

MASDAR

CAPABILITY STATEMENT ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



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MASDAR EXPERIENCE IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Community Development is about building active and sustainable communities based on social justice and mutual respect. There is nothing new about trying to assist local communities to develop but in many of the large, centrally driven “Integrated Rural Development Projects” of the 1970s and 1980s this development was planned and imposed from outside with the poor members of the community being viewed as the target of poverty reduction efforts. More recently the concept of *Community Driven Development* has turned this perception on its head and treats poor people and their institutions as assets and partners in the search for sustainable development. It involves empowering people so that they fully participate in the development process and take responsibility for the developments that affect their community. Community Driven Development operates on the principles of local empowerment, participatory governance, demand-responsiveness, administrative autonomy, greater downward accountability and enhanced local capacity.

MASDAR has been involved with many community development projects in both Africa and Asia and has been particularly active in encouraging local participation in both the planning and implementation processes of development.

2.0 PROJECT EXPERIENCE

Currently in the conflict-ridden Delta region of Nigeria, MASDAR is a partner in a consortium managing the EU-funded *MPP6 programme*. This Euro 42 million programme is working in six of the Delta states with the goal of improving living standards of poor communities by facilitating a large number of community-driven microprojects. As both a tool of political empowerment and as a function of pragmatic administration, MPP6 has incorporated a full range of participatory methods and techniques in the identification and prioritisation of community needs as well as in the different steps of the project cycle (from project conception to financing, implementation, monitoring and evaluation). This approach has ensured community commitment, a sense of ownership and finally empowered beneficiaries and promoted self determination rather than depending on external assistance.

The first stage of engaging with a potential recipient community on MPP6 has been **sensitisation**, undertaken by trained project staff with a view to making people aware of how they can help themselves and the opportunities available to them through the project. **Community mobilisation** has been the following step in which the community is mobilised around some clear and specific micro-

project ideas. Different groups of the community are encouraged to formulate their priorities and at the end of the process a consensus is sought to identify the most pressing problem and agree on a project-based solution. **Community participation** has been strengthened by the establishment of a community-based Project Implementation Committee (PIC) which has been trained by MPP6 in basic book keeping and other monitoring tools. Being the active community organ for the project, the PIC has played a vital role in overseeing the community contribution, supervising the work and taking general 'ownership' of the development process.

In all MPP6-financed microprojects, a **community contribution** has been requested whereby recipient communities bear at least 25% of the total project cost, either in cash or in kind (labour, building materials, transport etc). This not only reinforces community ownership but it strengthens intra-community interactions and can assist in conflict resolution.

Ownership of a project is not something that can be imposed, but is a feeling among the community members that emanates from the above approach. The **sustainability** of projects also depends on the approach but is strengthened by two actors: firstly by a Project Management Committee (PMC) which has been established in every community. This committee has the responsibility for maintaining the project and is supported through MPP6-organised training and capacity building activities. Secondly, MPP6 follows-up each completed project during the year after completion, to assist and advice the PMC on maintenance issues.

To date, over 1200 microprojects in the areas of water and sanitation, transport infrastructure, health, education, micro irrigation and income generation have been implemented costing over 4600 million naira.



Akorshi – Bendi Bridge – Cross River



Henshaw Town Health Centre Project, Calabar South, Cross River State



Nko Health Centre Equipment – Cross River



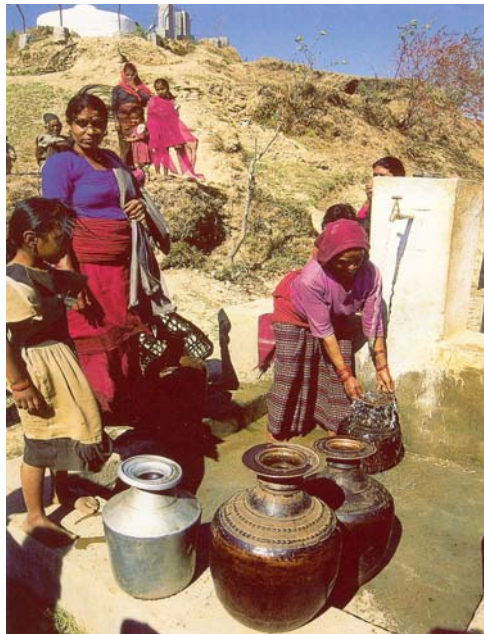
Ikot Ene Etim School Facility Integration Project, Akpabuyo LGA, Cross River

Increasing community participation was also a cornerstone of the *Gulmi-Argkhanchi Rural Development Project (GARDP)* in Nepal which MASDAR managed for five years. The project was designed to support the Government's policy of decentralisation and sought to strengthen the local communities ability to prepare, plan and obtain finance for smallscale development projects such as irrigation schemes, water supplies, rural roads, clinics, schools and community centres. However, most rural communities

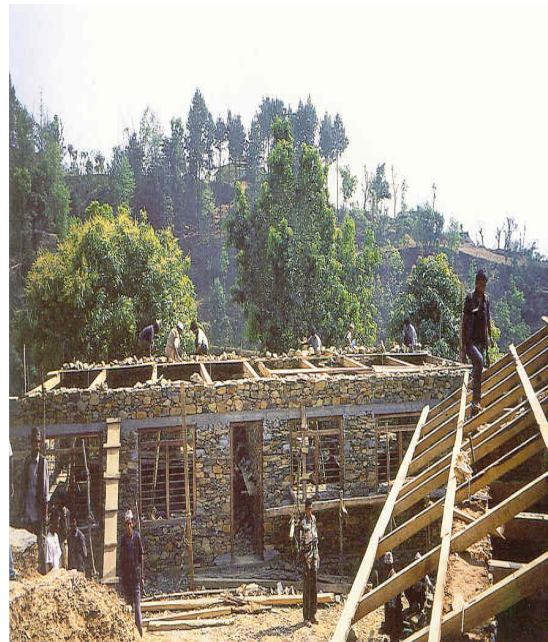


were ill prepared for decentralisation and lacked the experience, resources and manpower to clearly articulate their needs, far less to plan and pursue long term development goals. As with MPP6, GARDP helped sensitise and mobilise village communities through training and capacity building. Skilled facilitators would live amongst remote communities for many

weeks at a time, encouraging people to voice their concerns and make their suggestions. The results of this 'Village Planning Training' was often most pronounced and for the first time gave the most marginalised within Nepali society an opportunity to take an active role in community decision making. Although the infrastructural achievements of GARDP included building over 125 km of road, establishing 630 water points, rehabilitating 45 irrigation schemes and constructing 170 school buildings, for many, establishing the proper processes for development, and getting communities involved in those processes, was just as important as delivering the infrastructural targets.



Village Women at Water Point



Construction of Village School

MPP6 and GARDP are just two examples of MASDAR-managed projects where facilitating community development has been a key part of the assignment. Others include:-

Project Title	Country
Tea Rehabilitation Project	Bangladesh
South West Development Authority	Cameroon
Integrated Rural Development Project for Livestock	The Gambia
Peri Urban Smallholder Improvement Project	The Gambia
Isiolo District Support Programme	Kenya
PROSCARP	Malawi
Lake Malawi Artisanal Fisheries	Malawi
Green Zones Womens Development Project	Mozambique
Gulmi and Arghakhanchi Rural Development Project	Nepal
Participatory Rural Development Project	Nigeria
Micro Projects Programme in 6 States of the Niger Delta	Nigeria
Agricultural Planning Unit	Sudan
Northwest Smallholder Agricultural Development Project	Uganda
IRDP/District Development Support Programme	Zambia
Social Recovery Project: Microproject Audit	Zambia
Southern Province Household Food Security Programme	Zambia