

Steps of Community Development

Every community development project or program holds some essential steps/stages which contribute for better results. Following are major steps in community development:

1. Study

Study involves gathering information about community. It also involves study of problem, defining that problem precisely, identifying resources and obstacles and setting the goals. Assessment is made in study which is the most important step in community development as it is the foundation of entire process. During identification of problem, following considerations are very important for community worker or teams:

- **Need Assessment:** Need assessment means to determine that what type of services that community requires to meet human needs. Good development projects require concrete information about the extent of need for services and how well current services are meeting these needs. For this purpose need assessment survey should be carried on in which people of that community are asked about felt needs and services already prevailing. There are also chances to avoid detailed problem assessment in some exceptional cases when emergency services are required i.e., Emergency policies for Earth Quack area in October 2005 and October 2008.
- **Problem definition and Goals setting:** After identification and assessment of the exact problem, problem is defined in a comprehensive and clear way. All facts and figures are clearly assessed and defined. The eventual success of a project/program depends upon establishing clear goals. If there are multiple objectives they must be consistent. They must be flexible enough to change over time as the circumstances change.
- **Identification of Resources and Obstacles:** Resources and obstacles are also assessed for proper identification of problem. Resources mean those things which are available in the community and can be used for community development. While obstacles means all those hurdles that can harm the service provision in properly and smoothly in that community.

2. Planning

Projects are planned and designed on the basis of community needs, problems and availability of resources. Following are the essentials of planning stage:

- **Alternatives Exploration:** Different alternatives are explored, identified and discussed for project/program designing and implementation keeping the available resources in minds. Community development experts, planning experts, community people, leaders and other government and private experts and stakeholders give alternatives and suggestions.
- **Forecasting of Consequences:** It is necessary to forecast what will be and how will be the effects of different explored alternatives. Experts and community workers are now in this position to compare the advantages and disadvantages of the alternatives. It becomes clear what will be the future results of alternatives if adopted.
- **Project/program Choice:** After comparing and forecasting the alternates and effects, now, experts/planning teams choose the best suitable choice which will achieve the desired goals within given resources.

3. Implementation

The implementation of the selected option represents a critical aspect of the community development process. The most carefully crafted project is widely accepted by community people/beneficiaries and its implementation becomes easy. During this third main step, the goals, tasks and other arrangements for implementation are finalized in following way:

- **Manpower Planning:** It is decided in careful way that how much manpower for different tasks is required for how much time. Responsibilities are divided among them to clear the ambiguities.
- **Trainings:** Proper training is made possible for all men working at different levels according to need of their jobs so that implementation would achieve desired objectives.
- **Priorities Setting:** For successful implementation, priorities should be properly laid down. It must be decided which areas are to be approached first, which objectives are to be achieved first, and what would be the sequence of actions carried on. Objectives are also listed priority wise for accomplishment.

- **Adequate Arrangement for Feedback:** Project/program will be successful only when feedback is given by community. Therefore, efforts should be made to get the feedback for knowing the pace of the program run.
- **Harmonization of Inconsistencies:** All good projects carry some methods to harmonize the irregularity or contradictions faced by community workers during implementation. Mostly, there is proper system to rectify the inconsistencies, if any in the project.
- **Adequate Time and Financial Arrangements:** In implementing the project there must be an adequate time frame and finances should be managed carefully and properly as mostly projects depend on finances. Without financial resources, it is impossible to get the desired goals.
- **Community Participation:** A successful implementation of project is possible only with the full community participation. As projects are made for communities and they are only prime force which can lead the implementation of project towards success.

4. Evaluation

The implementation stage is not the final step in the process. The effectiveness of the project needs to be assessed after a certain period of time, and steps must be taken to ensure that there are resources and means to maintain a successful project.

Evaluation is an analysis by which one is able to understand and appreciate the merits and deficiencies of project or program after implementation. Evaluation is helpful to know the reasons of success or failure of project and consequently, it is helpful to improve the weaknesses in future projects. It is also used as guideline for projects/programs.