

**POVERTY REDUCTION AND ASSET BASED
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
APPROACH:REMEDY FOR KENYAN COUNTY
GOVERNMENTS**

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Background

- ❑ The UNDP human development March 2013 report shows that many economies in the south have made a remarkable socio-economic progress, but most of the African countries are in the least human development category.
- ❑ In Kenya poverty eradication has been tackled in various ways for decades but the situation has worsened with the GDP remaining below 6%. Kenyan County governments especially are faced with the challenge of inadequate allocation of revenue from the central governments and limited capacity that would otherwise see counties engaging actively in addressing widespread poverty. Building resilient economies that would less depend on central

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government and other external support is therefore fundamental for county governments.

This article argues that Asset-based community development (ABCD) approach provides an applicable framework for achieving sustainable development. It is a strength-based methodology to development that moves away from deficiency approach.

Problem statement

Challenge in community development is how to bring about the fullness of life against the reality of abject poverty afflicting the populations. Various methodologies and approaches have been tried in recent times in an effort to attain effective poverty alleviation through community based development initiatives

OBJECTIVES:

- 1.To assess the extent to which local resources can lead to poverty reduction at county level
2. To examine how assets can be mobilised for county development
3. To expand understanding on citizen's involvement in the development process through a shared vision

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

- **Amartya Sen's capabilities approach:** *what matters is what a person is, can be and does or can do. He emphasizes that development has to be more concerned with enhancing the lives we lead and the freedoms we enjoy.*

ABCD approach enhances capacities for citizens' involvement and ownership of development initiatives

OVERVIEW OF ABCD APPROACH:-

ABCD is an approach to community-based development, based on the principles of: *Appreciating and mobilizing individual and community talents, skills and assets (rather than focusing on problems and needs); and Community-driven development rather than development driven by external agencies.*

LOCAL RESOURCES AND POVERTY REDUCTION AT COUNTY LEVEL

The first step in the ABCD process is to create an “Asset Map” or “Asset Inventory.” This map or inventory is in direct opposition to the standard “Needs Assessment” that is often done by an outside entity. *The citizens conduct it, which creates an immediate vested interest in the outcome.* It answers the question: **“What resources do we have to solve this problem ourselves?”**

Assets

Time

Energy

Skills

Vision

Asset mobilization

- The process continues as an ongoing mobilization of community assets for economic development and information sharing purposes, initiated by the associational base. Associations are encouraged to engage by **appealing to their interests, finding common ground and ensuring that they are contributing on their own terms.** Eventually, an "association of associations" emerges

Citizens involvement in the development process through a shared vision

- The process of realizing the community vision begins with associations asking themselves **"What can we do to make this vision happen?"** External resources are not tapped until local resources have been utilized. This puts the community in a position of strength in dealing with outside institutions.

CONCLUSION

- Despite the community development constraints that have been observed, we are of the view that the ABCD approach coupled with Vision 2030 can deliver the growth and development that Kenya aspires to achieve. Its success will, however, depend on the management of reform of institutions especially those targeted by the social, economic and political pillar of the vision document. Furthermore, given the current poverty levels the county governments will need to rethink its development approaches.

And paradigm shift with a view to shifting financing of development from domestically generated resources as opposed to the current practice in many African countries which look to foreign financing as a panacea for development. The recommended reforms of tapping local resources, citizen's involvement and participation of a shared vision and mobilization of community assets will be critical in allowing the country to achieve this shift as these are the sectors critical for mobilization of savings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- *There is need for appreciative inquiry* which identifies and analyses the community's past successes. This strengthens people's confidence in their own capacities and inspires them to take action.
- There is also need for the recognition of *social capital* and its importance as an asset. This is why ABCD focuses on the power of associations and informal linkages within the community, and the relationships built over time between community associations and external institutions.
- *Based on the findings the study recommends a Participatory approaches to development*, which are based on principles of empowerment and ownership of the development process.

- *Moreover, there is need for Community economic development* models that place priority on collaborative efforts for economic development that makes best use of its own resource base.
- There is also need for Efforts to strengthen *civil society*. These efforts have focused on how to engage people as citizens (rather than clients) in development, and how to make local governance more effective and responsive.

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