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Development Strategies: A Case-Study of an Integrated Community-Based Project Magarini Integrated Rural Development Programme, Kenya

MIRDP's history and background

Magarini Settlement Project (MSP)

MIRDP evolved out of MSP, a settlement scheme in Magarini Division, Kilifi District, Coast Province, Kenya. MSP's objective is to settle the people already resident in the area and registered as squatters and give them title deeds. The need for the scheme is caused by the fact that, although the people have been living there for generations, they have no land rights. The land is either government land or it is owned by absentee landlords mostly from Zanzibar.

The implementation of MSP commenced in November 1978 after some feasibility studies had been carried out. The project was jointly financed and implemented by the Australian and Kenyan Governments up to June 1988. The original target of the project was to settle approximately 4,000 families. Each family was to be allocated 12 hectares (30 acres) of land.

The project encountered a number of problems caused amongst others by inadequacy in community involvement, lack of survey personnel in the project area, poor co-ordination between the Australian and Kenyan survey teams, and policy changes in the demarcation of plots from 30 to 15 acre plots and later reversal to 30 acre plots.

The most adverse effects had the lack of community participation and involvement. The project was planned very ambitiously and without any consideration of cultural and traditional values, attitudes of the community and sustainability of its interventions. The result was that the scheme met strong opposition from the people, many families did not take up their allocated plots, and the communities never felt responsible for infrastructural facilities like water supply which in turn resulted in the breakdown of most of them.

Malindi NGO Programme

An appraisal of MSP in 1984 recommended participation of an NGO to strengthen the resources and organization of the settler community and bring the component of community involvement. KFFHC started operating in 1986 as Malindi NGO Programme and brought a new approach to the project. It identified well-respected and capable community members who were employed as field workers and provided the link to the communities. The communities were involved in the planning of the activities, responsibilities were transferred to them, e.g. by introduction of committees to manage water sources, and they were required to contribute to all the activities. The main emphasis in the programme was on water development, preventive health measures, and simple income generating activities. Specifically the water activities were kept much more down-to-earth: shallow wells with hand pumps instead of boreholes and complicated reticulation systems which were absolutely not sustainable.

The reactions of the communities to the new approach were mixed: although they appreciated their increased involvement, they had got used to the previous approach of giving them free hand-outs and expected this to continue.

In 1990 the Australian funding for the project expired. The programme came to a standstill, only a few activities supported by communities continued when there was no donor support. KFFHC developed a new proposal and tried to identify new partners. They were found in the Austrian Government through an Austrian NGO, Austrian Service for Development Co-operation (ÖED). The funding for the new programme under the name Magarini Integrated Rural Development Programme (MIRDP) was verbally approved by the Austrian Chancellery in July 1992, but it was not before the end of the year that the first funds could be availed.

MIRDP

Planning of the programme

Early 1993 a basic programme team was put in place, where possible using staff who had previously been working in the programme. Being aware of the importance to involve the relevant line ministries, we started the planning process with a planning workshop involving KFFHC staff from Nairobi head office, MIRDP staff and representatives from the line ministries. The animators represented their communities.

While planning, we could build on the experiences of MSP and Malindi NGO Programme and try to avoid their pitfalls. A heavy emphasis was put

on sustainability of the activities, and to achieve this, it featured strongly that the activities have to build on the communities. The motto was: *The communities lead, and we follow.*

Original concept

And this is what the resulting programme looks like:

The overall-objective is to uplift the general status of living of the local communities on a sustainable basis.

The major components are:

- Community Mobilization and Training,
- Health and Nutrition,
- Water Development,
- Food Security (FS) and Income Generating Activities (IGA).

Community Mobilization and Training is to be the integrating factor to carry all the other components.

Health and Nutrition has mainly two lines:

- sanitary facilities on homestead-level, emphasizing on Ventilated Improved Pit Latrines (VIPs) and simple water filters for treatment of drinking water;
- a Community Based Health Care (CBHC) system involving training of Community Health Workers (CHWs) and Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) for basic health activities in the villages as well as Village Health Committees (VHCs) to oversee the health activities in each village. We are using the Bamako Initiative (BI) approach, a CBHC programme which facilitates the setting up of Community Pharmacies (CPs). These are village health centres run by the communities where basic drugs are kept, CHWs can do minor treatments and sell the drugs as well as other materials like impregnated mosquito nets. Much importance is given to an information system to let the communities know about their health status. In Kenya, the BI is supported by UNICEF.

Water Development continues very much along the lines of the previous phases with rehabilitation of existing and construction of new pans and wells, additionally roof and ground catchments with ferro cement tanks. All this is to be done with community contributions and community involvement, water committees are to be revived or set up to manage the water sources.

Food Security (FS) and Income Generating Activities (IGA): IGA having been the least successful component of Malindi NGO Programme, we changed the

approach and decided to build it on the traditional lifestyle of the rural communities which is agriculture, combined with a revolving loan scheme. Community loan committees are to oversee and finally take over the credit scheme.

Experiences and new insights during implementation

The team started enthusiastically. The villagers dug pits for the latrines, we trained artisans, mostly students and teachers from the two Youth Polytechnics (YPs) in the area, to produce slabs for the pits, they started producing them in one of the YPs. As many latrines had collapsed in previous phases, we tried to find proper designs especially for the lining of the pits which were suitable for the unstable sandy of black cotton soils in our area. In all these we got good co-operation and a lot of advice from Kilifi Water and Sanitation Programme (KIWASAP), a Government of Kenya-GTZ co-operation in Kilifi. Also for water activities, e.g. construction of ferro cement tanks with roof-catchments, KIWASAP gave us advice and trained our artisans.

But then we hit some snags. Let us use the VIPL construction as an example:

The villagers dug their pits much faster than we could come up with the proper design and deliver the required materials, specifically cement for the lining, or produce the slabs let alone the transport of those heavy things from the YP to where they were needed. Our recommended lining methods were too complicated and labour-intensive, so that they were often not followed properly, resulting in collapsing of latrines during the rainy season.

When we were still struggling to overcome these problems, others took initiative to solve some of them. Animators used a type of lining which is similar to the traditional building methods for houses, much simpler and more stable than our KIWASAP-designs. The YPs adopted a simpler method for slab production than they had learned at KIWASAP which enabled them to produce much faster. Only the transport problem nobody solved for us.

It was quite obvious that our beautiful design was simply not suitable for the area we are working in. As much as GTZ through KIWASAP provided a technically very sound solution to our needs, it was too expensive, too complicated, and required too much logistics like transport to succeed in our area. We clearly had to change the approach: we are now transferring construction of the slabs for the latrines to the villages where they are required so that the problem of transport won't bother us any more. For lining of the pits we will use the traditional methods developed by our animators – we should have asked them in the first place.

Another interesting experience: In our original concept, Community Pharmacies were meant to supplement government services. But when they were

implemented, in the absence of functioning government services they turned out to be the only health facilities in the area. Similar aspects apply to water.

Resulting policies

The experiences with these projects and programmes, starting from MSP in the late seventies until MIRDPA's current set-up, have lead us to define our development strategies. The scenario we want to introduce has as actors the community (target group) and development agencies which include:

- the government of the developing country,
- a local NGO,
- and a foreign donor – governmental or non-governmental.

Let's now analyze how they co-operate:

The foreign donor looks for an entry point to the community to be assisted. This entry point is usually provided by the government of the developing country. However, experience shows that projects initiated this way are rarely sustainable. In their attempts to address this problem, donors move down in the hierarchy of the local governments to district level as to be closer to the communities. At the same time, they try to enhance sustainability through capacity-building of the implementing government institutions.

But even these efforts usually show little success in sustaining the started activities. Why they cannot succeed can be seen when we look at the scenario from a different angle, namely from the communities' point of view. The community has needs and aspirations, its limitations are:

- lack of forums to discuss their needs,
- lack of confidence in themselves,
- lack of expertise,
- lack of materials/funds.

Our task as development agents is to assist them to overcome the limitations: analyze the communities' structures, find an entry point, enable the communities to interpret their needs and aspirations and find their own solutions. Only after this has been done, expertise and materials or funds from outside can genuinely benefit the community. This is the biggest challenge in development work and requires a closeness to the community which is only possible for NGOs. Governments work along different lines and are service-oriented which is opposed to the above approach.

From the above said it is also evident that only the communities themselves can sustain their development activities. Experiences like the Bamako Initiative described above show that the more an activity relies on the communities, the easier it can be sustained. When we talk of capacity building we must talk of building the capacity of the communities themselves

and not of any outside institution. A tool for this kind of approach can be Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), but never ZOPP.

Does this mean that we want to exclude the governments of the developing countries from any development co-operation? Not at all.

Co-operation local NGO – government of the developing country

There is a strong attitude amongst many NGOs of rejecting any co-operation with the government in the developing countries. This is understandable if one knows about the rampant corruption, inefficiency and bureaucracy. However, we don't agree with this opinion. Due to an elaborate structure of the government all over the country it is still desirable to collaborate closely in order to enlist its support as and when needed. Our experience shows that most civil servants are ready to co-operate when they are properly approached, informed and selectively used. The advantages of working with them are obvious.

- You can not operate fruitfully in any country while at the same time working against the government of that country. This does not mean supporting all government policies.
- Using taxpayers' money, the government has set up structures everywhere in the country which are supposed to serve the people. Through careful co-operation, NGOs can fruitfully use these structures and resources to be benefit of the people.
- Co-operation with the government has helped to improve mutual understanding, confidence and to remove suspicion which otherwise easily arises.
- Experience has shown that collaboration with civil servants on specific programmes and approaches has widened their horizon and helped to change their attitude towards the people.
- Due to the permanent nature of government institutions/ministries, they can provide sustainable fall-back positions to community projects while the NGO's stay is always limited.

Therefore our strategy which we also follow in our programme is: The entry point to the community has to be provided by a good local non-governmental institution which is capable of working closely with the community and enabling it to analyze and address its own problems rather than doing these tasks for them. This local institution, however, has to co-operate closely with the country's government on all relevant levels. The funds required for the activities have to be channelled through the NGO – channelling them through the government as well as giving them directly to the communities have adverse effects.

Genuine community participation

Let's now analyze our experiences with community participation as an NGO. Although from the onset of the programme we had been talking about community participation, we eventually found ourselves doing something different. We had set up a time frame and pre-determined their contributions in various activities and expected them to follow. However, our motto was to have the communities lead and we follow. The result was that the time frame could not be met nor were most of the community contributions forthcoming. The lesson learned is that you can not plan effectively on behalf of the people until you start working with them. For meaningful development to occur, the most important actor is the community, yet, it is the one who is least consulted in designing development programmes. This experience calls for:

- Pre-programme phases which are not only used to set up the programme team and the office, but even more importantly to plan and design the activities with full involvement of the community concerned. Only after this pre-programme phase a fairly reliable Plan of Action and budget can be put in place.
- Flexibility during implementation of the programme when and as need for change arises. It is important to see the community as a dynamic society. The positive change is a desired impact of every real development programme. Changing programme designs in the course of implementation is not always a sign of poor planning but can also be a reflection of emerging community aspirations.

The ultimate level of community participation is when they begin to define their own destiny. The only way to achieve sustainable democracy is through participatory development.

We have outlined the importance of community participation in this process. Now, how can community participation be achieved?

- The first important step is to establish a rapport between the community and the development agency which only can come through mutual trust, respect and love. Once this trust is established, the community opens up and communication starts.
- On this basis, needs assessments, ranking of problems and understanding their causes can take place. Intervention activities designed with full participation of the community through this process will genuinely address their felt needs. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) has proved to be a suitable tool to achieve this.
- During implementation, every effort must be made that the centre of activities remains within the community. This is easier said than done: you have set targets to achieve, you have deadlines to meet, and it is much easier and faster to do everything for the communities than through

them – but this would be dangerous and remove the basis for sustainability.

This principle is supported by our experiences in MIRDP: With our VIPL construction we had removed the centre of activities from the community, used imported and therefore unsuitable technology, and were forced to return to the villages and to the communities' own methods. The Bamako Initiative, on the other hand, put the centre of activities from the beginning to the community. It turned out to be much more reliable than the government's health services.

Integrated development

Our approach to development which is human centred and brings development through the people themselves cannot be separated into sectors as opposed to the traditional approach which tried to bring development from outside. Integrated development is more than running many activities at the same time.

Physical structures versus development through change

Our experience shows that the physical structures put in place during a project implementation are often more acknowledged by outsiders than the development through change. Unlike the change in the community, they can be easily shown, seen and photographed. Over-emphasis on physical structures at the expense of development through change has seriously undermined sustainable development. Physical structures are only acceptable as indicators for development if they have been achieved through the communities themselves.

No wonder, everybody is complaining that the structures that have been put in place, be it physical or institutional, are not sustainable: they have been put from outside and not through the communities.

Development and democracy

Development and democracy are inseparable. The same process which leads to sustainable development and which we outlined in this presentation also leads to democracy. In most African countries, there exists a passive silence especially among the rural communities which breeds dictatorship as well as it hinders development. When we started our programme, we only

thought of sustainable development and had no intention to politicize the programme. However, as we proceeded using the methods described, we realized that our meetings with the communities turned out to be highly political. As we assisted them in listing their problems, analysing their causes and seeking solutions, they overcame their passive silence and automatically started challenging their leaders.

In recent times, there has been a big debate whether foreign aid should be linked to good governance and the process of democratization. This attitude is hypocritical: from history it can be seen that Europe and America cannot claim to be masters of democracy. It is well known that even after the end of the colonial period the post-colonial dictatorial regimes in Africa and Latin America were and still are sustained by the Western Powers.

So should development aid be given regardless to the kind of governance? This is not the right way to address the question. The issue is how the funds are channelled and what type of project they support.

If funds are channelled through the central governments, their main impacts is to reinforce the dictatorial system of the regime. Even the small portion that trickles through to the community will contribute to this impact through political strings and the message it conveys.

However, if different channels are used which ensure that the benefits of the funds reach the community directly in a development project of the nature we described and thus strengthen the community itself with proper messages of development, then the process of democratization through development will be triggered.

Abstracts

Da es sich bei der Zielgruppe um eine lokale Gemeinde handelt, besteht eine wesentliche Frage in der Art des Zuganges zu dieser Gemeinde. Die Erfahrungen aus dem Projekt zeigen, daß der geeignetste Zugang über eine gut funktionierende lokale NGO gefunden werden kann, die in der Lage ist, mit der Gemeinde eng zusammenzuarbeiten und diese in die Lage versetzt, ihre eigenen Probleme aufzugreifen und zu untersuchen. Gleichzeitig muß diese Institution mit der Regierung des Landes auf allen Ebenen eng zusammenarbeiten. Es ist empfehlenswert, die Mittel für die Projektaktivitäten über die NGO und nicht über Regierungsstellen einfließen zu lassen, da dies vermutlich nachteilige Auswirkungen auf die Projektziele hätte.

As the target group is the local community a crucial aspect involves the question of how to approach the community. The experience of the project shows that the most suitable point of entry to the community can be found

by a reasonably well functioning local NGO which is capable of working closely with the community and enabling it to analyse and address its own problems. However, this institution has to co-operate closely with the country's government at all relevant levels. It is advisable that the funds required for the projects should be channelled through the NGO and not through government agencies, because that would most likely have adverse effects on the objective of the project.

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CARE Österreich Development Policies

In 1992 the development section of CARE Österreich was founded. Two programme officers who present the staff of this section are actively involved in planning, design and implementation of development projects in the Third World. The section concentrates on two major subject areas: Small Enterprise Development and Natural Resources Management.

I would like to give a brief idea on the contents of three CARE Österreich environmental development projects already in operation and then try to analyze the common features of all the interventions supported by CARE to give a picture on the development policies CARE Österreich tries to pursue.

Bushenyi Agricultural Innovation Project, Uganda

The oldest CARE Österreich project is the Agricultural Innovations Project in Bushenyi District, Uganda. It was actually conceived by Dr. Palme, the organizer of this conference who went to Uganda in 1992 to define useful and feasible ways of intervening through a project in the SW of Uganda, a priority area for Austrian development co-operation. The two year pilot project started in 1993 and seeks to help farmers of Bushenyi District to increase household income and to stop the alarming environmental degradation in this area. It is attempt to achieve this by strengthening the extension service of the Government of Uganda, by direct participation of small farmers, and by the promotion of local initiatives to safeguard the environment. The project has been working in three sub-counties which were chosen to cover the whole range of socio-economic and environmental conditions of the area.

The pilot phase project ends in December 1994 and is now in the process of extension to two districts and a duration of five years. The pilot project served as a start, a way of trying out interventions, finding flaws and being able to change directions if necessary.

In the first phase project participants were more or less unexpectedly confronted with new ideas to be introduced in their management of natural resources. These included banana management, pasture improvement, agroforestry, erosion control and nutrition.

In June this year, after 18 month a participatory planning workshop with representatives of all project participants was held. It was the aim to conceive and create a second phase which tries to learn from the pilot, include as many