Community Driven Development: Looking at Social Inclusion through a Gendered Lens

The primary principle underlying Community Driven Development (CDD) is viewing poor people as assets and partners in the development process. This could be made possible by helping rural communities build on their institutions and resources and by giving control of decisions and resources to community groups. Well-designed CDD programs are inclusive of poor and vulnerable groups and in addition, build positive social capital, and give them greater voice both in the community and with government entities.

Communities are not homogenous and to be responsive, CDD needs to be designed to be socially inclusive, giving voice and decision-making responsibility to different segments of the community. The policy research report *Engendering Development* states that gender equality is “... an integral part of an inclusive development strategy that seeks to enable all people—women and men alike—to escape poverty and improve their standards of living.” Gender refers to the socially and culturally defined roles assigned to males and females from birth. These differ from society to society and may change over time. They define responsibilities between men and women, decision-making authority, and involvement in social and economic activities.

These roles and patterns need to be understood and addressed when designing and implementing CDD programs, or else one group, often women but sometimes men, may be excluded. Women, as well as men, need to be directly involved in making choices concerning community projects. Project rules and institutions can be structured to help ensure that both women and men have access to and benefit from a particular program and are integrally involved in its implementation.

**Community Driven Development at the World Bank works to:**

1. Increase the understanding of community driven development and its role in poverty reduction;
2. Improve the overall quality of lending programs using community driven techniques; and
3. Find ways to effectively scale-up community driven activities in the World Bank’s client countries.

This entails giving voice and responsibility especially to those often excluded from community discussions and decision-making: women, the elderly, youth, religious and ethnic minorities and so on. The power of the poor to negotiate will be increased when all groups of the poor are included in a dialogue with the government, private sector, and civil society.

**Good practices in gender inclusion within CDD**

The Malawi Social Action Fund Project, in addition to ensuring that women gain better access to health, education facilities and employment opportunities is also designed to ensure that female-headed households, poor women, and other disadvantaged groups fully benefit from the project. With 50 percent representation of women as a goal, the project achieved much success. But the Fund soon learned that having half of any committee made up of women was not enough to ensure equity in participation. Women’s representation in community project committees (CPCs) is emphasized and all project staff and facilitators are receiving training to maximize benefits to women and encourage their full participation as active committee members.
The project led to an increase in women’s access to health care at sites where health facilities were constructed. Also, a little over one fifth of the 5000 jobs created by the project are held by women.

**Participatory approaches to increasing women’s voice in CDD projects**

Examples from Indonesia: In Indonesia, several successful CDD projects, most notably the Kecamatan Development Project (KDP) and the Water and Sanitation for Low Income Communities Projects (WSLIC), have experimented with approaches to ensure that women—who, as a group, have traditionally been discriminated against—gain a voice in CDD decision-making. KDP, which now reaches nearly 28,000 poor communities in 30 of 34 Indonesian provinces, is a multipurpose community development project. Communities may propose infrastructure projects (for which they receive technical assistance from project engineers) or can fund microenterprises through a revolving fund that is replenished when loans are repaid. WSLIC is a community water and sanitation project in which communities plan and implement community water and sanitation improvements of their choice.

Both projects began with affirmative action rules and project requirements aimed at widening community participation in decisions and specifically targeting women for greater involvement in project processes. For example, whenever a KDP community submitted more than one infrastructure proposal, at least one proposal had to be initiated by women. Both projects also required that the specially formed community decision-making committees have gender-balanced membership.

Both KDP and WSLIC worked with project stakeholders to design and implement additional transparency promoting participatory tools and project requirements. These tools and requirements included:

1. Social mapping of all community households, classified by socioeconomic status and sex of household head;
2. Holding separate community meetings for women to identify their priorities and formulate their proposals;
3. Requiring that the ideas selected for community proposals be evaluated and ranked using three criteria (poverty impact, potential sustainability, and majority’s preference), with final selection being made through public tallying of votes in a village meeting where each community member present had one vote.

Measures to promote gender inclusion in the India District Poverty Initiatives Projects in Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, consisted of mainstreaming gender within community interest groups (CIGs), promoting gender awareness among stakeholders, and providing educational support for girl laborers and school dropouts. Madhya Pradesh has a target of 30 percent women membership in CIGs and it also takes into account differences in women’s household and community contexts and the different opportunities that can be made available based on social and ethnic background of the household.

In the Moldova Social Investment Fund (MSIF), specific gender-supportive mechanisms were implemented to engage rural women in community empowerment efforts. In particular, early child education was a high priority, both to bring women more into the sphere of their children’s learning and to provide quality childcare, which in turn enabled women to take jobs. Gender-disaggregated monitoring and evaluation indicated that employment of women increased by 40 percent.

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