Community Development Impact Assessment- Process, Issues and Challenges

Daniel MUIA

IACD Trustee, Sub-Sahara Africa Region

Chairman, Association of Community Development Practitioners-Kenya

17th IACD Sub Sahara Africa Region Webinar

11th May 2022

Background

- Most definitions
  - CD – is a process of change based on community initiative + other stakeholders/development partners -> to improve wellbeing of members of the community (including the place they live in – in case of place based communities)

- Community development
  - is inherently a change process
    - This can be organically
    - interventionist

.

Community development – IACD's 2016 definition: –

- The goal is to ensure:
  - participative democracy – focus on voice and agency
  - sustainable development – assure balance between social, economic and environmental imperatives
  - Rights – assure dignity,
  - economic opportunity,
  - equality - equal attention to needs of all in community – thus inclusive
  - social justice - fairness and equal access to wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society

- The process
  - organisation,
  - Education
  - empowerment of people

- Vehicles used
  - Programmes
  - projects

"Community Development is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes participative democracy, sustainable development, rights, economic opportunity, equality and social justice, through the organisation, education and empowerment of people within their communities, whether these be of locality, identity or interest, in urban and rural settings" (IACDglobal, 2016).

The Key Question is –

How do we get to know that we have achieved what we set out to achieve?

- Routine monitoring – this will indicate we are on cost and time – and all is well!
- Evaluation – this will tell us that in light of the results attained , the set goals have been attained
- Impact assessment –
  - CD is about ultimately transforming communities and for the long haul!
  - Getting results – is good – but not enough
  - Effect of these results – project/programme outcomes – is crucial – to ensure that things become better – change for the better!
  - So:- *Impact assessment - focuses on the effects of the intervention*

Impact assessment - largely premised on theory of change

1. describes the process of cause and effect leading from an intervention to its desired effects.

- Ultimately, aim is to –

- establish that desirable outcomes and long term change has taken place due to the causes as designed and implemented – in our case – through CD interventions

- Caution – need to control for any unforeseens

2. builds on the idea of innovation/intervention systems – transform a community contexts, while taking into account roles played by different stakeholders – CD is a partnership for co-designing and co-producing desired outcomes!

• BUT – to attribute impact to our intervention/s – we need to know status of CD at start – hence baseline information is critical

⇨ impact assessment is just as vital as baseline survey! – SET BENCH MARKS

Why is it important to do CD impact assessments?

- to improve our interventions – (improve processes)

- As programme/project closes - to inform decision making with regard to whether to:
    - continue,
    - discontinue,
    - Replicate
    - scale up an intervention

- Accountability – after all the effort – what is there to show!?

Steps in undertaking an Impact Assessment

- Select the CD programme/project(s) to be assessed;

- Design an assessment – set goals; identify sample participants; determine study methods and develop tools; time frame and resources; assemble assessment team

- Carry out the assessment in the community; analyze data and develop an impact assessment report

(goal to demonstrate change from baseline to current status)

- Validate results

- Disseminate the impact assessment findings

Challenges in impact assessment

- Cause – effect is not necessarily linear – community contexts are complex and integrated

- Community settings are theatres of many actions and actors! – *how do you control for your individual project's effects – in midst of a dynamic theatre!*

- Community development is not an event but a process – at what point do we freeze change process to demonstrate impact!!
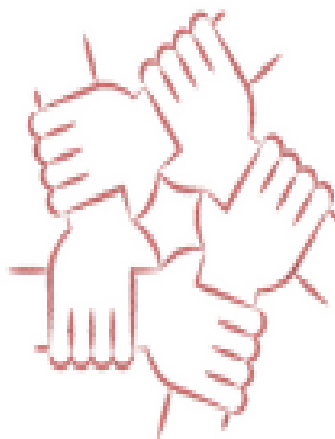
Point of reflection-

For the programmes/projects we have been or are currently undertaking – what has been your experiences as you seek to determine whether there is any impact being realized in the community?

Purchase your copy of ***International Community Development Practice*** using the following link and use code FLE22 to receive 20% off!

https://routledge.pub/3pjB4qB

Podcasts – done on each chapter – to ease assimilation

Point of reflection-

For the programmes/projects we have been or are currently undertaking :

1. what has been your experiences as you seek to determine whether there is any impact being realized in the community?
2. What issues have arisen?
3. How have you addressed them?

Thank you
Asanteni

God Bless You All