

# Critical Analysis of Community Designed Development Strategy on poverty reduction in Kenya: Case of NGOs participation in Kenya

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## Abstract

Kenya has a critical challenge of reviving economic growth to enable improved standards of living of her people. The nation's economic objective of growth, poverty reduction and improved access to essential services has not changed significantly since independence. Several efforts by the stakeholders including the national government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international donors have shown limited success in reducing poverty in Kenya. As a result, poverty is still persistent in most households, both in rural areas and urban slums. The persistence of poverty in the country can be in part attributed to the top-down approach to development adopted by various poverty alleviation programs. As a result of this, community development strategies have not been effectively implemented in the country. There is rhetoric on poverty reduction and inclusion of the marginalized groups. However, poverty reduction requires measures that empower people to improve their capabilities and take ownership of poverty project. Experience indicates that the dimensions of community-driven development (CDD) strategy of empowering communities are not fully addressed in the country's poverty reduction programs, despite the fact that a community-driven approach to development and poverty reduction has the potential of lifting rural populations out of the poverty trap. This paper focuses on community development strategies and initiatives adopted by the NGOs to tackle poverty in Kenya. The study found that the local communities in Kenya are not empowered enough to take full ownership of their projects for sustainable development.

**Key words:** NGO, Community Designed Development strategy, poverty reduction

## 1.0. Background information

The World Bank Report (2010) indicates that globally the gap between the rich and poor is quite wide in most places in the world. The study shows that almost half the worlds live on less than \$2.50 a day. Extreme poverty is a global challenge; it is observed in all parts of the world, including the developed economies. At the start of the new century, poverty remains a global problem (World Bank Report, 2000/2001). One third of deaths are due to poverty-related causes, (World Health Organization, (WHO), 2010). According to World Development Report (2000), poverty encompasses lack of voice because people need avenues to express their needs or obtain redress; lack of empowerment since people require the resources and authority to take charge of programs meant for their benefit and lack of good governance because people are worse off when officials are corrupt, unresponsive to local demands, and unaccountable. Community empowerment is therefore a form of poverty reduction in its own right; quite independent of its income effects Poverty has remained stubbornly high in Africa for decades. Top-down plans and donor-driven investment programs have been less than successful thus necessitating a new approach of prosperity through the empowerment of local communities. Communities can be empowered by giving them more resources and authority to use. Past experience suggests that decentralization initiatives work well in the presence of vibrant, participatory communities. Participation at some point needs good structures for sustainability. Empowerment provides communities with opportunities and a new set of powers, rights and obligations. Community empowerment strategy views people as beings with capabilities; the power to plan, implement and maintain projects to serve their felt needs; the obligation to enable women, ethnic minorities, the poorest and other long excluded groups to participate fully in economic development; and the obligation to be accountable to local people, not just the national governments or donors (World Bank Report, 2000/2001).

Sub-Saharan Africa has the greatest centralization of development administration in the world, the lowest per capita income, and high inequality. Extreme centralization and poor governance mean that little money gets through for intended purposes. Accountability is poor, and what little exists is upward to donors and central governments, not downward to local people. Besides, different donors use different channels for aiding community-based development. According to United Nations (1956), community development involves the process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of other stakeholders to improve the economic, social and cultural condition of communities to enable them to contribute actively to national development. This process therefore consist the participation of the people themselves in efforts to improve their level of living through (Akinbode & Laogun 1981). Community development is one of the strategies which have been adopted for rural development by many developing countries. The strategy is aimed at utilizing the rural people to develop themselves through their own self initiative and motivation, with minimum assistance from government. Community development aims at social development through self-help projects. It involves community members in planning and implementation of programs for their own development. It stimulates government and other development agencies to provide technical advice and materials in planning and implementing the projects (Gboyega, 1992).

A number of approaches have evolved over the years, to make community development feasible. One of the most popular approaches is the provision of basic social amenities to communities by NGOs through community participation. The CSOs function alongside the government to raise the well-being of the society (Ehigiamusoe, 1998). These nonprofit organizations could be international, national, regional, or community based depending on its financial resources and networking capability. NGOs do focus on a number of areas: such as skill acquisition, economic empowerment, disease control and management, adult literacy scheme and capacity building and information driven charity, conflict resolution and peace promotion. Despite all these many NGOs in Africa are constrained by various variables that include the inadequacy of funds. Again, studies conducted reveal that those NGOs focusing on development related issues in some parts of Africa have been effective in poverty alleviation (Adebayo, 1997). The reason for the failure of the NGOs to curb high poverty rates in Kenya is the gap to be filled by this study.

The economy of Kenya is relatively diversified. The service sector is the largest accounting for about 55 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Agriculture and the industrial sectors are the next significant contributors to GDP accounting for 27 percent and 18 percent of GDP. The Kenyan economy has been in a recession for many years. The continued slowdown in economic activity is spread across all key sectors of the economy. Kenya is a low income country and was ranked 138 out of 174 countries on the Human Development Index in UNDP's Human development Report for the year 2000 (Republic of Kenya, Economic Survey, 2000). The Government of Kenya recognized the need to focus on poverty alleviation through the government structures notably district focus for rural development. The government had realized that the only sure way of ensuring provision of basic social needs of the communities was through the exploitation of district endowments and investment in human resources at district level through participatory approaches, while at the same time, developing and strengthening sustainable poverty eradication strategies that can foster rural employment creation. The government had also recognized that it lacked capacity, both at the centre and the local levels, to steer the bottom up participatory approaches to local development. Community Driven Development strategy entails helping to achieve development objectives apparent in Poverty reduction strategy process. The resilience and determination of communities continues to inspire. The intent of CDD is to help empower local communities to shape their future by giving them more resources and the authority to use these resources to improve their standards of living. Empowering communities is an integral part of effective poverty reduction strategies. Although there are many projects initiated still too few resources filter down to the communities (Republic of Kenya, Economic Survey, 2000). Narayan and Prichett (1997), show that vibrant community structures have major economic externalities.

The importance of local interaction to build capable, responsive and responsible institutions has been stressed by Douglas (1990), Sola and Ebbe (1995), Burnside and Dollar (1997). Sujai (2000), Li (1999) and McGinnis (1999a, 1999b) argue that development and institutional governance evolve from associational patterns, which are determined in communities. CDD aims to build on social capital by harnessing community participation, and also to improve social capital by strengthening incentives for participatory development. Detailed studies the world over show that well-designed participation and decentralization strategies can reduce poverty's many dimensions. However, the current reality in Kenya is very different. This study seeks to assess the implication of community development approach on poverty reduction of developmental NGOs in Kenya.

For Many years, international and local NGOs have worked with the intention of contributing to poverty reduction and wealth creation to improve the quality of life of communities in Kenya. Through partnership with

international partners, especially certain UN agencies, some NGOs have focused strongly on fighting poverty through building the capacity of communities. Some NGOs engage in programming activities that promote social accountability, good governance, human rights and gender equality (Community Aid International, 2010). Despite these, extreme poverty still ravages the lives of a quarter of the population in developing countries. Such levels of poverty and inequality raise serious issues of sustainability-of peace and security, of equity and solidarity, and of the environment - at the national, regional and global levels. The sustainable development challenge remains urgent and acute (OECD, 2001).

In Kenya, NGOs play a crucial role in poverty reduction. As non-state organizations, NGOs have been involved in socio-economic development at national, regional and grassroots level in supporting and encouraging the development aspirations of local communities through the rhetoric community development strategy. This paper seeks to establish the effectiveness of the CDD approach to poverty reduction. The study further examines the barriers to effective implementation of CDD poverty reduction in Kenya.

## **2.0 Literature review**

### **2.1 introductions**

The government of Kenya formulated vision 2030 for sustainable, economic and social development of the nation. The main aim of vision 2030 is to make Kenya a globally competitive and prosperous nation with high standards of living by 2030 (GOK, Economic Recovery Strategy, 2003). However a study by IFAD (2012) reveals that poverty rates have remained steady at 48%. As indicated by this report, Kenya's rural poor include small scale farmers, household headed by women, unskilled and semi-skilled workers, herders, farm laborers, and people with disabilities and aids orphans.

The Kenya National Assessment Report (2000) observes that the overall incidence of poverty in Kenya has risen from 52% in 1982 to an estimated 56%, in the year 2000. During the same period, rural absolute poverty has increased from about 48% to about 60% with the rural areas and urban informal settlements being more adversely affected. In the arid and semi-arid areas, the poor account for as much as 80% of the population with women and children comprising the majority. The high prevalence is reflected in decreasing life expectancy, increasing child mortality, inaccessible health-care, water and sanitation, poor housing, unemployment, hunger and malnutrition, illiteracy and increasing prevalence of diseases. About 50% of Kenyan households are poor and do not have access to safe drinking water and only 4% of the population living in the rural areas have access to electricity. More than 47% of the urban dwellers live in informal settlements and in conditions of abject poverty characterized by, among others, unavailability of safe drinking water and sanitation facilities. It is therefore real to say that poverty rates have continuously remained high despite the non-state participation and interventions.

The study by Society for International Development (2013) shows that majority of Kenyans have no electricity despite the Kibaki's administration pledge of rural electrification program. According to this report, ¼ of the Kenya population has no education despite development policies and funds such as free primary schooling and secondary school bursaries and the Constituency Development Fund (CDF). Nearly half of the Kenyan population is poor and unable to meet their nutritional requirements. This condition exposes them to high risk of contracting communicable but preventable diseases and perpetuates the poverty cycle while exacerbating environmental degradation (Kenya National Assessment Economic Survey, 2000; KIHBS, 2006; PRSP, 2000; SID, 2013; Kenya County Fact Sheets, 2013; Environmental Health Department, 2013, IFAD, 2012GOK, 2008).

Although the government of Kenya spends a lot of money on development, poverty rates have kept rising (Daily Nation, 2013; the Standard, 2013). The World Bank (2010) and the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2010) view poverty as a violation of human rights. The World Bank (2005) observes that people have rights i.e. entitlement and capabilities rather than beneficiaries with needs while the government has a central role to play right development approach. This report claims that grass root participation is important to ensuring the voices of the poor are heard (World Bank, 2005). Kenya is a host of several development NGOs working in partnership with local communities and development partners to scale down poverty and promote social justice. Developmental NGOs are involved in activities meant to improve the quality of life of Kenyans by focusing on community development approach through empowerment of the beneficiaries (Community Aid International, 2010; Oxfam, 2009; Fowler, A. 1988).

Donor agencies have found enthusiasm in CSOs and described the NGOs as more reliable in terms of efficiency, equity and impact (Korten, 1980; OECD, 1988; Esman & Uphoff 1984). Donor views are that state bureaucracies are unreliable, inefficient, and irresponsible (Rahmato, 1991). And programs administered through

them have less chances of reaching the poor and the needy. Building the managerial capacities of CSOs helps to reinforce them and other existing economic or social institutions for self-managed enterprises (Vanek, 1975). Thomas and Logan (1982) suggested that self-management enables the participants to make their own rules with regard to their own empowerment for rapid poverty eradication and economic growth. CDD strategy entails helping to achieve development objectives apparent in poverty reduction strategy process.

For Many years, international and local NGOs have worked with the intention of contributing to poverty reduction and wealth creation to improve the quality of life of communities in Kenya. Through partnership with international partners, especially certain UN agencies, some NGOs have focused strongly on fighting poverty through building the capacity of communities. Some NGOs engage in programming activities that promote social accountability, good governance, human rights and gender equality (Community Aid International, 2010). Extreme poverty still ravages the lives of a quarter of the population in developing countries. Such levels of poverty and inequality raise serious issues of sustainability-of peace and security, of equity and solidarity, and of the environment-at the national, regional and global levels. The sustainable development challenge remains urgent and acute (OECD, 2001).

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## **2.2 The role of NGOs in poverty reduction process in Kenya**

Kenya is a host of several development NGOs working in partnership with local communities and development partners to scale down poverty and promote social justice. Developmental NGOs are involved in activities meant to improve the quality of life of Kenyans by focusing on community development approach through empowerment of the beneficiaries (Community Aid, International, 2010; Fowler, A. 1988). A good number of NGOs in Kenya are on the ground carrying out different types of developmental projects and programs in order to uplift the socio-economic status of the people. NGOs are involved in various aspects of community development such as community mobilization, economic empowerment, development of rural infrastructure and capacity building services. Most NGOs depend largely on donation and funding from international donors and/or funding organizations for the execution of their projects and programs. The civil society organizations are regulated by the NGO council in order to improve the social economic status of Kenyans (Sharpiro, 2010).

In helping the poor to climb out of poverty, NGOs in Kenya have implemented specific approaches. The civil society organizations have embraced both the supply and demand approaches towards poverty eradication. According to the supply strategy, the non-state actors provide basic services to the poor (Clark, 1995). Contrary to this strategy, some NGOs have used the demand approach to articulate peoples' grievances, mobilize and clarify the demand of services. The CSOs engage in advocacy policy so as to influence the public policy concerning the poor. In line to this approach, NGOs have developed various strategies to influence the process of public policy and to control implementation of development programs and projects in the country. This is an area into which NGOs have been moving during the 1990s when the CSOs revised and re-strategized to move away from the direct service delivery and prioritized policy advocacy and lobbying (Hulme, 2001).

In support to the demand approach, Clark (1995) indicates that demand strategy enables the NGOs to assist the poor in identifying government activities and others that might affect them. The citizens are empowered to use advocacy and political influence to hold officials accountable for activities or inactivity, which are damaging to the poor, and help communities to mobilize and societies to express their concerns and help to guard reprisals. Clark further indicates that the demand approach provides fora in which officials can consult and listen to alternatives presented by the people and help to ensure that individuals disadvantaged by the government decisions receive just compensation and negotiates with the affected parties.

Research indicates that NGOs in Kenya are close to people at the grassroots level and therefore they are in a better position to understand the nature of poverty in the country. It has also become common for the donors to use NGOs in monitoring and evaluating funds and the implementation of poverty reduction strategies and to hold the government into account in a way that have impact for their political stay in power. Participation of the NGOs is aimed at meeting the interests of the poor (Roddell and Robinson, 1995). The NGOs provide significant inputs into the poverty reduction process and documentation (Hughes, 2002; GOK, PRSP, 2000). The goal of

poverty reduction process is to raise the economic growth of the nation and reduce poverty levels in the country. The NGOs inclusion of participation in government policy matters is an important step. These voluntary organizations are involved in the collection of data on poverty assessment on local and national levels using participatory approaches to poverty. The sharing of information is useful to effective poverty monitoring and feedback. Consultation between NGOs and other stakeholders on poverty eradication are held at both local and national levels. These consultations are mostly held on general or specific themes (Chrisantsen, 2003).

NGOs have played key roles in facilitating the process of defining the objectives of engagements and methodology to be used formulating the poverty strategies in Kenya. This is because the NGOs have been able to utilize their experience of designing and implementing participatory processes with several stakeholders in the country. The Policy formulation of PRSP documents, for example, has witnessed the involvement of NGO specialists representing diverse groups from among the poor, government technocrats, and independent analysts. NGOs have played a central role in securing public endorsement by facilitating debate at all levels of the proposed options (Hughes, 2000).

Studies done testify that the contribution of NGOs to poverty reduction is limited. Edward and Hulme (1995) point out that it is challenging to find general evidence that NGOs are close to the poor despite the rhetoric community participation in poverty reduction projects and programs. There is growing concern that NGOs are not effective as expected. Riddle & Robinson (1995) argue that while the projects initiated by the NGOs reach the poor, they tend not to reach down to the poorest. These scholars say that NGOs projects tend to be small scale and this affects the total number of beneficiaries. The study further indicates that NGO projects are rarely self sufficient and most of them implement imaginative projects rather than innovative projects. This paper therefore seeks to establish the effectiveness of CDD strategy adopted by the third party organizations to confront poverty in Kenya.

### **2.3 Effectiveness of community development strategies in poverty reduction**

Social funds created through the CDD initiatives channel emergency money to needy communities. The immediate success rate of these schemes is high. The participation of beneficiaries in projects helps to improve project design, implementation and outcomes. However, such projects remain almost totally dependent on outside financial support, and this reduces local ownership as well as sustainability. In such cases, social funds have significant limitations (Tendler and Serrano, 1999).

Community-driven development provides control of decisions and resources to community groups in Kenya. This strategy regards poor people as assets and partners in the development process, building on their institutions and resources. Support to community initiatives usually includes strengthening and financing inclusive community groups, facilitating community access to information, and promoting an enabling environment through policy and institutional reform. Experience demonstrates that by directly relying on poor people to drive development activities, community development strategies have the potential to make poverty reduction efforts more responsive to demands, more inclusive, more sustainable, and more cost-effective than traditional centrally led programs. Community centered approaches fill a critical gap in poverty reduction efforts, achieving immediate and lasting results at the grassroots level and complementing market economy and government-run programs. With these powerful attributes, CDD can play an important role in strategies to reduce poverty (World Bank, 2000).

The Government of Kenya recognized the need to focus on poverty alleviation by decentralization approach district focus for rural development. The Government had realized that the only sure way of ensuring provision of basic social needs of the communities was through the exploitation of district endowments and investment in human resources at district level through partnership with the civil society organizations, while at the same time, developing and strengthening sustainable poverty eradication strategies that can foster rural employment creation. The government had also recognized that it lacked capacity, both at the centre and the local levels, to steer the bottom up participatory approaches to local development. Community based development strategy entails helping to achieve development objectives apparent in poverty reduction strategy process. The intent of this intervention is to help empower local communities to shape their future by giving them more resources and the authority to use these resources to improve their standards of living. Empowering communities is an integral part of effective poverty reduction strategies (The World Bank, 2000; GOK, PRSP 2001).

Poverty has remained a thorny issue in Kenya for decades. Top-down plans and donor-driven investment programs have been less successful necessitating a new approach of prosperity through the empowerment of local communities. Communities are empowered by giving them more resources and authority to use. This

process works well when embedded in a permanent institutional structure. Past experience suggests that decentralization will only work in the presence of vibrant, participatory communities. Participation at some point needs good structures for sustainability. Empowerment seeks to put rural and urban communities in the forefront and give them a new set of powers, rights and obligations. These include the right to view people as beings with capabilities; the power to plan, implement and maintain projects to serve their felt needs; the obligation to enable women, ethnic minorities, the poorest and other long excluded groups to participate fully in economic development; and the obligation to be accountable to local people, not just central governments or donors (Okwiri, 2012; Fact Sheets, 2011; Dijkstra, 2011; GOK, 2008).

Poverty reduction requires processes that help people improve their capabilities and functioning that enable people to take charge of local affairs instead of being supplicants before higher authorities. CDD aims to create such processes, with safeguards to provide voice to groups traditionally excluded from the decision-making process such as women and ethnic or religious minorities (GOK, 2000; Amartya, 2000). Human development approach ensures that communities have considerable capacity to plan and implement programs, which has often been cloaked by a lack of empowerment. Vibrant community structures constitute social capital, a much-neglected asset that can yield high economic dividends. CDD aims to build on social capital by harnessing community participation, and also to improve social capital by strengthening incentives for participatory development. Detailed studies the world over show that well-designed participation and decentralization can reduce poverty's many dimensions (Jammah, 2010; Fact Sheets, 2011; Dijkstra, 2011).

Studies done have established that considerable institutional capacity already exists in local communities but this capacity has been not utilized due to lack of local empowerment to use it. People who have survived by trying to solve problems in difficult economic and political conditions have considerable capacity to put their experience and skills to work, once they are empowered. What is perceived as a lack of local capacity is often a reflection of the fact that what local people want is different from what central planners want. Once it becomes clear that local people have the power to solve problems, they will at last have the incentive to organize, assess current ills, and work out solutions. The very act of wrestling with problems develops new skills. So the process of capacity creation can be described as learning by doing, learning by use of power, learning by solving problems, and learning by making mistakes. It means that skill development should be demand-driven, not imposed from above. General purpose capacity-building funds and training programs that support initiatives from below may be more effective than training funds or programs for specific sector. Once local level structures are in place, they will soon identify which skills are most needed and in what sequence. The best solution is to empower local communities, and then offer collaborative support as skills are upgraded. Community development strategies help to foster a mutually reinforcing process between community development and local government development. Equally it assists to encourage accountability in local governments which can support communities on a permanent basis. CDD empowers communities by giving them untied funds which allow them to choose their own priorities and implement their own programs. This enables local skills to be created and improved through learning by doing. Untied matching grants to communities helps to develop their inherent capacity for problem-solving through learning by doing. As they take on more responsibilities, the local beneficiaries have the opportunity to accept the need to upgrade their skills. This is easily facilitated by technical assistance from central governments and NGOs. Development has too often been viewed as mainly about physical investment. CDD emphasizes institutional change of empowering and sensitizing people, enhancing transparency, changing attitudes (World Bank, 2000).

Existing mechanisms have failed to provide adequate accountability. Almost all accountability is upward to donors and central governments, not downward to users of services. Even upward accountability is Balkanized because different donors have different requirements and create parallel systems of accountability, which sap limited local resources. A plethora of documents and reports are often required in the language of donors, which may not be locally understood. This reduces transparency and participation, and helps elite capture of programs. The success of community driven projects shows that accountability exists as social capital in user groups. Social pressure and peer pressure create accountability within a community. The empowerment of communities enables this social capital to be harnessed, and provide downward accountability to users of frontline services (GOK, ERS, 2003 to 2007).

Community empowered approach views poverty as not just a lack of income, education and health facilities, but also as a lack of voice, empowerment, good governance and security against shocks. Seen in this light, local empowerment is a form of poverty reduction in its own right, quite independent of its income effects. There are five dimensions of poverty that the community needs to identify: political, economic, social, lack of transparency, and lack of protective security. Poverty is viewed as deficits in peoples' capabilities and

functioning along these five dimensions. Poverty reduction requires processes that improve the capabilities and functioning of people in these five ways argues that intrinsic economic motivation is diminished by low levels of self-esteem and self-determination, which arise from lack of voice and empowerment (Amartya, 1999; Ostrom, 1999; Njeru, 2005).

Learning by doing is an important way of creating capacity in communities and local government levels. Technical assistance schemes in the past often failed because they did not correspond to community needs and priorities. In fact communities have immense latent capabilities, shown by the way they cope in extraordinarily difficult situations including post-conflict ones. Once communities are given the power and resources to choose and implement projects, the very act of wrestling with problems builds capacity, which can later be supplemented by training (FAO, 1999; Fiszbein 1997; Foster & Rosenzweig 1995). Beneficiary participation has great influence on improved economic outcomes and poverty reduction in several countries. Local participation has succeeded where centralized schemes failed in such areas like forestry, biodiversity and wildlife management. Collaboration between communities and donors also increases returns to aid. Once communities take the initiative to drive the process, they are in a position to receive support from a variety of stakeholders, including the private sector, civil society, and central government Partnerships ( Oblitas & Peter 1999; King & Orazem 1999; Caldecott & Lutz 1996; Dato et al 1999).

Poor people are often viewed as the target of poverty reduction efforts. Community designed strategy treats poor people and their institutions as assets and partners in the development process. Experience has shown that access to information and appropriate support, poor men and women can effectively organize to provide goods and services that meet their immediate priorities. Not only do poor communities have greater capacity than generally recognized, they also have the most to gain from making good use of resources targeted at poverty reduction (Njeru, 2005, GOK, ERS, 2003-2007).

Empowering the communities gives control of decisions and resources to community groups. These groups often work in partnership with demand-responsive support organizations and service providers, including elected local governments, the private sector, NGOs, and central government agencies. CDD is a way to provide social and infrastructure services, organize economic activity and resource management, empower poor people, improve governance, and enhance security of the poorest (World Bank, 2000-2001) community development strategies help in strengthening and financing accountable and inclusive Community Based Organizations(CBOs); facilitating community access to information through a variety of media, and increasingly through information technology; and forging functional links between CBOs and formal institutions and creating an enabling environment through appropriate policy and institutional reform, often including decentralization reform, promotion of a conducive legal and regulatory framework, development of sound sector policies, and fostering of responsive sector institutions and private service providers ( United Nations Development Program, 2003).

Community based development is an effective mechanism for poverty reduction, complementing market and state-run activities by achieving immediate and lasting results at the grassroots level. Experience has shown that community development strategy can enhance sustainability and make poverty reduction efforts more responsive to demand. This approach has also been shown to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of poverty reduction efforts. Because it works at the local level, CDD has the potential to occur simultaneously in a very large number of communities, thus achieving far-reaching poverty impact. Well-designed community based programs are inclusive of poor and vulnerable groups, build positive social capital, and give them greater voice both in their community and with government entities (Shapiro, 2010; World Bank, 2000).

Accumulated experience has shown that the central government programs are often slow to deliver basic services and are often ineffective in reaching poor people. State-run activities can be effectively complemented by NGOs among other actors. By using CDD approaches and local actors to provide key goods and services, governments can support immediate poverty reduction by efficiently building human and physical assets at the local level. Importantly, community development strategy can make services responsive to demand expressed by poor men and women and as a result can enhance sustainability. As consumers, community members are the most legitimate, informed, and reliable source of information about their own priorities. Community-developed facilities such as health centers, schools, and water supply systems tend to have higher utilization rates and are better maintained than when investment decisions are made by actors outside the community. Experience also demonstrates that demand is better articulated when communities contribute to investment costs and control investment choices (World Bank, 2000).

Community driven programs improves efficiency and effectiveness. Studies and practical experience suggest that community guided approach can improve the effectiveness and efficiency of services in many sectors and contexts. Examples of these include benefits for infrastructure, education, microfinance, and natural resource management. Evidence suggests that certain models of both individual and group based microfinance can extend the reach of financial services and achieve high repayment rates. Some microfinance programs rely on local groups that, because they know community members' characters and economic activities, can provide peer pressure. Group-based programs tend to do particularly well where the screening and monitoring costs of credit are too high for the lender and when the group approach reduces the cost of information gathering and creates incentives at the local level (; Lam, 1998; Tang 1992; Adato et al 1999). Empowering communities allow poverty reduction efforts to be taken to scale because this initiative devolves responsibilities and resources to the local level, activities can occur simultaneously in a large number of communities without being constrained by a central bureaucracy. When poor communities are trusted to drive development and are given appropriate information, support, and clear rules, a system can be put in place not to provide for poor people, but to facilitate their active and ongoing role in rolling out poverty reduction efforts (GOK, 2008).

Community led approach makes development more inclusive of the interests of poor people and vulnerable groups. Representative CBOs can provide voice and empowerment to groups that are typically excluded from the development process. The interests of women, indigenous groups, ethnic minorities, the disabled, and people with AIDS might not be effectively expressed through standard political and economic structures. As the minority groups get actively involved in CBOs, they help to make development processes more inclusive. Inclusion also requires that scarce public resources be targeted to groups that most need them. In the absence of reliable information to allow means testing (such as for household income), involving communities directly in the targeting process can improve efforts to target the poorest and most marginal individuals and groups especially in education management and control (Ravallion, 1999).

Community initiatives empower poor people, build social capital, and strengthen governance. The objective of development is not merely to increase incomes or to improve poverty indicators, but also to expand people's real freedoms. These are the choices people make between different valuable beings and doings, such as being nourished, being educated, participating in public debate, or being free to walk about without shame (Amartya, 1999). Targeted community-driven approaches devolve control and decision making to poor women and men, which empowers them immediately and directly. While clear rules, transparency, and accountability are important safeguards to prevent corruption or the capture of community resources by elites, the speed and directness with which CDD empowers poor people is rarely matched by other institutional frameworks for poverty reduction (World Bank, 2000). The Control over decisions and resources, give communities the opportunity to build social capital (the ability of individuals to secure benefits as a result of membership in social networks) by expanding the depth and range of their networks. This kind of network expansion has positive short-term effects on welfare and risk exposure. The creation of networks and social capital also helps to reduce household exposure to risk. Poor individuals and households manage risk in many ways, including offering reciprocal self-help, participating in local organizations, and building linkages with people outside their social networks (Grootaert 1999a; Narayan 2000).

Strengthening local associations that are inclusive increases poor people's voice in local political processes and governance. For all its potential benefits, CDD also presents risks. If CBOs are not appropriately strengthened or exclude the poor, if they cannot finance recurrent costs, if they crowd out local government or are manipulated by vested interests, then CDD may not be the optimal strategy (World Bank, 2000). There is an increasing awareness that management techniques are crucial to project success in non-governmental organizations. Generally, non-governmental organizations that are private have either a community or environmental focus. They address varieties of issues such as religion, emergency aid, or humanitarian affairs. They mobilize public support and voluntary contributions for aid; they often have strong links with community groups in developing countries, and they often work in areas where government-to-government aid is not possible. NGOs are accepted as a part of the international relations landscape, and while they influence national and multilateral policy-making, increasingly they are more directly involved in local action (Mukasa, 2002).

Beneficiaries' development approaches help to foster a mutually reinforcing process between community development and local government development. Equally, strategy assists to encourage accountability in local governments which can support communities on a permanent basis. Development has too often been viewed as mainly about physical investment. Community development strategy emphasizes institutional change of empowering and sensitizing people, enhancing transparency, changing attitudes (GOK, PRSP, 2001-2004).



## **2.4 The barriers to effective implementation of CDD strategy by the NGOs in Kenya**

In Kenya, NGOs work in many different fields and some are associated social transformation and improvements in quality of life. Development NGOs are highly visible sector, and includes both international and local organizations, as well as those working in humanitarian emergency sector. Many are associated with international aid and voluntary donation.

Studies done show that operational NGOs, seek to achieve small-scale change directly through projects. They mobilize financial resources, materials and volunteers to create localized programs in the field. They hold large-scale fundraising events; apply to governments and organizations for grants and contracts in order to raise money for projects. They often operate in a hierarchical structure; with a main headquarters staffed by professionals who plan projects, create budgets, keep accounts, report, and communicate with operational fieldworkers who work directly on projects. These NGOs are most often associated with the delivery of services and welfare, emergency relief and environmental issues. Operational NGOs can be community-based, national or international. The defining activity of operational NGOs is implementing projects (Willets, 2001).

Many NGOs are associated with the use of international staff working in developing countries, but there are many NGOs in both North and South who rely on local employees or volunteers. There is some dispute as to whether expatriates should be sent to developing countries. Frequently this type of personnel is employed to satisfy a donor who wants to see the supported project managed by someone from an industrialized country. However, the expertise these employees or volunteers may be counter balanced by a number of factors: the cost of foreigners is typically higher, they have no grass root connections in the country they are sent to, and local expertise is often undervalued. The dependency on foreign expatriates limits sustainability of local projects especially in situations where capacity building is inadequate. Some NGOs are highly professionalized and rely mainly on paid staff. Others are based around voluntary labor and are less formalized. Not all people working for non-governmental organizations are volunteers (World Bank Criteria defining NGO).

NGOs need budgets to operate but the amount of budget that they need differ from NGOs to NGOs. Unlike small NGOs, large NGOs may have annual budgets in the hundreds of millions or billions of dollars (Jewish News Weekly of Northern California; 1999-12-19). Funding such large budgets demands significant fundraising efforts on the part of most NGOs. Major sources of NGO funding are grants from international institutions or national governments, and private donations. Even though the term "non-governmental organization" implies independence from governments, many NGOs depend heavily on governments for their funding. Pawel, (2006) Wiens & Gudagni (1998), show that demand-driven investment funds in several countries don't reach the very poorest. The elite capture and social exclusion prevent the benefits of CDD from reaching the most vulnerable (minority groups, women, and the poorest of the poor), hence need for central interventions to arrest the situation (Manor, 1999; Bardhan & Mookerjee, 1999; Kerr et al. 1998).

There has also been the overwhelming disaster of NGOs using misinformed advice to enact their campaigns. It is reported that NGOs have been quite ignorant about critical issues because these organizations have lost their efforts in being truly scientific and are now more self-interested. Rather than operating through science so as to be rationally and effectively practical, NGOs are now abusing the utilization of science in order to gain their own advantages. At the same time, NGOs have shown themselves not to be very cooperative with other groups at the community level (Edwards & Hulme, 2002).

The issue of the legitimacy of NGOs raises a series of important questions. This is one of the most important assets possessed by an NGO; it is gained through a perception that they are an independent voice (Weber & Christopherson, 2002; Edwards & Hulme, 2002). Their representation also emerges as an important question. Who bestows responsibilities to NGOs or INGOs and how do they gain the representation of citizens and civil society is still not scrutinized thoroughly. There is concern over the representation of peoples' needs in developing world. Experience shows that International NGOs hardly ever come face to face with the people whose interests and problems they represent, or that they are not accountable to the people they represent therefore making matters to become even more troublesome. This has attracted suspicion from the government and therefore delaying their effectiveness (Neera, 2005).

Research done established that in many cases of decentralization, communities have responsibilities but little authority or resources, and so achieve little. Social funds have positive outcomes but also shortcomings. Tendler (2000) shows that they have an important supply-driven component that undermines community empowerment, that they do not represent real decentralization, and have a limited impact on poverty reduction.

Although there is growing evidence that CDD offers an effective means of improving the efficiency of public financing, the financing requirements to improve poor people's access to basic services far outstrip the availability of public funds. It is thus important to leverage local and private financing sources in implementing CDD. It is observed that consultations by the civil society on poverty reduction at the community level have been seriously affected by limited resources and logistics to consult beyond the district level. The implication of this scenario therefore is that the majority of the poor are unreached. This is a revelation that the biggest challenge of Kenya's planning process is the absence of the community voice in dealing with poverty at all level of society. Despite the public rhetoric on community involvement in decision making, little effort has been made to capture community views in the national development in the past. For many years national development plans generated from the district and line ministries have been developed without sufficient community input. The PRSP – MTEF consultations were therefore designed to include the voice of the poor and other stakeholders concerned with poverty matters in the country. Their views were to be considered in the national economic planning process (Owina, 2003).

From the World Bank (2000) analysis of projects in Africa, 75 percent of projects with some level of community participation were rated satisfactory against 60 percent for all African projects in 1994-97. But while 75 percent of such projects were rated satisfactory, only one-fifth were rated sustainable because they were almost totally donor-financed; they were temporary programs, not embedded in permanent institutions; their scale and geographical spread was very limited. While they provided for some beneficiary participation, they were typically earmarked for specific sectors and did not empower communities to set priorities or manage projects. This was a significant shortcoming: it deprived communities of the chance to exercise real choice and build skills through learning by doing. Communities and local governments had no guaranteed sources of revenue, and little or no power to raise local resources.

Community development and integrated rural development are ideas that have been tried in the past but with disappointing results. Recent research suggests that the problem lay in the inability of central government agencies and donors to respond to local priorities or take advantage of local skills. Funds were donor-driven, failed to generate local ownership or enthrone locals to maintain assets, and simply created a dependency syndrome. Instead of strengthening national institutions, donors raided their best staff to create parallel institutions, which could not be sustained when the donor programs ended. The result: poverty remained deep although countries of the region got some of the largest flows of net aid per capita in the world (World Bank, 2000).

Experience has shown that policies aimed at promoting national economic competitiveness and state-run public investment programs are essential but insufficient for poverty reduction. These policies and programs often do not benefit everyone, and benefits often take years to trickle down. CDD offers the opportunity to fill this critical gap by achieving immediate and lasting results at the grassroots level (World Bank, 2000)

The legitimacy and the accountability of NGOs on the point of their true nature are also emerging as important issues. Various perceptions and images on NGOs are provided, and usually implemented in an image as influential representatives of civil society that advocate the citizen. Accountability may be able to provide this and also be able to assist activities by providing focus and direction (Edwards, & Hulme, (2002). As non-state actors with considerable influence over the governance in many areas, concerns have been expressed over the extent to which they represent the views of the public and the extent to which they allow the public to hold them to account (Edwards & Hulme, 1996).

The origin of funding has elicited serious implications for the legitimacy of NGOs. This has compelled the government to prepare a bill to control the source of finance of the non-state actors in parliament in Kenya in 2013, although the bill was defeated. In recent decades NGOs have increased their numbers and range of activities to a level where they have become increasingly dependent on a limited number of donors (Edwards & Hulme, 1996). Consequently competition has increased for funding, as have the expectations of the donors themselves (Ebrahim, 2003). This runs the risk of donors adding conditions which can threaten the independence of NGOs; an over-dependence on official aid has the potential to dilute "the willingness of NGOs to speak out on issues which are unpopular with governments. In these situations NGOs are being held accountable by their donors, which can erode rather than enhance their legitimacy, a difficult challenge to overcome. Some commentators have also argued that the changes in which NGOs receive their funding have ultimately altered their functions (Edwards, & Hulme, 2002).

NGOs have also been challenged on the grounds that they do not necessarily represent the needs of the developing world, through diminishing the so-called Southern Voice. It is argued that the North-South division exists in the arena of NGOs that affect their performance. People have questioned the equality of the relationships between Northern and Southern parts of the same NGOs as well as the relationships between Southern and Northern NGOs working in partnerships. This suggests a division of labor among these organizations whereby the North takes the lead in advocacy and resource mobilization whilst the South engages in service delivery in the developing world (Lindenberg, & Bryant, 2001). The potential implications of this may mean that the needs of the developing world are not addressed appropriately as Northern NGOs do not properly consult or participate in partnerships. The real danger in this situation is that western views take the front seat and assign unrepresentative priorities (Jenkins, 2001).

The flood of NGOs has also been accused of damaging the public sector in multiple developing countries. The mismanagement of NGOs has resulted in the poor service delivery. Instead of promoting equity and alleviating poverty, NGOs have been under scrutiny for contributing to socioeconomic inequality and disempowering the services in the public sector of third world countries, including Kenya. The scale and variety of activities in which NGOs participate has grown rapidly since the 1980s, witnessing particular expansion in the 1990 (Sharpiro, 2010; Avina, (1993). This has presented NGOs with need to balance the pressures of centralization and decentralization. By centralizing NGOs, particularly those that operate at an international level, they can assign a common theme or set of goals. Conversely it is also advantageous to decentralize as this increases the chances of an NGO behaving flexibly and effectively to localized issues ( Anheier, & Themudo. 2002). The NGOs are not in a position to innovate new ways of jointly working together with other stakeholders in tackling common objectives. Most of the NGOs projects tend to be donor dependent and relief oriented and their approaches to poverty have not been sufficiently satisfactory.

## 2.5 Conclusion

The role of Non-Governmental Organizations towards community development generally is enormous because their activities cut across all sphere of human life. In this regard, more is expected to be put in place by the growing number of NGOs in Kenya for the overall wellbeing of the society. This can be done through an effective collaborative programs and strategies with an effective and efficient leadership structure to be able to meet up with the millennium development goals (MDGs). Strategizing to ensure sustainable development in local communities, through empowerment of the people to participate actively in development is required. Much can be achieved through social funds but the process needs to be taken further. Social funds represent community development without institutionally sustainable empowerment, and this limits its impact and sustainability. CDD aims to remove these limitations, and so improve on the success registered by social funds.

Communities can be organized quickly and productively to diagnose local problems, come up with solutions, lay down priorities, elaborate action plans, and strengthen community organizations and accountability. Participatory processes cannot be effective unless communities are empowered with resources and authority. Social/other funds already provide matching grants to communities but these are typically balkanized funds with a narrow focus tied to donor priorities. Communities will be truly empowered only if they get untied grants which enable them to decide their own priorities and hone their decision-making skills. Experience shows that rules for participation can be designed to give voice to socially excluded groups like women and minority tribes. The World Development Report 2000/1 sees great promise in decentralization, but only if it is tailored to reach the poor and voiceless, receives adequate support as well as sufficient autonomy from the center, and if institutionalized mechanisms of wide and regular participation are put in place. Poor people demand a development process driven by their communities so as to be in a position to negotiate with other stakeholders in order to obtain direct assistance through community-driven programs so as to shape their own destinies and experience local ownership of funds, so that they can end corruption. In so doing, the poor want NGOs and governments to be accountable to them (Narayan, et al, 2000). Finally, it is the submission of this paper, that operators of NGOs should be more proactive and sensitive towards the goal they have chosen to pursue and the welfare of those employed by them well care for. There is a high need for training and research for NGO functionaries as this is observed to be the basis for its sustenance and survival. Equally of great importance is the urgent need for NGOs to look inward, in sourcing funds for its activities internally, rather than waiting for the support of international donors alone, which do rarely come.

## 2.6 Recommendations & Suggestions

1. Where CDD arrangements are appropriate, governments can consider a range of institutional options to support CBOs. Local structures of government, the private sector, civil society, and central government can provide critical support to CDD, direct partnerships between CBOs and central government. CDD

requires community control of investment and management decisions. Furthermore, partnership with CBOs that do not include women or minorities, or do not represent their interests, can be described as neither community driven nor inclusive because key members of the community are excluded.

2. Non-governmental organizations need healthy relationships with the public to meet their goals. Foundations and charities use sophisticated public relations campaigns to raise funds and employ standard lobbying techniques with governments. Interest groups may be of political importance because of their ability to influence social and political outcomes. This should be done according to a code of ethics established by the World Association of Non-Governmental Organizations.
3. The management of NGOs should be more proactive and sensitive towards the goals they choose to pursue. There is urgent need for NGOs to look inward, in sourcing funds for its activities internally, rather than depending for the support of international donors.
4. There is need for training and research for NGO functionaries as this is observed to be the basis for its sustenance and survival of the community projects.
5. There are new developments that have emerged due to globalization and integration in the world affairs. The emerging issues such as environmental degradation and famine are constantly influencing development efforts. These incidents require new approaches and policies by the NGOs to make them to remain relevant to global challenges.
6. NGOs should not attempt to create skills in a vacuum, or as a pre-condition for empowering local governments. Local capacity cannot be created unless local government structures are given resources that enable local people to experiment. If resources are provided first, capacity creation is likely to follow. The gaps in skill can be plugged as they appear.
7. Local capacity is necessarily multi sectoral because local communities have to deal with a wide range of issues. Block grants may be more effective than schemes following the preconceived priorities of donors and/or central governments. The impact of CDD can be enhanced further by providing untied block grants to communities across entire countries. This will give resources as well as voice to people who have rarely enjoyed either.
8. Creating strong communities in the initial stage should help create accountability norms and leadership patterns so as to improve the quality of governance at the local level. And good local governments in turn should widen and deepen participatory processes
9. To promote local “ownership”, communities and local governments should contribute to project costs and operation and maintenance costs, apart from helping with design, implementation, maintenance and monitoring. Additionally, financial credits should not be burdened with too many conditions. Flexibility of use, which allows local people to choose what they want to do, should be emphasized.
10. Many tasks involving scale economies and externalities should remain with higher levels of government. Decentralization should not pit NGOs against central governments or sectoral programs. It should be a joint venture of different levels of government. Therefore decentralization should be based on the principle of subsidiarity. That is, responsibility for tasks should be devolved to the lowest level of government that can deal effectively with them. Each level should perform tasks according to its comparative advantage.
11. Basic skills garnered through learning by doing must be upgraded steadily with outside support. Local governments and communities must be able to get technical and managerial support on demand.

12. Devolution to communities implies that the direction of accountability should be downward to local people, not only upward to central governments and donors.
13. Development must be participatory and demand-driven. To provide voice to the voiceless, it should have safeguards against social exclusion and elite capture.
14. Community empowerment is unsustainable if based on donor-driven funds. It needs to be embedded in a new institutional framework of local government's strictures.
15. Initial attempts at decentralization were hindered by a failure to harmonize the political, administrative and fiscal elements involved. So, harmonization should be a top priority. This typically requires a high-powered task force backed by the head of government to work out new legal and constitutional arrangements. The political leadership in the country can decide how many tiers of government are appropriate and what powers each will enjoy. This is best done on the principle of subsidiarity.
16. Greater participation in all projects and programs should be done to improve the voice of local people. Decentralization must go to the grassroots, as social capital works best in small groups. Rural local governments should cover no more than a few tens of thousands of people, increasing transparency and responsively.
17. Fiscal rewards and penalties for communities should be used to induce competition between communities. Losers will be answerable to their constituents for being left behind in the race for matching grants. Such competition will improve accountability and performance.
18. Public goods that span many communities or that require large, complex systems are often better provided by local or central government. Similarly, private goods or toll goods are often better provided using a market-based approach, relying more on individual enterprises than on collective action. CDD can, however, fill gaps where markets are missing or imperfect, or where public institutions or local governments fail to fulfill their mandates.
19. Ideally, an appropriate enabling environment should be in place before initiation of any CDD effort. This is not always possible. Where such conditions are not present, well-designed CDD programs have nevertheless succeeded by incorporating measures in the program design to address deficiencies in the surrounding environment. By empowering communities and generating upward pressure on governments and agencies, these programs can serve as catalysts to initiate the necessary policy and institutional reforms.
20. Regardless of the mode of CDD intervention, CBO partnerships with county government, private support organizations, central government, or central funds, local governments systems can be critical to the success and sustainability of CDD. Lower government levels are often well positioned to facilitate coordination across communities and allocate resources. When county governments interact with communities and informal groups in a participatory way, it is possible to achieve economies of scale in producing and providing goods and services that could not be achieved by CBOs operating independently. Furthermore, in many cases, county governments are needed to support operation and maintenance of services, and for continuing funding of community groups. The local government structures are generally more responsive and effective where there has been political, administrative, and fiscal decentralization.
21. CDD has the potential to increase the power of poor communities to negotiate with government, the private sector, and civil society. But to fulfill this potential, CDD needs to be responsive to the priorities of all poor groups. Communities are not homogeneous; thus CDD needs to be designed to be socially inclusive, giving voice and decision making responsibility to women, the elderly, youth, religious and cultural minorities, indigenous and other ethnic groups, those with HIV/AIDS, and the disabled. When

CDD does not pay attention to issues of social inclusion, groups of poor people may be excluded, investment choices may not reflect the true needs of the poor, and impacts may be significantly compromised.

22. Communities should be well informed about the program content, conditions, and terms of CDD programs. Mass communication campaigns that provide wide public dissemination of this material help to place control in the hands of communities, thereby mitigating risks of manipulation by politicians, government officials, contracting agencies, and local elites. An essential component of any CDD program should be to provide community members with knowledge and information useful to conduct transactions with both the government and market organizations. Successful CDD programs serve to facilitate linkages between community groups and both government and markets.
23. Although CBOs learn by doing, the pace of learning and quality of implementation can be increased if CBOs learn from the good practices and innovations of other CBOs. Community-to-community exchanges provide opportunities to observe the potential benefits of participating in specific initiatives, and facilitate learning on how to replicate successful processes. However CBOs require technical information and support, including accounting and managerial skills required for decision making and implementation of activities.
24. Flexibility in design, often through piloting, is essential to allow systems to evolve and adapt better to local demand and capabilities. Flexible program planning and decentralized decision making mechanisms should be as close to the community as possible. There is need to facilitate quick response to change as part of the learning process. Direct feedback from the community on program performance is essential. Most successful programs routinely conduct beneficiary assessments, focus group interviews, client surveys, and other forms of evaluation that provide policymakers and program managers with information on whether investments reflect community priorities, the level and type of participation they have used, their sustainability, and their impacts.

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