



Civil Society Exploratory Session towards a Country Chapter for Community-led Development

John Coonrod, Updated March 3, 2017

Purpose

- For interested civil society groups to create a shared understanding of the Movement for Community-led Development and the possibility of joint advocacy and action for scaling up CLD in the country.

Background

- Many civil society groups share a commitment to empowering women and men as the authors of their own development. Yet the prevailing development paradigm has focused on top-down, short-term narrowly-targeted projects.
- As a result, there has been no collective discourse – no community of practice or evidence base – for the step-by-step process of mobilizing and empowering communities to set and achieve their own development goals.
- In recent years, “Community-led Development” has emerged as the umbrella term for this process.
- We face a unique opportunity right now with the SDGs. The SDGs recognize the need for integrated solutions to interlinked challenges, and for participatory decision making at the community level. The UNDP has a strong commitment to “Localize the SDGs” – a step which never successfully occurred with the MDGs.
- The Movement for Community-led Development was established to address this challenge, and encourages civil society actors to form national chapters for collective advocacy and action to ensure that all people gain this opportunity.
- At this point, the movement has no funding of its own, and relies on the voluntary leadership and mutual interests of its member organizations, as well as the moral support of champions for this subject in international agencies.

Intended Results

- To reach out to interested civil society actors, networks, academics and think-tanks who share aspects of this vision.
- To share materials in advance with invitees about the Movement and its goals.
- To hold an initial exploratory meeting of representatives of 10-20 organizations.

Suggested Agenda

The format of the first meetings of all our chapters to date have each been different but have shared a number of items in common:

- Welcome and Introductions
- Presentation on the Movement - making the case for CLD and awakening a sense of possibility based on successful scale-ups in the region.
- Brainstorming possible areas of working together – often there is interest in two big categories – sharing best practices and advocacy, opportunities for leadership.
- Brainstorming pathways to encourage government to scale-up CLD: parliamentary visits to successful projects, exchanges with other countries, champions within the ministries.
- Discussion of possibility of a “Localizing the SDGs” consultation with government possibly convened by UNDP.
- Q&A on expectations of members. Most chapters keep “requirements” low, but emphasize opportunities for leadership.
- Confirming which organizations are prepared now to be members (listed on a country page), which representatives need to check with people first, and who would like to head up different initial tasks.

Resources

- CLD Flyer
- Memo on Country-owned CLD
- Memo on CLD Social Media
- The CLD website, and its introductory videos
- I and other member organization leaders can be available for skype calls or remote participation in meetings if useful.