



11 CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNITY-LED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

- 1. Participation and inclusion:** all major development activities include a broad range of residents from all neighborhoods, people from all socio-economic groups (the very poor, poor, middle, better off), women, and minorities (i.e. LGBTQ, people with disabilities, youth).

Uses in literature: The active involvement and engagement of the public, intended to facilitate a sense of community belonging. The creation of equal opportunities for all by overcoming barriers and disregarding social or economic backgrounds. A potential producer of accountability and empowerment within communities.

- 2. Voice:** relates to program planning, design, monitoring and implementation, evaluation, and adaptation. Having a voice means to not only be heard and acted upon in decision-making but also building confidence amongst the poor, women, minorities, anyone typically without a voice, to speak up.

Uses in literature: The individual or collective ability of a group to express their needs and goals. The idea of voice enables groups to manage their own development and encourages community participation from marginalized groups. Voice is not limited to oral communication; instead, it is an overarching term for placing emphasis on local communities' capacities.

- 3. Community Assets:** program identifies, mobilizes, and celebrates local resources including finances, material goods, and local knowledge and time.

Uses in literature: A method of internal focus that amplifies a community's strengths instead of dwelling on its shortages. This style of development is empowering, and has the potential to lead to more durable changes because it mobilizes internal strengths.

- 4. Capacity Development:** the program is rooted in the belief that communities have the capacity and capability to script their own development; hence the program invests considerably in facilitators, as well as the capacity development of local groups, including locally elected government (if they are part of the process).

Uses in literature: A deliberate social and political process that unites local and organizational bodies in planning and achieving changes in a community by enhancing local skills. Changes are made within a community, though often through the guidance of outside organizations. This is a type of development that creates ownership.

- 5. Sustainability:** defined as the institutionalization of the CLD approach, as well as continued optimum use and the maintenance and care of community resources. In other words, once the

facilitating organization leaves, we expect the CLD participatory and inclusive process to continue and the sustainability of investments to be ensured.

Uses in literature: The overarching goal for a resource to endure, or the resilience of a community to maintain and improve upon developments even after an aiding body has stopped providing support. Sustainability refers to the condition of durability over generations. It refers both to the process and the goal of producing long standing effects in a community.

6. Transformative capacity: program strengthens the capacities of people to create a vision for themselves and to design pathways to achieve that vision. The program sets people on a journey to transforming social barriers, overcome dependency, and resignation. It is about creating a transformational mindset from clientelism and dependency to strength and vision.

Uses in literature: The recognition by communities themselves that they possess the resources and skills to develop. Harnessing transformative capacity decreases power dependencies. The process of using transformative capacity for development involves social learning in order to emphasize agency and adaptability.

7. Collective Planning and Action: The community members or groups within the community are engaged in the analysis process and discussions about the current situation and arrive at strategies and action plans to address issues –i.e. the development process is determined and driven by insiders. [This means the collective and common understanding that is needed for planning is worked up by community members and groups and used to make plans as well as strategies and allocate responsibilities to achieve these plans.]

Uses in literature: The unity of effort between several organizations/persons in a cross-sector network, often involving non-traditional actors in order to enable the highest number of voices to be heard. A course of action that relies on a coordinated effort between leaders and community members with local knowledge in order to mobilize local or international efforts.

8. Accountability: program practices multi-directional accountability but central remains the vision set by the community. Other types of accountability include ongoing feedback loops between local leaders and communities, these two groups and the facilitating agencies, and/or the facilitating agency and large public institutions.

Uses in literature: A measure of transparency, collective responsibility, and the degree to which actors meet agreed upon standards. Applies to stakeholders, government officials, and all members of a community.

9. Community Leadership: the program creates an environment where every community member is seen and sees themselves as a leader (active citizen) who can affect change. The focus of community leadership is co-creation.

Uses in literature: The active engagement and direct influence of informal or non-elected members of a community with pre-existing or cultivated knowledge and skills. Essential to the promotion of internal commitment and facilitation of strong relationships with external leaders. Selected leaders tend to be people trusted by their local community.

10. Adaptability: Program uses learning, and adapting strategies based on current context and data; the program is open to failure.

Uses in literature: The flexibility to modify actions to avoid arising challenges. Related to sustainability, adaptability is the readiness to adjust based on the evolution of a project in order to ensure its durability. Being adaptable involves preparation for change that is achieved through continuous learning and context-based evaluation.

11. Collaboration: building horizontal and vertical solidarity within communities and amongst communities.

Uses in literature: The cooperative effort of multiple groups - communities, governments, partners - intended to promote dialogues, develop policies, share perspectives, enact changes, or build harmony. A built partnership of many units to combat common challenges.

A 12th characteristic that plays through across the board is working with sub-national governments.