

TRAINING MODULE FOUR

Christian Community Development

Long term solutions to the problems of the poor come from the local community and church based efforts.

Biblical, practical principles come about from years of living and working with the poor.

Aiming for Good Practice:

First it is important that a worker has a high level of critical self-awareness and reflection. When a worker substitutes their own agenda for the agenda(s) of community the independence and identity of the community are no longer respected. It is foolish to assume that the worker will have no such personal agenda, but it is realistic, indeed necessary, to expect that a worker will be aware of personal agendas and needs and will seek to be sensitive.

A worker may sometimes frame work as doing things “to” or “for” others, rather than “with” others. They will also believe that what they are doing is “for the (others) good.” He will talk about “what this community needs” (without references to the voices of the people themselves). About “what I hope to do or achieve” (not ‘we’) and so on. Hence it is a good idea for the worker to give close attention to the words and terms that he and others use to describe community development.

It is only by stepping back, not rushing in with plans and intervention strategies, but allowing time and space for a process to be established that is truly owned by the community that community development can be genuinely initiated.

The next important principle is the idea of working in solidarity with the community. Working in solidarity implies working with, not for, the people concerned, and that there is a real sense of shared vision. It means that the worker has been able to listen to and understand the agenda of the community and is able to work alongside the people of the community in the process of community development.

Managing community Development Projects:

It is important for a Christian community development worker to manage all projects in the context of core values of ethical community development that are consistent with their Christian worldview.

Seven Components of Christian Community Development:

Relocation (live among the people)

John 1:14 tells us “The Word became flesh and lived among us.” Jesus relocated

The heart of relocation is to make community problems your problems and to minister from within the community as Jesus did.

Reconciliation (Love God and your neighbour Matthew 22: 37-39)

Christian Community Development is reconciling people to God and bringing them into church fellowship where they can be disciplined in their faith.

Based on 2 Corinthians 5 (love of God can change us). Our love for Christ should break down every racial, social or economic barrier.

Redistribution: (Fair distribution of resources)

Christian Community Development finds creative ways to develop jobs, schools, health centres etc.

Sharing our lives, skills and resources in a way that enable people to become all that God intends them to be.

Leadership Development

Raise Christian leaders from the community who will remain to live and lead.

Raising up new leaders, providing discipleship, developing youth ministries and relationship building with each other.

Listening to the Community:

Hearing dreams, ideas, thoughts. Don't focus on needs. Build on assets. Focus on the community members as solutions – not the government or overseas aid.

Church Based (A nurturing community of faith)

All that is being done should be Christ centred, biblical and covered in prayer. Use local people from the community and have a positive village atmosphere.

Holistic Approach

Deals with spiritual, social, economic, cultural, physical, moral, legal, educational and family issues. Christian Community Development sees not only the spiritual but the whole of life as important. People are best helped by commitment to a local church. We are co-operating, not competing. We are not building our church We are building the kingdom. It is important to network with other churches and organisations. We should be aiming for cooperation not competition.

Empowerment (not dependency)

3 principles

1. Must be opportunity to get needs met. People need to have positive outcomes. They need to have control over their situation and to see that they are getting out of poverty.
2. There must be a willingness to work (2 Thessalonians 3:10) "if a man will not work he shall not eat. " We are giving people a "hand up" not a "handout". "Give a person a fish and he will eat for a meal. Teach him how to fish and he will never be hungry."
3. When 1) and 2) are working a person's dignity is affirmed. Charity can demean a person and strip them of dignity. Community development seeks to empower people to take control of their lives.

Conclusion:

The key issue in development is how to deliver services in ways that release the creativity of the people you are helping – not to create dependent people, but how to create in others the desire to give to others.

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FACILITATORS NOTES AND FEEDBACK

<u>Concepts and Ideas</u>	<u>Notes & Questions</u>
<p>1. Pick 3 of the components of Christian Community Development that you believe are most relevant for your context</p>	
<p>2. Explain how these can be enhanced in your context</p>	
<p>3. How will you help deliver services in ways that release the creativity of the people you are helping ?</p>	