



# ***AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF PROJECT PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT***

***P. O. BOX KENYA:***

***PROGRAM: POST GRADUATE  
DIPLOMA IN PROJECT PLANNING  
AND MANAGEMENT:***

***REGISTRATION NO: PGD003-POST  
GRADUATE:***

***NAME: DRIJARU VIVIAN NELSON:***

***Email: drijaru.nelson@gmail.com***

***Skype: Vivian nelson***

***TEL: +211921803931***

**AREAS OF CONCERN**

- ❖ *Definitions*
- ❖ *Illustrations*
- ❖ *Objectives*
- ❖ *Aims*
- ❖ *Conclusion*

**References**

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## **SOLUTIONS FOR ASSIGNMENT 8**

*1. In your own opinion, is it important to involve the community in project management? Substantiate your answer*

**Rural community development** is a process conducted by community members. It is a process where local people can not only create more jobs, income and infrastructure, but also help their community become fundamentally better able to manage change.

The “concrete” benefits of community development, such as employment and infrastructure, come through local people changing attitudes, mobilizing existing skills, improving networks, thinking differently about problems, and using Community assets in new ways.

Community development improves the situation of a community, not just economically, but also as a strong functioning community in itself.

Rural community development builds the five capitals of a community – physical, financial, human, social and environmental. It is through participation in their community that people rethink problems and expand contacts and networks; building social capital. They learn new skills, building human capital. They develop new economic options, building physical and financial capital. They also can improve their environment.

### **Community plus Development**

Community development combines the idea of “community” with “development”. We discussed earlier the concept of community – a group of people with a shared identity. Hence, community development relies on interaction between people and joint action, rather than individual activity – what some sociologists call “collective agency”.

**“Development”** is a process that increases choices. It means new options, diversification, thinking about apparent issues differently and anticipating change.

Development involves change, improvement and vitality – a directed attempt to improve participation, flexibility, equity, attitudes, and the function of institutions and the quality of life.

It is the creation of wealth – wealth meaning the things people value, not just dollars.

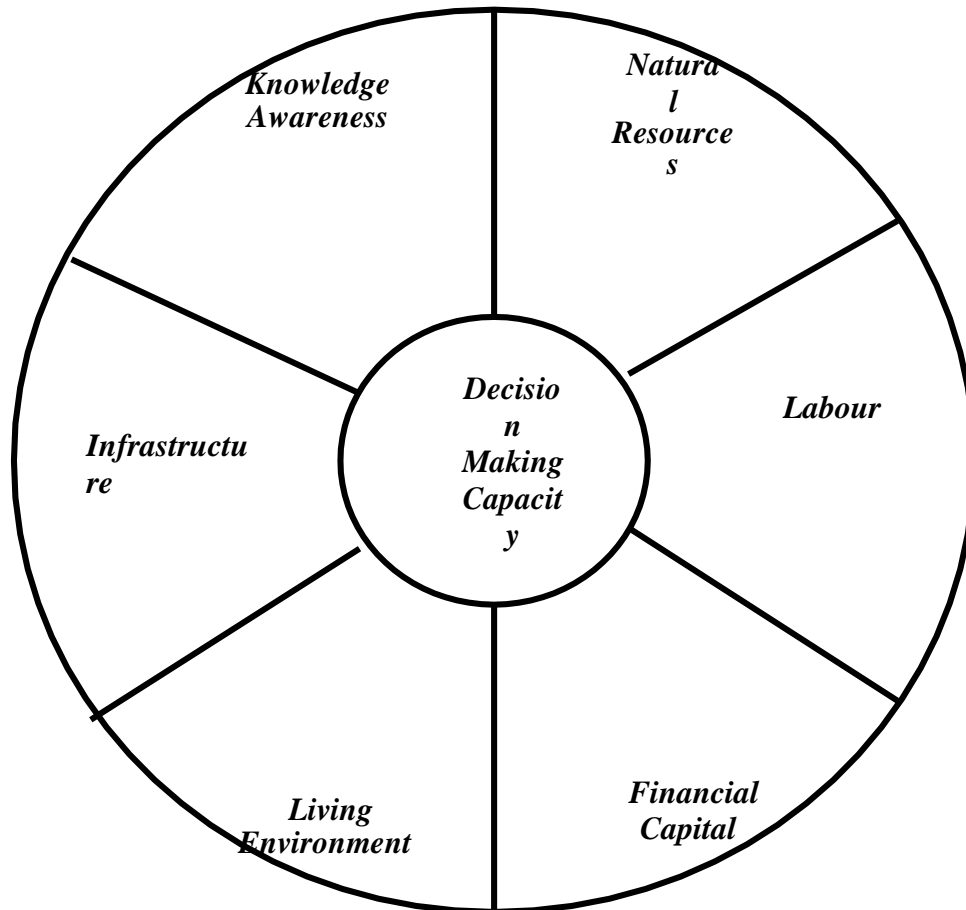
It leads to a net addition to community assets, avoiding the “zero sum” situation where a job created “here”, is a job lost “there”.

Putting the two terms together – community development – means that a community itself engages in a process aimed at improving the social, economic and environmental situation of the community.

The community is both the means and the end of community development. The community itself takes action and participates together. It is through this action that

*the community becomes more vital, not just economically but as a strong functioning community in itself.*

*Community development improves the ability of communities to collectively make better decisions about the use of resources such as infrastructure, labour and knowledge (figure 1).*



. Community development enhances community decisions about the employment of resources (Source: Shaffer, unpublished).

#### **Definitions**

*The key elements of community development are expressed to varying degrees in many definitions. Some key descriptions are as follows:*

- *For community development to occur, people in a community must believe working together can make a difference and organize to address their shared needs collectively – Flora et. al. (1992).*
- *Community development is a group of people in a community reaching a decision to initiate a social action process to change their economic, social, cultural and environmental situation – Christenson et. al. (1989).*

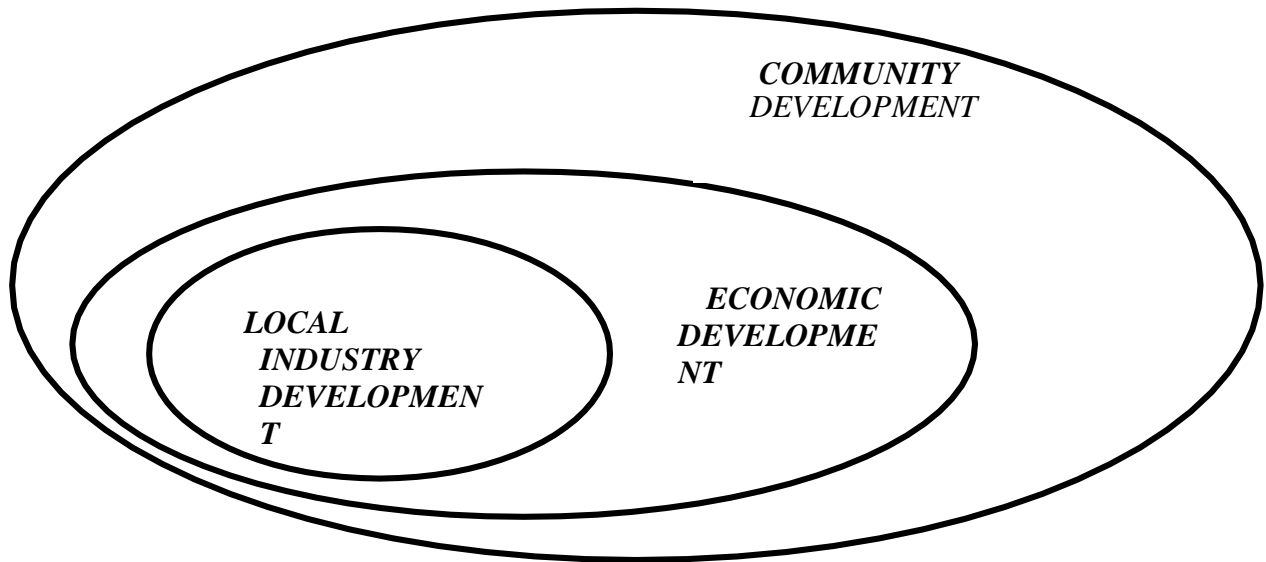
- *Community development is a process that increases choices. It creates an environment where people can exercise their full potential to lead productive, creative lives. – Ron Shaffer (pers. com.).*
- *Community development is a process where people are united with those of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities and communities are integrated into the life of the nation enabling them to contribute fully to national progress. – (United Nations, from Biggs, 1999)*
- *Community capacity is the combined influence of a community's commitment, resources and skills that can be deployed to build on community strengths and address community problems and opportunities – (Aspen Institute, 2000).*
- *Community vitality is the capacity of the local socio-economic system to survive and persist in generating employment, income, and wealth and to maintain if not improve its relative economic position. – Shaffer (1989).*
- *Community economic development is about identifying and harnessing local community resources and opportunities and stimulating sustainable economic and employment activity*
- *saw community development as a process moving from stage to stage; a method of working towards a goal; a program of procedures and as a movement sweeping people up in emotion and belief.*

### ***Community Development or Economic Development?***

*Economic development is part of community development. Local industry development involves facilitation of relatively small groups of industry people addressing specific issues, such as discussion groups or market alliances. This is part of economic development.*

*Economic development involves many of the elements of community development, such as participation, rethinking, action learning etc. However, it specifically aims to improve the relative economic position of the community. Flora et. al. (1992) argues that it does not necessarily lead to improved quality of life nor involve “collective agency”. Economic development largely aims to improve employment, income and the economic base of the community.*

*Economic development is part of community development, which seeks to build all five community capitals, not only enhancing the community's economy but its environment, social structures, attitudes and assets (figure 2).*



*The relationship between industry development, economic development and community development.*

*Practitioners debate whether community development or economic development comes first. Some argue that communities need jobs and income before broader social and human development can occur.*

*Others maintain that new attitudes and knowledge, together with greater organization and wider relationships in the community, underpin economic development. Many community development practitioners describe their work as community economic development.*

### ***Principles***

*There is no “recipe” for a process of community development. Rather, a set of key principles guide a flexible process of engagement and action as follows:*

- *Start where rural people are – the existing concerns and situation of people is the starting point of community development,*
- *Community development creates a vehicle for people to act on existing concerns,*
- *The passion and enthusiasm of local people drives action. Belief, motivation and Commitment are the “fuel in the tank” of community development.*
- *Community ownership/involvement – the community makes and implements Decisions, and the community’s initiative and leadership is the source of change,*
- *People build motivation and community capacity through participation and active involvement in decision-making and implementation,*
- *Inclusiveness – all citizens should be given an equal opportunity to be involved. Effort is required to encourage diverse sectors of the community to participate.*
- *External facilitators and resource people are “invited in” to work **with** rural people, rather than working **for** them, or delivering services **to** them. They have a responsibility to challenge and suggest, but not make or influence community decision-making,*
- *Development activities foster leadership, entrepreneurship and altruism,*
- *The existing capacity of people and their community need to be recognized and appreciated as well as creating opportunities for them to build their capacity,*
- *A holistic approach is used building economic, human, social and environmental aspects of community as an interrelated whole,*
- *“Reframing” – community development helps people redefine problems and opportunities and discover new options,*
- *Changed attitudes and networks are as important as material outcomes,*
- *A diversity of opinion and perspective is welcomed,*
- *Success, no matter how small, needs to be recognized and celebrated,*
- *Activities should be fun and social,*
- *Not all communities are suited to, or prepared for, development activities.*

## *2. Is development synonymous to growth?*

### ***Development, not just growth***

*Regardless of the definition, community development is not just “growth”. Growth means more jobs and more investment but implies “more of the same”. It does not necessarily increase choices, networks or ability to manage change.*

*Development can also sometimes mean “less”, fewer people in a community, or the loss of a manufacturing plant for example could improve the circumstances of what people value in the community. Development can occur without growth and growth can occur without development.*

### ***Clarifying Terms***

*Community development often is associated with terms such as community capacity building, community vitality, empowerment, rural development or self-reliance. The basic elements of collective action, ownership and improved circumstances are common to all these ideas. There may be slight differences in emphasis. For example, while community capacity building focuses on enhancing the assets and abilities of the community, the term is essentially synonymous with community development.*

*The debate increases over the distinction between community development and economic development.*

### *3. Explain the key elements/ingredients for successful projects in community development*

*The key elements or ingredients for successful community development are:*

- *A slight level of dissatisfaction – motivation and enthusiasm based on a feeling That “things could be better”, will always motivate the community towards development process.*
  - *Belief and expectation of self-help – a belief in the future of the community and a conviction that realizing that future depends on the action of community members,*
- *Local Leadership – committed formal and informal leaders that can enthuse and support others, foster “shared leadership”, accept criticism, and act as local champions for community development efforts,*
- *Collaboration – a strong culture of cooperation and participation,*
- *Willingness to experiment and take advantage of opportunities,*
- *Cultivate Allies – actively seek, inform, and network with outside supporters,*
- *Work hard and stay with the process, especially when there is a setback,*
- *Focus on specific actions without losing sight of the “weird and wonderful”.*

*Given these principles and “ingredients”, what would a process of community Development look like?*

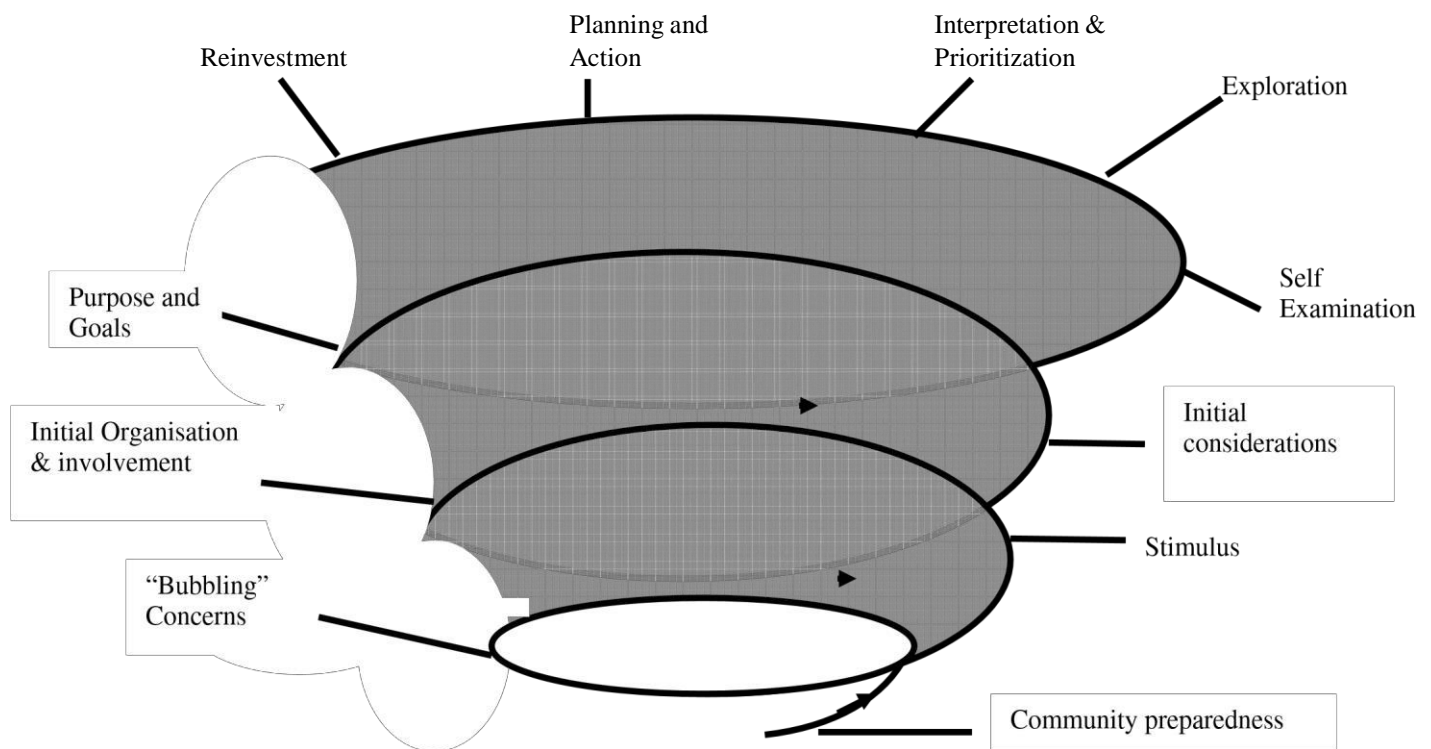


#### 4. With aid of a diagram, explain the community development process

##### **Community Development Process**

*The key to community development is facilitating a community in applying the principles to guide a flexible series of actions that are appropriate for the situation of the community. There are many “models” and frameworks for community development processes. There is a trade-off between communities having clear future plans for steps in the process and retaining flexibility and versatility. Considerable skill, confidence and judgment is needed to maintain an adaptable community-led process guided by the principles of community development.*

*While the application of principles in a flexible process is the key, figure 3 describes a sequence of key steps in a community development process. These steps are not prescriptive, but they rather describe the usual stages that most communities go through during a versatile process of community development. Communities may not progress through all the steps and some may occur concurrently.*



*The general stages in a community development process*

### **1. Community Preparedness**

*Communities need to have some of the key ingredients for a development process – motivation, local leadership, a sense of ownership. Not all communities are interested in, or prepared for, undertaking a process of community development.*

*At any one time, only a few communities may see the need, or have people motivated to organize and lead the community in development activities. Communities may have only a couple of the ingredients for success.*

### **2. “Bubbling” Concerns**

*Community development processes develop from a situation where issues and concerns are “bubbling” around. People are concerned, enthusiastic, motivated, frustrated. Private “troubles” become public concerns as people share issues that matter to them individually. People may begin to see some advantage for them in community improvement.*

*They also may have altruistic feelings of contributing to the welfare of the whole community.*

### **3. Stimulus**

*Often, a stimulus brings the “bubbling” situation to a head. A local crisis, such as a mine closing or business leaving town sparks community action. A local leader, a local community group or several concerned citizens may galvanize community action. “Outside” input such as a visit by a community facilitator, hearing what another community has done, or a visit by local people to a conference may stimulate*

Action. In “prepared” communities even an impassioned speech may turn concern to Action.

#### **4. Initial Organization and Involvement**

After a stimulus often the first step is an event that brings the community together – usually at a public meeting or forum. At this point, community representatives may invite a facilitator or resource person into the community to help with suggestions, information and the process itself. Some community members may have a clear idea of what is needed or what they want to do. Others may simply want to do “something” to improve their community but are not sure what.

#### **5. Engagement and Issues Identification**

After some initial organization, a key step is activities to engage local people and give as diverse range of citizens the opportunity to be involved. Engagement of people occurs throughout a community development process, but it is crucial to actively foster involvement early in the process.

There are several important aspects of engagement. First, it involves understanding the existing concerns of community members. This means identifying what people have passion for, what they feel community issues are, and how interested they are in being involved. Basic questions here are “What are your concerns?”, “How would you like your community to be?”, “Would you like to be involved?”

Second, it is important to ask citizens how they would like to participate. In many community efforts local leaders overlook this. They often choose participation opportunities that they are familiar with, often opting for traditional meetings and committees by default. Asking people how they would like to be involved and actively seeking alternative organizational arrangements and events that are fun and social will help people participate.

### **5. in your own view, what are the challenges faced by project development officials in emergency situations.**

We have discussed the components, principles and processes of community development. Final clarification comes from describing what community development is not.

**It isn’t service delivery:** Rural people are clearly demanding greater service delivery from both government and the private sector. Clearly, providers should give the best service possible. Yet community development is more than delivering services. Delivering what “clients” perceive they need does little to stimulate the “rethinking”, social networks or leadership that builds the ability of communities to manage change.

**It isn’t social work or welfare:** In a community development process, many communities may aim to improve the situation of the unemployed, ill, disabled or poor, strengthen social interaction, or improve social support services. However, community development is not a social welfare program. It is a self-directed process aimed at a broad range of economic, social and environmental community benefits.

**It isn’t a “feel good” exercise:** Community development produces real “bricks and mortar” and “dollars and cents” outcomes. It achieves this through cooperative action, rethinking and organization. But it involves a lot of action and work. It is far more than a morale boosting exercise.

***Conclusion***

*Community development is a process that leads to not only more jobs, income and infrastructure, but also communities that are better able to manage change.*

*Community members can better mobilize existing skills, reframe problems, work cooperatively and use community assets in new ways.*

*Principles of self-help and participation guide a flexible process. While there is no recipe, major steps are identifying existing concerns, engagement, self-examination, exploration, prioritization, planning and action.*

***THE END***

