Achieving the SDGs in Rural Areas: Strategies for Gender-focused, Community-led Development

White Paper by John Coonrod, Executive Vice President, The Hunger Project, May 2016

The key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is to unleash the wisdom, creativity and productivity of the one billion individuals currently living in poverty – the vast majority of whom live in rural areas.

There is a well-developed *science* – a **complex, intentional and human process** – for enabling rural women, men and young people to successfully take charge of their own development, and it has been implemented in all regions of the world. This paper illustrates affordable, comprehensive, step-by-step methodologies which can be adopted at national scale, and recommends policies necessary to create an enabling environment for it to succeed.

The Challenge and Opportunity of the SDGs

The newly adopted Sustainable Global Goals (SDGs) for 2030 highlight the complex, interlinked nature of these development challenges. Yet they present a strategic opportunity for governments and their development partners – including the donors, private sector and civil society – to "work better together" for broad-based economic and social progress.

The Hunger Project has long recognized the importance of an agenda that "is not merely a collection of goals, but the convergence of issues formerly seen as distinct into a single,

unified agenda. It recognizes that the crucial issues facing humanity are **one nexus of issues, inextricably linked,** and that only in successfully solving the entire agenda do we solve any of it." (THP 1995)

Achieving the SDGs will be a particular challenge in rural areas. While the SDGs place special emphasis on urbanization, the vast major of those in poverty are rural. Rural communities are, by definition, remote from the centers of government and commerce. Transport and communication systems are weak, making access to education, markets, healthcare, financial and legal services difficult and expensive.

Defining Gender-Focused Community-led Development

The approach described here – "gender-focused, community-led development" – is based on thirty years of lessons learned by and with the people themselves as together we've discovered what works to enable individuals to successfully take charge of their own development.

Why "Gender-Focused?" First, because a root cause of rural poverty is the marginalization of women. Women do the lion's share of the work, yet have traditionally been denied voice in the decisions that affect their lives. Second, because the same patriarchal mindset that disempowers women also leads to top-down, urban-centric governance priorities that marginalize rural communities.

Next, let's define "**community**." In this paper, we refer to community as the geographic area where people live and work. For a rural woman, who travels mostly on foot, often with a baby on her back, her entire world is the distance she can walk and return home in a day – **roughly 6 miles**. If public services and the institutions of government do not exist within that 6 mile radius, they don't exist for her at all, and her fundamental right to participating in government is denied.

It takes more than a village. Traditional villages are often too small to operate as a unit of development - perhaps only 50 households. The Hunger Project works with **clusters of villages** within 6 miles, with populations between 5,000 - 15,000 – and with the administrative level closest to the people: **gram panchayats** in India, **union parishads** in Bangladesh, **municipios** in Latin America. Many African countries do not yet have an administrative unit at that level, and so we organize **epicenters** to demonstrate that governance at the sub-district level could function.

There is a rich tradition of systematic programs to strengthen rural communities, going back to Y.C. Yen's Rural Reconstruction Movement in 1920s China (Keehn 1993) and Mahatma Gandhi's 18-point Constructive Program of the 1930s. With decolonization in the 1960s, community development often became nationwide programs, such as under India's 2nd Five-Year Plan and Korea's "Saemaul Undong" (SMU or the New Villages Movement). Indeed, the SMU is credited with increasing rural incomes six-fold in the 1960s and 1970s and providing the basis for Korea's economic success despite its lack of natural resources (Sawyers 2015).

Progress in national-level community development programs continued through the 1970s, but was largely derailed by central government decisions triggered by 1980s Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), and in the donor community by increased focus on top-down global health campaigns (child survival, HIV/AIDS, Malaria) and the necessity of responding to complex humanitarian emergencies following the end of the cold war.

A weakness of the approaches used in the 1970s and 80s was that they built on (and tended to reinforce) traditional patriarchal leadership structures, as well as exploitative political and economic interests.

In the 1990s and 2000s, in the face of a growing number of fragile and failed states and violent insurgencies, the World Bank and other donors began instituting large-scale programs of **"Community-Driven Development (CDD)**" - defined by the World Bank as "an approach that gives control over planning decisions and investment resources for local development projects to community groups." (WB 2016)

This period also saw an increasing move towards government decentralization. This proved highly successful in Brazil and a number of other countries, though this highlighted another weakness. As stated in the Addis Ababa Agenda on Financing for Development (FfD 2015), "expenditures and investments in sustainable development are being devolved to the sub-national level, which often lack adequate technical and technological capacity, financing and support." (FfD 2015)

In parallel, civil society organizations (including The Hunger Project) have pioneered methodologies that were more intentionally focused on social inclusion (including gender justice) and **building the capacity** needed for communities to manage a comprehensive set of public services and build thriving, resilient economies. This has become known as **Community-led Development (CLD)**, defined as "the process of working together to achieve locally-owned visions and goals... **focusing not on projects but on systemic change**" (Inspiring Communities, 2015)

While both Community-Driven Development and Community-Led Development put people in control of their own development, CDD generally focuses on one sectoral project at a time, while CLD focuses on building up the entire system of public services and their governance.

Country Ownership

It's important to note that all the strategies outlined here to facilitate community-led development must be carried out by citizens of the country itself, with the advice and expertise of that nation's government, civil society and private sector. Each country chapter of The Hunger Project, for example, is led and staffed only by women and men of that country, and each Hunger Project country director establishes a National Advisory Council or Board of leading citizens who bring experience and perspective from all relevant sectors.

The best role for civil society is not to supplement or displace government, but rather to catalyze and facilitate development processes by strengthening the capacity of

community-level institutions. This is a long-term and localized process that is best suited to the skills and commitments of civil society organizations.

A Set of Principles for "The Road to Dignity by 2030"

One characteristic of Community-Led Development is that it is based on, and directly engages communities in reclaiming and owning, a well-articulated set of principles, or core values.

In The Hunger Project, our methodology is built on 10 principles, which are highlighted in the sections below:

1. Human Dignity – never treating people as "beneficiaries" but as they key authors of their own development;

2. Gender Equality – catalyzing a society-wide change in the norms and behaviors that deny the opportunity to be full and equal partners in development;

3. Empowerment – that awakens people to their own strengths and organizes them for self-reliant action;

4. Leverage – that catalyzes large-scale systemic change;

5. Interconnectedness – meeting challenges not as "donors and recipients" but as coequal partners in building a better future for us all;

6. Sustainability – implementing solutions that are sustainable locally, socially, economically and environmentally;

7. Social Transformation – recognizing and transforming the deeply entrenched social conditions that suppress people's self-reliance;

8. Holistic Approach – applying integrated solutions to interlinked challenges (cf: FHI360);

9. Decentralization – moving decision-making as close to the people as is practicable;

10. Transformative Leadership – not top-down, authority-based leadership, but leadership that awakens people to their own power.

The 2014 Synthesis Report by the UN Secretary-General on the Post-2015 Agenda bore the title "**The Road to Dignity by 2030,**" and human dignity is at the core of the UN Charter and virtually every national constitution and faith tradition.

And, as Pope Francis stated in his address to the SDG Summit, "To enable these real men and women to escape from extreme poverty, we must allow them to be **dignified agents of their own destiny.** Integral human development and the full exercise of human dignity cannot be imposed. They must be **built up and allowed to unfold**…"

The Science of Gender-focused, Community-led Development

There are four major stages to the complex, intentional and human process of gender-focused community-led development: context, capacity, impact and sustainability. There is indeed a "science" for catalyzing communities to move through these stages, and this paper will present key elements of that science.

Mindset → Capacity → Impact → Sustainability

Stage One: Transforming the Mindset

Too often, the conditions of rural poverty leave people stripped of their human dignity, with a deep sense of resignation, dependency and hopelessness.

The face of rural poverty is female: many men migrate to cities for cash employment, leaving all household responsibilities in the hands of women. Yet traditional gender divisions of labor and power deny women voice in the decisions that affect their lives.

Rural communities have traditional cultural strengths which people treasure - yet these are intertwined with patriarchal power relations that inhibit full and equal participation of all, and which can encourage political, ethnic, religious and economic exploitation.

The starting point is to base policies and programs on a recognition of who human beings truly are. The heart of gender-focused, community-led development requires a fundamental shift of mindset by rich and poor alike: from seeing people primarily as passive beneficiaries of government services, to recognizing the people are the fundamental actors and authors of their own development. **People are not the problem, they are the solution.**

Self-reliance is an essential aspect of human dignity. While all animals need food, water and shelter - the fundamental human need is to create, to produce, to contribute. People's voice and agency in the work of development is as fundamental as food and water - and many have argued more so (Sen 1999).

This shift in mindset represents a **new paradigm for rural development,** with many policy implications, summarized in this grid:

	Traditional Top-Down Development	Gender-focused, Community-led Development
Who are "the poor?"	Beneficiaries of services	Intelligent problem solvers seeking voice and agency.
What's the role of women?	A vulnerable group, targeted	Key change agents and leaders for

	beneficiaries	development.
What's the role of local government?	Implementing arm of national programs.	The primary locus for planning and action.
What's the role of national government?	To provide comprehensive public services.	To create an enabling environment for community-led development.

For community-led development, the implication is that the greatest resource available for development is self-reliant action by active citizens -- what is often called **social capital**. This paper outlines a roadmap for the science of building social capital for successful rural development.

Money is still important, but is secondary and can even be a spoiler, if it is used in ways that reinforce dependency and undermine the spirit of self-reliance.

In The Hunger Project, we've identified three key interventions in creating an empowering context for rural development: (1) Start With Women, (2) Mobilize Everyone and (3) Engage Local Government.

Start With Women

Gender Analysis. Before the process of establishing an empowering context begins, there must be a good, participatory analysis of the specific barriers to women's full and equal participation in development.

Most importantly, where is the **highest leverage opportunity** for catalyzing gender equality? Although gender discrimination exists everywhere, the highest-leverage opportunity is distinct in each region. For example, in Sub-Saharan Africa, we chose to focus on economic empowerment, while in India the higher-leverage opportunity has been political empowerment. In Latin America it has been social empowerment - specifically, empowering the position of indigenous women within the broader indigenous rights movement.

In each region, we take multiple interventions to empower women to become the key change agents for community-led development. We first mobilize women to enter the public space, and participate in equal numbers with men in development activities. As women emerge with dynamism and passion, these women receive additional leadership training.

Women leaders transform the development agenda - placing greater emphasis on health, education, nutrition, water and sanitation than their male counterparts. In addition, they provide **role models** that transform gender norms and expectations among both among males and females. Studies show, for example, that when **men** personally work with

women leaders in their communities, it significantly shifts their attitudes in a positive direction (Beaman 2009).

In India, for example, women elected to local government (gram panchayats) receive a transformative "Women's Leadership Workshop" that awakens them to their rights, and to the power to improve lives in their community. The women are then supported to establish "women's platforms" to mobilize women in their community.

In Bangladesh, grassroots women are trained and organized in local chapters of an "Unleashed Women's Network." In many conservative areas, women are not permitted to travel alone outside the home. Trained women leaders from the community have the respect and sensitivity to be welcome within the home, and are able to have very successful behavior change communications with women and their families -- on nutrition, the value of literacy, and basic legal rights as well as sensitive issues such as child marriage or domestic violence.

In Africa, at Hunger Project epicenters, women lead the management of community-owned banks. Women establish village loan committees, and elect representatives to be trained to operate a savings and loan cooperative.

In Latin America, The Hunger Project supports indigenous women to form associations and networks that provide a place to stand in order to learn about and demand respect for their basic human rights.

Mobilize Everyone: Vision, Commitment and Action

With women and men able to participate fully and equally, The Hunger Project facilitates a process to transform the mindset of dependency and resignation, and build people's confidence that they can cause positive change for their families and community.

In most areas, this process begins with a highly participatory one-day **Vision, Commitment and Action** Workshop (VCAW). As the name implies, community members create a vision for how they want their community to be. They then analyze that vision and discover *for themselves* that there are immediate actions they could be taking to achieve that vision. They select a near-term achievable priority, and confront that they will need to **personally commit** to make this happen. They then launch a campaign of self-reliant action to achieve it.

The VCAW is led by facilitators from the community called **animators** who have undergone a 3-4 day training to be fully grounded in the principles of gender-focused, community-led development. The Hunger Project trains a critical mass of animators in each community.

Successful first actions are critical. Were community members to simply become inspired and then fail in their attempt, this would simply provide more "evidence" for dependency and resignation. Animators work with communities to – step by step – tackle more and more complex community projects.

Community members overcome rivalries and build social cohesion. Many traditional villages are too small or too fragmented to develop and manage basic community services. Consistent with the old saying "we build the road and the road builds us," as communities achieve bigger and better successes through collective action, they gain trust and see the advantages of working together across old boundaries.

Engage Local Government

SDG 16 pledges to "build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels" - which includes the community level. It targets participatory decision making.

In nearly every country, the level of government closest to the people is the constitutionally mandated structure through which people can work together to meet their basic needs. A key element of an empowering context for gender-focused, community-led development is to forge **an effective working partnership between active citizens and their local government**.

A two-year study of 92 countries by The Hunger Project with support from the UN Democracy Fund demonstrated global progress in decentralization, yet illustrated how local governments face a range of challenges in attempting to meet their responsibilities, including a lack of sufficient and reliable revenues, weak citizen engagement, bureaucratic obstruction and unclear and conflicting procedures. Some development actors bypass local government, thus undermining its role.

The Hunger Project engages and works to strengthen the role of local government at every step in the process – providing orientation workshops, capacity building workshops, and arranging exchange visits. For example, The Hunger Project brought elected local leaders from Bangladesh to the Indian states of Kerala and West Bengal where participatory local governance has been particularly effective.

Communities mobilized by The Hunger Project have developed key activities for achieving SDG 16. These include:

- **Citizen Charters:** Public postings informing citizens of available government programs and how to access them.

- **Participatory Planning:** creating multi-year development plans for the community, which the elected government will be accountable for achieving.

- **Accountability Forums:** public forums where the government reports on progress towards shared goals.

- **Standing Committees:** Most local government systems have a provision for active citizens to serve on official committees of the local government on such critical issues as health, education, public safety, social welfare and economic development. While often not implemented, The Hunger Project sees this as a critically important step to mobilizing people-power as the key capacity to achieve the SDGs.

Stage Two: Capacity for Development

At least 12 of the 17 SDGs require building capacity – the skills, teams, programs and physical infrastructure – for implementing integrated strategies at the community level. This capacity must be owned and led by the community itself, with the full and equal participation of women.

Time poverty is one of the harshest realities for rural women, who typically work twice the number of hours as men, making the full participation in public life nearly impossible. A top priority in building the capacity to achieve the SDGs is to reduce drudgery, and "co-locate" community services to liberate women for community leadership and economic participation.

We've already noted SDG 16. Let's work backwards, as the first two goals require the most integration.

SDG 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss. No one is more deeply committed to this goal than are small-scale farmers, most of whom are women. The Hunger Project promotes strategies for community natural resource management, permaculture farming, composting and other activities for sustainable agriculture.

SDG 11: Make human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Experts now recognize that resilience is fundamentally an aspect of communities, not of individuals or nations. The Hunger Project has discovered that building a cadre of volunteer animators, as well as activating bottom-up planning, pays huge dividends in resilience. Communities in Bangladesh that have been devastated by floods have been able to internally mobilize immediate relief efforts powered by their animators. Communities in Tamil Nadu, India that were hit by the Tsunami were able to "rebuild better" when women elected representatives, empowered by The Hunger Project, were able to draw up comprehensive reconstruction plans.

SDG 10: Reduce inequalities. The first key here is for marginalized groups to be organized to know their rights and work together to improve their lives. The Hunger Project facilitates marginalized groups to form cooperatives, loan groups and other associations for mutual empowerment and problem solving. The second key is **"data for the people:"** community-relevant household surveys that can educate the community as to who is being left behind.

SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. The Hunger Project supports rural communities to boost family income through enterprise formation, access to credit and agricultural inputs, training in improved farm techniques, and household- and community-level grain storage to avoid ruinous price fluctuations.

SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all. Recent breakthroughs in "off-grid" renewable electricity via solar panels holds the promise of rapidly improving the lives of rural communities. Individual entrepreneurs in communities mobilized by The Hunger Project have already begun utilizing their improved access to credit to finance solar lanterns and solar panels for recharging cell phones. Communities have come together to obtain larger installations to ensure vaccine refrigeration in health centers, lighting in schools and public spaces to improve safety, particularly for women and girls.

SDG 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. Clean, sufficient water is critical for rural families both for family consumption and for agriculture. The Hunger Project empowers communities to establish the capacity to dig and maintain wells, purify groundwater, test tube wells in areas of Bangladesh where arsenic has entered the groundwater, and establish small-scale irrigation systems.

Equally important to the supply of water is its protection, through good hygiene and sanitation. We empower communities to carry out massive awareness and behavior-change campaigns, and mass-action campaigns to establish and utilize improved latrines.

SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. The Hunger Project has learned that building a strong, informed cadre of women leaders is the starting point for creating the capacity for communities to empower all women and girls.

Violence and the ever-present threat of violence is a massive barrier to progress by all women and girls. Halting gender-based violence, including child marriage, is a top priority .

SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. One of the highest expressed priorities by the people of Hunger Project communities is for better education. The Hunger Project mobilizes communities to build their own facilities, including preschools, classrooms and adult literacy facilities – and supports them with gender-disaggregated data to ensure these include both girls and boys.

SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages. The capacity for health includes not only a health center with skilled personnel, but also a transformation in "health-seeking" awareness and behavior by the people. The Hunger Project empowers communities in Africa to build their own health clinics, and to carry out massive awareness campaigns - such as our "HIV and Gender Inequality Workshop" which empowers both women and men to halt the pandemic.

SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. It has long been recognized that improving nutrition can only be achieved through a multisectoral strategy involving not only all-year access to affordable nutritious food, but also gender equality, clean water and sanitation (WASH), access to health care and nutrition education.

The Hunger Project empowers communities to make simultaneous progress in all these areas, with a special focus on educating community leaders and members on the critical "1,000 Day Window" for maternal and child nutrition, from the beginning of a woman's pregnancy to her child's second birthday. Nutrition during these 1,000 days depends fundamentally on the nutrition of women and adolescent girls - individuals who have often eaten "last and least" due to gender discrimination.

Key elements of success in The Hunger Project's strategies to build community capacity to improve include ensuring that both women and men in the community understand the harmful effects of gender discrimination on the health of all community members – both male and female – as well as motivating cadres of volunteer animators who can focus on specific areas, such as women's empowerment, health, WASH and food security.

Trained volunteer animators leverage scarce human resources of government agencies, such as agricultural extension agents and health workers. By working in partnership with a cadre of animators, each government officer can effectively connect with every family in the community.

SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere. There are three key aspects of ending poverty: (a) improving incomes for those who work, (b) ensuring communities are resilient to the shocks that could hurt incomes, and (c) ensuring that safety nets are available for those who cannot.

The Hunger Project builds the capacity of working individuals to improve agricultural incomes through multiple interventions (noted in SDG 8) and to form off-farm enterprises through affordable access to credit. Through social accountability mechanisms, Hunger Project trained leaders ensure that the destitute are properly able to access existing safety net programs, such as widows' pensions, which they have often been excluded from due to bureaucratic hurdles.

Stage Three. Impact – Creating a Momentum of Accomplishment

Building capacity is not enough. Communities need to build the habits of democratic development: participatory planning, budgeting, program effectiveness, transparency and accountability.

The Hunger Project partners with communities as they build these practices and institutionalize them. Some of the most important steps include:

- **Celebrating successes:** Community gatherings, featuring speakers from upper levels of the government, to cut ribbons on new classrooms, clinics or even multi-seat latrines, can build community spirit and confidence in leadership.

- **Participatory Planning and Target Setting:** A regular annual cycle of bottom-up priority and target setting builds ownership and responsibility for self-reliant action.

- **Mass Action Campaigns.** Wherever possible, "people power" social capital should be used to achieve targets rather than external financing. This continues to build confidence and social cohesion.

- **Public accountability meetings.** Elected local leaders can build and maintain the confidence of the community by holding regular meetings to review progress against targets, problem solve, and discuss new challenges or opportunities as they emerge.

- **Inclusive leadership bodies and elections:** Whether community development associations are part of local government or grassroots civil society, they need encouragement to include equal numbers of women and men from every component community.

- **Learning and adaptation:** Part of the regular planning cycle includes reflecting on lessons learning, using these lessons to leverage success, share and implement best practices and make strategic interventions for the greatest impact and effectiveness.

Stage Four. Ensuring Sustainability

Experts have long pointed out that sustainable development must integrate three dimensions: economic, social and political sustainability (UNEP 2015). This implies that outside facilitators, local leaders and communities themselves must be committed from the outset to communities truly taking full charge of their own development and completing the facilitator partnership. There must be objective measurements that demonstrate that this stage has been achieved.

Social Sustainability depends on building people's organizations that can democratically elect, ensure training for its own leaders and, in some cases, maintain its legal existence. In Africa, for example, Hunger Project epicenters must secure clear title to the land for the epicenter building and training farm, and register themselves as a legal entity.

Political Sustainability depends on having an enabling policy environment that supports – rather than creates obstacles – for communities to achieve progress.

Economic Sustainability requires that communities generate enough reliable revenue to maintain their own programs and facilities.

In South Asia and Latin America, where The Hunger Project strengthens the ability of grassroots-level government to successfully implement gender-focused, community-led

development, its interventions are timed to the regular election cycle – to provide the right support at the right time.

In Africa, where The Hunger Project's Epicenter Strategy establishes legally registered civil society development associations, sustainability is measured through achieving a "Self Reliance Score." Through regular reporting and a series of household surveys, communities track and demonstrate progress in the following eight goals:

1. Mobilized communities that continuously set and achieved their own development goals

2. Empowered women and girls

3. Improved access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities

4. Improved literacy and education

5. Reduced prevalence of hunger and malnutrition, especially for women and children

6. Improved access to and use of health resources

7. Reduced incidence of poverty

8. Improved land productivity and climate resilience of smallholder farmers

When a epicenter community has achieved the targets set to demonstrate its self-reliance, The Hunger Project has activated its exit strategy, and it is anticipated that there will be no further financial inputs, with the exception of not-as-frequent staff visits and a post-evaluation three to five years later in a select number of epicenters.

Summary Table: Framework for Gender-focused Community-led Development

Mindset	Capacity	Impact	Sustainability
Empower women **Mobilize Everyone** **Engage Local Gov't**	**Leadership/Animators** **Social Cohesion** **Integrated programming across the SDGs**	**Momentum of accomplishment** **Participatory planning** **Public accountability** **"Data for the people"**	**Legal registration** **Graduation criteria**

Policy Recommendations to Get to Scale

The Hunger Project, and other like-minded NGOs, have demonstrated that government and NGOs can work together to facilitate gender-focused, community-led development in thousands of communities in ways that produce sustainable progress in achieving the

SDGs. Numerous governments, such as Korea, the Philippines and Brazil, have demonstrated how such partnerships can be carried out in every community where it is needed.

The goals for 2030 are bold but achievable. Yet to be achieved, **we recommend that every nation establish national-scale gender-focused, community-led development programs by 2020.**

The package of policies required for such a program include:

- **Structure:** A clearly delineated and accountable democratic structure for community-led development – whether governmental (such as panchayats in India) or legally incorporated local development associations.

- **Gender Equality:** Legal guarantees for full and equal leadership of both women and men, and representative inclusion of marginalized groups.

- **Revenue:** A transparent and timely mechanism to fund community-led development activities. In general the level of government closest to people requires at least 20% of public resources (whether expended there by ministry personnel or by the community itself).

- **Facilitation Partnerships:** A smaller but critically important requirement is a transparent and reliable funding mechanism for the facilitation of communities in partnership with the ministry of local government, and working within a shared results framework.

- **Accountability:** In fields where public services are directly provided by government, such as operation of health clinics, laws are required that mandate clear and transparent accountability mechanisms at the community level.

- **Strategic Deployment:** Policies that establish regular district level strategic planning meetings, where all stakeholders can coordinate deployment of human resources and review progress in community facilitation – much as government would coordinate a vaccination or literacy campaign.

With these mechanisms in place, the full energies and creativity of hundreds of millions of women and men currently living in rural poverty can be translated into fulfilling the bold vision of the SDGs: "to free the human race from the tyranny of poverty and want and to heal and secure our planet." These are "the bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path" of the 2030 agenda, and we are not aware of any other way to do so. We stand committed to work in partnership with all those committed to these goals.

References

Beaman, Lori, Raghab Chattopadhyay, Esther Duflo, Rohini Pande, and Petia Topalova, 2009, "Powerful Women: Does Exposure Reduce Bias?" *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 124, No. 4, pp. 1497–540.

FfD 2015: Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development.
http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/AAAA_Outcome.pdf

FHI360:
https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/legacy_files/files/publication/160301_Runde_IntegratedDevelopment_Web.pdf

Keehn, Martha McKee ed., Y.C. James Yen's Thoughts on Mass Education and Rural Reconstruction : China and Beyond: Selected Papers from an International Conference Held in Shijiazhuang, China, May 27-June 1, 1990 (New York: International Institute of Rural Reconstruction, 1993).

Gandhi, M. K.. Constructive Programme - Its Meaning & Place. (Navajivan, 1941) Full text available online at http://www.mkgandhi.org/cnstrct/cnstrct.htm.

Sawyers, Dennis. 2015. http://borgenproject.org/new-village-movement-korea/

Sen, Amartya. *Development as Freedom*, 1999.

"Ending Hunger and the New Human Agenda." The Hunger Project, 1995. Available online at https://advocacy.thp.org/1995/10/01/new-human-agenda/

UNEP 2015.
http://web.unep.org/ourplanet/march-2015/unep-work/three-dimensions-sustainable-development, accessed April 2016.

UN 2015: Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld

World Bank, 2016.
http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/communitydrivendevelopment/overview#1