

Findings

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Nigeria: Design of the Community Social Development Project (CSDP)

The concept review for the Nigeria Community Social Development Project (CSDP) began in March 2005 with project appraisal scheduled for early 2006. The design of the CSDP incorporates innovative elements in Community Driven Development from CPRPI and is expected to play a pivotal role in harmonizing CDD activities in Nigeria.

A credit of \$200,000,000 US dollars is to be disbursed to the Federal Government of Nigeria, and implemented by the National Planning Commission and project units in about 25 states of the Federation. The CSDP or second Community-based Poverty Reduction Project (CPRPII) as it is also called is designed to build on the portfolio of existing CDD projects in Nigeria in both scope and magnitude through a twofold strategy: further integrate project elements into local governance structures, and enhance partnerships between communities and the local government. This is the first time that as much as 85% of financial disbursements are being made directly to the communities in Nigeria.

The objectives of the CSDP are to build on the Community-based Poverty Reduction Project (CPRP) I through (i) expanded project coverage within the participating States of the two projects; and (ii) enhanced project integration using the broad framework of a community-based poverty reduction strategy in conjunction with the Local Empowerment and Environmental Management Program (LEEMP). Project design stresses transparency, autonomy of the State agencies responsible for allocating funds at the local level, and the use of a fully participatory approach. Sectors currently targeted for capacity enhancement include water and sanitation, natural resource management, safety nets, transportation, health and social services, and education.

Innovative Elements of the CSDP Design

- Harmonized Approach to Community Driven Development (CDD). The CSDP will combine the efforts of the five existing CDD operations in Nigeria, and will implement these changes in the existing CPRP, FADAMA and LEEMP States as well as in the new State initiatives.
- Scaled-up project implementation structure. While the basic institutional structures will remain the same as in CPRP I, independent State agencies will be responsible for implementing the project, assisted by stronger linkages to the State and local government authorities.
- Project changes are embedded in institutional structures to ensure that local government and communities are empowered to use and manage resources.

- Expansion of the role of Local Government Authorities (LGAs) to include greater inclusion in the implementation process through (i) increased responsibility for budget allocation and execution; and (ii) the facilitation of community planning and budgeting.
- Lessons in CDD are incorporated from local government studies such as the National Planning Commission (NPC), Local Empowerment and Environmental Management Program (LEEMP) and from FADAMA studies on irrigable land.
- Social safety nets targeting marginalized groups will be created to work in conjunction with the government's existing social protection framework.

Lessons Learned

The main lessons from the implementation of CPRPI that are to be applied to the design of the CSDP include:

- Empower local communities by maintaining and monitoring systems locally. The Tajimi Water Project in Kogi State, as an example, provided a rural community with direct responsibility for project contracting and this empowered the communities to take charge of the project. The communities themselves were levied; funds were generated on a regular basis at this level towards the maintenance of the water systems, and individuals at the community level were also appointed to secure the materials on-site.
- Facilitate project awareness from the design stage. From the beginning, strategic communication efforts and exchanges between field staff, the communities, and local government offices were designed to facilitate project awareness. Examples of these activities included awareness-creation workshops, plays/playlets by theatre groups, billboards, pamphlets, radio and television jingles.
- Knowledge exchange strengthens stakeholder cooperation. Knowledge exchange between the communities and the local government on development and governance issues was built into the project design. Communication experts were involved right at the design stage so that cooperation between stakeholders could be factored into the project cycle. Exchanges between local governments and communities were arranged and supported by project preparation teams at the beginning through consultation workshops and through partnership workshops by the project units during implementation.
- Develop the social capital to give communities the impetus to act. Communities have found their voice as a result of CPRPI and are better able to demand responsibility and accountability from the local government. Communities that are empowered are able to ensure that local governments are more transparent.
- A cross-sectoral approach facilitates trust and cooperation between stakeholders. The CPRPI brought together local stakeholders to establish common goals and aspirations within the process, and this strengthened trust at the local level. As a consequence, communities were able to demand improved service delivery from the local governments with one voice and agenda.
- Stable project leadership allows more sustainable projects. In CPRPI, the project leadership, especially at the State level, has been in place from the start and this stable leadership structure has enabled project elements to carry over from one project to the next. This has lessened the need to re-negotiate or re-work the basic project structure to meet new political requirements. At the Federal level, there was substantial staff turnover and this affected the performance of the Federal component of the project.
- Availability of counterpart funds signals strong government commitment. Communities are aware that project funds being available to them exactly when they need them signals the necessary government commitment to project objectives.

This infobrief was written by Sharon L. Watkins, Consultant, AFTKL, Africa Region, World Bank and has been sourced from the Debriefing series titled 'Nigeria Country Portfolio Performance Review' and related project documents. The writer acknowledges the contribution by Foluso Okunmadewa to this article. The Debriefing site can be accessed by Bank staff at <http://afr/debriefing>.

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