

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION

IFAD-supported community-driven development operations in Nigeria

The 2015 Nigeria Country Programme Evaluation assessed two programmes which have used a community-driven development approach (CDD) since 2001: The Community-Based Agricultural and Rural Development Programme (CBARDP) and the Community-based Natural Resource Management Programme - Niger Delta (CBNRMP). The results and lessons are important and should inform the design of inclusive approaches to poverty eradication.

The programmes

The CBARDP was launched in seven states in northern Nigeria in 2001, at a time when local governance was weak after 30 years of military rule, and rural poverty was deep and persistent. Its emphasis on strengthening local actors down to village level and enabling communities to determine their own development and manage their own funds was closely aligned with the participatory approach embedded in the country's Rural Development Strategy that had been formulated in the same year. Total programme financing was US\$113.4 million, of which US\$42.9 million are attributed to IFAD.

The programme filled an important institutional vacuum. It established community development associations (CDAs) as a fourth tier of government through a process of systematic sensitization and group formation across all 207 selected village areas. The CDAs provided poor people with a structure and space to plan community investments and manage them in a sustainable way. This structure enabled the Government to channel funding into hard-to-reach areas. The hierarchy of CDA committees and sub-committees, taking responsibility for planning, implementing and maintaining village level investments, the transparent democratic structure and their pivotal role in dispensing programme funds, have given them a high degree of credibility and authority.

The community development fund component reached 1.2 million beneficiaries through 28,116 investments into community infrastructure, sustainable agricultural development, rural enterprise and financial linkages support and gender and vulnerable group development. In almost all cases the numbers of completed investment activities exceeded the set targets substantially.

The CBNRMP was launched in the South in 2002. This programme started to promote a new form of organization outside of the traditional community structure – the commodity apex development association (CADA). The CADAs were formed with a strong focus on enterprise development by commodity groups.

Commodity apex development association

Commodity apex development associations (CADAs) are formed by a number of production and enterprise groups. By 2015, the programme had created 146 CADAs across the same number of communities, representing 2,215 individuals. The CADAs are mutual interest groups providing services and support to farmers engaged in similar production processes. The CADAs cover different agricultural commodities, including food crops, cash crops, livestock, and others. For example, Yiza Tropical Blossom honey producers in Abia State (picture) was formed in 2013 and made up of 13 young men and 2 young women. Group members report



making a good income from the sale of honey and wax. They even went on to train other farmers, 50 in total, in bee-keeping, who then replicated the model in other communities.

Results

Efficiency. The CDD approach has yielded a number of efficiency gains and benefits. Above all, the CDD projects have been more cost efficient and delivered good value for money. They used direct labour contribution and some local materials for assets. IFAD rarely used contractors but let the community manage investments directly, with the support of local government and programme staff, and with this avoided overheads and commissioning costs. Whether building schools, fish-farms or boreholes, the community also used local materials for building wherever possible. One estimate found that roads, irrigation schemes, dams, boreholes, clinics and schools were built 50 per cent less expensively than would have been the case if the Government had supplied contractors. In terms of **allocative efficiency**, the community-led programmes in particular represent good value in the sense that funds were used on assets that were based on choices expressed by the community, rather than being supplied by local government or by others without due consideration of local priorities. However, the CDD programmes had relatively high costs per beneficiary. The main reason was that funds were managed at state level. Decentralised fund management resulted in higher transaction costs for IFAD because each state had to submit its withdrawal application separately, leading to a high number of withdrawal applications.

Sustainability. The evaluation found that overall the quality of construction was sound and the assets were mostly still being used even after programme closure. The asset verification exercise indicated that about 74 per cent of the sample (34 out of 46) rated as being in either reasonable or good working order and being successfully maintained by the relevant village committee. The lower-cost assets had better ratings – economic assets run by individuals (welding, sewing, threshing, milling, irrigation) were often continued successfully and had significantly increased their income. The CDAs are still operational, and they continue to prepare their Community Action Plans. However, maintenance committees are often weak and sub-committees are no longer very active.

Transformative changes. The institutionalization of the CDAs as a fourth tier of Government in the North and the wider acceptance of CADAs in the South, are the most significant impacts that IFAD's support has made in Nigeria to date. This village-level form of CDD development architecture has effectively channelled resources and brought forward the views and priorities of those living in often remote and disempowered communities. For many of those visited by the evaluation team, such local institutions were keeping records and accounts, making payments to contractors, and ensuring the quality of services. They

have mostly obtained formal status through registration under co-operative legislation, and are on the way to financial independence, although the growth in their assets has been modest. State legislation and funding have been introduced in Sokoto, Kebbi and Katsina States to support the replication of CDAs in local government areas not supported by IFAD, as well as in new villages within former IFAD-supported local government areas.

However, the CDD approach has been less effective in transforming existing power relations and addressing issues of inequality within communities. For women it has provided a ground-breaking opportunity to participate, but the women were usually passive participants in the community-level debates and their role in decision-making remains limited. The reinforcement of conventional roles through the CDD approach was evident from women's high uptake of traditionally female interests and occupations (i.e. health and nutrition, sewing, perfume making and small livestock rearing) and low uptake of literacy classes.

Lessons

- Building participatory governance at the local level will require continuous engagement with the political leadership.
- The use of government structures rather than creating separate project units has built ownership and understanding and enabled sustained government support of 4th tier structures.
- CDD programmes may be more costly because of the management overheads, but they ensure good allocative efficiency and value for money.
- Within the changing social and economic context, new forms of associations based on mutual interests and cooperation are becoming important mechanisms for inclusive development.
- Wider replication and impact of the CDD model will require more support, to build new forms of trust and collaboration, new skills and capacities, new models of leadership and power sharing.
- CDD programmes require sufficient time for structures to be understood and to take root, beyond the often short cycle of strategic reorientation and redesign.

Further information:

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