a “testing and proving” mentality to a problem-solving mentality. The most important trait in helping groups to move on to the next stage seems to be the ability to listen and cooperate.

**Norming:** In the *Norming* stage, interpersonal relations are characterized by cohesion. Group members are engaged in active acknowledgment of other members’ contributions, community building, and maintenance, and focus on solving group issues by being flexible and reflective. Members are willing to change their

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<sup>42</sup> Adapted from: Tuckman, B. (1965). *Developmental Sequence in Small Groups*. Psychological Bulletin, 63, 384-399.

Tuckman, B. & Jensen, M. (1977). *Stages of Small Group Development*. Group and Organizational Studies, 2, 419-427.

preconceived ideas or opinions on the basis of facts presented by other members, and they actively ask questions of one another. Leadership is shared, and cliques dissolve. When members begin to know – and identify with – one another, the level of trust in their personal relations contributes to the development of group cohesion. It is during this stage of development (assuming the group gets this far) that people begin to experience a sense of group belonging and a feeling of relief as a result of resolving interpersonal conflicts by agreeing on norms.

The major function of stage three is the information flow between group members: They share feelings and ideas, solicit and give feedback to one another, and explore actions related to the task. Creativity is high. This stage is characterized by openness and sharing of information on both a personal and task level. They feel good about being part of an effective group.

The major drawback of the norming stage is that members may begin to fear the inevitable future breakup of the group and may resist change of any sort .

**Performing:** The *Performing* stage is not reached by all groups. If group members are able to evolve to stage four, their capacity, range, and depth of personal relations expand to true interdependence. In this stage, people can work independently, in subgroups, or as a total unit with equal facility. Their roles and authorities dynamically adjust to the changing needs of the group and individuals. Stage four is marked by interdependence in personal relations and tackling the challenges in the realm of task functions. By now, the group should be most productive. Individual members have become self-assuring, and the need for group approval is no longer required. Members are both highly task-oriented and highly people-centered. There is unity: group identity is complete, group morale is high, and group loyalty is intense. The task function becomes genuine problem solving, leading toward optimal solutions and optimum group development. There is support for experimentation in solving problems and an emphasis on achievement. The overall goal is high productivity through collaborative work.

**Adjourning:** The final stage, *Adjourning*, involves the termination of task behaviors and disengagement from relationships. A planned conclusion usually includes recognition of participation and achievement and an opportunity for members to say their goodbyes. Concluding a group can create some apprehension – in effect, a minor crisis. The most effective interventions in this stage are those that facilitate task termination and the disengagement process.

### 3. Theme-Centered Interaction

The concept of Theme-Centered Interaction (TCI)<sup>43</sup> is rooted in the philosophy of M. Heidegger and M. Buber. This concept has been further developed by Ruth Cohn as a model to improve learning in groups. According to TCI, human beings are continuously influenced in team activities, which is predominant in project work or in collective actions through the following three main aspects called “I, IT (theme, topic) and We.” These three aspects stand for the needs of human beings as well as for the behaviors shown by them to fulfill these different needs. Successful and productive interaction in a group happens if there is a balance among the three aspects. The role of the

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<sup>43</sup> The concept has been developed by the Swiss psychotherapist and educator Ruth Cohn. Further information in: Neuland, N. *The World of Moderation*, 1998, p.78–82.

facilitator is to strengthen the type of behavior that is neglected or suppressed and find appropriate mechanisms to establish or reestablish a balance.

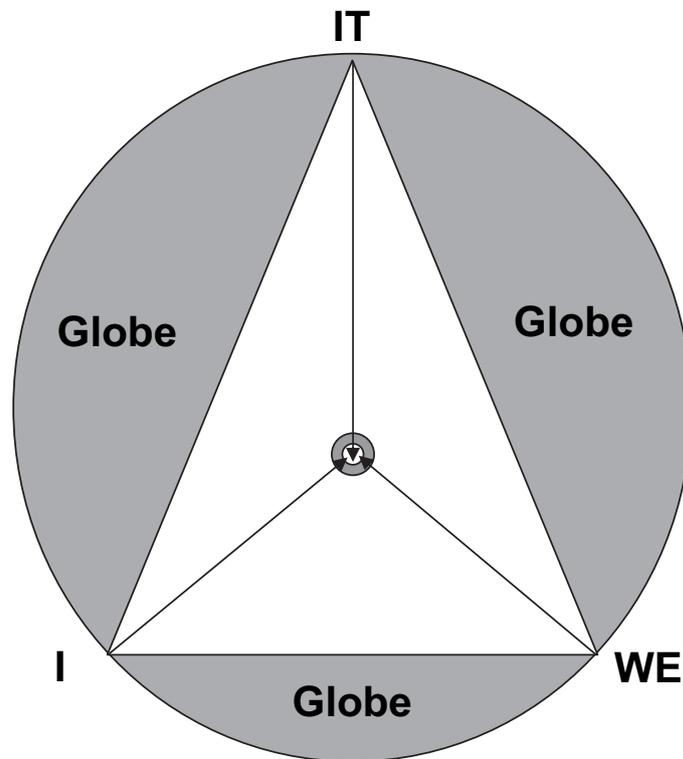


Figure 19. Theme-Centered Interaction (TCI)

In a community or group of people, we find in general three types of behaviors resulting from different needs of the group members.

- **I** – Behavior that expresses the private goals of each group member, such as self-promotion or the will to dominate others. (Ego orientation)
- **IT** – Behavior that helps the group to solve problems and carry out the work. (Task-oriented behavior)
- **WE** – Behavior that encourages positive relations between group members. (Group orientation)

- 
- **Globe** – The environment consisting of time, location, and historical/socio-cultural factors.

The challenge of the facilitator is to keep a balance between the needs of the three different aspects represented in the triangle and promote necessary activities to strengthen all three areas simultaneously in a creative and productive way for the achievement of team goals.



***PART-4***

***SEVEN D***

***APPROACH -***

***DEVELOPING***

***CAPACITIES***

***OF COMMUNITIES***



# **SEVEN D APPROACH TO COMMUNITY CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT**

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*"Fall seven times, stand up eight."*

**– Japanese Proverb**

The Seven D Approach to community capacity development (CCD) is balanced, participatory, process-oriented, and people-centered. The approach focuses on achieving short-term livelihood improvement as well as long-term community capacity development. The key steps of the Seven D Approach enable communities to develop a shared collective vision, analyze, and appreciate systematically their past achievements, discover existing community potentials, agree on specific directions for action, and develop a plan for systematic implementation of activities to achieve the agreed objectives.

Collective and continuous reflection on the outcomes of implemented actions ensures that projects and activities actually contribute toward the community vision, strengthen its members' capacity, and lead to the identification of further projects and activities. Such a continuous and repeated action – reflection cycle, embedded in a collective visioning and implementation process – is nurtured by dialogic communication, team spirit, and consensual decisions.

## **SEVEN D APPROACH – A TWO-FOLD STRATEGY FOR CCD**

The Seven D Approach aims at facilitating productive, sustainable, and equitable development of communities by creating avenues for enhancing the participation of community members and external stakeholders throughout the different phases of the process. A holistic, systematic, and critical analysis contributes significantly to improved quality in the identification, planning, and implementation of community projects. Another special feature of the Seven D Approach is its two-fold strategy of simultaneously targeting short-term and long-term outcomes and impacts. On the one side, the approach focuses on enhancing the capacities of communities as a long-term objective, and on the other, it addresses the urgent needs of the community to improve aspects of their livelihood as quickly as possible.

Continuous reflection on implemented actions and emerging dynamics is critical for achieving intended outcomes and collective learning. The generation of knowledge for community projects ensures that the continuous learning process takes place, and the implementation of small projects contributes to the improvement of the situation. This best occurs through:

- Improving community livelihood through successful implementation of strategically selected small projects by mobilizing internal resources (this is organized as a *Kaizen* process), and
- Strengthening the individual and collective capacities of communities to identify, plan, and implement projects successfully in terms of efficiency and effectiveness.

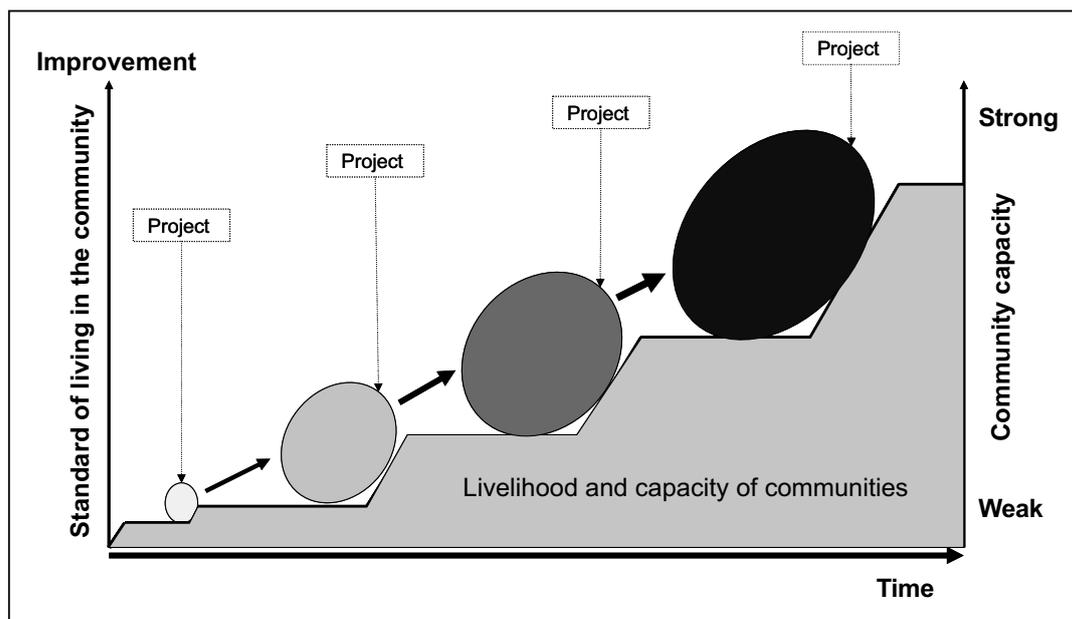


Figure 20. Evolution of Small to Larger Projects

### Why a Two-Fold Strategy?

The above-described two-fold strategy emerged through careful observation, intensive discussion, and joint reflection by community representatives, development professionals, and academic people throughout the various activities of the APO ICD Program over a period of 10 years. The intensive sharing revealed that the prevailing poverty in rural communities of many Asian countries creates strong pressure for immediate action geared toward quick improvement. Therefore many national and international programs focus on improving the situation at community level through increased agricultural production or by introducing agribusiness activities, or through improving education for children, or by boosting health facilities and services at the community level. However, this can lead to neglect of community capacity development, and in some cases, massive transfer of new knowledge and technology destroys even the existing local capacities of communities.

Other cases, often initiated by non-governmental initiatives, focus on empowering vulnerable sections of communities to analyze and influence their situation carefully. Such participatory approaches are successful in strengthening specific capacities of sections of communities; however, they often neglect to take a holistic approach toward bringing the whole community together and strengthening the productivity aspect of the community. This can lead to the risk of friction in the community, as well as increased expectations vis-à-vis external agencies in terms of provision of important products and services.

The APO ICD Program has encountered various successful community development initiatives<sup>44</sup> in Asia and has identified the following salient features as contributors to their success:

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<sup>44</sup> Rural Life Improvement Program (RLIP) in Japan, Farmer Field School in Indonesia (FFS), Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, initiatives of the Population and Community Development Association (PDA) of Thailand, and many others.

- Holistic approach engaging the whole community;
- Paying attention to both community capacity development as well as responding to urgent needs;
- Balancing individual and collective goals, benefits, and potentials; and,
- Cooperation of government, non-government, private, and community actors.

These insights have significantly shaped the concept, principles, and steps of the Seven D Approach. The Seven D Approach has been applied, and further developed, in various forms as pilot initiatives in communities in Nepal, Laos, Iran, and Indonesia. Later the approach was intensively tested in Fiji. Experiences as described in the case of Fiji (Chapter 5) show that the ambitious goal of Community Capacity Development can be achieved by enabling communities to get involved in a cyclic, flexible, and systematic bottom-up planning, implementation, and reflection process guided by collective visioning. The key to its success is finding a balance between collective learning and immediate improvement, action and reflection, endogenous driven development, and clever utilization of external opportunities. Such a dialectical process is helpful in unleashing potentials, tackling challenges, and developing the human and social capital of communities.

Seven D provides external facilitators and internal stakeholders from communities with a clear step-by-step process for increasing productivity as well as capacity. This increases their motivation and confidence after the end of the project and generates the collective will to take their development into their own hands.

### **WHAT IS THE SEVEN D APPROACH?**

The Seven D Approach is an innovative and unique blend of well known approaches developed in the area of human psychology, community development, productivity development, and capacity development. The strength of Seven D lies in providing a holistic and pragmatic perspective to community development and offering for the two intertwined objectives of capacity development and productivity enhancement an easy-to-apply methodological design.

In order to describe the methodology systematically, three building blocks of the Seven D Approach will be presented one after another: Key Principles, Main Steps, and Tools. During application of the process all three have to be blended and performed simultaneously.

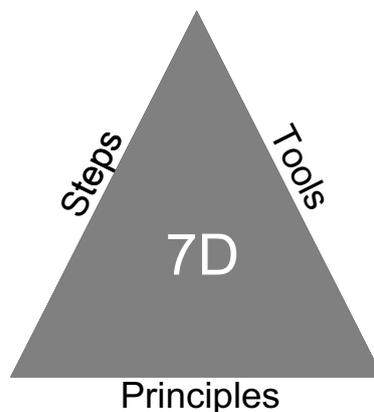


Figure 21. Foundation of the Seven D Approach

The Seven D Approach rests firmly on several *key principles* that provide the foundation and orientation for shaping the process of community development, the *seven steps* describe systematically the steps of community capacity development, and finally the *tools* provide options on how to facilitate communication, analysis, and decision-making processes within, and with, the communities.

## PRINCIPLES OF THE SEVEN D APPROACH

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*"As to methods there may be a million and then some, but principles are few. The man who grasps principles can successfully select his own methods. The man who tries methods, ignoring principles, is sure to have trouble."*

**– Ralph Waldo Emerson**

### KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE SEVEN D APPROACH

At the core of the Seven D Approach to community capacity development are principles that provide orientation for facilitating communities in their development process. The principles are derived from practical experience with community capacity development as well as from theoretical insights described in the chapter on Key Concepts. Experiences of APO with community development in different countries in Asia have revealed that the diversity of each context requires a localized approach especially in selecting tools and flexibility in designing community capacity development processes. However the following principles are regarded as the base on which the Seven D Approach rests.

#### Principles for Community Capacity Development – “A, B, C, and D”

The key principles of the Seven D Approach are grouped for better presentation by the following four main features, which are called A, B, C, and D: **A**ppreciation, **B**lending, **C**reating, and **D**eveloping.

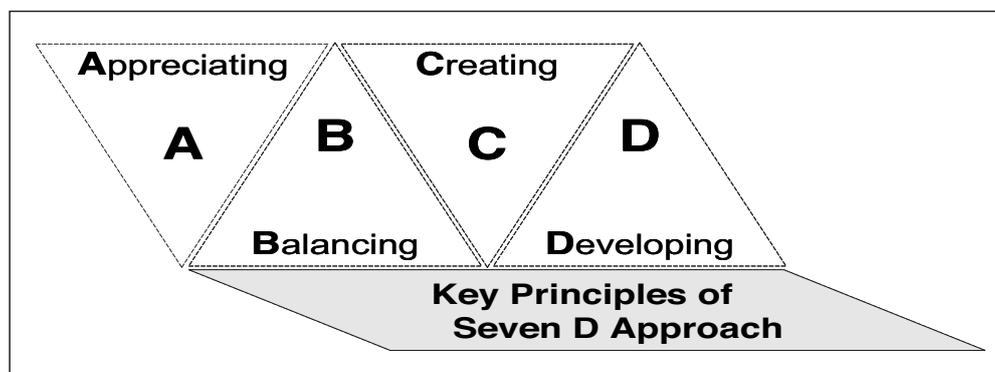


Figure 22. Key Principles of the Seven D Approach

**A: Appreciating...**

existing capacities, community values, and culture

**B: Balancing...**

Step-by-step approach with a spiral processes

**C: Creating...**

avenues for increased participation, knowledge creation, and reflection

**D: Developing...**

capacities to initiate and manage change

## **A: APPRECIATING...**

- existing capacities
- community values and culture
- diversity and flexibility

### **APPRECIATING EXISTING CAPACITIES**

*"You can complain because roses have thorns, or you can rejoice because thorns have roses."*

**– Ziggy**

#### **Community Development at the Crossroads**

Government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and international donor and implementing organizations often perceive rural communities as social organizations struggling with immense challenges on the one side and, on the other, lacking appropriate knowledge, skill, and financial, natural, and physical capital to improve their livelihood. Communities are in general perceived as an entity lacking almost all key ingredients necessary for sustainable development, and obviously external support is regarded as the only solution to improve their situation. Based on such a paradigm, external agencies were often, in the past, too willing to provide rural communities with key services and products needed to secure their livelihood. In some countries of Asia, the continuous provision of money and services by the government and international agencies has contributed to a "handout expectancy" on the side of the community. That means communities have lost their confidence in their self-help capacity and usually wait for external agencies to jump in and help them survive.

However, analysis of such experiences reveals that external support focusing on the delivery of goods and services can lead to great challenges for both sides. The community faces the risk of being caught up in a vicious cycle of losing their capacities to manage their affairs, as they become increasingly dependent on external help. Of course the community develops a specific capacity: how to get access to external support, but not how to mobilize their internal resources for community-driven development. At the same time, increased external provision leads to a spiral of increasing costs for the external agencies. Many countries in Asia are at present facing extreme challenges to support the vulnerable sections of society with sufficient resources.

In summary, we can say that communities are in danger of losing their capacity to develop their own aspirations and solutions through mobilizing their internal resources and increasing productivity. Meanwhile, the external agencies are running out of resources to respond to the increased demands by the communities.

#### **Appreciate Community Capacities**

The Seven D Approach builds strongly on the conviction that no community exists that does not have *some* capacities, and it is the art of facilitating to enable the community to (re)discover their existing capacities, use the existing capacities to find solutions to manifold challenges faced today, and design a path toward their desired future. Communities and individual members of the community are continuously engaged in an intricate process of learning, sharing of knowledge, and developing capacities.

Discovering own strengths, potentials, and capacities has to be given priority over dwelling on and analyzing problems. Such an appreciative process of facilitating the communities to discover their capacities functions as a catalytic process to strengthen the confidence of the community to collectively shape its future.

Therefore the Seven D Approach continuously engages the community in a deep dive geared toward a collective retrospection into its history, and identifying key capacities which its members and their ancestors have developed to survive and flourish. Such a process of looking back into their achievements in an appreciative way leads to discovering the potentials already available within the community.

Community development facilitators have to be clear that their role is not to replace the capacity with knowledge and skills from outside, but to encourage communities to discover their capacities, as well as to strengthen the development of these capacities.

Therefore the Seven D Approach to capacity development is driven by the conviction that human beings and communities are a rich source of capacities with high potential to shape their future, and not an empty box that has to be filled with external solutions, technologies, or knowledge. The challenge for outsiders and community members is to discover that richness, and to awaken the power within the community and to create opportunities for continuous development of their capacity.

Devaluation of existing capacities and transferring totally new skills incompatible with the existing capacities can create tension and lead to total collapse of the community. Appreciating the capacities of the community and enabling community members to appreciate each other's capacities is the key to fruitful interactions and further development.

## **APPRECIATING COMMUNITY VALUES AND CULTURE**

*"Perfection is attained by slow degrees; it requires the hand of time."*

**– Voltaire**

Communities are always engaged in a continuous process of change driven by internal and external factors, and this has strongly influenced the evolution of their culture and values. In addition, community members will interpret and benefit from the culture and values of a given time differently. This diversity of views and interests related to existing culture and values is a strong driving force for continuous change in culture. The discovery of the double nature of culture and values – being solid and static at a given time, but also continuously changing over a period of time – is essential in taking a middle path toward culture and values.

Culture and values provide the frame for social identity where individuals can feel unified as a community. It is important to reflect, with the community, that culture and values are dynamically changing and adapting to changing situations. The Seven D Approach focuses on bringing the attention of the community to this dynamic aspect of their culture by appreciating their culture and values in the context of their dynamic changes.

Analyzing community development discourses and development programs, one can recognize two often-opposing paradigms:

- The proponents of a “protective” paradigm tend to glorify the local culture of the community and their values as something that has to be protected and conserved against the negative effects of modernization and globalization.
- The proponents of a “modernization” paradigm regard community culture and values as something backward, which cannot contribute to development and therefore have to be destroyed or changed into a modern global culture.

The Seven D Approach advocates a middle path, which suggests appreciating and respecting community culture and values as viable responses developed by the communities in dealing with the challenges faced by them. It is important to realize that community members, embodied by traditional values and culture, are sometimes not even aware of the rich potential resting in their culture, such as indigenous knowledge, practices, and rituals. External facilitators can support the communities to appreciate and discover their values and culture, and to reflect collectively and carefully on how they can make use of their culture and values in reaching their vision, which will naturally be based on their culture.

The clear focus toward their vision ensures that they are aware of the challenges faced by external forces and that they will find a dynamic solution instead of looking back and focusing on preserving old traditions.

Trust and respect for community culture and values is, especially at the beginning of the Seven D process, essential for capacity development. Whatever process is applied, the guiding principle is to strengthen the self-esteem of the community, so that its members can start to create a collective will to change their life according to their vision. Only respect can provide the ground for discovering the strength of the community and whatever it has achieved in the past, and supporting it in its self-determined journey. Therefore, progress in genuine Community Capacity Development is comparatively slow, and great visible results cannot be achieved at once. We must be prepared to be satisfied to proceed in incremental small steps.

## **APPRECIATING DIVERSITY AND FLEXIBILITY**

*"If the only tool you have is a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail."*

**– Abraham Maslow**

Asian countries in general are characterized by enormous diversity in terms of their natural environment, and linguistic as well as socio-cultural background. In some countries, we may experience, within a distance of just 50 kilometers, communities with different languages, cultures, and differing world views living in different ecological zones. Considering this enormous diversity, it is obvious that no one single solution, no matter how sophisticated it may be, can be successful; appreciation of diversity and flexibility is therefore another key principle of the Seven D Approach.

Analysis of community development efforts reveals that often community development is driven by “blueprint solutions.” What this means is that solutions that have been successful in one region are transferred without paying sufficient attention to the diverse conditions of communities in which they are being reused. However, deep understanding of the differences between a community and a factory is needed so that solutions, tools, and processes developed in the private business sector are not

applied in the area of community development without careful reflection. Factories are, worldwide, becoming increasingly similar in their production processes as inputs and outputs are becoming standardized and the goal of the company is often clearly set. Companies focus, therefore, on tools for improving efficiency. That is the reason why standardized procedures such as ISO Norms can be applied worldwide; at least one can try to apply unified procedures.

However, communities are not only characterized through their context-specificity resulting from time, space, and the social context. Their specificity and uniqueness is, in fact, something that defines them as a community. Once they lose this identity, they are not a community anymore, but merely a collection of individuals.

Considering this special challenge of community development, flexibility, and local reinvention of appropriate processes and instruments are crucial to strengthening communities in their identity and capacity.

## **B: BALANCING...**

- Step-by-step approach with a spiral process
- action and reflection
- work and joy

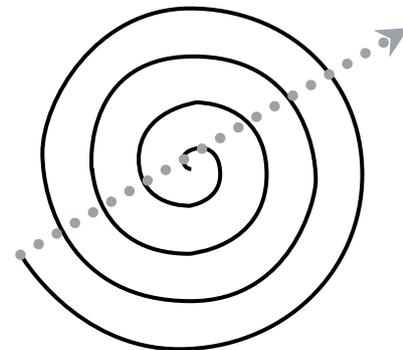
### **BALANCING A STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH WITH A SPIRAL PROCESS**

In general, intervention strategies and project management approaches define steps that are suggested to be carried out in a specific order. The Logical Framework Approach (LFA), as well as Project Cycle Management (PCM), together define clear steps for developing a strategy for a program/project.

Such a sequential description of steps has the great advantage of standardizing and structuring processes in a simple and logical way so that trainers and facilitators can implement the steps easily. Analysis of the application of the Logical Framework Approach reveals that the methodology has often been applied in a rigid and linear way, the result being a focus mainly on conducting logically correct problem analysis and creating formally correct plans. However, often the motivation and participation of all stakeholders and capacity development have been sacrificed for the sake of logicity.

In general, standardized application can lead to a mechanistic and simplistic application of a rigid methodology, not giving sufficient consideration to the dynamics and diverse aspects of rural communities. In addition, as highlighted in the PDCA Cycle and *Kaizen* processes, only a spiral process can enable (1) a continuous improvement of the quality of processes, as well as the outputs and outcomes generated, and (2) genuine capacity development.

In summary, a logical model is helpful in presenting concepts and clarifying the underlying logic, while a spiral application of the steps in a flexible way is appropriate for addressing the complexity and diversity of community contexts and the dynamics pertaining at the community level. Therefore, in real life, the steps of the Seven D Approach should be carried out as a cyclic process with several feedback loops in



which all the results of decisions are monitored so that the actions can be modified according to the experience gained and changes that occur in the process of project implementation or capacity development. For example, plans are only valid until new insights and findings make it necessary to revise them.

Such a continuous revision is not the result of improper planning, but rather, it is essential for high-quality planning that takes into account the emergent nature of new aspects through learning or changes in the environment.

The Seven D Approach addresses these challenges by deliberately advocating a transparent and well designed balancing between a step-by-step and a spiral process. Seven D designs the process of capacity development as a sequential seven-step approach; each step prepares and lays the groundwork for the next step. This provides the community and the facilitator with logical clarity about the whole process, as well as about each of the steps, and makes the application of the Seven Ds and the selection of tools easier.

However, social changes are not simple linear processes. They are complex, dynamic, and driven by self-emerging phenomena. Considering this, it is recommended that the design of the Seven Step Approach in this handbook not be treated as a recipe to be replicated exactly as described in a community development process. It is more a concept that describes some important principles and steps that have to be applied in a flexible and spiral way, so that capacity development can really take place.

The advantage of conceptualizing processes in a spiral way has been highlighted in the PDCA Cycle and the Knowledge Spiral as well as in action–reflection cycles. In all these concepts, the spiral stands for continuous and progressive learning and capacity development. For the design and implementation of the Seven D Approach, it is recommended to find a balance between a linear step-by-step approach and a cyclic process moving as a spiral toward increased capacity development.

### **Balance Action and Reflection**

Community capacity development is faced by the tremendous challenge of addressing the urgent needs of millions of poor people in Asia to fulfill their urgent need for employment and increased income. Hunger and poverty are still the harsh reality for hundreds of millions of people in rural areas. Recent economic crises and projected climate change will increase the need for quick actions and projects geared toward improving the economic condition of communities. Community members are also keen to implement actions with visible material impacts instead of going for slow learning processes. This can lead to the neglect of the long-term objective of community capacity development. Actions may lead to quick results, but only in combination with reflection can knowledge be generated and capacities developed in a sustainable way.

Therefore, another key principle of the Seven D Approach is to pay careful attention to the balance in action-orientation. Even if the time seems to run away, it is well worth the extra effort to reflect on the outcomes of the actions taken and on the actions planned in terms of possible outcomes prior to implementation. Such a deep reflection is not a luxury, but instead can be the insurance to learn important lessons from actions, and against paying a high price through repeated mistakes.

Again, Seven D is not purely an action or reflection-oriented approach. It recognizes action and reflection as interdependent modes that enrich each other through balanced practice. The Seven D Approach focuses on creating a rhythm for the community to take appropriate actions and reflect collectively about the process

and the outcomes. Through such an action/reflection cycle, not only is the efficiency of the projects and their effectiveness increased, but more importantly, the community jointly creates knowledge and becomes a learning community.

### **Balance Work and Joy – Combine Head, Hand, and Heart**

Another important observation of community life in Asia is the natural blending of work and enjoyment. Traditional reciprocal systems of labor exchange in villages always combine hard work with moments of collective joy, ranging from relaxing, joking, resting, singing, eating, and drinking. Such a harmonious blend of hard work with celebration is a key principle for ensuring motivation and strengthening relationships among the members of the community, which is a fundamental aspect of community capacity development.

No doubt, community capacity development is hard work that can only be successful if, throughout, the process “head” (intellectual reflection), “hand” (implementation), and “heart” (emotional feelings) are each equally addressed. Collective reasoning and deep analysis, real implementation through collective action, and emotional satisfaction for individuals as well as for the community have to go hand-in-hand, so that community capacity development is sustainable.

Key for continuous engagement of various stakeholders and collaborative progress toward new areas of learning in a creative way is motivation. Therefore the Seven D Approach addresses the challenge of increasing the motivation of communities through strengthening positive relations within the community as well with external facilitators. Celebration of collectively implemented actions is essential to keeping the cycle of learning running and creating, emotionally, the energy at the community level to elevate and sustain the hard work. It is therefore recommended to take, after each milestone, some time to appreciate and enjoy what has been achieved and to pay respect to all the members of the community who have contributed to the achievement.

## **C: CREATING...**

- avenues for participation of all stakeholders
- space for dialogue and the emergence of consensus
- opportunities for co-creation of knowledge and solutions

### **CREATING AVENUES FOR PARTICIPATION OF ALL STAKEHOLDERS**

Participation is a multifaceted concept with various shades and facets. Often, participation of all stakeholders is demanded as a precondition for community development, but careful analysis of community development programs applying participatory methods reveals that participation can almost never be fully realized. Some programs concentrate on working with only specific groups (such as widows, landless poor, or women), but this does not necessarily contribute to a holistic development of communities. The organization of subgroups within communities without creating social arrangements and avenues for multi-stakeholder dialogue at the community level can easily lead to increased conflicts and the break-up of the community into factions fighting each other. That can jeopardize the success of community capacity development.

Therefore, another key principle throughout the Seven D process is to create avenues for increased participation of community members and their representatives. It is important to highlight that full participation of all stakeholders is more a vision toward which the community moves, than a reality that can be achieved with forced intervention. Also, participation cannot be realized merely through applying specific tools or an elegant process design. It is, rather, part of an intense process of "shifting power within communities." Experience with Seven D has revealed that collective reflection on the benefits of increased participation, deep analysis of successful collective actions in the past, and tracing endogenous values associated with collaboration and reciprocal exchange enhance collaboration among community stakeholders significantly. Community development as a holistic process can only be successful if the entire community is involved. Potentials and solutions developed by the community increase significantly in terms of quality if multiple stakeholders are involved in analyzing and in decision-making structures. This has to be experienced as "seeing is believing".

Seven D puts stress on increasing the active involvement of individuals, social groups, organizations, and other stakeholders within the community from the very beginning in the planning and decision-making processes of a development project, by creating social arrangements and avenues. Participation of all stakeholders of the community is a key factor for the success of CCD and the sustainability of the development process, as it leads to increased ownership by the participants and contributes to better solutions as the knowledge of everybody is used for solutions. The Seven D Approach regards the community as the experts of their own life and as the decision-makers shaping their own destiny. However, considering the fact that full participation is often more a vision than a reality, CCD pays attention to starting with whatever degree of participation may be possible, while also aiming to ensure that participation increases in terms of width and depth. The application of the *Kaizen* principle of continuous improvement starting from what is already there applies also in this context.

Participation is more than just a means to the achievement of project objectives; involvement of the whole community in shaping their future is also a goal in itself. By taking part in workshops and meetings, by joining a visioning process of the community, and by designing projects, the members of the community can appreciate themselves as valuable and active members of their community and society and this contributes directly to the improvement of their livelihood.

## **CREATING SPACE FOR DIALOGUE**

*"Change happens by listening, and then starting a dialogue, with the people who are doing something you don't believe is right."*

**– Jane Goodall**

Any community is by its nature characterized by multiple actors often with differing interests and aspirations. In addition, the various actors have their own specific construction of reality and differing opinions on what should be priority, what the key challenges are, and how they should be addressed. We can identify myriads of aspects in which they can and will have differing opinions.

Therefore, a key challenge for community development is how to enhance the collective decision-making and actioning process. We have already stressed the fact

that the quality of decisions increases significantly if different individuals and groups can enrich each other by sharing views, moving toward a joint analysis, and developing a shared understanding of the situation, their vision, and appropriate actions.

### **Promoting Dialogue**

Crucial for strengthening the capacities of communities to take appropriate actions is creating spaces for genuine dialogue among different sections of the community and facilitating the emergence of consensus. Dialogue is basically a communication mode in which all involved do not insist on being right or convincing the others on their opinions, but rather to seek a common understanding that is beyond the understanding of single individuals. Key to dialogue is careful and active listening.

Genuine listening to each other has an enormous power to contribute to consensus. Once a community has developed the skill to actively listen to each other's stories, concerns, and ideas, its members can enrich each other significantly by not only developing new insights and bringing about collective change, but also in building trusted relationships. The facilitator has to pay special attention to creating a situation that allows for a dialogical communication process, and ensure that openness and flexibility are encouraged. This will help in re-examining all positions, discovering new options, and enabling common understanding and creating the ground for joint work. Dialogue is a prerequisite for collaborative and continuous learning.

## **CREATING... OPPORTUNITIES FOR CO-CREATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND SOLUTIONS**

Experiences reveal that instead of searching for a universal formula of community development or a "nice" blueprint solution that can fit all situations, it is more effective to co-create, with the communities, viable solutions for locally faced challenges. This will contribute significantly to strengthening the capacities of all involved to create knowledge and solutions to emerging challenges, which will, without doubt, be one of the key capacities needed in future when external dynamics will require continuous clever adaptation.

For flexibility to be realized, there needs to be an appropriate understanding of the methodology and appropriate arrangements for community development.

Firstly, the selection and application of the tools need special care and adaptation to the local context, and this can only be done by experienced facilitators with the confidence to design a locally suitable process by selecting appropriate tools and shaping the process.

Secondly, there is a need for space for the community and the facilitator to reinvent a situationally appropriate process without being forced to apply a standardized process. The case of Fiji demonstrates how they managed to reinvent a local approach based on Seven D, which they even called the "Namatakula Approach," which is the name of the community where it was developed.

We have intensively discussed the concept of the knowledge spiral, according to which knowledge is created if implicit knowledge is made explicit and explicit local knowledge is blended with other available explicit knowledge, and then the explicit knowledge, once again, becomes implicit. Another important aspect of knowledge creation is that it is a social process. Only if people come together and communicate and reflect jointly on their constructions of reality and create new ideas based on

intensive dialogue will knowledge be created. Creating opportunities for community members to share their rich knowledge systematically with the clear intention of generating valuable knowledge relevant for improving their situation is key for capacity development. In addition, creating opportunities so that external actors and community members can share each other's views, perspectives, and knowledge is a precondition for co-creation of new knowledge and boosting collective learning. As knowledge cannot be transferred, but only communicated and reconstructed based on previous existing knowledge of the communities, the community capacity development process has to pay attention to opening up the space for genuine knowledge creation and encouraging the communities to create their own context specific knowledge by being open to externally available knowledge. Finally, knowledge generated has to be put into action so that creative solutions are found and the situation improved.

Community capacity development focuses essentially on strengthening the capacity of community members, as well as organizations within the community, to continuously generate the knowledge needed. Co-creation of knowledge happens if people come together, exchange their experiences, share insights, and make their implicit knowledge explicit, combine it in a novel way, and apply this learning for changing reality.

## **D: DEVELOPING**

- a holistic view
- a consensus orientation
- a notion for transparency

### **DEVELOPING A HOLISTIC VIEW**

The famous sentence "think globally and act locally" is gaining increasing significance for community development nowadays. In times of drastic changes at global level, such as climate change or financial crises, communities cannot afford to take a purely local view toward issues and develop solutions for specific aspects of their life.

If a community, for example, makes a decision to focus on production of coffee, it needs a holistic understanding on the possible outcomes of that decision on the community livelihood as well as a holistic understanding of external factors that may have an impact in the future. Some questions for reflection could be: Who will benefit from that decision and what is the benefit for the community as a whole? Which capacities are strengthened or weakened by the decision to focus on coffee production? What will happen with the world market price? What will be the impact of possible climate changes on the coffee plantation? As we can imagine, many of the questions cannot be answered accurately, as they are dealing with various uncertainties.

When communities focus on improving certain aspects of life, such as improving the productivity of specific developing initiatives that have severe effects on communities worldwide, a global and holistic perspective becomes crucial for taking sustainable actions at the community level. Only if communities develop their capacity for a collective holistic understanding of their reality can they foster sustainable development for the community.

Community livelihood is complex and holistic, and changes in community life result from an interplay of ecological, economical, spiritual, socio-cultural, and political factors. Integrated community development that addresses not only economic or ecological aspects of life, but the totality of livelihood, requires a holistic understanding by the community. Experience with successful community development reveals that strengthening the ability of communities to gain a holistic understanding of factors influencing their livelihood and to find ways to develop their life is essential. Such a holistic understanding by the community is not something that can be taken for granted, but is rather something that has to be developed jointly.

The interesting question is how to enhance the capacities of communities for this holistic understanding. Seven D pays careful attention to the principle of involving different actors of the community in a dialogical communication, thus ensuring that different views are expressed and a holistic understanding of the necessary direction of development, as well as of the reality, is developed. An additional important aspect is to involve external actors in a fruitful dialogue with the community, as this contributes significantly to overcoming blind spots of the community members and widening their perspective beyond their community horizon.

Community members, with their different views, have to generate a joint understanding of the entire community and its challenges in order to strengthen their capacities. Only a thorough systemic understanding of their reality will enable them to identify and implement projects in a way that they contribute to their well being and strengthen their capacities.

## **DEVELOPING A CONSENSUS ORIENTATION**

Decisions can be reached in different ways, such as through voting or through delegated members. However, the disadvantage of these procedures is that, always, a significant number of the community members may not be satisfied with the decision, which again can affect the community identity negatively. Consensual decisions may have the disadvantage that they take longer and move as a slow spiral process, but the advantage is that a great majority, or even everybody, can agree on the final decision. Especially for crucial decisions such as a community vision or major decisions affecting the whole community, consensus-oriented decision-making is crucial. Therefore, the capacity of communities to take decisions in consensus has to be strengthened throughout the Seven D process.

Therefore a critical factor for the collective development of communities is strengthening their ability to make decisions in a way that everybody involved is satisfied with the decision. If communities are not successful in collective decision-making, they are then paralyzed. Conflicts can arise and community development efforts can lead to cracks within the community or even to the destruction of the community. Again, it is not important to have all decisions taken as a consensus, but it is important to push for consensus within the community, especially if decisions affect the livelihood of the community.

Consensus leads to the enhancement of joint decision-making and action, and thus increases the self-confidence of communities as social and organizational units. It is obvious that consensus orientation will not prevent all tension and conflicts, but a productive approach in dealing with arising conflicts is a central aspect of the Seven D Approach.

Community consists of different stakeholders – individuals, groups, or organizations – all having their own views on what is desirable and what are the most important problems that have to be addressed immediately. Even the views of different stakeholders on how to solve a problem will vary, depending on their background and their interest. Key to community development, which is mainly a collective development, is to provide all community stakeholders with the chance to voice their perspective and views on developing a solution to the challenges faced by the community. As community development focuses on equity and collective collaboration, reaching a consensus among the stakeholders is crucial for successful and sustainable development of the community and its capacities.

Consensus building is a time-consuming decision-making process and is not appropriate in emergency situations, but it is an appropriate method for sustainable development of communities by themselves. Consensus orientation requires intense participation of stakeholders, and a dialogical communication that enables everybody to express his or her perspective on an issue without fear of not being taken seriously by others.

But once the community has successfully reached a consensus, implementation of the agreed actions, as well as necessary flexible management decisions, will be less blocked. In order to support consensus-building processes, it is important to create open spaces for conversation across stakeholder groups and meetings.

## **DEVELOP A NOTION FOR TRANSPARENCY**

The open communication process among stakeholders, the continuous feedback on the results of decisions, and the use of methods and instruments that encourage active participation from those involved in the planning process are all key features of the Seven D approach. They provide the transparency required to enable the stakeholders to have a clear and open understanding of the information on the situation, problems, objectives, and interests of the various members of the community. Such a state is important if the information obtained is to form the basis for rational decisions.

## STEPS OF THE SEVEN D APPROACH

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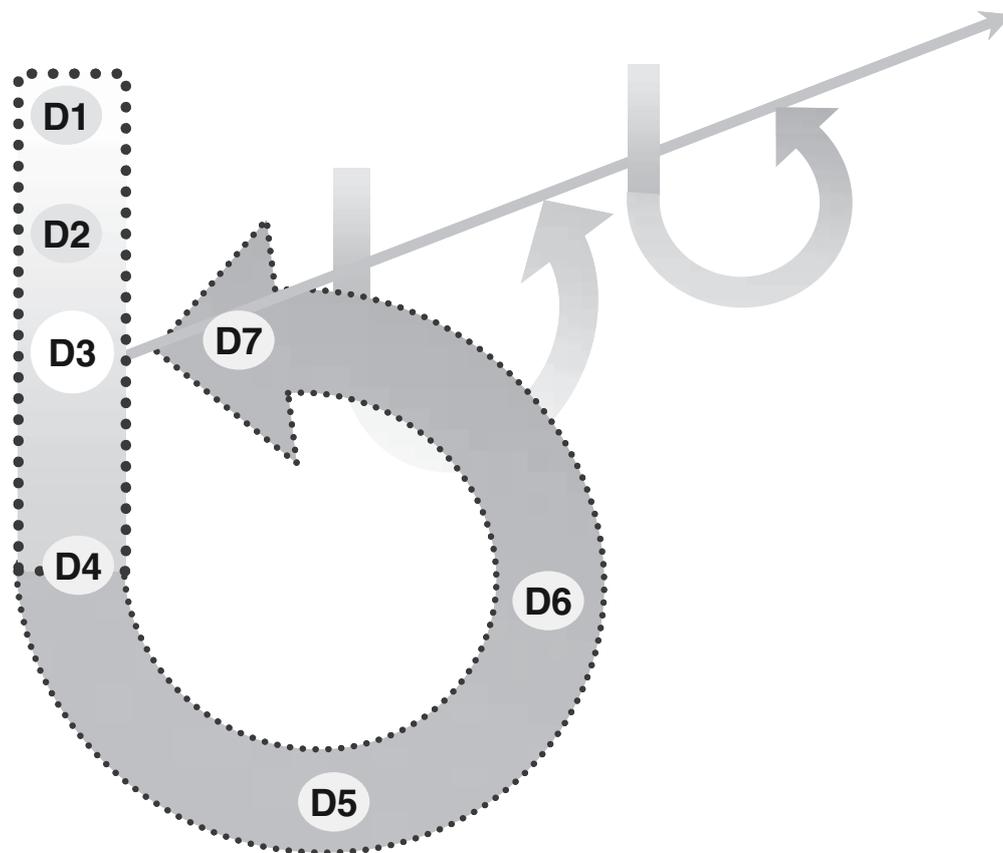


Figure 23. A systematic process for collective action

### OVERVIEW OF THE SEVEN D APPROACH

The Seven D Approach is a systematic process designed with a focus on community capacity development. It is a people-centered, process-driven approach nurturing, especially, the capacities of communities to take collective action intended to contribute to their long-term vision. Another important focus of the approach is on mobilizing resources for endogenous development, awakening motivation for collective action, strengthening careful analysis of the existing situation, identifying actions, and promoting systematic planning, implementation, and reflection on outcomes of the action.

Seven D is a holistic approach alternating between different modes such as action and reflection, intellectual analysis, and emotional engagement. For the facilitator, it is crucial to know which aspects are addressed during the different phases and to facilitate processes conducive to the specific steps and to select tools accordingly.

Through facilitating a communication and decision-making process in the community using each of the steps of the Seven D Approach, the community is empowered to take jointly agreed actions using internal resources as well as to clearly identify areas where they need support from outside, and how to mobilize such external resources. The role of the facilitator is mainly to enable the community to go through the following described seven steps of the Seven D Approach, and not to *tell*

the people what they should do to improve their livelihood. The steps can evolve their full potential only if the principles described in the previous chapter are applied throughout the process.

The first three steps focus on mobilizing the emotional aspects of human beings and are best implemented in a creative and appreciative mode. The next two steps – Steps 4 and 5 – are required for intellectual analysis by the community. Step 6 is mainly action oriented, as it is referring to the implementation of planned activities, and the final Step 7 is a reflection of the whole process.

**Main Steps of the Seven D Approach:**

- Step 1:** Developing relations
- Step 2:** Discovering capacities
- Step 3:** Dreaming of the community future
- Step 4:** Directions for community actions
- Step 5:** Designing actions
- Step 6:** Delivering planned activities
- Step 7:** Documenting outputs, outcomes, and learning

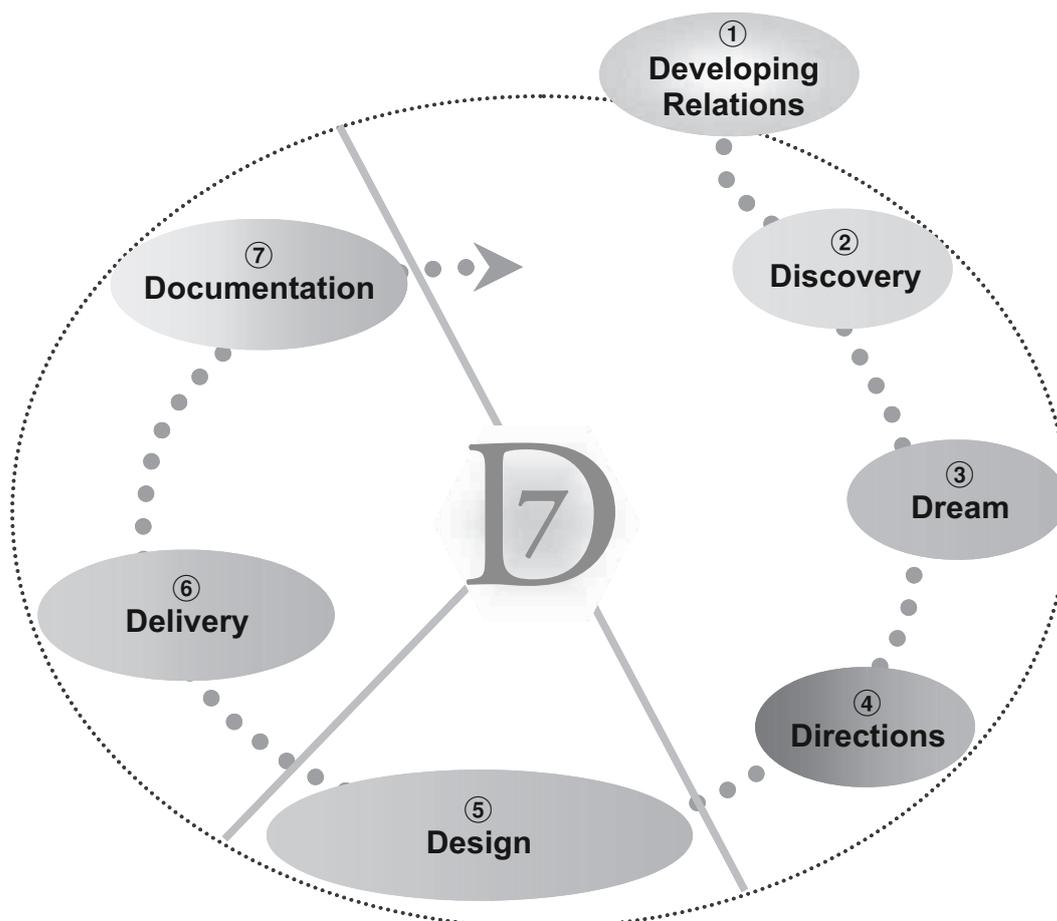


Figure 24. Seven Steps of the Seven D Approach

**Points for Consideration Prior to application of the Seven D Approach**

As elaborated in previous chapters, a key feature of the Seven D Approach is that it has to be adapted to specific contexts. Depending on time and budget availability, as

well as the needs of the community, the whole process can be implemented all in one go or through a series of workshops.

In cases where community development agencies are experienced and communities show readiness for capacity development processes, it is advised to run the seven steps in one or two workshops. We have had good experiences with implementing an initial complete circle of the seven steps in four days with smaller communities. The advantage of such a complete process in one period is that after being energized through the first steps, communities can continue with the identification of projects and design the plans for identified activities. It is easier, organically, to move to actions without being slowed down through confusion and doubt.

However, depending on the context, it can also be advisable to break the seven steps into three separate workshops, so that each step can be carried out intensively and the community can develop a rich picture of their reality prior to moving to concrete actions. Such an intensive process has the potential for a deeper collaborative spirit taking shape, and the community has more time to carefully analyze its situation. The danger, however, is that the momentum is lost and communities may stop after the initial steps.

In case the process is broken down into different workshops, it is helpful to engage communities with some kind of activities in between by assigning responsible groups. However, it does not make sense to implement only a few steps of the Seven D process and to not finish the whole cycle of the seven steps, leading at least to implementation of certain projects and reflection on achieved results.

## **STEP 1: DEVELOPING RELATIONS**

*"If you go to a new community open your ears and not your mouth."*

**- African saying**

### **Getting Started**

The first step in community capacity development is the establishment of a trustful relationship and the creation of an enjoyable atmosphere. This is best achieved through taking time, creating space for exchange and approaching the community in a respectful manner, and being authentic.

### **Relations – The Foundation of Community Capacity Development**

Community development is essentially dependent on establishing and maintaining, continuously, a productive relationship among the members of the community as well as between community members and external actors. In general, if human beings have to work in a cooperative way to achieve certain common goals, they need to pay attention to establishing and maintaining an excellent relationship that is supportive for productive work. Methodologies such as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), Facilitation, and Appreciative Inquiry suggest different procedures on how relationships can be nurtured. *PRA* focuses on rapport building between external agents and communities through spending sufficient time with the communities, participating in their everyday activities, and developing a mutual respectful relationship. *Facilitation* concepts highlight important aspects of group dynamics that have to be facilitated well so that a group of people becomes a high-performance team. *Appreciative Inquiry* suggests exploring each other's potentials and successful

achievements through appreciative interviews and thus creating the foundation for trusting relationships. In general, experiences from the field suggest that respecting a community's values and culture, along with transparency and a facilitative approach, has great potential to initiate a process of relationship development.

Seven D is designed as a community-driven process facilitated by external agents with the objective of strengthening the capacities of communities as well as strengthening the engagement of external agencies. However, key for fruitful collaboration between external actors and communities is the establishment of a good relationship as the foundation for all other steps to come. In order to achieve this, the facilitators may have to meet responsible senior people and community representatives first and get their consent for collectively going through the Seven D process. Once such an agreement has been reached, it is important to organize a first community meeting and invite the whole community for the start of the process.

During these first interactions, it is vital to ensure that the whole community is invited and the actions center around rapport building and establishing the groundwork for strong motivation for joint learning and working. A skillful facilitator, with clarity and experience on intricate mechanisms of the community and capacity development, empathy for the community, and a sound mastering of appropriate instruments, is crucial in this phase.

Especially in Asia, developing rapport and good relationship is regarded as essential for success even in business environments. This becomes even more valid for community development. Without conscious investment in building the foundation for good relationships, productive interaction of outside agents, such as GO and NGO staff, and the community members is almost impossible.

### **How to Start**

At the initiation of the community capacity development process, it is important that all different groups of the community come to know each other and gain an appreciation of each other's capacities and ability to contribute to the development of the community. Even if members of the community already know each other well, it is strongly suggested to invest sufficient time to provide space for seeing each other's potential in a different way, and discovering their interconnectedness and interdependency for improving community livelihood. During this first step of the Seven D process, the different groups of the community are encouraged to discover each other's contribution to community life in the past and at present, and to explore the potential for shaping a tomorrow that is better than today.

The community should feel comfortable with the facilitators and experts joining from outside. Unless a good and clear relationship is established, no progress can be expected. This requires observing local norms; listening to local people without lecturing; avoiding criticism; observing appropriate visiting time; respecting local knowledge, skills, and expertise in dialoguing and facilitation; meeting with members of the main village organizations, and with the society; and walking and talking with villagers or simply sitting together and enjoying everyday life with them. The investment of time and energy at the start-up phase of the project for relationship building is a necessary step for the smooth progress of the next project activities. As Seven D intends to bring all key stakeholders of the community together and involve them in a dialogical communication for an intensive process, it is important to acknowledge the challenge of preparing the ground for fruitful communication between

various groups in the community and with the facilitators and representatives from outside.

In particular, government representatives and communities need an open and trusting relationship if they want to move from traditional top-down planning and a handout mentality toward a genuine relationship that focuses on supporting communities to improve their livelihood. Community capacity development is a process of external actors such as governmental or non-governmental agencies supporting communities to develop their capacities. Genuine CCD does not focus on providing money or infrastructure such as school buildings or houses to the community but on assisting them in managing their affairs effectively and efficiently. Ultimately, the community has to develop clarity on where it wants to go and how it wants to reach the goals it defines and mobilize the necessary resources. Such an empowerment process of communities often needs, paradoxically, external support.

## **STEP 2: DISCOVERING CAPACITIES, POTENTIALS, SOLUTIONS**

*"The real voyage of discovery consists of not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes."*

**– Marcel Proust**

### **Awakening Communities**

Within the whole Seven D Approach, the second step of Discovery refers to a process of looking carefully into the past and present life, and collectively appreciating what is already there and realizing the richness in terms of potentials and solutions available within the community. The community is enabled to see the obvious with new eyes. It is about discovering the complexity of community life and appreciating what the community has created in its long history. It is about rediscovering the beauty, the resources, the spiritual sources, and richness available in the community and, for a moment, not paying attention to the problems and insufficiencies that are also a part of life. The main function of this phase is to get energized by remembering past successes and analyzing how they had managed to create all that they are now proud of. This second step aims at creating within the community an atmosphere of motivation, confidence, and enthusiasm to take destiny into one's own hands.

Community capacity development aims at *developing* the already-existing capacities of communities, and not primarily *replacing* them with external capacities. By building on insights gained from human development and organizational development, this second step encourages communities to remember collectively their successes, share stories of achievements, and feel the collective strength of the community. Experiences show that even the poorest community or the most marginalized family has experienced exceptional moments of success and developed solutions for survival. The facilitator has to divert the attention of the community to those moments, actions, and activities that have contributed to improvements in their life. Analyzed carefully, such exceptional moments of achievement provide rich insights on capacities available within individuals and communities. As intensively discussed in the concept of solution-focused therapy, the *solution talk* creates solutions, and *capacity talk* creates capacities.

### The Process

During the Discovery phase, the community is encouraged to identify those small and big achievements of the community. This could be something accomplished just the previous year or a long time ago by their ancestors. Our experience with the application of Seven D has highlighted that, usually, community members focus on achievements in the area of infrastructure, such as roads, buildings, and renovations of church or mosque. However, it is also important to encourage the community to reflect on different dimensions of community livelihood, and identify different areas where achievements could be tracked and community assets identified.

Using a holistic framework visualizing all key areas of assets can be helpful to encouraging the community to systematically reflect on all aspects of the capabilities the community possesses.

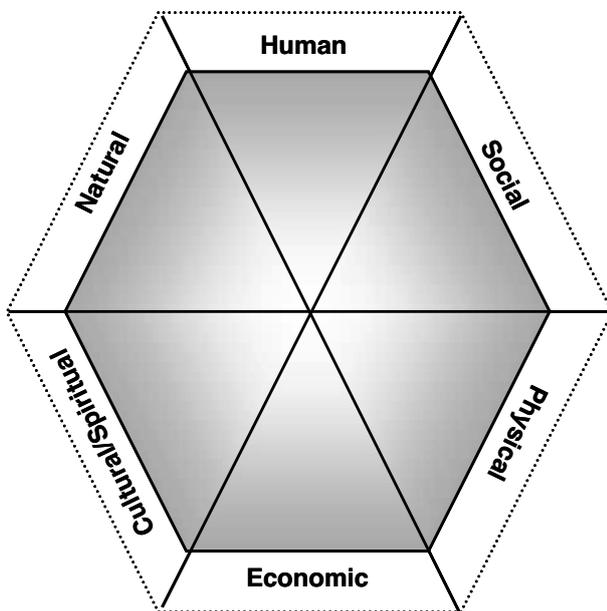


Figure 25. Key areas of a community's assets

**Natural assets** are those that are available within the community area and are regarded as exceptional for the specific community: well-protected forests and coral reefs, trees, medicinal plants, and animals.

**Financial assets** are those that are available for individuals, community organizations, or for the whole community: savings and earnings of community members or of the community through lease of community resources or cooperative businesses.

**Cultural/spiritual assets** are those resulting from strong and collective efforts of the community in nurturing cultural and spiritual aspects of their life, such as performance of rituals, religious buildings, following cultural values, or handing over to successive generations specific cultural traditions such as weaving of specialized carpets, silk embroidery, and other indigenous practices.

**Physical assets** refers to all aspects resulting from activities of human beings in terms of infrastructure. Roads, canals, and temples belong to this group, as these have been created by the communities and can be utilized for their development.

**Social assets** refers to all aspects resulting from the performance and functioning of strong community networks such as neighborhood help, forms of reciprocal exchange, or continuation of rich cultural practices.

**Human assets** refers to various aspects of individual human well being, such as education, health standards, and richness in knowledge.

### **Case from Laos**

During one of the applications of the Seven D Approach in a community in Laos, the community was encouraged to identify achievements they were proud of. In different groups consisting of elderly people, young men, women, and children, they identified the following achievements:

#### *Construction of Footpaths in the Village*

In order to improve the quality of life in the village, the community had constructed footpaths several years back, without any support from outside, just by using internal resources (collection of money and labor). A deeper analysis of this case identified that the community has capacities in the area of mobilizing resources, collective planning and decision making, and coordinated implementation, as well as in maintenance, through monitoring and sharing of responsibilities and clear leadership. Furthermore, the community discovered that the footpath is not only contributing to better access within the community, but has also increased their community identity and improved marketing of their products to the next city.

Another group presented the case of the renovation of their community Buddhist temple. This was done over several years by mobilizing internal resources and using them to create a space that is not only used for spiritual gatherings but also for community meetings. This case revealed how the community had managed to collect and spend a significant amount of money over a long period of time in a transparent way. Insights on traditional values and leadership gained through this case provided valuable understanding on community strengths for future projects.

### **Case from Iran**

During an application of the Seven D Approach in a community close to Tehran, the community identified the following achievements:

The community identified, as one of its main achievements, the establishment and running of a public bathhouse. According to the community, the public bath house was not only a beautiful building, but it was, after several years, still well maintained and clean, with funds available for its continuous renovation. A deeper analysis of the reasons for this exceptional bathhouse revealed success factors in terms of sustainable funding, leadership, monitoring, and quality control, which provided again valuable insights for the future. In addition, after analyzing such cases, the community was feeling confident and motivated to implement new projects, such as several they had also implemented successfully.

The community was also proud as it was famous over the entire region for weaving carpets in highly regarded traditional patterns. Another achievement identified was that the community had more than 12 teachers who worked in surrounding schools.

If such an appreciative and collective discovery is carried out systematically through intensive dialogue among the various groups of the community, the result is usually overwhelming for the community as well as for the external actors. The members realize, often for the first time, how rich their community is and how much assets are available there, and that there are many reasons to be proud of their community. This step, facilitated by asking carefully formulated appreciative questions, urges and encourages the community members to view their often taken-for-granted reality through a new lens: the lens of viewing the community history as a history of consecutive successes and achievements. In order to make this a collective

process, it is important that a broad and intensive conversation among the community members be initiated by involving the young and the old, men and women, and rich and poor, and getting them to tell each other success stories, important achievements, and significant changes in their livelihood.

Often communities and outsiders perceive the community as a place of problems and limitations, and feel helpless and hopeless to change their life by themselves. However, during discovery, we try to reframe the way the key actors, including the community and intermediaries, perceive their social and natural environment.

This second phase of the Seven D Approach has many similarities with a classical situation analysis of a project cycle, but the important difference lies in changing the perspective. Usually, situational analysis focuses on identifying and analyzing problems and identifying the needs of the community, so that it can be addressed through a new project. In the Seven D process we deliberately focus on achievements and existing capacities in order to boost motivation and confidence, and make use of this rich potential for future projects.

The Discovery phase<sup>45</sup> focuses primarily on discovering the achievements and identifying the factors that have contributed to such achievements. This phase also aims to discover all the resources available in the community or for the community.

We have discussed, several times, that for CCD to be successful, it has to enable and support communities to build on their assets instead of waiting for outside support. This can be a difficult task as community members are often not really clear about resources that are readily available to them. Therefore, it is important to enhance the communities' ability to discover, map, and assess their assets. This can be done using a wide variety of instruments starting from transects, mapping, and interviewing. However, to make sure that all assets are really analyzed, a clear understanding of different types of assets as described in Figure 25 can be helpful.

### **STEP 3: DREAMING OF THE COMMUNITY FUTURE**

*"If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea."*

**– Antoine de Saint-Exupery**

*"Dreams pass into the reality of action. From the actions stems the dream again; and this interdependence produces the highest form of living."*

**– Anais Nin**

#### **Beyond the Horizon**

Dreaming refers to a process of creative imagination about a positive future. Vision is the translation of a dream into a long-term-oriented, attractive, and clear image with the potential to provide strong commitment, motivation, and direction for actions. Visions provide the foundation for deriving directions for concrete steps. Such a collective visioning process creates also the motivation for continuous and long-term

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<sup>45</sup> Classical situation analysis often focused immediately on identifying problems.

efforts within the community as well as with external actors, who can support communities to move toward their dream.

The key purpose of developing a vision at the community level is that it enables a collective agreement on a collective positive future and thus provides the foundation for collective decisions on what should happen and what should not happen. Ideally such a visioning process involves the creative, spontaneous, open imagination of the whole community. The vision lays the orientation for shaping the future and dealing with the tension of desire and reality and bridging this gap through an evolutionary, continuous endogenous development process. This process is endless and strengthens the capacity of the community.

### **What is a Vision?**

#### *Visions are not mission statements*

A mission statement is a broad, general statement of the purpose of an organization or business. Usually it specifies the reasons for existence and provides a frame for the scope of the organization's activities. Missions are usually stated in one or two sentences and often have the character of a slogan. It is important that the mission statement is formulated in a way that members of the organization can easily remember it. A mission statement can serve a useful purpose, namely to define what the organization is focusing on. However, usually a community is not providing services to other clients and does not need to specify the reasons for its existence. Therefore within the scope of community development formulating a mission statement is not actually needed.

#### *Visions are an attractive image of a desired future*

However in strategic management, organizations develop also a vision statement. Such a vision is an attractive image of a desired future. While the mission statement describes that portion of the vision that the organization seeks to realize, the vision statement describes the wholeness of what it desires to see happen. As communities often have multiple purposes and multiple dimensions, vision statements are more useful to communities than mission statements.

#### *Visions are not plans*

A plan, which usually contains goals, strategies, and projects, tells a community how to get there. A strategic vision clarifies to the community what is the meaning of "there"– what the community wants to become and how it sees itself in the future.

It is important to realize that visions are at an abstract level and do not identify issues and specific interventions, as this may be perceived differently by various stakeholders.

If the vision is too concrete, such as the community should have two schools, three enterprises producing clothes, and that it apply certain kinds of environmental protection measures, there will immediately be discussion and argument over these solutions. Then communities will not be able to agree in a consensual way on a community vision. However, if the vision statement describes "a vital economy in harmony with the environment, preserving community culture, and nature," community members are more likely to join in, seeking paths to make this vision a reality. A vision should bring people together because it *expresses who they are and what they want their community to become.*

*Visions are not extensions of the present*

Visions are also not simply projections or extensions of the present, nor are they estimates of the likely future given present trends and constraints. Projections of the present assume no active innovation from the community other than what is already taking place. Visioning seeks to actively alter present trends and constraints through creative imagining and collective community action. Visions are derived from the inner core of the community and the call from the future touching this inner core. It is also important to understand that visions are not mechanisms to eliminate risk. They are, however, mechanisms to *reduce* risk, particularly the risk of being challenged with an undesired future. An undesired future can be the result of external forces having their sway over a community and/or internal dissension dissipating energy and prohibiting a common vision and direction.

Analyzing dramatic positive changes in human society and human systems performing at exceptional levels reveals that human beings are highly motivated and efficient if they are clear about the course they want to take. Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi are historical leaders who worked with the power of vision. "I have a dream!", is just one example of how a vision can energize a whole community for a long and intensive struggle. Malaysia's proclamation of "Vision 2020", a vision for the whole country, is another example of the power lying in visioning processes. Barack Obama's slogan "Yes, we can!" builds also on the power of vision.

*What is the magic of the visioning process and why is it important for community development?*

Communities are characterized by a great diversity of positions, interests, and needs: some community members without access to tap water may be interested in improving public water distribution, others with children may be interested in better education, the elderly generation may be interested in having a quiet and peaceful life, and the youth may want sufficient space for playing sports or socializing. One can be sure that a community with 100 different stakeholders will have even 150 agendas shaped by their interests resulting from the needs and problems faced in their daily lives.

Community capacity development is faced with the following challenges:

- How should a community decide which needs should be tackled first?
- How should a community make sure that some groups do not benefit much more than others?
- How should a community allocate scarce resources?
- How can we avoid, by focusing on certain activities, that other groups become disappointed and separate themselves from the collective process?

Experiences with CCD have revealed that it is almost impossible to find consensus for joint actions on certain small projects. If somebody suggests doing something to improve road facilities, others will advocate renovation of the temple or mosque. Experience shows that collective visioning has the potential to create a common base for cooperation and consensus toward joint actions. However, to succeed in this consensus-building role, the visioning has to be a collective process involving the whole community from the head of the village to the most marginalized people.

Considering the diversity of the involved people, it is advised to offer various tools for the visioning process. Visioning is not merely an analytical process of just looking

into the reality around us and deriving vision from the outer reality. Visions emerge from introspection and utilizing the creative imagination.

Our experiences with different communities in Fiji, Laos, Indonesia, Iran, and Nepal taught us that it is not recommended to ask communities highly specific questions such as “What should be in your village in five or 10 years?” or “What do you want to have for your community?” Such questions encourage communities to come up with specific desires that look more like a shopping list than a vision. Good visioning starts with encouraging the community to take time for introspection and imagine a powerful image of their future, by initiating a journey into their inner core and associating with those they love. Thus a more effective question is: “If you close your eyes and imagine the time when your children and grandchildren will be living, what kind of community do you wish for them to live in?” That is the reason why creative methods such as drawing, story telling, or composing a song are recommended.

A vision provides the direction for the community’s journey. Particularly if different actors with different interests want to work collaboratively in times of uncertainty and complexity, a vision provides the orientation for consensus, and this has to happen at an early point in time and has to be revalidated throughout the journey.

Developing such a vibrant and motivating vision is the intended result of this step. The aim is to support the community in going through a creative process of imagining their collective future. At the end of this step the community should have developed a motivating, clear image, providing orientation and motivation for it to engage in concrete activities. It is important that many groups and the entire community take part. By doing this, each group of the village society contributes to a picture of the village in terms of ideas for change projects that stem from their energy-loaded aspirations. With these ideas, the structural components of a village vision become identified, which are completely developed in a bottom-up, creative process and therefore rooted in the local culture. Inspiring objectives for community development projects can be derived only from a clear vision.

### **Points for Consideration**

A collective and clarified vision has enormous power that is grounded in its ability to draw the community toward the imagined future even if projects and actions fail. As Appreciative Inquiry has highlighted, a vision has the heliotropic power of drawing the community toward the vision it has created. It provides motivation and direction and unites the people who are involved in the visioning process.

However, too often, visioning is mixed up with strategic objectives or targets. A vision has to fulfill the following criteria so that it serves the function described above:

- Vision comes from the wholeness of our body, mind, and soul. Therefore, it has to be personal, passionate, and holistic.
- It expresses the deepest values of a community and its members – those qualities that influence community members and the community often even subconsciously in what they do or not do.
- It describes how we are connected with others in our longing for a better future.
- It provides a clear image about the desired future, thus creating a strong desire to break through barriers. It gives meaning to our lives.

A vision should provide answers to the following questions:

- Who are we in this community?
- What do we value most?
- What would we like our community to be like in future?

These simple but compelling questions lie at the heart of the community-building challenge. For without a commonly held identity and a broadly shared vision for the future, the hard work of regenerating the community is very difficult to sustain.

In many communities, a process of community-based planning provides the vehicle for defining and developing a local vision, and for attaching that vision to strategies that begin to move toward making that vision a reality. Different but effective community planning models and approaches abound, and even more are being developed as localities recognize the usefulness and power of a consensus-building process that leads to a common plan for action.

It is again reminded that facilitators from outside the community are strictly restricted to a facilitative function and are not to provide the community with ideas on what they should dream of, or criticize their dreams for being unrealistic or too ambitious.

#### **STEP 4: DIRECTIONS FOR COMMUNITY ACTIONS**

*"We all have dreams. But in order to make dreams become reality, it takes an awful lot of determination, dedication, self-discipline, and effort."*

**– Jesse Owens**

*"If we are facing the right direction, all we have to do is keep on walking."*

**– Anonymous**

The fourth step of the Seven D process is called Directions, as the focus is on the community identifying clear directions for immediate actions. The focus is on facilitating the community to co-create a rich picture of the present situation and relate that to the vision, so that clear directions can be identified and concrete projects agreed. By reflecting on the visions developed and by referring to the potentials discovered, the community is encouraged to take evidence-based decisions on which objectives should be targeted in order to improve the situation in the community as well as having the potential to strengthen important capacities. Usually, different groups within the community may find different directions attractive to focus on, and the art of facilitation is to enable communities to select key directions for planning and implementation in a harmonious way.

During this phase the community must deal with the challenging task of agreeing collectively on specific directions or strategic objectives for implementation of both smaller and bigger projects. While the previous phases of the Seven D process focused on creating energy and motivation and a collective vision through appreciative methods, this phase assists community in analyzing carefully where its members want to go. It is obvious that even great visions do not produce automatic improvement in life. The vision has to be translated into specific objectives, which have to be achieved

through systematic implementation of necessary activities by the community members.

In order to identify directions, the community has to analyze what are the essential aspects of the existing situation, as well as by whom they ought to be addressed. Different groups in the community may want to focus on different aspects of the vision: the youth may want to focus on getting a playground; the farmers may want to focus on improved marketing; the elder women on peaceful life in the village; and the women’s cooperative on micro credits. In addition, careful analysis of available assets may provide important insights on which directions should be taken first. Intensive reflection on available assets and existing capacities ensures that communities do not start with projects that cannot be implemented at the very beginning. Building on endogenous capacities and available assets can assist in avoiding frustration and disappointment. However, through a continuous application of *Kaizen*, the community can focus on bigger projects in accordance with strengthened capacities. During this phase it is also helpful to reflect on existing problems, so that the community can take directions based on a balanced reflection on both the vision and experienced problems. The principle of balancing should be applied here.

In summary, the community has to blend two different ways of identifying objectives: a) the long-term vision has to be broken into short-term objectives considering available resources and potentials of the community, and b) existing problems have to be taken into account so that the community can enjoy quick improvements. Such a blended process will ensure the community improves its livelihood systematically in the direction of its collective vision.

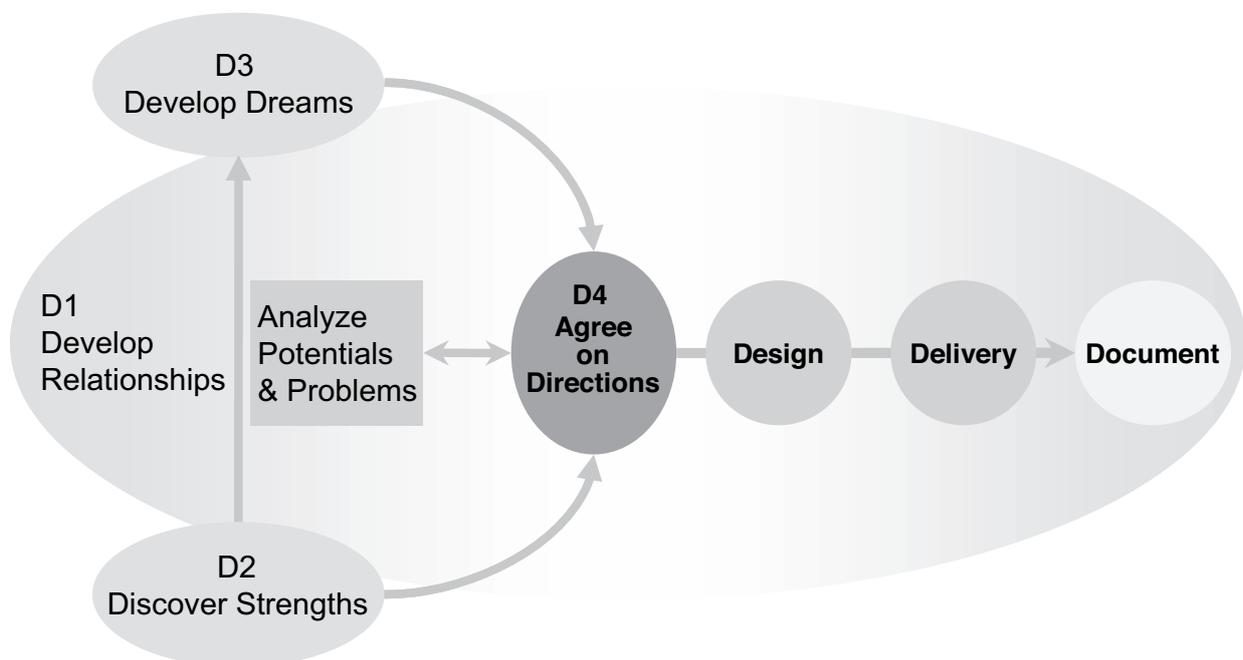


Figure 26. A blended process

### Tips for Facilitators

Facilitators have to be clear that the community is now moving from the previous creative phase into a phase of analysis and decision-making. The previous steps of Discovery and Dream focused on remembering past achievements and creatively

imagining the future, and usually this step is enjoyed much by the community and does not create tensions. That is also exactly the reason why we start with those processes. This has to be designed by a careful selection of tools as well as making this shift transparent to the communities. The community has to be supported to make this shift, by selecting appropriate tools, and by becoming aware of possible tensions that might result from discussions among the group on just which directions are in line with the vision developed, and which directions are most urgent.

Collective consensus-oriented decisions during this step are key for later success. In order to enhance this, a collective analysis is needed that provides the community with the opportunity to assess carefully their assets, reflect about their vision, and jointly agree on which paths should be taken by different groups of the community so that the whole community can move toward the vision, by taking the "right" direction.

*Don't rush from vision to design!*

It may be tempting to move quickly from the agreed-upon vision directly to implementation of activities. However, it is the responsibility of the facilitator to guide the community through a process of clarifying the ultimate objectives of the Seven D process: identifying directions with high potential to move toward the vision as well as strengthening the capacities of the community to tackle more and more complex projects for community welfare.

*Nurturing the capacities of communities to analyze*

Experience with community development and project management has shown the extreme benefit of a thorough situation analysis prior to making decisions. Such a situation analysis addresses the following key areas as crucial for successful change processes:

- Analyzing the situation at community level in terms of capacities, assets, and resources available;
- Analyzing stakeholders in terms of their influence within the community, their desires, possible contribution, and linkages to external organizations;
- Analyzing external factors having an influence on the community at present and in the future;
- Analyzing problems and obstacles faced by the community as a whole or by specific sections of the community.

Such careful analysis prevents communities from becoming carried away by their dreams and ending up with unrealistic projects or with projects that do not address immediate needs or do not contribute to the long-term vision.

In particular, an analysis of stakeholders, the relations among them, and of institutions can provide important insights for the communities into who will be affected, and how, by the various directions taken, who will strongly support or object specific directions, and how actors can participate in taking actions to achieve the developed objectives. The understanding of the social and institutional context at this very beginning of future projects is crucial to developing a strategy for creating avenues for increased participation of all community sections. Again the analysis is done by the community with the facilitative support of external staff and a critical review of the results by outsiders.

### **Problem Analysis**

An important way of finding the appropriate direction is analyzing the carefully perceived problem at the community level, which should be followed after identification of strengths and potentials. The problem analysis ensures that communities are not carried away by their dream and solely focus on some future dream without paying attention to pressing problems. By doing so the direction is based on the vision developed as well as on the solutions identified by analyzing problems experienced by the community.

Once the members of the community have reached an understanding and consensus on the essential problems, the next step is to carry out a more in-depth analysis of the problem, which involves looking at the interrelationships of human, financial, natural, technical, and organizational issues in terms of their cause-and-effect relationships. In this exercise, the logical relationships of problems (i.e., whether they are causes or effects) is carefully analyzed. Major tools used in this exercise are the Problem Tree Analysis or Fishbone Diagram or conducting the “5 Why Interview”. Each stakeholder will have his/her own perception of the problems. However, through joint analysis, a collective view of the problems and their priorities can be reached, and ideas to solve the problems can be worked out. A thorough analysis of a problem also helps to identify root causes and to develop clear objectives for specific projects in line with the vision created by the community.

A systematic analysis of the problem is important as it provides the basis for identifying strategies for solving the problems. The open discussion that ensues encourages active participation among the community members and promotes transparency, which increases the acceptability and viability of identified solutions to address the problems. More importantly, it strengthens the capacity of the community to analyze problems logically and develop strategies based on such analysis.

## **STEP 5: DESIGNING COMMUNITY ACTIONS**

*“Write your goals in concrete and your plans in sand.”*

**– Anonymous**

The fifth step of the Seven D process is Designing, by focusing on enabling communities to develop clear plans for identified directions, and objectives derived from the directions that were developed during the previous step. Such design includes strategic planning by analyzing the relationship between outputs, outcomes, and impacts, as well as operational planning, which focuses on clarifying how specific objectives are going to be achieved with the given resources within a specific timeframe. By doing both, the foundation for smooth implementation is laid.

Once the community has successfully mobilized the energy to change its reality, and has developed a clear image of its future and agreed upon a clear direction, a clear design for implementation is needed. This requires clarity on objectives for specific projects as well as clear operational plans to achieve these objectives.

### **Clarifying Objectives**

During the design phase, the community, or relevant groups within the community, are supported to reflect on how the identified objectives will contribute to the directions identified in the previous step, and to the community vision. In general, the objectives have to fulfill three criteria: first, the objectives have to have a strong link

to the long-term goal and the vision; second, they have to contribute to the development of community capacities; and third, they have to contribute to the improvement of the livelihood of the community members. After clarifying all this, the community moves into planning mode. This involves analytical and anticipative thinking, so that it is not a case of simply listing activities to be implemented, but one of identifying purposeful actions. A purposeful action is different from an impulse and desire, as it translates into a plan and a specific method of action based on foresight of the consequences of intended action being taken in a specific way while paying careful attention to prevailing conditions.

The crucial challenge for the facilitator during this phase is to slow down the desire of the community to move quickly into action, and to motivate community members to invest sufficient energy so that careful observation and judgment are applied. During this phase two important aspects for direction are blended as part of intellectual anticipation – the idea of consequences is blended with the desire and impulse that gives impetus and momentum to ideas.

**Converting Directions into Action Plans**

A simple but powerful way of designing the path toward the agreed direction are *action plans*, or *plans of operations*. Such action plan formats provide the necessary logical clarity for small groups in the community to document in detail how they intend to reach their objectives, as well as to check their progress in achieving objectives and moving toward their vision during implementation.

We have already discussed in the chapter on Project Cycle Management the structure of an Action Plan. A modified and appropriate Action Plan is helpful in this phase.

Activities	Timeframe														Resources time	Resources money	Resources others	Responsible	Involved	Important Aspects	
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February							
Activity 1			.....																		
Activity 2	.....																				
Activity 3				....																	

Figure 27. Example of structure for Action Plan

The facilitator has to be clear about the intended outcome of this phase; it is not an Excel worksheet or a document consisting of an action plan. It is, rather, developing the capacities of the community to design projects in a way that its members can

achieve their intended outcome. Strengthening the community to differentiate between inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes and relate the outcomes to the community vision is important in this phase. This is especially a key aspect of supporting communities to become self-managing and being effective.

In summary, the role of the facilitator is not to develop a nice plan to be implemented by the community, but to strengthen its members in their capacity to plan in terms of strategy and operations. This makes it necessary to encourage the members to reflect carefully on their vision and available resources, and their previous experiences with successful projects, and to plan based on these insights.

## **STEP 6: DELIVERING PLANNED ACTIVITIES**

Once plans have been designed and jointly agreed upon, the community or groups within the community are ready for the next phase of implementing the planned activities. However, considering the dynamic nature in social systems and the influence of changes in the external environment, the action plans should not be treated as blueprints to be implemented exactly as planned. During the delivery of products and services relevant for achieving the objective of the project, the community has to monitor carefully the implementation process and also the results emerging from the implementation. The monitoring has to balance between monitoring the performance in terms of efficiency as well as monitoring the outcomes in terms of effectiveness. Enhancing the capacities of the communities for implementing projects through a flexible planning and continuous steering, guided by the desired ultimate impact, should be paramount during this phase.

### **Moving from Plan into Holistic Management**

Experiences with implementation of projects in the area of international development teach us that sophisticated planning is not always a guarantee for the success of projects. Whereas development thinking and practice in the '80s and '90s was dominated by emphasizing the importance of planning for the success in projects, we are experiencing now a move toward new management concepts emphasizing outcome and impact orientation in management, new concepts such as Managing for Development Results, trying to suggest a new management approach that is appropriate for a constantly changing environment. Another important learning from failures of past projects is not to focus only on inputs and treating a plan as a blueprint document. It is recommended to focus always, during the implementation phase, on outcomes and impacts and treat the plan as a collective process of continuous adaptation to the changing conditions. It is far more important to develop the capacity to adjust plans continuously so that the intended outcomes are reached rather than to prepare a solid and elaborate plan on paper that ultimately goes nowhere.

### **Lessons from Action Research**

We have already referred to Kurt Lewin, father of Action Research, who has illuminated beautifully the fact that human beings understand the mechanisms of a system or the possibilities for its change, not by studying it intensively, but by inducing small changes to the system. We have also discussed the importance of the PDCA cycle for success in change processes. Based on these insights, the community has to be made aware of small changes and the results caused by that change, which

can provide insights into the intricate mechanisms of the system. Transferring this insight to community development, Seven D suggests implementing quickly some small actions and observing the changes occurring and, based on the insights gained, to proceed further. That may cause difficulties and failures, but it is more important to fail early so that we can succeed quickly instead of planning too much to avoid mistakes. Genuine community capacity development is only possible through taking actions and reflecting carefully on the outcomes of the actions taken.

### **Monitoring Results and Team Performance**

Rigid implementation of plans developed in the past sometimes becomes a disaster if they are not managed well. The community has developed, during the previous step of Design, a Plan of Operation (Action Plan), which is meant for implementation during this Delivery phase. However, the dynamic nature of community life, as well as changes in the external environment, make it necessary to adapt the plans according to the changes. Developing the capacities of communities to implement the plan, monitor carefully the outcome, and modify the implementation process so that the objective is met at the end, is the focus of this phase. Delivery is usually managed and monitored by a core project team that could be a women's group, a cooperative, or a committee. Here, organizational structure and clear leadership are crucial for successful delivery of the project. Once a group or an organization has successfully started to work toward its objectives, it is important to ensure that the relationships among the group members are strengthened and the organization is continuously nurtured and supported in facing the challenges that arise. In particular, a careful monitoring of the activities, maintaining good relationships with external supports, and providing necessary information regularly become essential features during this phase.

During the Delivery phase, the responsible group or organization should pay appropriate attention to monitoring the performance of the project team and the progress of the project. A simple and collaboratively developed monitoring plan can help the community to track the progress and steer it so that the project can be implemented successfully. It is necessary to clearly identify who is taking responsibility for monitoring and steering the process, checking if the project is being implemented according to the design, observing changes in the environment that may have an influence on the progress of the project, checking if key aspects of the project (organizational structure, budget, progress, outputs, etc.) are conducive for success, and identifying difficulties and finding solutions for them.

The core team should start by looking at the project objectives and the action plan (activities), and ask regularly the following questions:

- Are we on schedule?
- Are we within budget?
- Are decision-making and cooperation moving according to expectations?
- Are leaders taking actions to steer the process?
- Are difficulties being identified and solutions developed?
- What else should we do?

## **STEP 7: DOCUMENTING OUTPUTS, OUTCOMES, AND LEARNING**

The last step of the first cycle of the Seven D Approach is called Documentation. Now the community focuses on reflecting on the journey as well as on the destination its members have reached. Such intensive reflection is crucial for learning, knowledge generation, and capacity development. The community looks after implementation of projects, what was the original objective, and what are the outcomes after achievement of the various results as well as the outcome of the process it has undergone during this project as a group. This reflective process has to be done collaboratively with key stakeholders of the community and external stakeholders involved in the project, which will lead to identification of the lessons learned for the next cycle of new projects and programs.

### **Value of Reflection**

Documentation focuses on reflecting on the project from the very beginning up to the end, including all the challenges faced and the ways found to overcome the difficulties. This kind of reflection is important for learning in order to make improvements for the future and become conscious of all the factors involved in managing a project. This phase is actually the most critical one in developing capacities for shaping the future. Human beings learn through careful reflection. Without such reflection, there is the danger of repeating mistakes and of not using the valuable experience gained. Documentation enables communities to share their learning with other communities, and helps external stakeholders improve future initiatives and projects.

Documentation stands for analyzing, sharing, and capturing the knowledge and learning of groups and the community as a whole with the application of the previous steps of the Seven D Approach. A collective reflection at the end of the journey “illuminates what the self and others have experienced” (Raelin, 2002) and the challenge for those involved in such a journey is to take the time for deep reflection and not to jump into the next project or actions. Especially if a project has been successful, there is a temptation to move quickly into the next action. It is important to be aware that actions swallow the time available for reflection and vice versa. The balancing of action and reflection, which was described as a key principle of Seven D, has special relevance in this phase. Only by reflecting, capturing, and sharing the insights can the community be strengthened to become more purposeful in its actions as well in its learning. The community members discover how they can work more productively in moving toward their vision. As the reflection is rooted in their own experience, there is no need to “own” that insight, as it is already embedded in their lives.

Key in reflective practice is the move from an action mode into an inquiring modus; and important methods for facilitating reflection at group and community level are dialoguing and story telling. Dialogue enables a group to think aloud jointly about a shared experience.

### **Moving from Action Toward Reflection**

Sometimes communities, as well as external agents, may be tempted to start with new projects instead of taking the time to reflect on the experiences realized with previous projects. However, all involved in community capacity development have to be clear that after action, reflections are not a luxury, but the minimum requisite for

institutional learning, knowledge generation, and capacity development. Only a continuous combination of action and reflection can enable communities to improve their livelihood and to strengthen their capacities. If one aspect is neglected, community development will be jeopardized.

Therefore, a deep reflection of experiences gained through the application of the various steps of the Seven D Approach during the first cycle is strongly recommended, so that valuable insights on how community life can be improved and capacities further developed can be gained. The knowledge generated by such a reflection is community-specific and extremely relevant for further application by the community. In addition, the community discovers the strength of reflection and of generating collective knowledge through careful reflection on its experiences. That is a discipline that is seldom practiced within communities.

During this phase, the role of the facilitator is to encourage the community to apply an explorative and reflective mode, by formulating meaningful questions for collective reflective sharing. Experiences with the Seven D Approach have shown that the following questions are helpful:

- What were the most significant changes in the community life? How were they related to the interventions of the community?
- What did we learn from the implementation of projects?
- What was the original objective of the project and how far could we go in achieving it? What are the outcomes or impacts resulting from the project?
- How is the project contributing to the achievement of the vision?
- What insights should we apply for future projects?
- Which capacities have been strengthened and what others need to be strengthened in the future?
- What difficulties did the community experience, and how did it overcome them?

In this phase, the community or a group in the community explore deeply the whole experience of the first cycle. The learning achieved by such a reflective practice is completely different from learning derived from books or from external experts. It is learning and generation of knowledge by the community as a collaborative process, by reflecting on a project that they have implemented themselves. The power of such learning lies in the fact that it is grounded in the reality of the community, and deals with the whole range of issues involved in changing livelihoods, thus, providing an avenue for analyzing the nature of the challenge the community is facing.

### **Celebrating Success**

The Seven D process is designed in a way that a community can never fail in applying it. Even if the project did not achieve the objectives formulated, the community still could learn how to design and implement better projects and improve its capacities. In terms of capacity development, the community can only fail if it does not go through all the steps of the Seven D process. To ensure this is the responsibility of the facilitator. Therefore, completion of any project should be used to celebrate it, however it should be clear that no project goes smoothly and the outputs at the end may differ from the original plan. But there is always a reason to celebrate once people focus on the achievements of the project. Such a celebration provides an excellent opportunity to appreciate all stakeholders for their contribution to the success of the project. The end of the first circle is also an excellent opportunity to

invite external stakeholders, who have accompanied or supported the process, to look back and reflect jointly on the whole process from the start until the end of the project.

### **Reflective Practice in the Community Context**

Communities are often haunted by activities, and are continuously busy with their daily routines and work. In traditional communities, such work is implemented mainly based on implicit knowledge handed over from generation to generation through socialization processes. Such implicit knowledge is embedded in routine behaviors and executed without much analysis or reflection. The Seven D Approach attempts to develop the capacities of communities in the following important aspects:

- Support communities to make decisions based on evidence by analyzing potentials, resources, and challenges faced;
- Enable communities to plan more systematically their actions with clear objectives;
- Strengthen the communities to reflect carefully on results of actions at different levels; and
- Enable a continuous monitoring and steering of community processes by clearly focusing on their vision.

This is ambitious, as it needs behavioral and cultural change in the community, moving from routine actions driven by implicit knowledge toward systematic and planned actions driven by processes of externalized and combined knowledge. Only such a process leads to knowledge generation.

Proper planning and implementation of the plan is already a big challenge, but planning and implementation in the community are faced by even bigger challenges. Projects at community level are always faced by complexity and dynamic change resulting from dynamics within the community as well as from external factors. If community organizations want to implement their action plans, they often become involved in a struggle for finding solutions to messy and emerging new problems. Communities in such a situation have to develop innovative and flexible solutions to achieve their objectives. Predefined solutions from external agencies or simple recipes from eloquently written booklets may provide comfort but seldom help them to improve their practice in a sustainable way.

That is the reason why success in community development emerges mainly from action-learning types of projects, projects that dare to make their own experiences and reflect carefully on the outcomes and apply the learning gained for the next steps. This kind of continuous action and reflection cycle applied with a humble *Kaizen* perspective has, in the long run, the best chance to strengthen community capacities.

However, this can only happen if the communities engage in a deep reflection process, as reflection assists communities to deepen their learning and derive actionable knowledge from such reflections and to improve the practice by applying the insights gained for the next projects and activities. Reflective practice has the potential of developing capacities of community organizations to improve practice, as well as the capacity for learning and coping with emerging situations and challenges.

### **How to Document Results**

There are many ways of documenting the lessons learned: holding a meeting at group or community level and sharing the lessons by story telling; creating a poster of the journey the community has gone through from the beginning to the end of the

project; or reflecting in groups and making a presentation in a community forum. In case significant external funding was utilized, an evaluation using indicators (output and outcome indicators) formulated at the beginning of the project could also be necessary. Especially the Participatory Writing Workshop (PWW) Method has been proven to be successful to document lessons learned in a collaborative way.

## **SUMMARY – THE SEVEN D APPROACH**

Seven D is a methodology aimed at improving people's participation and management capacities at community level through an incremental process. The use of insights from *Kaizen* and PDCA are crucial for strengthening the capacities of communities through small projects, focusing on resource management and development planning. The ultimate goal of the Seven D Approach is to strengthen the capacities and self-help potential of community members by enabling them to assume an increasing role in planning and decision-making.

Seven D is an evolving process that must be constantly reviewed to keep it relevant to the dynamic concept and nature of participation as well as to maximize its utility as an approach for community capacity management.

Participation of local communities in project planning can create a lot of heightened expectations among members of the community. Unless it is made clear from the beginning of the planning process the expectations of the different stakeholders and the possible outcomes of the process, this may lead to more conflicts and further loss of confidence within the community. In such a participatory process, in which often different groups in the community with varied interests are involved, conflict management or consensus building is highly essential during the planning process. As a core principle of Seven D, this has to be emphasized and discussed with the community members as well. Appropriate proactive measures have to be taken so that the project success is not jeopardized in a later phase. Early capacity building on team building, dialogic communication, conflict management, and mediation in the community are some of the approaches we have discussed to ensure smoother project development.

It may not be important whether the facilitator is an outsider or an insider as long as his/her role is clarified at the beginning of the planning process. Besides steering the planning process, it may be worth considering that facilitators should be able to assist the community in identifying and mobilizing internal and external resources for the project or activities conceptualized or developed during the planning process. The ability of the community (or planning team) to convert the plan into an actual project or activity improves the utility of the planning exercise for the community.

But ultimately, the core project team and the community should be clear that a project is limited in time and scope and that the project is just an opportunity to develop their individual and social capacities in developing thriving visions, mobilizing resources, and managing them in a sustainable way.



***PART-5***  
***CASE STUDY***



# COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING – FIJI’S EXPERIENCE

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Figure 28. Map of Fiji Island group

## BACKGROUND

Fiji is an island nation in the South Pacific Ocean, located about two-thirds of the distance from Hawaii to New Zealand. It has a total of 322 islands, of which approximately 110 are inhabited with a land area of about 18,270 sq km and a total population of about 867,000 persons. Fiji is a multiracial country with an ethnic distribution of 51% Fijian (predominantly Melanesian with a Polynesian admixture), 44% Indian, with Europeans, other Pacific Islanders, overseas Chinese and others making up the remaining 5%.

Religion is very much a part of life in Fiji, including such denominations as Christian (52%, including 37% Methodist and 9% Roman Catholic), Hindu (38%), Muslim (8%), and others (2%) spread throughout the Fiji Islands.

Fiji, endowed with forest, mineral, and fish resources, is one of the most developed of the Pacific Island economies, although still with a large subsistence sector. Sugar exports and a growing tourist industry – with 300,000 to 400,000 tourists annually – are the major sources of foreign exchange. Sugar processing makes up one-third of the nation’s industrial activity. Long-term problems include low investment, uncertain land ownership rights, and the government’s difficulty in managing the national budget.

### Community Development in Fiji – An Overview

During the last 20 years most if not all development interventions at the community level in Fiji have been in the form of development cooperation<sup>46</sup> projects. As

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<sup>46</sup> Projects initiated by government and implemented by communities.

centralized top-down planning was the usual practice, most of the government-supported projects were designed and implemented with an emphasis on national vision, issues, and development priorities set by the government itself, rather than considering the needs of the local communities or keeping in mind the contribution of the projects in strengthening the self-help potential of Fijian communities.

Project initiatives and ideas were often designed and formulated at the national level either by international or national development experts, while the so-called project beneficiaries, the rural communities, remained outside the project planning and decision-making sphere. This was based on the belief that a technically sound project, normally championed by government officials, would guarantee success and ultimately the realization of desired outcomes. Such a process was implemented with the best intention of supporting communities so they have a better livelihood.

However, Fiji has experienced the failure of development projects implemented at the community level which otherwise were considered technically sound. Often, projects were implemented without much contribution from the communities. Moreover, the maintenance of these projects after implementation was poor, leading to the unsustainability of the products delivered by the government. In summary, government funding was utilized for creating various outputs such as school buildings, communal halls, roads, shelter, etc., without having created the desired impact on improving the livelihood of rural communities. In addition, this ineffective distribution of funds through top-down management has created a tendency within rural communities to exhibit an increased reliance on government and to adopt an individualistic approach in obtaining and enjoying the benefits of the government-supported projects. As a result, communal frustration and disappointment of those who could not benefit from the government-supported projects became a virulent phenomenon.

Traditional norms of togetherness, communal cohesiveness, and the operation of "*solesolevaki*"<sup>47</sup> have slowly faded over the years, putting increased pressure on government to deal with and attend to more sustainable and community-driven development in rural communities. It is important to highlight that some of the problems encountered in community development can also be attributed to the gradual dissipation of these traditional norms, which is happening as part of a general process of modernization and globalization.

### **Challenges Faced by Government Development Initiatives**

For example, projects in villages were incomplete; extended phases of project implementation were required; and additional funds were later sought to complete the projects. Even though the government spent a lot of financial resources and government officers extensively spent their time and energy to support community development, the community members at times did not seem to fully appreciate the government initiatives that have been implemented in their localities. Only a handful of community members could be relied upon to provide assistance when required.

Some community members demanded wages to assist in community development work, even when they, and their community, were the beneficiaries of the projects. Meetings with government officials were considered to be forums pitched at too high a

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<sup>47</sup> The traditional approach to working together to achieve communal goals.

level for sections of the community. The forums tended to be dominated by menfolk; the female community members, following traditional custom, did not normally speak but played a listening role. Other sectors of the community, such as youth and elderly people, seldom participated in the official gatherings.

Fijian experiences also revealed that some community members always act negatively to development projects initiated by the government, and, in some cases, use the opportunity at joint forums and meetings to complain bitterly about government inefficiency and the poor quality of service. Government agencies and communities seemed not to work together to improve the situation, but would fight with each other and thus lose motivation and energy on both sides.

## **INITIAL ASSESSMENT OF SITUATION**

The Ministry of Provincial Development, which constitutes the lead agency for rural community development in Fiji, considered the high degree of dependency on government that was beginning to develop in rural communities as a serious cause for concern and wanted to address it immediately. It was determined that an effective capacity-building program was required to enable Fiji's rural communities to plan and implement their own development projects, minimizing, as far as possible, their reliance on government.

The ministry consequently initiated an assessment of this prevailing situation to establish its causes and develop alternative strategies accordingly. Numerous reasons surfaced for the deepening reliance of communities on government in the field of community development. The most notable was the view expressed by community members concerning inadequate participation by community members in the planning and decision-making related to rural development projects. The assessment further revealed that the attitudes and perspectives of community members had changed over time for the following reasons:

- Knowledge and experience of local communities and their capacity for analyzing, planning, and self-organizing had been ignored or underestimated in past government programs;
- Consultation and participation of stakeholders, especially from the various sectors of the community, in project planning, analysis, and implementation were considered insufficient;
- Solutions in the form of products and services provided by the various schemes reflected the knowledge and context of outside planners or experts rather than the visions, aspirations, and needs of the local community and beneficiaries;
- Target groups or local communities did not have a sense of ownership of projects, or did not feel responsible for their implementation, since they did not play a role in the planning process and were not involved in the implementation process and handed over full responsibility;
- Understanding the relative roles and responsibilities of collaborating partners was inadequate on both sides, resulting in a lack of commitment on the part of the community members and the government officials involved; and
- Blueprint-style planning failed to adjust to the rapidly changing socio-economic conditions affecting Fiji's rural communities.

This assessment indicated that a great deal more was required to ensure the success and sustainability of capacity-building initiatives and project implementation, rather than spending more money or initiating more projects. It also became apparent that there were relatively inadequate human resources for planning, accompanied by existing planning practices/processes that paid insufficient attention to promoting and sustaining the active participation of rural communities in capacity development through a self-help/asset-based approach. Even if government officials were willing to involve local communities in designing projects, the communities were not capable of contributing toward productive cooperation. The failures of the past had decreased the community members' capacity to take their development into their own hands and to trust the government to take the necessary initiatives. Moreover, when the government ultimately took action, it was blamed for not being effective.

In light of these findings, the Fijian government strongly supported and endorsed a program called Community Capacity Development, encouraging the active participation of rural communities in the planning, conceptualization, design, and management phases of project development. The desired outcome was the strengthening of the capacities of the communities and making them a strong partner for government interventions.

### **Fiji's Approach to Encouraging Community Participation in Capacity Building and Community Development**

At one time in the village of Namatakula,<sup>48</sup> the community members had initiated an endogenous process of developing the community through various vibrant activities. A close examination of the case revealed that the village has adopted a vision-driven approach to community development, facilitated by a former participant of an APO Training program on Participatory Project Cycle Management in Bangladesh in 1998. The community even won a national contest as the "most beautiful village," thus showcasing a successful approach to community development. The unique feature of the "Namatakula Approach" was to involve the whole community in a collective visioning process to develop small projects that could be implemented mostly with their own resources for quick results. In addition, they managed to find a mechanism to balance the individual's and the community's benefits through the projects.

The government of Fiji was interested in exploring the potential of the Namatakula Approach for a national program and designing a community capacity development approach that could be used by the government agencies to reorient their work toward community capacity development. For this purpose, the government of Fiji invited the Asia Productivity Organization to run an international workshop on Participatory Project Cycle Management (PPCM), which was held at Namatakula in 2002. During the workshop, the experts deputed by APO in close collaboration with the Namatakula community and government officials of Fiji codesigned a community capacity development approach that came to be known as the origin of the Six D Approach (later to evolve into the Seven D Approach).

The international workshop provided Fiji government officials some practical insights in facilitating communities to develop a vision and a community-driven plan using a blend of principles and tools originating from Participatory Rural Appraisal

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<sup>48</sup> A village in the Nadroga area along the Coral Coast on the way to Suva from Nadi.

(PRA), Project Cycle Management (PCM), *Kaizen*, and other concepts of people-centered planning.

The insights and learning from this workshop led to Fiji's adaptation of the Six D Approach as a bottom-up planning process with contextualized tools that promised significant advantages in the sphere of planning and building community capacity. The following figure shows a summary of this Six D Approach to ICD.

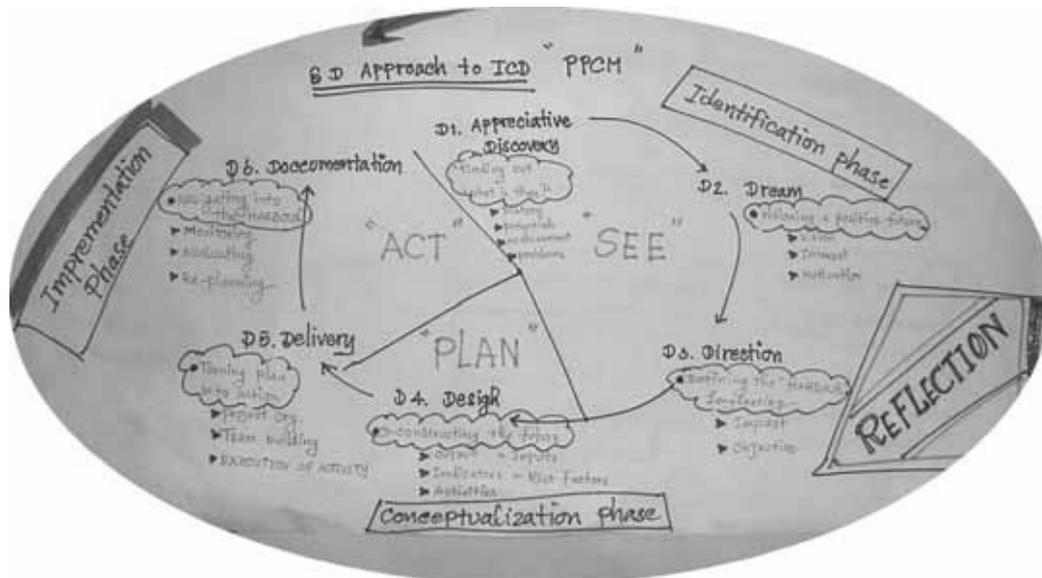


Figure 29. Participatory Project Cycle Management (PPCM) Model

This participatory project cycle model was considered by the Ministry for Provincial Development to be generally workable for communities in Fiji. Additionally, the approach was also conceived as having high potential for creating a tangible and long-term partnership between government, communities, and non-government organizations, enabling a more collaborative and productive approach to the development of rural communities.

The following spin-offs were identified as the outcome of the approach:

- Developing human capacity at community level;
- Identifying key people and empowering them within the community setting through capacity development;
- Involving everybody in the community and thus strengthening community cohesion;
- Developing the community in terms of economic improvement through projects;
- Enhancing the economy in general; and
- Involving outside organizations for meaningful contribution toward community development.

The application of the PPCM model at Namatakula made it evident that the planning process motivated people to participate, increased their interest in their community's development, and improved their knowledge and understanding of the planning and analysis of a project. Further, the villagers' strong involvement in

determining the content and priorities of the project helped to increase the likelihood of success and sustainability.

The government, in its determination to implement and focus on community capacity building, was optimistic that the following would be achieved through a wider application of the approach in community development work:

- A powerful voice would emerge in the community due to the process of bringing people together around community-based issues to exchange views and ideas on matters of common interest;
- An awareness would be created of community assets and the means to mobilize them to realize the full potential of the community;
- Communities would benefit from new skills and the higher levels of confidence, which are vital to direct the development needs of communities to the appropriate authorities;
- Leadership training at the grass roots community level would help build capable leadership into the future;
- Communities would actively participate in putting ideas into action, instilling a sense of ownership and achievement when projects are implemented; and,
- Communities would gain a better understanding of the government's role in the development process. More importantly, a strategic partnership between government and rural communities would emerge and develop.

Also, the Fijian government believed that the PPCM process enhanced a more bottom-up planning approach which confirms that:

- Data are directly collected, analyzed and tested by the users, reducing the failures of data transfer;
- Those involved in the planning process perceive its weaknesses and strengths directly;
- People's motivation to participate in project implementation is enhanced when they are involved actively in the planning and decision-making process of all phases of the project;
- People themselves are directly involved in clarifying and analyzing the problems, solutions, and potentials possessed by the community, which makes the project design, activities, and inputs more realistic and acceptable to the community;
- Solutions to problems can be discussed during the planning process and the experiences collected are shared throughout the ongoing process;
- Peoples' knowledge is enhanced and consolidated while participating in the planning process as well as through rejuvenating traditional skills; and
- People's ownership of the project is enhanced because of a better appreciation of the problems, the cultural context, possibilities, and conditions that can cause change.

As the next step, the APO was requested to provide assistance for two national training programs on the Six D Approach. During the first program, government officers from various ministries such as Health, Agriculture, and Local Development

participated and discussed extensively the Six D concept, and their various insights led to further modification of the concept and more localization of the tools applicable in the Fijian context. After this training, which was crucial for spreading the idea of community capacity development within the government institutions, another program for facilitators was agreed upon.

This second national training program focused on intensive training of 25 local facilitators to familiarize them with the core concepts, methodology, and instruments of the CCD-Six D Approach. The training was implemented as an action learning process with the local community. These facilitators were later used by the various districts to run community capacity development process all over Fiji.

## **WHAT HAS BEEN DONE TO DATE**

In order for the government to stimulate rural community capacity building based on the principle of self-help/asset mobilization, it was imperative that an integrated and coordinated approach be adopted at the senior executive officer level, at the operational level where all stakeholders participated, and at the local level where communities are involved.

This led to formation of a three-tier structure with a steering committee comprising relevant chief executive officers; a working group made up of representatives of relevant stakeholders; and a community development taskforce at the local level.

The steering committee acted as the government's supervisory body overseeing the activities of all the agencies involved in community capacity building initiatives. Twelve ministries participated in the committee. The committee served as the focal point for the coordination and monitoring of community capacity building programs undertaken through this approach.

The Ministry of Provincial Development, as the lead agency, decided to market, in a timely fashion, the self-help/assets-based concept of community development. First and foremost, an initial awareness program was implemented, involving the Chief Executive Officer for Provincial Development and his counterparts in the selected ministries.

This was then carried to other forums, such as the Provincial and Tikina<sup>49</sup> Councils, where officials delivered presentations on the community capacity building concept, as well as the framework and implementation plan suggested by the government. The awareness program also included other communication mediums, such as newspaper articles and call-in programs on local radio stations.

The Ministry of Provincial Development commenced piloting its Community Capacity Building Framework in 2004, in a number of villages around Viti Levu<sup>50</sup>.

In 2005 the working group further approved pilot projects for two villages and two settlements in each of the 14 provinces to be coordinated by an implementation team. The team progressed its work well during the year, and, very encouragingly, due to the interest expressed by other communities not included in the pilot program, similar

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<sup>49</sup> A cluster of villages within a province of Fiji.

<sup>50</sup> The largest island of the Fiji group where Suva, the capital is located.

efforts were demanded by the leaders (chiefs and elders) within these communities for community capacity-building workshops.

Since the official launch of the community capacity building program in 2003, the Ministry of Provincial Development has thus far achieved the following:

- Established a steering committee in 2004 comprising chief executive officers;
- Established a working group and terms of reference for the program, which has been operational since 2004;
- Conducted a community awareness campaign using radio programs, presentations in provincial councils, and through other media;
- Formed an official partnership/forum with rural communities involving a regular interface with the communities utilizing trained government officers as facilitators;
- Conducted a Train-the-Trainers workshop for 34 facilitators in 2004 in conjunction with the APO and TPAF (Training and Productivity Authority of Fiji);
- Secured an annual budget to conduct workshops in 2004 and 2005;
- With the assistance of the Ministry of Fijian Affairs, identified villages and settlements for pilot projects;
- Completed workshops in nearly all of the 56 pilot villages and settlements;
- Localized a catch-phrase for the community capacity building program "*Buli Suvasuva Kei Na Cavu I Sausau*;"<sup>51</sup>
- Conducted social audit programs to form the baseline data for community development initiatives and designed a database to store the information gathered to date;
- Provided ongoing monitoring of the projects in all pilot villages and supported communities with their projects;
- Created a Community Participatory Impact Monitoring Team (ComPIM); which tapped into the local knowledge and experience of retired government workers now residing within the communities;
- Established a quarterly reporting process to the Development Subcommittee of the Cabinet; and,
- Organized ministers to visit pilot villages when conducting Cabinet meetings in rural venues.

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<sup>51</sup> A slogan that literally means "Keep on building communities and improve on achievements."

## **NOTABLE RESULTS OF THE COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM**

The implementation of the community capacity building program has progressed well since its inception in 2003. It has generated a lot of interest and enthusiasm in rural communities, including those yet to experience directly a capacity building workshop.

Interesting changes in perspective within communities have been observed. Very importantly, there have been demonstrated improvements in community life positively affecting *inter alia* health, agriculture, education, and comprehension of tradition and culture. Some results of this process are:

- The creation of improved village bonding and a sense of working together – “*solesolevaki*”
- Increased participation in decision-making and social planning by all members of the community, including women and young people;
- Increased and strengthened sense of ownership by the community for development projects;
- Improved ability and knowledge to make positive assessments of community development by communities;
- Improved and enhanced spiritual commitment underlying individual development;
- Improved trust of government institutions and a new-found readiness to accept change;
- An improved understanding of government roles and responsibilities;
- Improved understanding of government expectations of communities;
- Improved networking with government agencies;
- Demonstrated ability to develop long-term visions to realize their development dreams;
- The re-emergence of the clear identification of traditional hierarchy, chiefly titles and holders;
- Greater recognition and respect for traditional leadership style;
- Better appreciation of local resources and the exploration of strategies for their better utilization;
- Enhanced appreciation of community history, culture and tradition;
- An increased willingness and urge to revive traditional culture and local knowledge of handicrafts and farming;
- Improved community efforts on issues affecting health and sanitation;
- Identification, restoration, and respect of historical sites, natural sites, and marine reserves;
- Improved ability to establish an effective community profile (population, religion, educational background, transportation, infrastructure, housing/toilet facilities, water sources, etc.);
- Formation and strengthening of village committees to spearhead development, i.e., village, women, youth, church, school committee, etc.);
- Improved ability and motivation to set up activities and small businesses to stimulate the local economy;

- Increased knowledge and ability to initiate and plan projects, including compiling village development plans;
- Improved capacity of communities to resolve internal conflicts/differences and improve community relationships;
- More regular conduct of village meetings;
- The establishment of a monthly village clean-up day with the whole community participating;
- The dedication of an annual celebration day for development achievements organized by communities; and,
- Initiation of contact/networking to develop village associations with affiliations to NGOs.

### **Model Village Achievement – Namatakula**

Villages in Fiji have different ways of demonstrating their success in community capacity building and community development efforts. Some have just begun their journey, while others have a much quicker turnaround time to achieve results and have attempted to implement larger projects.

To demonstrate the success of the community capacity building program in Fiji, the village of Namatakula in Nadroga, the place where the program was initiated in 2002, is a useful example. Through a self-help/asset-based approach to community development, Namatakula has:

#### **Partnership and Networking**

- Established contact with the Japanese Embassy to improve water catchments to enhance the village water supply. This was an initiative arranged by the community;
- Established support through a partnership with the commercial sector (Flour Mills of Fiji Ltd) that led to the construction of welcome billboards using the principal totem animal “vove”<sup>52</sup> within the village boundary; and,
- Established a market exchange with FRESHWOTA Women’s Association in Vanuatu.

#### **Infrastructure Development**

- Constructed two multi-purpose community halls.

#### **Socio-economic Activities**

- Established flower gardens to attract tourists. The village also secured a contract with local hotels to supply flowers harvested from gardens;
- Extended its community herbal gardens for traditional medicine and to attract tourists;

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<sup>52</sup> Piglets

- Constructed sidewalks within the community boundary to observation points at a nearby hillside. The site is to be used for marriage ceremonies, prayer-group youth camps, eco-tours, and other activities;
- Secured deals with a nearby five-star hotel (Warwick International Hotel) to organize daily tourist excursions to the village;
- Secured a contract with Warwick International Hotel for the village women to plait belts and necklaces made of "magimagi"<sup>53</sup> and "civa"<sup>54</sup> for tourists;
- Established a craft sale at the village community hall organized for tourists; and,
- Constructed home-stay facilities for tourists and established facilities for email and Internet use.

### **Utilization of Local Resources**

- Opened up the village marine reserve and eco-parks to schools for educational purposes. Secondary school students have been visiting the village since 2003; and,
- Cleared historical sites and produced information brochures for tourists.

### **Village Beautification**

- Won the title of "cleanest village in Fiji" through whole-of-community efforts to maintain the village.

### **Education**

- Established a scholarship fund to support village children's access to tertiary education; and,

### **Health**

- Constructed a village dispensary with two beds and basic medicine provided by the government with a member of the community trained to treat and provide basic assistance prior to referral to a nearby hospital.

## **CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS**

The success of the community capacity building program in Fiji to date can be attributed to the contributions from the government of Fiji, the communities themselves, the facilitators, and the PPCM model. Because the PPCM model came with easy-to-use tools, communities were able to understand the model very quickly. Further, the communities were able to use the participatory approach to recognize all opinions, views, and comments in a consensus decision-making format. Similarly, trained facilitators with the ability to motivate communities and the use of local

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<sup>53</sup> String made from plaiting coconut fiber.

<sup>54</sup> Pearl shells.

facilitators who fostered a sense of trust in the program also contributed to the success of the program.

To highlight the contribution of the community, it is worth noting that the traditional village set-up and the village chief system of leadership helped the program to be implemented within the community setting. Communities developed an interest and the confidence to participate in the program through the leadership of their traditional chiefs.

The government of Fiji helped with its early identification and assessment of community development problems. The Prime Minister himself, the Cabinet, as well as the implementing ministry, provided the commitment and leadership required for the success of the program. The government provided its support through its approval to apply the participatory model, accompanied by an adequate allocation of funds for the program. The government was also instrumental in conducting an effective awareness program that helped the communities accept the capacity-building initiative. Moreover, the concerned ministries provided their commitment and participation to jointly implement the program, augmenting the resources allocated toward the program's success. Finally, assistance and professional support by the APO and the Training and Productivity Authority of Fiji (TPAF) ensured the program's success.

## **LESSONS LEARNED**

The community capacity building program implementation in Fiji has taught the stakeholders, both the government and the communities, very important lessons. The government needs to understand that the observation and respect of traditional protocols by all the involved officials is highly important. The government's intent, anticipated benefits of the program to the community members, and resource allocation and limitations must be clearly stated from the very beginning so as to give community members a clear idea as to what to expect from the government. This requires proper briefing, mobilization, and involvement of government agencies. It is also worth noting that if the government is willing to provide leadership to community-identified goals, the community's response will be more forthcoming. Proper training opportunities must be provided to promote awareness and assist in changing attitudes and behavior. The government must provide linkage to other community development initiatives to encourage partnerships and networking with other indigenous communities. An asset-based approach can have the effect of lessening community dependence on the government. Moreover, the government needs to ensure that the facilitators and non-community participants are professional, understanding, and committed to the development of communities with a genuine interest to serve the people. Provision of feedback through proper documentation of the engagement process and clarification of points of interest in proper community meetings helps to strengthen the community's confidence in the program. Last, but not least, the involvement of women as repositories of knowledge is invaluable for the success of the program.

Community development is best understood as consolidated community organization, mobilization, participation, and empowerment. It requires that the communities must be willing to take part in the program to ensure that a genuine participatory approach is applied. In the Fijian case, the participatory approach has strengthened the "solesolevaki," which is part of the traditional Fijian way of doing

things. The participatory approach provided equality for everyone. It is both flexible and accommodating to change. The necessary level of trust and willingness to participate is best achieved by "Going to the people, Living with the people, and Planning with the people." Proper participation in the program by the community requires that the program be specific to the local culture and that communities must be treated with respect as repositories of knowledge and education. A successful program will tailor the best of traditional and modern concepts to fit the relevant community context. Further, the emotional state of the community cannot be ignored. Proper attention must be paid to what the community cherishes and prides itself on the most. Community capacity building and community development do not occur in a vacuum. Asset-based community capacity building is based on relationship building and mobilizing the strengths, talents, and "gifts" that lay within communities. Well educated community members must be recognized and treated as think tanks for instruments to drive and lead village communities. Only through concerted efforts by individuals within the community and all stakeholders can success be attained.

### **Major Challenges to the Community Capacity Building Program**

In the course of implementing the community capacity building program, both the government and the community must be aware of the challenges that they might have to tackle, some of which might even derail the successful outcome of the program. For example, any potential change in the government's priorities could affect the program adversely should a newly elected government take office. It is vital for the government officers to maintain a high level of commitment to implement the program to ensure the community's continued interest in it. The government needs to make sure that the community's requests to supplement their development efforts are met. New ideas and concepts must be introduced with care so as not to confuse the community. Uncoordinated implementation of community engagement by government ministries with different and incongruent agendas further confuses the community as well. Assessment and monitoring of community efforts and projects must be well coordinated. The government must ensure adequate provision of major infrastructure such as roads, water, and electricity. Limited availability of educational resources, technology, and experienced facilitators is a challenge that must be addressed adequately.

Similarly, the communities need to be aware of the challenges they face in implementing a community capacity development program. They can be easily fatigued due to too many uncoordinated visits from outside organizations. The creation of innovative partnerships could be hampered by the limited availability of necessary resources. Raising the required funds as contributions from the community for community development projects can be a challenge especially when the community members do not feel a sense of ownership in the project. Various unforeseen circumstances and traditional events can lead to frequent interruptions to the project's progress. Relocation of community members to urban centers for employment is a challenge that must be addressed properly; so is the government's tendency to use NGOs as its mouthpiece. Finally, establishing partnerships with funding agencies and other stakeholders is a challenge that must be overcome.

## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

The government of Fiji through the Ministry of Provincial Development is embarking on the full implementation of the Community Capacity Building program, covering approximately 1,130 villages and settlements. Because of the demand and interests shown by rural communities toward the program, the government has been working toward:

- Training more facilitators to accelerate training;
- Strengthening partnerships among government agencies in the effective and efficient delivery of services to communities;
- Training community elders, chiefs, and leaders for continuous development;
- Formally engaging NGOs to participate in assisting communities in their development;
- Collating and grouping village plans to form a consolidated Provincial Development Plan that will assist in forecasting and distributing funds; and,
- Providing additional funds to cater to projects initiated by the communities.

### **Assessment and Monitoring of the Program**

The government assessment and monitoring program is anticipated to occur on three levels:

- **Community level** – identification and training of community “champions” who will motivate community members to work toward achieving their goals and serve as a link to the province as well as government by providing briefs on development progress and achievements.
- **Provincial level** – the engagement and training of Provincial Community Participatory Impact Monitoring (CompIM) teams relying on the expertise of reliable retired government officers with a good record in surrounding communities to visit, motivate, provide professional assistance to delegated areas, and serve as a link to the community and government by providing briefs on development progress and achievements.
- **Government level** – officers at the lead ministry will play a vital role by periodically visiting communities to discuss progress, offering advice and support to the communities, community champions, and provincial CompIM. They will collate information and provide quarterly briefs to the steering committee, minister, and cabinet. The lead government agency will be tasked to assess the applicability of the model and tools, as well as the facilitators’ guides and approach, when engaging the community for the workshop and community feedback to ensure the program delivery maintains a high standard throughout the program. To keep the communities focused and motivated, the lead agency will also look at launching an annual community development competition in which each community will demonstrate its achievements and be recognized under the overall Community Capacity Building Framework.



***PART-6***  
***APPENDIXES***



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## **INTERNET SOURCES**

Asian Productivity Organization (APO)

<http://www.apo-tokyo.org/>

Capacity Org – A gateway for capacity development

<http://www.capacity.org>

Community Development Society

<http://comm-dev.org/inside/>

Edis – Development policy, practice and research

<http://www.eldis.org>

International Association for Community Development (IACD)

<http://www.iacdglobal.org/>

International Institute for Environment and Development

<http://www.iied.org>

United Nations Development Programme – Capacity Development

<http://www.capacity.undp.org>

### A

**Accountability:** Accountability is closely related to responsibility and refers to the obligation of actors to justify their actions. Especially in development cooperation, where resources are provided by third parties, actions of a project/program have to be justified. The responsible actors have to demonstrate that they have spent the money in compliance with agreed rules and standards and are accountable to higher authorities.

**Activities:** Actions taken or work performed through which inputs (financial, human, technical, and material resources) are mobilized and utilized to produce specific outputs that contribute to outcomes and the ultimate vision of the community.

**Assumptions:** Hypotheses about conditions that are necessary to ensure that planned activities will produce expected results at various levels. Often community decisions are also based on hypotheses between the different levels of results. For example, community members can assume that if they construct a community hall, that it will be utilized by the whole community and contribute to community cohesiveness. Incorrect assumptions at any stage of the results chain can become an obstacle to achieving expected results on a higher level. It is important that assumptions are made explicit, so that they can be monitored.

**Attribution:** In general, attribution refers to how far an observed effect can be ascribed to a specific intervention. However, in real life a direct and unilinear causal link between observed change and a specific action is difficult to determine, especially if between both is a large "distance." For example, it is difficult to link a decrease of poverty in a community to training on productivity. However, impact-oriented monitoring/evaluation aims to demonstrate a credible linkage between project/program outputs and desired change.

### B

**Baseline study:** A study describing the situation prior to a development intervention, against which progress can be assessed. Data generated by such baseline studies offer an important reference for monitoring and evaluation. There are different sets of data

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<sup>55</sup> References:

OECD. Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management. (<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/29/21/2754804.pdf>)

European Commission – Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid – Echo. Manual Project Cycle Management. ([http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/about/actors/fpa/2003/guidelines/project\\_cycle\\_mngmt\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/about/actors/fpa/2003/guidelines/project_cycle_mngmt_en.pdf))

ADB. Glossary of Terms. ([http://www.adb.org/documents/guidelines/Eco\\_Analysis/glossary.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/guidelines/Eco_Analysis/glossary.asp))

that can be collected as baseline, such as the incidence of a problem in the community (i.e., the number of student dropouts). It can also focus on documenting the perception of the community (i.e., 30% of students report that they do like school), or it can also measure the attitude of community members toward an issue (i.e., 70% of villagers think that too many children do not attend school).

**Benefits:** Improved processes or outcomes resulting from activities implemented as part of community efforts. Benefits for some people can be negative for others, therefore it is necessary to indicate who perceives something as a “benefit.”

**Beneficiaries:** An individual or group who has benefited from a development activity. Intended beneficiaries are in general all stakeholders who are expected to benefit directly or indirectly from a project/program. However, in a narrower sense, beneficiaries are those individuals, groups, or organization whose situation is primarily supposed to improve due to the intervention (the ultimate target group). Often the condition of other people may also improve as a result of the development intervention. For example, a community development project may focus on improving the situation of widows (the intended beneficiaries of the program), but members of the NGO, relatives of the widows, and village shopkeepers may also benefit from such a program.

## C

**Capacity:** Capacity is the ability of individuals, organizations, communities, networks, and society as a whole to clarify their future, mobilize necessary resources, solve problems, make evidence-based decisions, plan their future, and take collective actions to achieve their goals. In general, capacity refers to the knowledge, organization, and resources needed by the whole system to perform a function. Generically, capacity can be defined as the ability of an entity to understand the existing situation and move toward a desired situation by being effective and efficient in the necessary change process. Sometimes the term *competency* is used to refer to the capacity of individuals. Capacity includes specialized and methodological know-how, practical ability to structure complex social processes, as well as the capability of self-reflection. (DAC 2005)

**Capacity development:** CD is, in general, a process of deepening knowledge and skills, improvement of procedures, and strengthening of the organizational base. CD aims to enhance the ability of individuals, groups, institutions, and organizations to achieve their goals. Nowadays the term *capacity development* focuses on two dimensions: a) to support individuals, organizations, and networks to increase their management skills, and b) to support relevant actors to create the necessary environment for successful application of their strengthened capacities.

**Causality analysis:** A specific analysis intended to identify the root causes of development challenges. Development problems often derive from the same root cause(s). The analysis organizes the main data, trends, and findings into relationships of cause and effect. It identifies root causes and their linkages as well as the differentiated impact of the selected development challenges. Generally, for community challenges, a range of causes can be identified that are interrelated. Often instruments such as the Problem Tree or Fish Bone Diagram are used to facilitate a

casualty analysis. In a community context it is also helpful to use a more appropriate tool such as 5 Whys to encourage the community to reflect on causes and effects.

**Chain of results:** A causal interrelated sequence of results visualizing a possible pathway of achieving desired results starting with the activities through which inputs are utilized to produce specific outputs, which are contributing to outcomes and impacts. The chain of results makes the *implicit* assumptions of a specific project or program *explicit*.

**Community:** A group of people living together over a long period of time and interrelated through a web of personal relationships, networks, institutions, traditions, and patterns of behavior. Often they share a physical environment, socio-economic conditions, history, and special interests.

**Community development:** The process of supporting communities in their self-help process. Often community development is dealing with catalyzing social change and justice by strengthening the community capacity to clarify its needs, plan necessary steps, take collective actions, and reflect on results. As community development largely deals with change, strengthening the ability of the community to deal with diversity and conflicts is essential.

**Community capacity development:** Activities that support communities to strengthen their skills and the abilities at various levels of the community – individual, group, organization, and the community as a whole.

**Community groups/organization:** Entities consisting of community members organized around common interests or the physical neighborhood. Decision making is within the control of the group or organization and it does not in general have paid staff.

**Cooperation:** Process of working together in designing and implementing actions for the benefit of the community based on mutual respect for diversity within the community.

## D

**Data:** Specific quantitative and qualitative information or facts that are collected to track changes.

## E

**Effectiveness:** A measure of the extent to which a project/program achieves its planned outputs and contributes to desired outcomes and impacts.

**Efficiency:** A measure of the relation between inputs and outputs, usually a measurement of the optimal transformation of the various inputs (financial, human, technical, and material resources) into outputs.

**Empowerment:** In general, empowerment refers to strengthening the ability of communities and especially of disadvantaged sections of the community to shape their living conditions according to their vision. However there are different areas that empowerment could focus on: economic, political, social, or decision making. Key

areas of the Seven D Approach focus on empowering communities to take collective actions based on collective visioning and planning through collaborative decisions. Special importance has to be paid to increase community actors' abilities to participate in decision making; that is, the ability to negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable the institutions that affect their lives. In its broader sense, empowerment is the expansion of freedom of choice and action of communities and implies transferring decision-making responsibilities and operational resources to the community.

**Evaluation:** A management process that attempts to assess systematically and objectively the relevance, performance, and success, or the lack thereof, of ongoing and completed programs. Evaluation is often undertaken to answer specific questions to guide communities and/or program managers, and to provide information on whether underlying assumptions used in program development were valid, what worked, and what did not work and why. Evaluation commonly aims to determine the relevance, validity of design, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of an intervention.

## **F**

**Focus group:** A group of usually seven to 10 people selected to engage in discussions designed for the purpose of sharing insights and observations, obtaining perceptions or opinions, suggesting ideas, or recommending actions on a topic of concern. A focus group discussion is a method of collecting data for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

## **G**

**Goal:** The higher order objective to which a community intervention is intended to contribute. The goal is closely interrelated with the vision of the community.

## **I**

**Impact:** The overall and long-term effect of an intervention. Positive and negative long-term effects on identifiable population groups produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, expected or unexpected, positive or negative, intended or unintended. Impacts may occur at any time of the program/project life cycle and in various areas such as economic, socio-cultural, institutional, environmental, technological, etc. Even though community development projects aim in general to produce intended, positive impacts, the real impact may vary and therefore it is important to monitor outcomes and impacts and draw necessary consequences. Examples include a higher standard of living, increased freedom, and greater food security.

**Implementation:** The actual fulfilment of the development plan by concrete measures. Even though implementation is often paid less attention in manuals compared to planning, success of community development is in fact based on the successful implementation of project activities.

**Indicator:** A quantitative or qualitative signal that reveals progress or lack thereof toward outputs, outcomes, or impacts. Indicators are used to track what actually happens against what has been planned in terms of quantity, quality, and timeliness. Indicators provide a simple, reliable, and trustworthy basis for tracking change and assessing achievements, change, or performance.

Also, a quantitative or qualitative variable that provides a simple, reliable, and agreed means to track achievement, to reflect the changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess the performance of a development actor/organization or project team.

**Institution:** Institution refers to the soft aspects of human life: informal rules, values, and norms are all elements of an institution. Institutions are always context-specific and define the field for action of the various actors and influence their behavior. Institutions play a key role in defining the roles and tasks of the actors and the way relationships among actors are realized. Even though an institution may be difficult to see or to describe, it is crucial in maintaining the existing social system as well as in any change processes, whether they support change or counteract change. Examples of institutions are: market, caste, honor, marriage, and gender-based relationships.

**Inputs:** The financial, human, physical, technological, and knowledge resources provided by relevant stakeholders (i.e., donors, program implementers, and beneficiaries) that are utilized to implement a development intervention and create intended results.

## K

**Knowledge:** Knowledge is the totality of acquired experiences and information of a person and guides the perceptions as well as the actions of the person. Even though knowledge is always subjective, it is communicated and shared in a social environment and influenced by the culture, world views, and values governing a community. Community Capacity Development is intrinsically blended with knowledge creation by the community.

## L

**Learning:** Change of skills, knowledge, and expertise that community members develop by analyzing their reality, developing a vision, and taking appropriate actions to develop the social, economic, political, environmental, and spiritual aspects of their community life.

**Logical Framework Approach (LFA):** A specific planning methodology that is used to prepare a program or development intervention. The methodology focuses on clarifying strategic elements (goal, purpose/objectives, outputs, activities, and inputs) and their causal relationships. In addition, indicators are formulated to measure progress toward results and the assumptions and risks that may influence success or failure of the intervention. LFA offers a logically structured approach to setting priorities and building consensus so that intended results are clarified and the appropriate activities of a program are selected with the relevant stakeholders.

**Logical Framework (log frame):** A systematic planning and management tool that summarizes the results of the logical framework approach in a single matrix. It provides the basis for monitoring progress throughout the project implementation phase as well as for evaluating program results. The matrix should be revisited from time to time and refined as the situation changes and new information becomes available.

## M

**Means of Verification (MoV):** The specific sources from which the status of each of the result indicators in the Results and Resources Framework can be ascertained.

**Method:** A description of the path by which something will be done. Methodology consists in our context of a set of instruments and procedures used to generate and analyze information appropriate for planning, implementing, and evaluating a specific project, program, or activity.

**Milestone:** A moment or point during the implementation of an intervention when important outputs should be available, usually at the end of a period. Milestones are used to monitor whether the implementation is actually going according to plan.

**Monitoring:** A continuous management function that aims at providing key stakeholders with regular indications of progress or the lack thereof in the achievement of intended results. Monitoring usually tracks the actual situation and performance against what was planned or expected according to predetermined standards. However, monitoring can also collect information on unexpected changes that could provide interesting insights for the program. It generally involves collecting, selecting, and analyzing data according to structured formats of the program, and delivery of summarized information to the management and stakeholders involved in decision making. In the context of community development observation and checking are often combined and necessary corrective measures are taken.

## O

**Objective:** A generic term usually used to express an outcome or goal representing the desired result that a program seeks to achieve.

**Organization:** A clearly defined system comprising individuals with specific roles created for an explicit purpose. Organizations have their own structures, rules, resources, and are recognizable by outsiders and change dynamically *über einen Zeitraum* [during one period].

**Outcome:** The intended or achieved short- and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs, usually requiring the collective effort of partners. Outcomes are outputs generated by partners of the project management using the outputs of the project/program. Outcomes represent changes in development conditions that occur along the results chain between the outputs and the impact. Examples: increased delivery of extension services to farmers, better provision of health services, more efficient education system, etc.

**Outcome evaluation:** An in-depth examination of a related set of programs, components, and strategies intended to achieve a specific outcome. Outcome evaluation gauges the extent of success in achieving the outcome; assesses the underlying reasons for achievement or non-achievement; validates the contributions of a specific organization to the outcome; and identifies key lessons learned and recommendations to improve performance.

**Outputs:** The products (goods and services) that result from the completion of activities within a development intervention and are regarded as necessary to achieve the objective (outcome level) of the program/project. Outputs are those items that are created at the completion of activities. Examples: community hall constructed, beach cleaned, memorandum of understanding signed, community organization formed, curriculum developed, etc.

## P

**Participation:** Participation is closely interrelated to the idea of help for self-help. External support by government or non-governmental agencies has to strengthen the capabilities of the communities by enhancing participation among community members as well as with external actors. Participation refers to both the planning and implementation of activities as well as benefitting from the results achieved. Participation has to be ensured throughout the Seven D process starting from a collective visioning up to reflection on achieved outcomes. The double nature of participation being a means for sustainable development, but also the goal of development needs appropriate attention in the design phase for increasing participation of marginalized groups as well as the community as a whole.

**Performance measurement:** The collection, interpretation, and reporting of data for performance indicators that measure how well programs or projects deliver outputs and contribute to the achievement of higher level aims (purposes and goals). Performance measurement focuses on measuring how well an agency is meeting its stated goals or objectives.

**Poverty:** Poverty is a multi-dimensional phenomenon covering material as well as non-material aspects of life and is in general a deprivation of human beings to conduct their lives with human dignity by realizing their innate human rights and potential to improve their well being.

**Program:** A time-bound intervention similar to a project but which cuts across sectors, themes, or geographic areas, uses a multi-disciplinary approach, involves multiple institutions, and may be supported by several different funding sources.

**Project:** A time-bound intervention that consists of a set of planned, interrelated activities aimed at achieving defined program outputs.

## R

**Reliability:** Consistency and dependability of data collected through repeated use of a scientific instrument or data collection procedure under the same conditions. Absolute reliability of evaluation data is hard to obtain. However, checklists and training of evaluators can improve both data reliability and validity.

**Result:** Generically, *result* is the end-state of activities and in our context refers to the effects of a program/project. The terms output, outcome, or impact (intended or unintended, positive and/or negative) describe more precisely the different types of results at the selected three levels deriving from a cause and effect relationship set in motion by a development intervention. This is a simplification of reality, as we have in real life a whole web of interrelated results with feedback relations.

**Results-Based Management (RBM):** A management strategy by which an organization ensures that its processes, products, and services contribute to the achievement of desired results (outputs, outcomes, and impacts). RBM rests on stakeholder participation and on the clearly defined accountability for results. It also requires monitoring of progress toward results and reporting on performance/feedback that is carefully reviewed and used to further improve the design or implementation of the program.

## S

**Social capital:** The level of trust, mutual reciprocity, and cooperation existing within communities, which is created through norms, institutions, and networks existing at the community level. Social capital has gained in the last several decades significant attention in community development and is seen as key to social inclusion and holistic development.

**Stakeholders:** In the area of community development the term *stakeholder* refers to any party that is influenced by or influencing, or affected by or affecting, the measures of an intervention. It also refers to individuals, groups, or organizations who have a role and interest in the objectives and/or implementation of a project and program and thus have a stake in the design, implementation, or results of a project/program. In general anybody who places a claim on attention by government or non-government organizations, available resources, or generated outputs or is affected by such outputs or outcomes is a stakeholder. Important stakeholders of an intervention include the community whose situation the program seeks to change; field staff or organizations who implement program activities and program managers who steer the implementation; donors and other decision-makers who influence or decide the course of action related to the program; and supporters, critics, and other persons who influence the program environment. Careful attention to the various perceptions and needs of the stakeholders is vital to ensure success of any community development program. In the area of community development, a multi-stakeholder approach is seen as viable; in this approach all relevant stakeholders are collectively engaged in developing a vision, defining objectives, and taking appropriate collective actions.

**Survey:** Systematic collection of information regarding a defined population (sample of units such as youths, patients, undernourished people, widows, etc.) usually by means of interviews or questionnaires. *Baseline surveys* are carried out at the beginning of the program to describe the situation prior to a development intervention in order to assess progress; *midline surveys* are conducted at the midpoint of the cycle to provide management and decision-makers with the information necessary to assess and, if necessary, adjust, implementation, procedures, strategies, and institutional arrangements, for the attainment of results. In addition, the results of midline surveys can also be used to inform and guide the formulation of a new country program.

*Endline surveys* are conducted toward the end of the cycle to provide decision-makers and planners with information with which to review the achievements of the program and generate lessons to guide the formulation and/or implementation of new programs/projects.

**Sustainability:** The continuation of effects generated by a project/program after its end.

## T

**Target group (TG):** The main intended beneficiaries of a project or program that are expected to gain from the results of that intervention. The TG is the section of the population that an intervention aims to reach in order to address their needs.

## V

**Validity:** The extent to which methodologies and instruments measure what they are supposed to measure. A data collection method is reliable and valid to the extent that it produces the same results repeatedly. Valid evaluations are ones that take into account all relevant factors, given the whole context of the evaluation, and weigh them appropriately in the process of formulating conclusions and recommendations.

## W

**Work plan:** Summary of tasks, timeframes, and responsibilities for a specific period of time, usually annually. The work plan is often used as a monitoring tool to ensure that the outputs are generated as planned and needed and contribute to the progress toward desired outcomes.

**Seven D Toolbox can be downloaded from:**

Asian Productivity Organization (APO)

<http://www.apo-tokyo.org/>