

Local- and community-driven development (LCDD) has emerged over the past 20 years in response to the advent of integrated rural development and difficulties with centralized service delivery. LCDD approaches generally have better outcome ratings than centralized approaches and deliver more sustainable infrastructure at lower costs. LCDD has also greatly enhanced government capacities to implement programs at scale. The most successful of these programs are embedded in decentralized government structures and involve a variety of stakeholders.

The elements of LCDD

The definition of community development has evolved over the past few decades. Originally it entailed community consultation, subsequently grew to include participation, and finally became empowerment—community control and management of development resources.

Although no two are the same, successful scaled-up LCDD programs share several characteristics. They are embedded in a decentralized structure of rural governance with an associated decentralized fiscal system, and they are part of a participatory planning system active at both the local and national levels. LCDD programs also need the participation and support of technical agencies of the government, civil society, and the private sector—facilitators from these sectors help community participants develop, present, and analyze information.

The core belief of LCDD proponents is that the poor can become the most important actors in their own development. Communities analyze their own problems, opportunities, and constraints and develop a list of projects and activities that they would like to undertake, thereby changing from passive recipients to active managers of their destiny. Participatory appraisal processes and toolkits safeguard against dominance by elites as all involved community groups, separately, are asked to develop priorities.

During the process of participatory appraisal, communities strengthen or create their own institutions through “learning by doing” and training. They learn how to interact effectively with organizations that work beyond the community—for example, organizations that can help access markets for productive projects. Such organizations may be introduced from the outside into LCDD programs by facilitators, or they may emerge from federations of villages.

Community priorities identified at participatory appraisal usually start from basic, productive, and social infrastructure needs: for example, needs in schools, health clinics, and markets. Natural resource management activities such as soil reclamation, regulation of livestock herding in the community, or tree planting have also become the focus of LCDD, as have safety net programs for disadvantaged or disabled members, such as home-based care for HIV and AIDS patients.

Livelihood and income priorities, however, are a challenge to address through LCDD. They require advisory services, input

supply, access to credit, and marketing systems generally beyond the control of the community level and necessitate specialized skills and/or special organizations from the private, NGO, or government sectors.

In Brazil, Burkina Faso, China, Indonesia, the Philippines, and other countries where LCDD has been implemented successfully, developing communities are supported by various organizations. The major responsibility for coordinating the local development plan, cofinancing community activities, and facilitating development rests with local government. Facilitators and support organizations assist the communities with mobilization and organization and assist the program authorities with scaling up. As noted, technical assistance can be supplied by government departments (agriculture, water, health, education, and so forth), bought by the communities from private sector providers, or provided by specialized NGOs. The private sector can partner with communities in the provision of inputs, marketing of outputs, and financing of community development as part of its vertical supply chain presence.

Scaling up stepwise

Scaling up LCDD programs requires sequential steps, from the initial localized pilot program, through a scaling-up pilot, to a national program, and finally to consolidation. A diagnostic phase is necessary to establish the preconditions for a scaled-up LCDD program, which often requires policy or regulatory reforms. For example, a decentralized local government may exist but may not yet function well within a participatory environment; capacity building is needed. Progress then requires many parallel and systemic developments to take place.

The diagnostic phase is followed by a design phase and a pilot scaling phase, in which the processes, logistics, and tools for scaling up to national levels are first developed and fully tested. Such scaling-up pilots should cover all communities and subdistricts in at least one district of a country. The scaling-up pilot results in tested procedures, logistics, and tools, which are summarized in an operational manual. The tested program can then be rolled out and further adapted in the remaining districts of a country, province, or state. Only then can a truly scaled-up, countrywide LCDD program be put in place.

While local conditions will dictate how each step will be conducted, planners should give attention not only to individual steps but to the overall process as a nonlinear, iterative one and use a systems perspective. Experience shows that scaling up an LCDD program generally takes 10 to 15 years.

The dimensions, drivers, and spaces for scaling up LCDD

At least three dimensions of scaling up should be taken into account: the physical, the social (making the process more inclusive), and the conceptual (moving beyond participation to

embedding empowerment in the entire development process). In addition, all scaling up should be tailored to local cultural contexts.

Scaling up is often driven by the success of the pilot program; skilled leadership and management at local, regional, or national levels; and/or outside forces such as donors. For LCDD to be scaled up from a pilot project to a national program, political commitment is needed to ensure that power actually shifts from the top to the bottom. Central institutions and sectors must be aligned with LCDD concepts, administrative and fiscal decentralization must progress, and a government's own fiscal resources, both local and national, should eventually become the main source of support for LCDD programs. This requires a reform of the fiscal system in many countries.

Political will is not enough to ensure success. Diverse stakeholders have to be brought together to build a consensual space around the core LCDD concepts and platform, and governance incentive systems have to change concretely. It is important that stakeholders be able to present solid evaluation data and use them in consensus building, and they must recognize that consensus building is a continuous process that involves stakeholders at each level: national, provincial, local, and community. Stakeholder analyses conducted at regular intervals and for each level provide crucial information needed for building and sustaining consensus.

Factors needed to sustain scaled-up LCDD

A number of factors are critical to ensuring the sustainability of LCDD efforts:

- **Growing facilitation capacity:** As programs scale up, the facilitation agency has to have the reach and skill set to match evolving community needs and institutional capacities. It is important to consider costs, skills, and motivation in this evolution. To reduce costs, training teams of facilitators from the communities themselves is often introduced.
- **Building accountability systems:** In the empowerment model of community development, the primary accountability is to community members, and communities have to be trained in appropriate accountability processes, including procurement, disbursement of funds, accounting, and reporting to their own members. Community leaders and local program managers are also responsible for reporting to higher levels of authority and are subject to the possibility of audits. Different LCDD programs have experimented with independent monitoring and audit committees, as well as encouraging independent journalists to report.

- **Creating good monitoring and evaluation systems:** The goal is to develop a true learning organization. However, the state of monitoring and evaluation in most LCDD programs is poor. A World Bank review found that only 5 to 10 percent of projects had sound evaluation plans. On the other hand, the availability of solid evaluation research data enabled Indonesian stakeholders, for example, to make a strong case for scaling up and consolidating many different programs into one national program with one source of funding. Overall, the lack of convincing impact evaluation results that can prove convincingly the superiority of the LCDD approach is one of the reasons that the merits of LCDD versus sectoral development programs continue to be debated.

Conclusion

The LCDD approach can be utilized in almost any country, but the design and management of programs will differ according to the country and locality. During the diagnostic phase, stakeholders discern the best strategic fit among the country and community context, the locus of management responsibilities, and the flow of funds. Experience in Africa shows a progression of institutional complexity and institutional sustainability. Through policy reforms, decentralization, and capacity building over the course of 10 to 15 years, institutional arrangements in many cases have moved away from separate, "silo" programs toward programs fully embedded in national and local government structures. This is both a reflection, in part, of LCDD approaches already taken and a positive trend for future LCDD activities.

For further reading: P. Barron, CDD in Post-Conflict and Conflict-Affected Areas: Experiences from East Asia (Oxford, UK: University of Oxford, 2010); H. Binswanger-Mkhize, J. de Regt, and S. Spector, Local and Community-Driven Development: Moving to Scale in Theory and Practice (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2010); V. Rao and G. Mansuri, Localizing Development: Does Participation Work? (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2012); R. Shotton and M. Winter, Delivering the Goods: Building Local Government Capacity to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals (New York: UN Capital Development Fund, 2005); World Bank, Community Driven Development, web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/EXTCDD/0,,menuPK:430167~pagePK:149018~piPK:149093~theSitePK:430161,00.html; World Bank, International Conference on Community-Driven Development and Rural Poverty Alleviation, Beijing, China, October 2009: Proceedings (Washington, DC: 2010); World Bank, The World Bank Participation Sourcebook (Washington, DC: 1996).

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