

Engaging women through Community led project. Challenges and Lessons learnt in Nigeria

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WHAT are community-led projects?



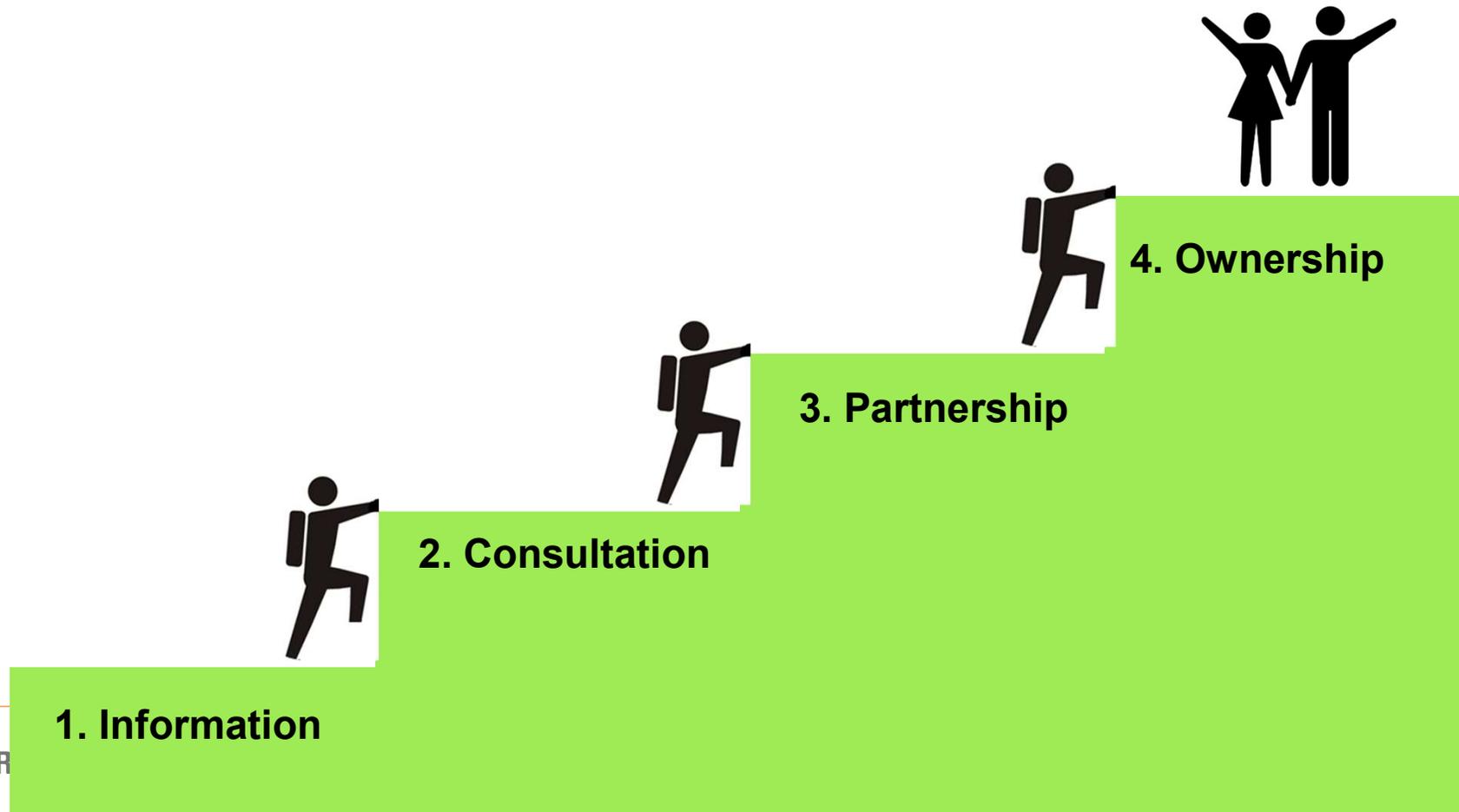
- Handing over the project design and implementation to the community, based on their priorities
- Based on agreed project criteria
- Build on community-based solutions and action plans
- Include handing over cash grants or assets for implementation
- Include coaching & support from CM agency

And what are **community-based solutions**?

- Identified by the community
- Rely on skills and resources within the community
- Can be material or non-material
- The CM agency should support when necessary, but ideally the community can continue to drive the solution without CM agency's support



WHY community-led projects?



Why CLP

To truly reach the empowerment or ownership level of participation, communities should be able to make real decisions about which problems are addressed and how resources are used, and to take a leading role in designing and implementing solutions. Community-based projects can be an avenue to reach this level of participation. For a solution to be community-based. It means that it is identified and proposed by the community members themselves and they take ownership of the solution. It means that it is based on the capacities within the community and not external capacities. It means that the community is mobilized to implement the solution, with or without external assistance, what matters is that the community is driving it and can ideally continue to drive it without continued external support.

By taking a step back and allowing the community structure to lead the process from the problem identification and prioritization to developing solutions and implementing these, the community structure and other community members are more likely to take ownership of the project, it becomes more sustainable and likely to continue on after the Supporting agency team has exited the community.



Project Implemented

Introduction

NRC has been supporting women groups and community structures with capacity building trainings in topics such as problem identification and prioritization. In several of our community structure meetings and CFRM desk, we have received request to support several groups with livelihood support and skills acquisition training on several skills identified by groups especially women committee members.

Project One

Support to Livelihood project

NRC in consultation with community leaders and women representatives decided to support women in the community through community led project on skill acquisition training and funding to acquire skills such as tailoring, soap making and cap knitting targeting 300 women participant in 10 camps due to budget constraint.

The Idea is to train this women in this skills over a period of time and provide them with seed money (Capital) to start of local business after graduation. This women are to also train other women from the community using the skills they learnt and resources provide by NRC.



Project 1 continued

Together with NRC the women committee prepared a project Budget, proposal and BoQ detailing what is required and specifications needed. Through community engagement we were able to identify specialized trainers in the community who are registered and government approved to conduct this skills acquisition programs.

A CLP committee was set up to oversee the beneficiaries selection this committee consist of NRC staff, women representatives and community leaders. Selection criteria was agreed upon by the committee and mass awareness sessions and community engagement was conducted to educate people and raise awareness as who will be selected and why.

Status of project: Ongoing



Project 2

Support to women adult education classes

NRC CCCM received request to support voluntary teachers who conduct evening classes to teach camp women how to speak and write in English in one of our camp. This adult education classes targeted women from the camp and host community, and have been suffering from lack of funding and resources as it was a voluntary based engagement from retired teachers. NRC engaged women committee members and community leaders through FGD and meetings to understand the impact and importance of the adult education and benefit to women educations. NRC through community led project is providing education materials such as books, pens, boards and other requested materials, while also referring/advocating for support for the adult education project to education partners and government ministry of women affairs and education who can be able to provide a more comprehensive education package.

Status of Project: Planning and assessment phase



Challenges

- Identification of specialized trainers
- Identification of local specialized trainers
- Finding a balance between organization policy and community ownership of the project in terms of documentation and processes.
- Beneficiaries selection and managing expectations.
- Community leaders interference in project planning, beneficiaries selection and project implementation.



Lessons learnt

- Using the Community-Led Project Beneficiary Selection Guidelines in chapter 4 of CCT. NRC CCCM team in collaboration with community leaders and women representatives can come up with an acceptable selection criteria. the NRC CCCM team role was ensuring the engagement of women and marginalized groups.
- Be flexible in your planning.
- Ensure to engage all major stakeholders early on. Especially community leaders, religious leaders and men groups who often times can be an opposition to women engagement.
- Capacity building and effective communication is required to mitigate against both cultural and social barriers limiting women engagement in our context. Especially engaging community leaders in dialogue and open conversations is required to gain their trust and buy in into projects only targeting women in the community.
- Engage the community on go and see visit to training facilities





International Organization for Migration (IOM)

The UN Migration Agency



Engaging Women In Community Led Projects

NORTH EAST NIGERIA



THE PROCESS

- There was training of staff from IOM and NRC on CCT.
- Staff were taken through a mock CLP process and were given practical tips on how to implement process at community level.
- There was prioritization and targeting of sites.
- In Borno state two sites in Hard To Reach Areas and two sites around metropolitan area were selected. One site selected in Adamawa state.
- There were prior consultations with the government as the CCCM Sector Working Group lead and government camp managers to secure the necessary approval.
- There were also initial consultations with community leadership.
- Women were included in the initial community consultations.



THE PROCESS contd

- There was selection of focal points. These Focal Points were allocated particular sites.
- The focal points were given further technical support and tools.
- Implementation workplans were drafted per site to ensure that all the key stages were being followed.
- Weekly feedback meetings were organized to ensure that support was provided to deal with field level challenges.
- There was emphasis on documentation of proceedings.
- There was identification of competent interpreters to ensure that all community meetings were in the common languages of the affected populations.



EXAMPLES OF COMMUNITY LED PROJECTS IN NORTH EAST NIGERIA

- Construction of Local Drainage Channels.
- Clean up up of existing drainage channels.
- Clean up sites.
- Excavation of new Waste Disposal Pits.
- Household Nutrition Gardens.
- Repair of infrastructure e.g WASH, Shelter
- Repair of shelter for EVIs and PWSNs
- Livelihood projects for youth and women.



Custom House Camp Local Drainage Construction



CHALLENGES

- Multiple languages spoken by the affected populations. To address this there was usage of multiple interpreters.
- Literacy challenges among the affected populations. Problem tree analysis process was difficult to conduct for some sites. To address this there was use of open discussions. These need to be recorded for documentation.
- Some communities failed to agree on prioritization of problems to be tackled. These groups had to split.
- There was domination of men in discussions due to deeply patriarchal set up of society. Facilitators had to accommodate women and ensure that their opinions were expressed at critical stages.
- Lack of confidence from women in expressing themselves. Facilitators encouraged the women to contribute through various means. E.g Involvement of women in key support functions like translation.
- Securing land for some of the CLPs was a challenge.

LESSONS LEARNT

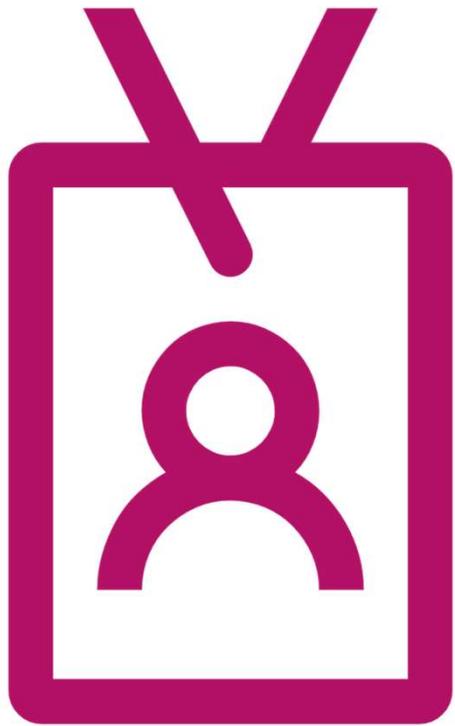
- Securing a buy in from government stakeholders is crucial and gains the confidence of communities in the process.
- There is need for deliberate measures to bolster the confidence of women for them to participate in the context of deeply patriarchal societies. Leadership training is crucial and needs to be regular. Refresher trainings to women leaders on their roles and responsibilities.
- Changes in societal attitudes take a long time and need to involve usage of multiple strategies. The content in sensitization sessions and the methods used need to be diversified to ensure that its not monotonous.
- Greater effort has to be exerted for men to understand the importance of women participation in deeply patriarchal societies.
- The project staff need to include both women and men. For IOM all project staff included both men and women.

LESSONS LEARNT contd.

- The religious and cultural norms that may inhibit women participation need to be mapped out from the beginning and strategies crafted on how to tackle them. For example men and women not being allowed to sit in one meeting or women not being allowed to talk during a public meeting when a large number of men are present.
- Meetings have to be arranged at suitable times that women can attend. Due consideration has to be given to their traditional household chores.
- Women need to be given some key roles during the project to ensure their involvement. A critical stage is the action planning stage where tasks that specifically can be contributed by women should be agreed. An example is community mobilization tasks. Even for projects that require heavy manual labour women have particular roles to play.

LESSONS LEARNT contd.

- There is need to invest in communication with affected populations particularly language support. Usage of appropriate languages ensures that women are not relying on men for them to understand the processes and content being delivered. The interpretation and translation into local languages must be of good quality. IOM was able to leverage on its partnership with Translators Without Borders which has been providing language support services in North East Nigeria.



Thanks for
participating-
Time for
questions.