Community Facilitation Programme
Community Development
Module 2. Defining Community Development.
The implications of Community Development.
Community Development vs. Social Development

1 Introduction

What we have learned in the previous model :

We have seen that apart from the White Paper on Social Welfare and the MDG's the theory and practice of Community Development is having a critical impact on community development policy. Furthermore we have seen that:

- Community development is a process that requires skilled intervention. The shortcomings of the natural process of development, often found in communities, has led to the establishment of community development as a form of intervention. During this intervention a process is established with the agreed upon outcomes in mind.
- Communities are characterized by cycles or spheres that plays a critical role in either the development or underdevelopment of a community. Community Developments target these spheres.

The aim of this Module:

In this module we will define Community Development more accurately.

2. **A Definition of Community Development.**

Community Development is the method, process, programme and strategy by which change agents, with or without the help of external systems:

- Accelerate the **tempo** at which a community develops. Community development as a natural process is slow. Focussed interventions speed up this process.
- Provide the **direction** in the development process in order to purposefully realise objectives within the economic, psychosocial, bio-physiological, technological, spiritual-cultural, political, environmental, educational and other spheres of life.
- Ensure that the process is as **cost-effective, streamlined and as sustainable** as possible.
- Contribute towards **human growth** and the **unlocking of human potential** by empowering community members to take responsibility for their own as well as the community's development. This amplifies national government's social welfare stance that envisions the development of human capacity and self reliance.

3. **Implications.**
Some of the implications of this definition are as follows:

- It is a specific set of procedures that is followed to realise specified objectives, defined together with the community.
- It represents a change or movement from one state to another, of which the tempo varies from one community to another.
- It takes the form of planned change that is determined by a plan of action.
- It is a predetermined course of action.

- Individuals and groups from outside or inside a community become change agents when they deliberately start to change the existing situation.
- The development process could be completely "contained" within a geographical community.
- It intends to accelerate the pace at which a community develops.
- It is an attempt to consciously bring about predetermined planned change in one or more spheres.
- It is an attempt to bring about the optimal efficiency and balance between input and output, local initiative and external influence, short and long term gains.
- It contributes towards the desire to become involved in leadership development. It creates a strong sense of individual and collective responsibility, community loyalty and identity. It fosters social participation in the processes of decision making and implementation, cooperation, involvement and self-help.

4. Community Development vs. Social Development

Up to this point we have established the concept, its meaning and the implications of community development as defined by the social development literature. This is often contrasted rightly or wrongly with that of social development:

- These two concepts are often used interchangeably which leads to much confusion and misunderstanding.
- They are two very distinctive concepts, each with its own particular history and purpose.
- Social Development became popular through the efforts of the United Nations to address human developmental needs in the world's poorest nations following independence from colonial rule in the 1960's. Social development as a concept was endorsed by the United Nations World Summit for Social development in 1995.
- Social development, as an approach, assumes that social investment in social programmes which enhance the welfare of people through their participation in a productive economy, is the most effective way of achieving economic development.
- One of the key theorists of social development, James Midgley, defines it as follows:
  "Social development is a process of planned social change designed to promote the well-being of the population as a whole in conjunction with a dynamic process of economic development". This warrants some further explanation.

4.1 Key Concepts of Social Development
- It is inextricably linked to economic development. This gives it its unique character when compared to other institutionalized approaches for enhancing people's welfare. Social development is particularly inspired by the modern-day political economy. It therefore involves role-players from both national and local government, development bodies like the IDC (Independent Development Corporation) , UDDI (Uitenhage/Despatch Development Initiative), CDI (Coega Development Initiative) and corporate and local business.
- It has an interdisciplinary focus as it involves various social sciences. These disciplines are once again represented through the various stakeholders mentioned earlier.
- It is a process. The social development process is defined in conceptual terms as having three aspects: a pre-existing social condition, the process of change itself and finally the the end state in which social development goals are accomplished.
- It is progressive in nature. There is a definite point of departure proceeded by

growth, change and development that is clearly visible and measurable.

- It is interventionist by nature. The proponents of social development reject the idea that social improvements occur naturally as a result of the workings of the economic market. They believe that organised efforts are needed to bring about improvements in social welfare.
- It involves various strategies. These strategies, most of the time link social interventions with economic development efforts.
- It is inclusive or universalistic in scope. Social development differs from other social treatment approaches, like community development, in that it does not primarily focus on needy individuals. Instead, the proponents of social development advocate the adoption of a macro focus which directs attention to communities, cities, regions or countries.
- It promotes social welfare, but it is the most inclusive of all approaches for promoting social welfare today.

4.2 Key Differences with Community Development

At this point it might be somewhat confusing to try to distinguish between different approaches as there seems to be quit of bit of common intellectual knowledge amongst all of them. So let us bring the magnifying glass a bit closer.

- Social development requires purposeful intervention from state and non-state actors and requires the organizational and institutional arrangements at national level that harmonise economic and social policies within a comprehensive commitment to people-centred development. This is not the kind of approach one would fine in community development where the focus is limited, the target group mostly defined to a particular geographic community and where the role players are limited to maybe a few organizational role-players and the rest of them being representative of the particular community.
- Government action is key through policy and legislation of a protective and regulatory nature. There is a strong relationship between economic and social development, achieved through macro-economic policies. Once again this approach is well above the influence and input of the role-players involved in community development.
- Community development contributes towards economic development but does not facilitate this process and does not require state or non-state actors to influence design or implement economic policies. Change agents of community development can be someone from any sector of society or any sector of the community.
- Community Development places a great emphasis on the relationship between external agencies and local people enabling them to help themselves and to become self sufficient.
- Community development does not link social policies and programmes to a wider process of economic development but develops separately from this process.

At this point it should be clear that for the purposes of this module the focus is very much on community development its process and aims as it makes the development process almost accessible to any person who is part of any community. Not so the social development. It is in fact a very exclusive approach.

5. Social Capital Formation

A relatively new concept in development theory that emerged over the past few years is that of social capital formation, or in short social capital. This is not a concept that warrants in depth study but it nevertheless requires some cognisance. The major theorist of social capital is a person by the name of Robert Putnam who wrote a book with the strange title "Bowling Alone - The Collapse and Revival of

American Community". This book challenged the way America viewed civil society and how it was, and still is changing. Through extensive interviewing he established that members of civil society increasingly have became disconnected from one another and that social structures were disintegrating. His research also diagnosed the negative consequences these broken relationships caused on civil health.

Social capital is defined by Putnam as those features of social organization such as trust, norms, and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated action. It is the invincible resource that is created wherever people begins to network together.

Since his work various other researchers cashed in on the wealth of new knowledge this concept provided, notably Rosemary Leonard and Jenny Onyx, two Australian academics and researches. They helped to further define this concept. Theorists of social capital define the characteristics of social capital as follows:

- It is a resource created through numerous connections between members of a group which is the property of the group or society and not any individual within it.
- It involves cooperation gained through informal constraints such as social norms and mutual interest involvement rather than force.
- It involves high levels of trust.
- It can be realised in tangible outcomes not necessarily directly related to the original interactions.
- It can be accrued and realised either inadvertently or through deliberate planning.
- Is interactive in that a store of social capital can be translated into a co-operative activity, which can then lead to increase in the store of social capital.

Wherever people in any community start to build relations and begin to network together with a specific purpose in mind, social capital formations start to take place. This can take the form of a group of women who begin a food garden, the prayer group of a local church, a football club for youngsters, a pigeon racing club for retirees, a political party or a "stokvel". High levels of social capital are associated with many desirable outcomes such as lower crime rates, fewer school dropouts, higher productivity and even economic development. Communities with a high level of social capital therefore tend to have a higher level of development than those where it is absent. High levels of social capital in a community accelerate the introduction of any development initiatives in a community. The World Bank has found that 75% of their interventions fail if they are not initiatives of the local community.

Leonard and Onyx defines 5 elements of social capital:

- Networks. This refers to the close interlocking networks of relationships between individuals and groups. Social capital cannot be generated by individuals. People relate as friends, solving common problems within their communities.
- Reciprocity. The individual provides a service to others, or acts for the benefit of others at a personal cost, but in the general expectation that this kindness will be returned at some undefined time in the future in the case of need. A "stokvel" is a good example where members contribute monthly a specific amount of money that is collected from all the members and then given to one of the members. Every month someone else receives the money until everyone has had a turn, then the process is repeated. While contributing and awaiting their turn, members trust the rest of the members of the group that the favour will be returned to them.
- Trust. This entails a willingness to take the risk in a social context based on a

sense of confidence that others will respond as expected and will act in mutually supportive ways.

- Shared Norms. This provides a form of informal social control that makes it unnecessary for more formal sanctions and regulations. A good example of the absence of formal sanctions is the Grameen Bank project where money is lent to members of the Bank without any legal contracts. More about that later.
- Social Agency. This implies a sense of collective power and the belief that togetherness delivers desirable outcomes. The development of social capital requires the active and willing engagement of citizens working together within a participative community.

5. Conclusion

What we have learned in this module:

- That community development gives change agents a theoretical and practical framework through which they can engage communities in a process that will deliver desirable outcomes for both the change agents and the members of the community. This is an accessible approach for change agents desiring to get involved in communities without going through all the trouble of engaging government structures, although this is not excluded.
- Social development on the other hand is an approach that requires involvement from national and provincial government and other development institutions with the aim of economic development focussing on entire communities, cities or regions. This makes it less accessible for change agents.
- Social Capital is a concept becoming more prominent in development literature. It is not a strategy but an awareness of the presence of relationships and networks which contributes toward community development, or an awareness of the absence of it.