AGENCIES, COMMUNITIES, AND CHILDREN

A Report of the Interagency Learning Initiative: Engaging Communities for Children's Well-Being

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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ACRONYMS

AI	Appreciative Inquiry
CBO	Community-based Organization
CCF	Christian Children's Fund
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
ILI	Interagency Learning Initiative: Engaging with Communities for Child Well-being
PLA	Participatory Learning and Action
PLWH	People Living with HIV/AIDS
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

All organizations and governmental agencies involved in relief and development work engage with communities in the course of their work. This engagement has been extensive and varied, including among the many approaches: direct service provision, advocacy, rights promotion, public education, and the mobilization of action by communities. While there is an extensive literature on working with communities, there does not appear to be any document that presents a consensus or common point of reference regarding good practice for such work.

Recognizing both the importance to children of effective work with communities and the absence of a clear consensus on good practices, in May 2007, a group of practitioners came together to initiate an exchange and mutual learning process on programming issues in this area. They formed a Steering Committee with representatives of the following agencies:

- Christian Children's Fund
- Displaced Children and Orphans Fund of USAID (DCOF, convening organization)
- Firelight Foundation
- International Rescue Committee

- Program on Forced Migration and Health, Columbia University
- Search for Common Ground
- World Neighbors
- World Vision

Eventually named the Interagency Learning Initiative: Engaging with Communities for Child Well-being (ILI), the group decided that a starting point would be a review of key documents and interviews with experienced practitioners. DCOF provided the initial funding for a consultant to carry out this review, which considered contexts ranging from emergencies and conflict through post-conflict to long term development. Twenty-one agency practitioners with experience in Asia, Africa and Latin America were interviewed, and fifty-six documents from various operational contexts and regions were reviewed. The document review, however, was not exhaustive since a review of the wider literature on the topic was not possible within the relatively short consultation.

The aim of the report is to identify key issues, as a step toward the development of a broad consensus on good practice in engaging with communities to promote children's safety and well-being. This report is written with a focus on the role that agencies play in community engagement and does not pretend to reflect community perspectives. Eliciting community views on their experience with agencies is another and important next step that ILI is working towards, but it was not within the scope of the research that provides the basis for this report,

The report includes a typology of four basic approaches for engaging with communities, and this typology provides a framework that is referenced throughout the report. The report concludes with

recommendations for a way forward to improve the consistency and effectiveness of community engagement for children's well-being. It is presented with the intention of raising key issues worthy of consideration and discussion by practitioners and donors.

The twenty-one practitioners interviewed represent various agencies and backgrounds and have worked with communities in initiatives that intended directly or indirectly to benefit children. The ILI Steering Committee proposed and purposively sought out a group of practitioners with a depth and breadth of experience in engaging with communities in order to complement the document review. While those interviewed have extensive and varied experience in several regions, their views are not presented as representative of practitioners generally. Steering Committee members also participated in reviewing and refining this report.

This paper raises key issue and is one step toward improving agencies' work with communities for children. Information on three working ILI working groups is included in Appendix 3, and readers are encouraged to consider joining any or all of these groups.

Findings on Enabling and Constraining Factors

Recurring themes emerged during the analysis of documents and the interviews, and the two lists below reflect these. There were ***ten enabling factors* that** emerged as representative of good practice. Also, ***six constraints*** were identified that mitigate against good practice for engagement with communities. Each list is presented below:

Enabling Factors for Good Practice

1. Attitudes (respect, humility, listening)
2. Participatory Methods
3. Children's Participation
4. Mobilizing Internal Resources
5. Role of the External Agency
6. Use of External Resources
7. Community to Community Exchange
8. Time and Pace
9. Scale
10. Use of Human Rights Standards

Constraints on Good Practice

1. Donor Requirements
2. Exigencies of Project Planning
3. Other Agencies' Practices
4. Conflict
5. Power Dynamics/ Harmful Community Practices

The contents of the responses to each interview were subsequently assessed according to the degree of emphasis each practitioner gave to each of these themes. In the report, where each of these themes is discussed a chart is included that shows the degree of emphasis it was given by the practitioners interviewed. The charts are included as visual summaries of emphasis, not as any sort of definitive measurement of importance and are only included where they illustrate a noteworthy pattern. Similarly, quotes from the interviews are included to provide texture to the discussion of the key themes.

Some of the overarching questions that the report addresses are:

1. What are the different approaches and possible enabling factors that agencies can consider when engaging with communities for the well-being of children?

2. How can donors enable practitioners to create space that is more conducive to community led and managed projects that will be sustained?

3. Are we really listening to communities when we seek to engage with them for community-led, sustainable initiatives? If not, how can we adjust our strategies to make sure that we engage in a genuine dialogue with communities? How can we engage with community sub-groups and people who are often "invisible" in community discussions and mobilization efforts more fully?

4. What are the values needed to make actions meaningful when engaging with communities for the well-being of children? Are agencies adequately training and monitoring field personnel regarding their attitudes and behavior in relation to the community members with whom they work?

5. How can agencies tailor the mode of working alongside communities for child well-being, considering the context and desired outcomes of the initiative?

Summary of Key Findings

There were some noteworthy points of convergence between the interviews and the document review. For example, every respondent and many of the resources mentioned **attitudes** of agency staff as a key enabling factor, especially the attributes of *respect, humility, and listening*. Also, almost all practitioners interviewed and documents reviewed emphasized or made some mention of the importance of **mobilizing internal community resources** and facilitating from the start of the engagement process. Perhaps most dramatically, there was near universally strong emphasis that **donor requirements and the architecture of aid constrain good practice**. The emphasis was strong enough and varied enough to reduce concern that it was simply a "scapegoat" reflex.

One factor that stood out due to a marked divergence between documents and practitioners, was the use of **Human Rights standards**. Manuals and guides reviewed mentioned this as an enabling factor very often, while practitioners mentioned it only rarely. There were also differences of opinion as to whether an agency should provide **incentives or stipends for volunteers** in community-based initiatives. There does not appear to be an absolute resolution to this dilemma, rather a choice based on whether a community has determined an activity needs to be ongoing and whether there is the potential for an agency or the government to pay stipends on an ongoing basis.

<u>**Recommendations for a Way Forward**</u>

1. Encourage discussion and reflection on attitudes and values within agencies.

To improve the effectiveness and quality of community engagement it is important for agencies to give greater attention to attitudes when orienting and training personnel. This applies to all

four approaches to community engagement in the report's typology. Agencies should consider and learn from each other how to orient and train for as well as monitor attitudes of expatriate and national staff regarding the community members with whom they interact. In addition to training, equal or greater emphasis should be given to organizational culture, and processes that shape staff attitudes. Agencies that have developed effective approaches to addressing staff attitudes and values should document and disseminate their methods and lessons learned.

2. **Create opportunities for increased dialogue and engagement with donors**.

   There is a need to engage donors to develop improved systems of funding and reporting as well as time frames for action that will facilitate effective work with communities. The report's Typology can be a useful reference point. Discussions with donors should address the parameters for each of the four different approaches to community engagement, relevant benchmarks, and outcomes.

3. **Develop a more robust research and evidence base for good practice.**

   For each category of the Typology, there needs to be stronger research and evidence that undergirds its assumptions about the strengths and limitations of each approach to community engagement. Comparative operations research could help clarify the factors to consider when determining which of the four approaches is the most appropriate to achieve particular results in a given context. Such studies should give particular attention to community expectations and assessments of the different approaches to engagement.

4. **Make space for community feedback.**

   The communities with whom agencies work, while often at the receiving end of initiatives, rarely have a chance to assess and help refine agency approaches based on their experiences. Agencies would benefit from a greater focus on community perceptions, and such information could improve the reality base for discussions with donors.

5. **Create a mechanism for the development of guiding principles.**

   It would be beneficial for agencies that engage with communities to have a common reference point of guiding principles. The Typology should be refined and could be used as a framework for organizing such principles. If so, the guiding principles should avoid implying that there is a hierarchy of approaches. Guiding principles for community engagement should include particular attention to the implications of conflict for community engagement. Many practitioners who work in less stable contexts mentioned this as a gap in resources.

   It would be beneficial for agencies that engage with communities to have a common reference point of guiding principles. The Typology should be refined and could be used as a framework for organizing such principles. If so, the guiding principles should avoid implying that there is a hierarchy of approaches. Guiding principles for community engagement should include particular attention to the implications of conflict for community engagement, as many practitioners who work in less stable contexts mentioned this as a gap in resources. The

document should be relatively concise, including broad principles on what is appropriate when engaging with a community. It should not attempt to specify particular methods for how to engage with communities. It should also include definitions of key terms.

INTRODUCTION

All organizations and governmental agencies involved in relief and development work engage with communities in the course of their work. This engagement with communities has been extensive and varied, including among the many approaches: direct service provision, advocacy, rights promotion, public education, and the mobilization of action by communities. While there is an extensive published and gray literature concerning engagement with communities, there does not appear to be any document that presents a consensus or common point of reference regarding good practice for such work.

Recognizing both the importance to children of effective work with communities and the absence of a clear consensus on good practices, in May 2007, a group of agencies came together to initiate an exchange and mutual learning process on programming issues in this area. They formed a Steering Committee with representatives of the following agencies:

- Christian Children's Fund
- Displaced Children and Orphans Fund (DCOF) of USAID
- Firelight Foundation
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- Program on Forced Migration and Health, Columbia University
- Search for Common Ground
- World Neighbors
- World Vision

Eventually named the Interagency Learning Initiative: Engaging with Communities for Child Well-being (ILI), the group decided that a starting point would be a review of key documents combined with interviews with a group of experienced practitioners. The Steering Committee developed a scope of work and Nicole Behnam was selected to undertake this work. DCOF provided the initial funding. This review considered contexts ranging from emergencies and conflict through post-conflict to long term development. With assistance from the ILI Steering Committee, twenty-one practitioners with experience in Asia, Africa and Latin America and from a variety of agencies and backgrounds were indentified and subsequently interviewed by Ms. Benham (See Appendix 1). She also reviewed fifty-six documents from the various environments and regions that the Steering Committee also helped to identify (See Appendix 2).

The report includes a typology of the various approaches for engaging with communities and some conclusions and recommendations for the way forward based on the review. It identifies potential enabling factors for as well as constraints on good practice. Quotes, definitions and concepts are included from a variety of sources to reflect the views of practitioners and thinkers who have dedicated time, effort and passion to community engagement throughout the world. The process of developing and reviewing the report has been participatory, in the interest of encouraging a broad sense of ownership of the findings.

The aim of the report is to identify key issues, as a step toward the eventual development of consensus on good practice in engaging with communities to promote children's safety and well-being. The practitioners interviewed each has significant experience in agency efforts to engage with communities to improve the safety and well-being of vulnerable children, but their views must be considered indicative, not representative of the views of all such practitioners. Also, the documents reviewed included selected guidance material, analytical pieces, and reports, while significant, they represent only a portion of the relevant literature. The report is presented with the intention of raising key issues worthy of consideration and discussion by practitioners and donors. It is one contribution in what the ILI Steering Committee anticipates will be a larger set of documents and interactive processes to address the goal of improving the ways that agencies work with communities to benefit children.

June 2-4, 2008, the ILI, together with the Care and Protection of Children in Crisis Affected Countries Initiative of Columbia University's Program on Forced Migration and Health and with support from DCOF, carried out a workshop, "Engaging in Communities for Child Wellbeing." At the conclusion of the workshop three working groups were formed to carry forward key action:

1. Building an Evidence Base

2. Developing Agency Staff Values, Attitudes, and Competencies

3. Refining ILI Typology and Conceptual Framework

These working groups are described in Appendix 3, and interested readers are encouraged to join any or all of these groups.

Purpose

The report is primarily descriptive rather than prescriptive. The aim of ILI in developing parameters for the report was for the consultant to identify themes and to assess the extent to which there is consensus around them. It is important to note that this report is written with a focus on the role that agencies play in community engagement and does not pretend to reflect community perspectives. Eliciting community views on their experience with agencies is another and important next step that ILI is working towards, but it was not within the scope of the research that provides the basis for this report. Rather, this report reflects the perspective of the agencies and is therefore only a part of the story.

The report is presented as a preliminary effort to identify key issues and areas of agency consensus and divergence around them. *It is presented with the hope that it can help define issues and provide a basis for discussion so that exchange and further learning can take place, with a view toward developing consensus on what constitutes good practice when engaging with communities with the aim of benefiting children.* This may eventually include an interagency process for the development of guiding principles for this area of work.

Process of Review and Data Analysis

The practitioners interviewed represent various agencies and backgrounds and have worked with communities on initiatives that intended directly or indirectly to benefit children. The ILI Steering Committee proposed and purposively sought out a group of practitioners with a depth and breadth of experience in engaging with communities in order to complement the document review. While those interviewed have extensive and varied experience in several regions, their views are not presented as representative of practitioners generally.

Recurring themes emerged during the analysis of documents and interviews, and these are listed below. The consultant assessed and analyzed, and illustrative quotes were extracted. To identify the key issues raised by the practitioners interviewed, the consultant reviewed her interview notes using a simple thematic coding process, adapted from Maxwell's book[1] on qualitative research. The initial categories she used were drawn from ILI discussions, and these were "ownership," "sustainability," "agency issues," (internal) and "systems issues" (concerning the architecture of aid). She initially organized the data under these sub-headings and then fractured it into additional categories that emerged through reviewing the data, each of which represented a topic of concern to the practitioners.

In order to assess the degree of emphasis practitioners had given to the topics identified, she coded each interview as to whether topics had been mentioned just once briefly, in which case it was rated as "some reference" or if it had been discussed in greater detail it was rated as having had "strong emphasis." Pie charts are included in the text to provide a graphic indication of the degrees of emphasis practitioners gave to the various topics. For every interview, each theme or concept was rated as to whether it was given "some reference" (one limited reference) , "strong emphasis" (lengthy or multiple reference), or "no mention." Pie charts are used to illustrate the degree of emphasis given to several of the issues that emerged. They are only included where they illustrate a noteworthy pattern.

Selected quotes from the interviews and documents are included in the report. At the beginning of each interview, the practitioner was assured that no attribution of specific remarks would be included in the report, and this did facilitate their willingness to describe not just examples of successful agency engagement, but also of mistakes and misunderstandings when it came to working with communities. Both positive and negative examples are included in this report, since it is important to learn from both.

Documents reviewed include manuals and guides from a variety of contexts (geographic and situational, from conflict and emergency through development), as well as evaluations and assessments of current and past programs. In addition to reviewing them for substantive input into the report, the consultant also assessed the level of emphasis they gave to the issues that arose through the interviews. Quotes from documents are cited.

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[1] Joseph Maxwell, *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*, Sage Publications, 2004.

Information from the interviews are compared and contrasted with that from documents. Where differences emerged between practitioner experience and opinion, on the one hand, and the literature on the other, these issues are flagged as needing further exploration and discussion. In some places the interview and document analysis have been organized into separate sections. However, where they were in sync, they have been merged for the sake of brevity. The consultant conducted the interviews, analyzed their contents, reviewed documents, and prepared a series of draft reports that the ILI Steering Committee reviewed, contributed to, and refined.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The findings from the review of documents and interviews are presented in three inter-related sections. **Definitions** of key terms are presented first. Second, a **Typology of Agency Approaches to Engaging with Communities** is included that provides points of reference for the analysis that follows. Beyond this report, this Typology may also be used as tool for generating discussion among practitioners and donors of the advantages, disadvantages, and requirements of different approaches to community engagement. Third, **themes that emerged from the documents and interviews** are presented, and these are divided into enabling factors for good practice and constraints on good practice.

Questions

Five overarching questions emerged that readers may find useful to consider when reviewing the findings presented in the following sections:

1. What are the different approaches that agencies can use when engaging with communities for the well-being of children?

2. How can donors enable practitioners to create space that is more conducive to community led and managed projects that will be sustained?

3. Are we really listening to communities when we seek to engage with them for community-led, sustainable initiatives? If not, how can we adjust our strategies to make sure that we engage in a genuine dialogue with communities? How can we engage with community sub-groups and people who are often "invisible" in community discussions and mobilization efforts more fully?

4. What are the values needed to make actions meaningful when engaging with communities for the well-being of children? Are agencies adequately training and monitoring field personnel regarding their attitudes and behavior in relation to the community members with whom they work?

5. How can agencies tailor the mode of working alongside communities for child well-being, considering the context and desired outcomes of the initiative?

Caveat on Interview Data and Charts: The summary charts included in various places in the report do not have statistical significance. *Instead, they are meant only as a visual summary of the degree of emphasis given to key themes the discussions with twenty-one experienced practitioners.*

The Steering Committee proposed and purposively sought out a small group of practitioners with a depth and breadth of experience in the field of agency engagement with communities. The practitioners interviewed were from a variety of agencies and backgrounds and have worked with communities in ways that either directly or indirectly support children. Twelve of the interviewees had a background primarily in development contexts and eight have backgrounds in emergency and conflict-affected contexts.

A semi-structured interview guide and process were applied in order to focus on gaining a richness of data rather than attempting the more grandiose and less realistic aim of gathering data that is technically representative or generalizable. In this case, the report was attempting to glean not definitive answers, rather questions and possible answers for consideration in future discussions.

Another caveat regarding this analysis is that interviews were generally completed in a single session, ranging between 1 hour and 2 hours, so "no mention" of certain topics might simply reflect the fact that time was limited, or perhaps that it did not spring to mind in the context of the discussion. Therefore, it would be misguided to place too much weight on the levels of "emphasis" reflected in the charts. However, this loose rating system can still be useful, not as a definitive measurement of importance but rather as an indication of practitioner "discourse," reflecting issues that may emerge when people discuss engaging with communities for the well-being of children.

Some Definitions of Key Terms

Confusion sometimes arises when stakeholders use the same terms to mean different things. The following are examples of useful definitions of key terms related to community engagement:

Community

> Community can be described as a group of people that recognizes itself or is recognized by outsiders as sharing common cultural, religious or other social features, and a common background and interests, forming a collective identity with common goals. However, what is externally perceived as a community may in fact be an entity with many subgroups or communities, divided into clans or castes or by social class, language, religion and so on (UNHCR, 2007, pp.8-9).

> Community refers not only to a group of people who live in a defined territory, but also to groups of people who may be physically separated but who are connected by other common characteristics, such as profession, interests, age, ethnic origin, or language (Howard-Grabman, L. and Snetro, 2003, p.261).

Community: a concept pertaining essentially to social relations, a group of people, less self-sufficient than society, but who have closer "associations" and deeper sympathy among members than society in general. Members of a community often share a common identity, tend to use a common language, have clear criteria for membership and understand the social boundaries within which they operate. There are social and psychological ties among members, and often a connection with a geographic area. While one of the functions of community is to promote common interest, relationships of dominance and dependency exist in communities as they do in all human organizations (Gubbels and Koss, 2000, p.2).

Community-Based Approach

Community-based approach is a way of working that is based on an inclusive partnership with communities of persons of concern, which recognizes their resilience, capacities and resources. It mobilizes and builds on these to deliver protection, assistance and solutions while supporting community processes and goals....It calls for the recognition of our facilitation role as external actors and *our* limitations in terms of capacities, resources and the temporary nature of our presence, as well as the longer-term impact of our interventions. The community-based approach reinforces the dignity and self-esteem of the people of concern and seeks to empower all the actors to work together to support the different members of the community in exercising and enjoying their human rights (UNHCR, 2007, p.8).

Community-Based Organization (CBO)

"[A]n inclusive type of organization created and controlled by local people for their own benefit. These can be traditional organizations or more recently formed groups designed to help members meet their basic needs and further common interests. Examples include self-help groups, savings and credit groups and village development committees" (Gubbels & Koss, p.182).

Community Development

"[C]ommunity development can be understood as a social-political change process (i.e., planned intervention) undertaken by an organized group of people, to improve the social, economic, cultural and/or environmental situation of their community" (Gubbels, 1999, p.6).

Community Mobilization

"Also referred to as *community action* or *animation*, the process stimulated by a community itself or by external change agents of helping communities identify and take action on shared health or social concerns. The community mobilization process also aims to strengthen the community's capacity to address its future needs" (Phiri et al, 2001, p.7).

In these guidelines, the term 'community mobilisation' refers to efforts made from both inside and outside the community to involve its members (groups of people, families, relatives, peers, neighbours or others who have a common interest) in all the discussions, decisions and actions that affect them and their future. As people become

more involved, they are likely to become more hopeful, more able to cope and more active in rebuilding their own lives and communities. At every step, relief efforts should support participation, build on what local people are already doing to help themselves and avoid doing for local people what they can do for themselves (From IASC, 2007, p.61).

Community Mobilization can be defined as a process whereby local groups are assisted in clarifying and expressing their needs and objectives and in taking collective action to attempt to meet them. It emphasizes the involvement of the people themselves in determining and meeting their own needs. It is closely linked with the concepts of participation and resilience (ARC, 2001, p.4).

Ownership

"Ownership is achieved when the persons of concern in the community assume full responsibility for the continuity of the work and are managing the activities and services; this is the overriding goal of our work …Ownership is the end result of a process that has respected the principles of meaningful participation and empowerment" (UNHCR, 2007, p.13).

"Ownership is the sense among those involved that the problems identified are theirs and that they hold primary responsibility for addressing them" (Donahue and Mwewa, p. i).

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)

PRA is a label given to a growing family of participatory approaches and methods that emphasize local knowledge and enable local people to make their own appraisal, analysis, and plans. PRA uses group animation and exercises to facilitate information sharing, analysis, and action among stakeholders. …The purpose of PRA is to enable development practitioners, government officials, and local people to work together to plan context-appropriate programs (World Bank, 1999, Appendix 1).

Participatory Learning and Action (PLA)

"PLA is a method for tackling concerns in a community based on the idea that community members are the best 'experts' about their own situations…By working together, community members can increase local understanding of an issue, such as the increasing number of orphans and children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS, and solve related problems based on the resources available" (CARE, 1999, p.F-ii).

A Typology of Approaches for Engaging with Communities

The categories included in this typology are referenced throughout the document as broadly representing different types of engagement that agencies undertake with communities to benefit

children.[2] This typology is presented as a tool for discussion and considerations of alternative ways to engage with communities and of the different requirements and potential of each approach. It is based on several working assumptions:

- There are four fundamentally different ways that agencies engage with communities,

- Each is potentially valid and has particular strengths and limitations,

- Each of these approaches establishes (explicitly or implicitly) particular roles and responsibilities for the agency and the community (and in some cases the government),

- These roles and responsibilities generate expectations on the part of the community and the agency for each other,

- These expectations, which are not always clearly expressed, tend to shape the ongoing relationship between the agency and the community, and

- As a consequence of these different roles, responsibilities, and expectations, the potential continuity or sustainability for the activities initiated through each approach is significantly different.

A key dynamic that underlies the distinctions among the four categories in the typology is that of "ownership" on the part of the community. This can be understood as, "the sense among those involved that the problems identified are theirs and that they hold primary responsibility for addressing them."[3] With the first category, the community sees the intervention as the responsibility of the agency that intervenes with the community; the agency owns the intervention. With the second category, the community sees responsibility as being shared with the agency; there is some degree of partnership between the agency and the community. The community's sense of its responsibility may range from limited to extensive, but it sees ownership as being shared to some extent with the agency. Consequently, the continuity of the activities involved depends on the continued involvement of the agency and the community. With the third category, the community has taken ownership of the issue and sees itself as responsible for addressing it. The agency's ongoing role, if any, is seen by the community as supportive. With the fourth category, the agency's involvement follows a community's having taken responsibility for addressing an issue, and, as with the third category, its role is supportive.

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[2] An early version of this typology was included in Annex 10, "Closing the Gap: Scaling up Action to Improve the Lives of Children Made Vulnerable by HIV/AIDS in Zimbabwe," John Williamson, in Peter McDermott, et al., "Report on the Mid-term Review of the STRIVE Project," submitted to Catholic Relief Services/Zimbabwe and USAID/Zimbabwe July 10, 2003.

[3] Donahue, J. & Mwewa, L. (2006). Community Action and the Test of Time: Learning from Community

Experiences and Perceptions. Case Studies of Mobilization and Capacity Building to Benefit Vulnerable Children in Malawi and Zambia. (http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADI161.pdf), p, i.

In the typology, the category "Agency" refers to an organizational entity that engages directly with a community. This category reflects roles and activities often carried out by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), but it is also important to recognize that governmental agencies and international agencies can also play these roles. The term "catalyst" used in the typology is borrowed from chemistry. It refers to something that enables a reaction to take place but is not, itself, a part of the resulting new substance. It suggests that an agency's mobilization role is time limited, with the purpose of bringing about a change within a community that enables community members in the longer term to continue with activities of their choosing without the direct involvement of the agency.

	Process of Initiation	Roles			Implementation Method	Specific Activities	Resource Base	Continuity
		Agency	Community	Government				
1. Direct implementation by agency	Agency submits proposal to funder and secures funding Contract is negotiated for delivery of specific services to targeted beneficiaries to be carried out by agency	Service provider	Beneficiaries	Informed of activities and generally some approval given, May play oversight or coordination role	Paid staff of a funded agency implement specific activities for targeted beneficiaries within the community Residents may be hired as staff, but agency oversees implementation	Determined by funder and agency, possibly with community consultation	External funding Agency expertise	Depends on continuity of funding
2. Community involvement in agency initiative	As above, and in addition, the agency persuades specific community members to carry out specific activities with agency training and support Agency enlists, trains, and supports community volunteers to carry out specific activities	Promoter of an initiative Planner Trainer	Volunteers Beneficiaries	Informed of activities Govt. ministry may take over support role when agency leaves Agency may do training and capacity building in appropriate government ministry to promote sustainability	A funded agency supports community volunteers to carry out specific activities for targeted beneficiaries (priorities set by external agency, perhaps in consultation with community) Residents may be hired as staff, but agency oversees implementation	Determined by funder and agency, possibly with community consultation	External funding Agency expertise Volunteer action by community members Possible use of community resources (e.g. land, expertise, facilities) External agency may or may not provide	Depends on continuity of funding and : - Concern about problems addressed - Sense of responsibility for the response - Capacity to carry out responsibilities

	Process of Initiation	Roles			Implementation Method	Specific Activities	Resource Base	Continuity
		Agency	**Community**	**Government**				
							volunteers financial or material incentives	
							Possible government roles	
3. Community owned and managed activities mobilized by external agency	Mobilized by external agency with goal of fostering community ownership and independent management.	Catalyst *	Analysts	Any of the above are possible	Community members carry out and manage activities they have planned (This may be initially supported by agency, with agency involvement phasing out over time.)	Determined by community, initially in consultation with mobilizing/ capacity building agency	Basis is community action and local resources	Determined by community's :
		Capacity builder	Planners					- Concern about problems addressed
			Implementers				May include external resources (e.g. material inputs, expertise, training, info, funding)	
	Agency enables community to analyze its own situation, identify priorities for who and what to focus on, and to develop/implement a plan of action based on its priorities.	Agency may facilitate the building of inter- and intra-community linkages	Assessors (above roles may initially be supported by agency working in partnership w/community)		Agency often helps build capacity of community to independently manage activities.	Cannot be predetermined by mobilizing agency		- Availability of local resources - Sense of ownership of the response
	Agency builds capacity of community or designated members to independently manage activities.	Agency may provide funding after community ownership is established	Beneficiaries		Agency may provide resources (tools, mentorship, support of planning process) as it works in partnership with community.		External agency usually does not provide financial or material incentives to community members involved in initiative	- Capacity to manage activities independently
	External funding may follow but does not lead				Agency may help link community to external sources of information		If community activities progress to established	- Inter- and intra-community linkages

	Process of Initiation	Roles			Implementation Method	Specific Activities	Resource Base	Continuity
		Agency	Community	Government				
	the process				and support.		CBO/NGO level, external funding may be provided	
*4. Community owned and managed activities initiated from within the community***	Catalyzed (mobilized) from within the community by one or more community members. Community analyzes its own situation, identifies priorities for who and what to focus on, develops and initiates a plan of action in response to these priorities. External funding and	Capacity Builder Funder	Analysts Planners Implementers Beneficiaries Assessors	Any of the above roles are possible	Community members carry out and manage the activities they have planned. Activities are adapted as community sees the need Agency may help link community to external sources of information and support.	Determined from the onset by the participating community members.	Same as above	Same as above

	Process of Initiation	Roles			Implementation Method	Specific Activities	Resource Base	Continuity
		Agency	Community	Government				
	support for capacity building may follow but does not lead the process							

* ***"Catalyst"*** is a term borrowed from chemistry. It refers to something that enables a reaction to take place but is not, itself, a part of the resulting new substance. It suggests that an agency's mobilization role is time limited, with the purpose of bringing about a change within a community that enables community members in the longer term to carry on activities of their choosing without the direct involvement of the agency.

**Note on Category 4: One limitation of this report is that it makes only very limited reference to Category 4. Because there are regrettably few examples of this type of engagement with communities, it was rarely reflected in the interviews or descriptions of initiatives. Only one of the interviewees was with an agency that regularly used Approach #4. Also, the documents reviewed were generally written by practitioners and professionals associated with agencies using Approaches 1-3. The ILI Steering Committee recognizes this gap and is committed to working towards a greater understanding of the Category 4 approach.

FINDINGS REGARDING ENABLING AND CONSTRAINING FACTORS

Throughout the process of analysis of documents and the content of the interviews, key themes and practices were identified. These include ten ***enabling factors*** that support positive benefits for children when engaging with communities. In some cases they also encourage community ownership and sustainability. Also, six ***constraints*** were identified that can undermine good practice for agency engagement with communities. Both sets of factors are listed below. Following the lists, each of these themes is discussed.

Enabling Factors for Good Practice

1. Attitudes (respect, humility, and listening)
2. Participatory Methods
3. Children's Participation
4. Community to Community Exchange
5. Mobilizing Internal Resources
   a. Asset-based approach
   b. Tangible benefits
   c. Integrated programming
   d. Longer-term support
6. Role of the External Agency
   a. Catalyst
   b. Capacity builder
   c. Intermediary
   d. Promoting and maintaining transparency
7. Use of External Resources
   a. More is not always better
   b. Use of stipends
   c. Channeling of funds
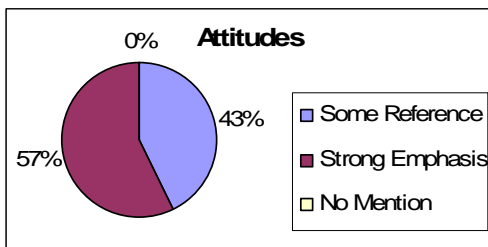8. Time and Pace
9. Scale
10. Use of Human Rights Standards

Constraints on Good Practice
1. Donor requirements
2. Exigencies of Project Planning
3. Other Agencies' Practices
4. Conflict
5. Power Dynamics/ Harmful Community Practices

ENABLING FACTORS FOR GOOD PRACTICE

1. Agency and Staff Attitudes and Values

Attitudes

0%

43% Some Reference

57% Strong Emphasis

No Mention

Interview Quotes

"There is a values orientation that must be there for agencies to be able to do this."

Attitude has been defined as "the complex mental state involving beliefs, feelings and values and dispositions to act in certain ways" (WordNet 3.0, 2006 by Princeton University). One of the most intriguing and surprising issues that was heavily emphasized in the interviews and documents reviewed was the influence that attitudes and values have on results when working with communities. All practitioners mentioned their significance, some at great length and a few even lamented the "over-professionalization" of the field which has led to some misguided attitudes in the work that actually undermine long-term benefits for children. Three words that come up frequently were, ***"respect," "humility"*** and "***listening.***" Though interrelated, they were mentioned separately, with distinctions among them. Each is addressed below.

Most documents addressed the need for being respectful, having a listening attitude, and engaging in dialogue with communities. Some also encouraged training on attitudes and values, and even monitoring them, one example stating that "*Managers should note that people need to be supported [in critical examination of their attitudes] and be rewarded with positive feedback. As learning is continuous, people must be encouraged to monitor their attitudes and behavior so that they can adapt when necessary" (CARE, 1999, p. 1.8).*

"There is often a lack of respect in the ways we approach people."

Respect: The concept of respecting communities was a common theme in interviews, though the term, "respect," was not always explicitly used. Most related comments concerned ensuring that agencies respect local values and culture, and approach local people, communities and institutions with a sincere and deep attitude of respect. This included understanding body language and local traditions so as not to offend inadvertently, and because such understanding can open doors.

Humility: Practitioners very often mentioned having an attitude of humility. This involves understanding that we do not know everything and that we need to engage in constant reflection and critical thinking in

"The agency that I work for I have found to be humbler than other agencies I have worked for, and this translates into programming…."

order to maintain perspective and to remain humble and open. In a sense such an attitude is an act of will and includes a voluntary giving up of power. It is also resonant of Chamber's idea of "putting

the first last, and the last first" (1997, p.2), since it takes humility to recognize that agencies do not know everything.

> "We need to sincerely listen to people and value their opinions, and not just use them for strategic purposes."

Listening: Lastly, enabling attitudes also include a commitment to mutual exchange or dialogue, and in this case many practitioners (and documents as well) put the heavier emphasis on listening, perhaps because they saw this as being a weakness agencies often have when engaging with communities. Over and over again, the idea of ***listening*** came up in interviews with practitioners. The reasons stated why this was important ranged from the practical to the qualitative, including such elements as understanding the context to creating a culture of respect, but the emphasis was consistent. Also, listening should go both ways, since, as one national staff member interviewed said quite emphatically, "*It's OK to introduce new things to the community, but its the way you do it – you need to do it in a way that allows people to listen and also to add their own ideas.*"

Implications

While the substance of the discussions on attitudes was no surprise, the consensus and intensity with which people discussed this issue was striking. Some also wondered why, if attitudes are important, we do not spend more time training, mentoring and monitoring attitudes. Explicit measures within agencies to orient and influence staff on this issue appear to be rare. This might be because those who hire personnel assume that candidates already have appropriate attitudes. It might also be due to a failure to recognize the importance of attitudes. Certainly it is a common experience that the pressures of the job and the demands of programs and donors can undermine the patience needed to listen and the respectful and humble attitudes that lead to more effective engagement with communities. Without explicitly addressing the issue of attitudes, engagement with communities can be severely undermined. This can also have repercussions that continue beyond a particular initiative, entering a community's collective memory and undermining future interactions with other agencies.

But how to "train" for appropriate attitudes is a question that needs some examination. There are many resources for training, as reflected in all the guidance material available. Appropriate training would seek to instill appropriate attitudes and ways of relating to community residents. But formal training is only one dimension. Equal or even greater emphasis should be given to developing respectful organizational culture, and processes, which often shape or drive staff attitudes. One ILI member commented: *"In my view, [generating constructive attitudes] has to involve learning by doing and reflection. I don't think it can be done effectively with extensive pre-service training. Some yes, but I think that training is best done through an iterative process involving cycles of presentations, discussion, reading…, practice, and reflection on practice experiences."*

2. **Participatory Methods**

The tools and methods used to facilitate participation and communication were mentioned in discussions and documents. While documents and many of those

> **Interview Quotes:**
>
> "The tools used in PLA did not matter as long as the idea was grabbing them in their hearts, to think through their own role and having a voice."
>
> "Many times we use the PRA tools – but we have had to write the proposal beforehand and so they become useless to designing and more just a manipulation. This is partly because of how the system of funding is set up, but also because of misunderstandings about what PRA really is."

interviewed mentioned Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA – see definitions and Appendix 4 for more information) tools, in general it was the spirit of the tools as opposed to the tools themselves that was emphasized in the interviews. Also, some practitioners mentioned that by the time a community was ready to participate in a PRA process the agency had already made decisions regarding program focus and activities, due to time pressure driven by the implementation schedule linked to funding.

Appendix 2 includes references for useful guides and manuals that describe the use of participatory methods, their value, and how to apply them. Some focus on PRA or PLA. Training for Transformation is another participatory methodology.

Implications

While both documents and interviewees stressed the importance of participatory methods and tools, comments from experienced practitioners show that it is not always easy to apply them, and many times even in their application, participation may not be achieved at the level intended. In such cases, the use of such methods without enabling complete ownership of activities by communities may actually seem disingenuous and may undermine future long-term efforts at community-led and managed activities*.*

In addition, in situations where an agency intends to engage with communities in a way that leads to community-led and managed initiatives (the Approach #3 in the Typology), *agencies need to be honest with donors about the time required to do effective community mobilization work and the necessity of enabling the community to set the pace and choose the specific issues to address.* Agencies should avoid committing themselves to what they know to be inappropriate processes and time frames, anticipating that once they get the money they can figure out how to make things work. This suggests the need for agency-donor dialogue outside of a specific process of proposal development, as well as for honesty in proposals and negotiation with donors.

3. **Children's Participation**

Children's Participation

24%

38%

38%

☐ Some Reference
☐ Strong Emphasis
☐ No Mention
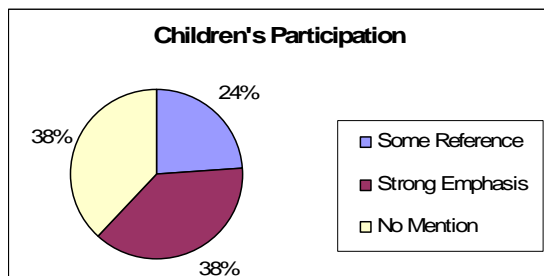
Interview Quotes:

"A lot of communities get caught in political patterns, but these can often move into the background when working through and with children."

[T]he leadership and full participation of children and youth is a fundamental element of community mobilization… Also, children are frequently the best motivators of community engagement and action. (Wessells, 2005, p.7)

Children's participation, at its best, is the willing and ethical involvement of children so that their perspectives, skills and energies are integrated and valued as part of the process and outcomes of all phases of an initiative. Many practitioners highlighted the importance of including children at least at a consultative level, and cited examples of the importance of including children (See Case Study #2). Those who had experience with this practice felt very strongly that this is an element that must be increasingly considered in programs that seek to engage communities for the well-being of children. Even so,

both practitioners and resource documents recognized the difficulty of including children given community perceptions, the risk of superficiality and tokenism, as well as the time constraints of the children themselves.

Many documents—both manuals and assessments—mention the need for child participation. Sometimes it was just a passing reference, but some documents describe its importance at length. There are some excellent manuals that deal only with this issue,[4] and some of the best practices for child participation also mirror good practices for engaging with communities in general. Nevertheless, many documents point to some unique issues that emerge dealing with children's participation, including ethical and safety concerns as well as potential tokenism.

Implications
Children are often not included in participatory agency efforts to promote their well-being. However, the true and ethical participation of children can contribute substantively toward effective agency activities to benefit children. Depending on the type of approach to a community that an agency uses and the type of results it is seeking, the nature and extent of children's involvement can vary. In all cases, though, children's participation needs to be a meaningful part of programming, and communities and agencies should avoid tokenism.

> Case Study #2: Child Participation and Community Engagement in Afghanistan
>
> After an initial analysis, agency x thought that they had engaged communities in Afghanistan in a way that had built a high level of community commitment, especially around education. However, after a time it became clear that while children had nominally been involved, their actual concerns had not been captured. Once children were actually brought into the process to do asset and risk mapping, the community groups began to realize there were big gaps in their understanding since the children were saying completely different things about their concerns than the adults. The children identified various risks (e.g. lack of latrines for girls, rickety bridges and dangerous roads for boys) and were careful not to assign blame as they identified them. When they became their own advocates and presented their concerns to the community, the adults were shocked into action and began to address the risks that they had identified risks, and included children in the response.

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[4] See *So You Want to Consult with Children* and *Children Changing Their World* (bibliography), two of many good examples that exist.

4. __Community-to-Community Exchange__

Community to Community Exchange

24%

38%

38%

- Some Reference
- Strong Emphasis
- No Mention
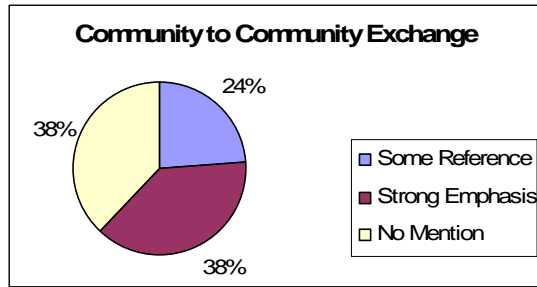
___Interview Quotes:___

"We use some villages - the ones who are more unified and effective - as catalysts, so they can learn from each other."

Community-to-community learning exchange facilitates an exponential growth of empowering grassroots initiatives and helps consolidate networks for effective bottom-up advocacy.(Snetro-Plewman, 2007, p.x)

A few practitioners were very enthusiastic about community–to-community exchange visits and discussed this as one of the main enabling factors they had seen, not just for mutual learning but for creating optimism that change is possible. However, it is important to highlight here that _40 percent of practitioners did not mention peer exchange_ or exchange visits. This bears further discussion and analysis, especially as those who did mention it were highly enthusiastic about the effectiveness of such community-to-community learning.

The importance of community-to-community exchange and the effectiveness of internal messages and modeling was mentioned in the documents as well, and was highly valued as a principle and strategy for community mobilization. In some of the documents on "scaling up and out" mention was made of the helpfulness of such exchange in relation to expanding geographically, but this principle was reflected only in a minority of documents.

Implications
The idea that 'like speaks to like' may deserve to be emphasized more broadly as a good practice, with some examples of how it is done both at the inter- and intra-community level, but the evidence base currently appears to be thin. Additional use and evaluation of such approaches seems justified.
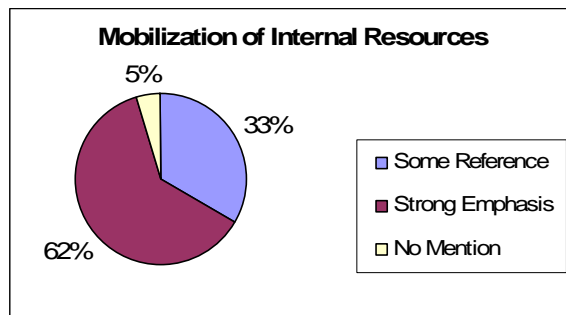
5.   Mobilizing Internal Resources

Mobilization of Internal Resources

5%
33%
62%

- Some Reference
- Strong Emphasis
- No Mention

Almost all practitioners and many of the documents mentioned the importance of mobilizing internal resources and doing so right from the start. Many emphasized that this should come before any external resources. The discussions highlighted three particular issues:

1. **Taking an asset-based approach**

2. **Emphasizing tangible benefits** at the beginning of an initiative

3. **Enabling the community to identify priority needs** and encouraging integrated programming

1. Taking an Assets-Based Approach

This is "an approach in which community members inventory their community's strengths and resources so that they can use and build on those strengths and resources to address a health or other issue" (Howard-Grabman & Snetro, 2003, p.261). All of the practitioners except one made some mention of the importance of approaching communities and programming with an asset-based mentality and tools. Many also outlined some of the problems agencies encounter when they come in with a deficits model, no matter what type of engagement or initiative is intended.

> *"In camps, there are coping mechanisms that exist and one of these coping mechanisms is to be able to 'manage' international organizations. Refugees generally have learned how to exploit the deficits model we come in with and do not see it as being to their benefit to change this model. But we are the ones who presented it in the first place, so when you think about it, it is very understandable."*
>
> "*Factors motivating families to respond to the needs of children include seeing the devastating impact of HIV and AIDS on children, compassion, adhering to values of ubuntu, a high value placed on children, love for children, ability and willingness to do something, and religion*" (Mathambo & Richter,2007, p.66).

Many documents also stressed the principle of beginning with assets—as opposed to an initial focus on needs. Sometimes this was discussed in language of looking for "existing structures" and building on those. Appreciative inquiry (AI) was a specific methodology cited in some cases.

One asset that was mentioned in both documents and interviews was the idea that "concern" for children is generally already present in a community and that this was an internal resource that promoted unity and was key in mobilization. The research reported in *Community Action and the Test of Time*, identified factors that sustained action for children by communities in Malawi and Zambia. The principle ones were unity, compassion for children, vision and community participation (Donahue and Mwewa, pp.35-37).

2. Tangible Benefits

Achieving tangible benefits early in an initiative was mentioned by many interviewees as an important element. In both development, as well as emergency and conflict-affected contexts, participants pointed to the generation of optimism and empowerment that result from participants seeing relatively rapid results from their own efforts. Such concrete results can have a multiplying effect that is empowering for communities, as well as for agencies working alongside them. As one respondent said "*It is very important that people see tangible benefits and see them quickly. Then they have proven to themselves that things can change and they take on more and more.*" Another interviewee mentioned that in the context of child protection, if an agency is attempting to tackle something that is a more sensitive topic within a community, "*When we start with working together for concrete results, this develops the rapport needed and then the community also is more open to messages that may have been more controversial (like early marriage, FGM, and so on).*" This issue of achieving early results was rarely mentioned in any of the documents reviewed.

3. Integrated Programming and Enabling the Community to Identify Priority Needs

The idea of mobilizing internal resources is also related to integrated programming. This includes enabling communities to identify their own priority needs at the outset and then encouraging residents to find some way to address those needs (see Case Study #4). A reality check on this concept, however, is that a poor community rarely can address everything that its vulnerable children need, so agencies and communities need to consider not only their priority concerns, but also the time and resources that they feel able to bring to bear to effect positive change around the issues identified.

Many documents also mentioned the importance of integrated programming and enabling communities to identify their own priority needs for children. Especially in the context of HIV/AIDS, emphasis was placed on the idea of holistic well-being and of working in a variety of programs according to community concerns.

Implications
While both documents and interviewees mentioned the mobilization of internal resources as of prime importance, there was consensus among practitioners that the actual approach to

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Case Study #4: Small Actions with Internal Resources and Energy Can Lead to Big Results

One interviewee described a case of agency engagement with a community that was seriously affected by HIV/AIDS. A community garden had already been initiated to address food security and nutrition issues, and people living with HIV/AIDs (PLWHs) had been given plots within this garden. When urged to identify issues and vulnerabilities within their community, some of the members briefly mentioned the garden and pointed out that the rows that the PLWHs were poorly hoed and were not as well maintained. The facilitators from the agency encouraged them to consider hoeing the rows for the PLWHs in their midst as one concrete action they could take to get started.

The members in the group were initially skeptical about the effectiveness of this action, seeing it as insignificant and not really the issue. But the facilitators continued to encourage them and the community agreed. After they had done this small gesture and saw the response from the PLWHs in their midst, they were empowered to take more and more action using their own internal resources and energy, and did not need further prompting or much facilitation from the outside agency. They had seen for themselves what they could do, and did more and more.

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communities is often driven by a deficits model; resources and capacity that are present are not recognized and is disempowering to the community. No matter which type of engagement an agency is attempting to undertake with a community, some recognition of assets and existing structures should be part of the assessment and programming. Even if agencies wish to engage with communities around simple service delivery (Typology Category #1), beginning with a process that looks for assets and capacities and before focusing on needs, and enabling the community to determine what concerns take priority at the outset, may be more effective and can build a foundation for future engagement initiatives.

6. **Role as Catalyst and Facilitator Role of the External Agency**

The role of the external agency was a subject of much discussion in the interviews and documents and the substance of the remarks can be distilled into 4 sub-themes:

1. Role as Catalysts and Facilitator

2. Role as Capacity Builder

3. Role as Intermediary

4. Maintaining and Promoting Transparency

1. **External Agency as Catalyst**

Both interviewees and documents mentioned the role of the external agency as being one of a catalyst or facilitator, especially in relation to the second and third approaches in the Typology. Many mentioned this idea of facilitation as being of prime importance and needing well-trained, intuitive facilitators. Despite the importance of empowering communities to see issues around the well-being of children as their own in most engagement, documents and practitioners alike recognized that there is a role for external agencies, and that *"community groups struggle to support effectively the large numbers of children that require protection and care. This is where the role of a supporting organisation is essential…The supporting organization should see its role as a catalyst, focusing on supporting the community structures to develop their work at a pace that is best for them."* (SAVE, 2007, p. 9)

Other documents emphasized that agencies should be careful not to take sole responsibility for initiatives, since this can then undermine the community sense of responsibility. The Typology provides a framework for considering the potential implications of such a "responsibility transfer." Maintaining a balance of responsibility between the agency and the community is inherent to its second approach. An agency can easily undermine the community ownership that is central to the third approach and fourth approaches, if it assumes responsibility for addressing an issue, rather than enhancing a community's capacity to respond. A Save the Children document makes this point: "*International and national agency strategists need to realize that the problem is not primarily their own. The problem belongs to affected communities, and many are already constructing solutions. When viewed from that perspective, the primary responsibilities of outside agencies are to strengthen the existing programs, activities, and endeavors that have been initiated by communities*" (Snetro-Plewman, 2007, p.44).

> **Case Study #5: Whose Responsibility is It?**
>
> One research study from Rwanda examined an agency's engagement with local communities for the support of orphans and vulnerable children. One that was particularly enlightening was that **by providing services and support to children in communities, one agency had undermined general feelings of responsibility that may have been there otherwise for child-headed households**.
>
> "Evidence that the community had noticed and was resentful of the aid orphans and youth-headed households received from NGOs came from youth, mentors, and adults in the general community. The youth frequently described their neighbors and other community members as 'jealous' and believed that, due to the assistance they were given, they were perceived as 'lucky' or 'rich.' Adult focus group participants echoed this sentiment.
>
> While NGO services provoked jealousy, **community members and youth also seemed to perceive NGOs as orphans' primary caretakers. Nearly 80% of mentors and 87% of surveyed youth felt the community viewed it as the responsibility of benefactors (such as NGOs) to assist orphans**. When discussing orphans and vulnerable youth, phrases such as 'World Vision kids' emerged from adult focus group participants. Youth also highlighted how community members directed them to NGOs when they were in need of assistance. Youth may rely heavily on [World Vision Rwanda], illustrated by one adult's comment that program participants considered WVR to be their 'parents." (Thurman et al, 2008, p.7)

2. External Agency as Capacity Builder

Documents more frequently than practitioners mentioned capacity building as central to the role of an external agency. This may be because the concept is so prevalent in the language of the field that it is taken for granted. One document that focused primarily on the role of the outside agency as a capacity builder is *From the Roots Up,* which defines capacity building as *"an explicit effort to improve an organization's performance in relation to its purpose, context, resources and sustainability. The aim is to develop a more effective, viable, autonomous and legitimate local organization by creating the conditions in which change can take place from within the group or organization"* (Gubbels & Koss, 2000, p.3). However, like many practitioners, this document also emphasizes that capacity building involves much more than training. As the manual goes on to say, *"investing only in training (or human capital) is not a sufficient capacity building strategy because it does not address critical organizational development issues (i.e., systems, structures, processes, etc.)."*

3. External Agency as Intermediary

An agency can play a role of linking communities to other organizations and higher-level institutions (donors and government) as one way of building their capacity. One document stated that the *"role of an intermediary proved invaluable in linking grassroots-level committees with a wider pool of resources and in representing the community in policy decisions at the district and higher levels"* (Donahue & Mwewa, 2006, p.iii). This was also emphasized in documents that dealt with general child protection as one way of building up a broader "protective environment" for children. They recommend, for example, linking groups responding to child protection concerns within the community to government ministries and other institutions as part of the overall

response to abuse and exploitation of children. This linking role of external agencies came up much more in the document review than in the interviews.

4. Maintaining and Promoting Transparency

A UNHCR document defined transparency as *"the provision of accessible and timely information to stakeholders and the opening up of organizational procedures, structures and processes to their assessment" (2007, p.14).* Transparency was mentioned in both interviews and documents as an important practice for agency engagement with communities and community mobilization, but most practitioners mentioned it in conjunction with an agency's being open with community members about its own agenda. Most practitioners felt that having an agenda is unavoidable, not only because of requirements related to funding, but also because agencies are guided by their norms and values. Most of them agreed that an agency being candid about its aims can open opportunities for dialogue as well as helping to prevent raising unrealistic community expectations. They also pointed out, however, that how and when they share their agenda matters. As one interview participant stated, *"We do have an agenda, but we don't want to lead with it or impose it, but we also don't want to go in and just cement structures of injustice…We are not problem-solvers, but facilitators of social change."*

Implications
In situations where agencies are seeking to engage with communities in ways consistent with the Typology's third and fourth approaches, it is imperative that they take the role of catalyst or facilitator. When engaging in simple service delivery (the first approach), this role is perhaps less important but should at least be considered, and maintaining an appropriate balance between agency and community responsibilities is important in the second approach.

Capacity building can and should be part of agency's engagement with communities whenever possible. Even in service delivery engagements, some form of capacity building is possible. In those cases when agencies wish to truly mobilize communities, capacity building should occur, as needed, throughout the initiative and not be "one-off" or cursory. As one resource noted *"Capacity building workshops that followed the initial mobilization were critical in helping committee members learn how to develop their own common vision, share it with the wider community, and then turn it into an action plan"* (Donahue & Mwewa, p.57).

External agencies also have a significant role to play in many situations where communities can be linked not only to each other but to organizations or institutions that can provide support and resources or which wield influence relevant to community concerns. Also, an agency's transparency about its goals and agenda is key in all types of community engagement (approaches 1-4).

7. <u>Use of External Resources</u>

Interestingly, very few practitioners explicitly used the words "ownership" and "sustainability," perhaps because they believed all of the principles described above lead to these results, or perhaps because these words have become so entrenched as rhetoric that practitioners now avoid them. When these issues did come up it was generally in conjunction with a discussion about external resources and the role of the external agency. In such cases, ownership was cited as one of the

results that agencies aim for when engaging with communities according to the approaches outlined in the Typology's Categories 2-4. Like the role of the external agency, the use of external resources was also nuanced and it broke down into three sub-themes:

1. More is not always better

2. The use of stipends and incentives

3. Channeling resources: When and how to channel resources depends on context and type of engagement intended

1. More is Not Always Better

Many practitioners and some of the documents reviewed mentioned that, depending on the type of engagement intended, sometimes having too many resources at the beginning or even at any point in the process of engagement can undermine long-term goals. Limiting the amount of external resources at the beginning and throughout an initiative when appropriate was repeatedly cited as important. Limiting the number of outside staff was also mentioned quite often by practitioners, especially when contemplating Categories 3 and 4 of the Typology, *but this was rarely mentioned in the resource documents.*

> **Case Study #5: "More is Not Always Better"**
>
> One agency in a post-emergency context learned the hard way that more is not always better. They were given a very large amount of relatively flexible funding to carry out a variety of programming activities in response to the devastation from the 2004 tsunami in South Asia. Because the resources were so extensive, the agency quickly sent in a large number of expatriate staff in order to implement and manage the project, many of whom were inexperienced and unprepared for the work on the ground. Also, there was so much angst about the size of the resources and the desire to manage them well and still do "good" programming that it became very difficult for expatriate staff to give up control and power. National staff on the ground who had high capacity and had worked for the agency and with communities before were increasingly sidelined, marginalized and given less meaningful tasks while expatriates maintained control over the design of the project and the activities. The end result was chaos, poor programming choices, and even an exacerbation of already strained inter-ethnic tension within local communities, due in large part to agency activities and choices made without a depth of contextual understanding. In fact, the project led to such tension with the community that external staff eventually felt the need to hire security staff for protection. In the end the agency was "locked out" of communities, the program was cut short and very little was accomplished that was considered relevant or beneficial to children in the communities.

2. Use of Stipends and Incentives

When ownership and sustainability were mentioned in the interviews, most of the discussion centered on the payment or non-payment of

> **Interview Quotes**
>
> *"I am totally against paying stipends for volunteers. I just don't think it's a good idea. I realize there are some places where you can't get away from it, but it really just distorts and masks people's true intentions. If you are going to pay people, then you shouldn't even mention the word volunteer, because how can you be a volunteer if it is for your own benefit? Maybe the problem is that we have merged staff and volunteer roles in a way that undermines volunteerism."*
>
> *"I really believe that for long-term support, agencies have to consider some form of remuneration for participants in community groups. We are asking them for an enormous amount of time, effort and emotional support…I do believe that the groups who are getting something are going to last longer than the ones who are not."*

31

stipends. Practitioners stressed the fact that ownership is built by making sure the community is involved in meaningful ways. While the majority came down on the side of *not* paying community members any sort of stipend, a few voices did come out in support of the "fairness" of paying people who are doing and giving so much for children in their communities. When this argument was presented, the issue of the words *volunteer versus staff member* was often invoked. Those practitioners who seemed ambivalent, questioned whether we have perhaps conflated staff and volunteer roles in a way that makes not paying volunteers exploitative. As one interviewee wrote in an email, *"Yes – we are advocating that the people that we expect to provide care for children over many years through ups and downs should be compensated for this. Responsibility should not be "dumped" on poor communities. It should be both nationally and internationally shared with others. The direct support can come from community members but resources for them and for the children should come from others outside."* However, also in response to the issue of fairness, one ILI Steering Committee member wrote: *"Fairness is an issue when people are being asked to do something. If the agency's role is to help people deal with something on an ongoing basis that they are concerned about and the agency is only able to play a short term role, fairness is not a real issue."* Another Steering Committee member said, *"Volunteerism is key, but there are indeed limitations. However, the solution is perhaps not to pay community members to do things to help themselves, but rather to strengthen the capacity of community based organizations to develop self-financing techniques, and local appropriate compensatory mechanisms. A good PRA type investigation would reveal that there are often several types of informal non-salaried positions within a community that provide services to benefit everyone. Such figures as traditional birth attendants, local pastors or imams, traditional healers, and herbalists all provide services and receive some sort of local incentives, not always monetary. Sometimes, collective labor is done to help on the farms of these individuals. In terms of 'local capacity building' these indigenous mechanisms need to be identified and adapted to support new forms of community service."*

Finding intrinsically motivating activities and the potential prestige of being a volunteer were mentioned as motivating factors and potential alternatives to remuneration. Some interviewees implied that there is a natural commitment to voluntarism in communities, which is easily crushed by organizations who just want to get things implemented. This can particularly be the case in emergency contexts.

Most practitioners acknowledged that their agency has at some point paid stipends because another agency nearby had already begun by doing so, and it therefore would have been impossible to mobilize communities without a similar policy. Most documents did not mention this in detail, although a few gave examples of when stipends had undermined community initiative (see Case Study #6).

3. Channeling of Funds

Many practitioners and especially documents mentioned that external resources need to be channeled appropriately, depending on the type of the engagement intended. There was consensus that external resources should always come *after* internal

> "*It's important not to start with bells and whistles and big projects, but it is a fine line because it's not like they can do it all on their own. We have to figure out what to add to the mix, and when.*"

resources have been mobilized. This is also reflected in the Typology's third and fourth approaches, which concern community led and managed activities.

Some practitioners and documents mentioned the idea of "***drip feeds"*** for funding – allowing for funds to come in smaller amounts over a longer period with predictability and greater ease of management and reporting. This term was first used by Geoff Foster in his report, *Bottlenecks and Drip-feeds,*[5] where he defined it as, "long-term commitment of funds to CBOs [community based organizations] with incremental increases at a rate CBOs can handle." Mathambo and Richter used it when they wrote, "The metaphor of 'drip-feeding' is based on the assumption that CBOs require long-term funding that is continuous, steady, small amounts of resources to ensure that communities can sustain their responses" (p.25). This method allows for local organizations to learn by doing how to manage funds with accountability and transparency without being overwhelmed by financial responsibilities for which they are not yet ready. "Drip feeds" are particularly relevant to the third and fourth approaches in the Typology, but are potentially relevant to the first two, as well.

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[5] *Channelling resources to communities responding to orphans and vulnerable children in southern Africa*, Save the Children, 2005.

Implications

Not surprisingly, the uses of external resources and especially the issue of stipends generated somewhat polarized views from practitioners. It is important to examine agency and community roles so these can be distinguished. Likewise, the term "volunteer" needs to be examined and clarified as well, so that agency engagement with communities can avoid perceptions of injustice and exploitation. However, the question of whether or not to pay volunteers seems to be based on a false dichotomy, and the Typology provides a framework for considering the issue in a particular context. Where an agency's involvement or the potential for government support to volunteers is time limited, but the community has determined that a volunteer activity should be ongoing, paying a stipend in the short term seems likely to undermine long-term volunteer efforts.

Perhaps there needs to be some discussion in the context of the typology of approaches and considering the costs and benefits of using stipends according to each different approach and the outcomes desired. Remuneration may be very appropriate to sustain commitment to an externally defined agenda or task (Categories 1 and 2, for example). With the third and fourth approaches, where the community group decides what it is concerned about and what it is prepared to do, on an ongoing basis, and where the agency's role is time limited and catalytic, remuneration is likely to be counterproductive.

The concept of supporting community led activities with a "drip feed" approach is an issue that deserves attention in dialogue between donors and agencies. Practitioners often feel pressured to move external resources according to donor requirements and not necessarily according to what is best given the type of engagement considered. But external resources and how and when they are channeled can make or break the effectiveness of engagement for the well-being of children. *"If imperatives to move resources within a donor's timeframe are allowed to determine the timing and process—and likely undermining local efforts—the intended beneficiaries may be made even more vulnerable over time"* (Donahue & Mwewa, 2006, p. 58).

8. **Time and Pace of Engagement**

Pace can be defined as the expected or actual rate of activity, progress, growth and performance of an initiative or program. In the interviews, the pace of projects and making sure to spend the time required with communities was given strong emphasis. Most of those interviewed discussed the importance of investing the time necessary at the beginning of an initiative to get to know the context and history of the communities concerned. They also discussed allowing the time a community needs to reach an internal consensus about taking action, what action to take and who should do what. Most who discussed these issues noted that there is a tension between two factors: the internal, contextual factors that influence the pace at which a community decides to take action and the requirements related to funding and project schedules. They noted that the second factor is to some extent out of the hands of agencies.

The four approaches suggested by the Typology imply different amounts of start-up time, for example, the first category will likely have a more rapid pace from the outset. Some practitioners pointed out that accelerating the project process within a community changes the dynamics and can force an agency to take on roles that would have been better left to community members

themselves. While they recognized that rapid action may be necessary, especially in emergencies, allowing adequate time was nevertheless considered a key element in making certain the process of engagement is not based on untested assumptions or naïve acceptance of superficial analysis.

Fewer of the documents mentioned spending time to get to know a community as a key element in mobilization. It was sometimes noted, but more with a passing reference than a prolonged discussion. Likewise, very few documents mentioned the pace of an initiative as an important element to consider within community mobilization programs.

Implications
Thought and analysis should be put into the pace of a program right from the beginning. Initiatives should be paced according to realistic expectations for the approach to be used and the community's own processes and deliberations. Consequently, donors should allow for the use of funds at the beginning of an initiative to enable the agency to develop an adequate working knowledge of the community, as well as allowing sufficient time for a process that progresses at the community's pace (see Donor Constraints section).

9. **Scale**

The principle of scaling up has been defined as "the amplification of an existing program in additional geographical sites or the application of a successful model in a new context and/or realm of activity" (Snetro-Plewman et al, 2007). Impact on a large scale can be achieved either by scaling up," increasing the size of a project, or by "scaling out," replicating a mobilization through multiple actors. Almost all practitioners mentioned that too much money and too large a geographical target can undermine the entire process of mobilization or at least the sustainability of its results.

However, most interviewees also mentioned that taking efforts to scale is not impossible and that the extent of the issue or problem for children is often so widespread that going to scale is imperative. Documents and interviewees referenced examples of agency engagement with communities taken to scale with positive results (see Case Study #1).

Some of the documents focused on this issue of scale to address the perception among many donors that it cannot be

> **Interview Quotes**
>
> *"I have found that human rights can help raise awareness and build on to ideas that are already there. It can help create a common language. I would never start with discussions of HR, but using them eventually can help hold communities to account."*
>
> *"I am not sure we can do pure human rights. Many times workers are dogmatic about human rights and this just undermines what may be happening more organically…The beginning is always understanding how the community defines things, and anything we do in the area of human rights and child protection, if we muck it up, we just create divisions."*

done at scale. These documents present evidence to the contrary and, as one indicated that while *"some may perceive community-based approaches—specifically empowering approaches—as intensive efforts that reach relatively small populations, successful widespread impact is possible"* (Snetro-Plewman, et al, p.v.).

Building on proven strategies, World Vision has been seeking cost-effective ways to help communities provide care for the large number of children and families made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS. World Vision has developed a strategy that includes community care coalitions (CCC) as part of a set of core project models, for effective and scaled up engagement with communities. The CCC model mobilizes and equips community organizations and groups to care for orphans and vulnerable children and chronically or terminally ill persons.

Between 2003 and 2004, World Vision piloted this model in eight Area Development Programs (ADPS). *The pilot phase revealed that this approach was feasible and acceptable, after which World Vision started scaling up in ADPs in Africa*. **Scale-up has produced some significant results**. As of April 2007, World Vision was facilitating and supporting 3,245 community care mechanisms in seventeen African countries, more than 575,000 orphans and vulnerable children were receiving some form of care or assistance, and almost 2,900 church congregations had sent members to join CCCs.

In order to enhance its understanding about the costs, effectiveness and impact of these programming models, World Vision designed and conducted Operations Research (OR) projects in two ADPs (Keembe ADP in Zambia and Katwe ADP in Uganda) where the model had not been previously applied. *The studies found that scaling up of the mechanisms was possible and effective, and that community-led childcare programs—established through strong community mobilization processes and well networked both horizontally and vertically—are sustainable mechanisms for enhanced child well-being at the community level.* One of the most significant findings of the CCC Review is related to the impact of CCC on children. In almost all interviews at the community level...respondents held the view that, since the CCC started operation in the community, the number of vulnerable children accessing education, health services, birth registration, and other services has increased. This finding indicates that coordinated community-led care responses have a positive impact on perceived child well-being at the community level and can be taken to scale. (Adapted from World Vision, OR Summary, 2007)

Implications

The descriptions of projects that have been taken to scale indicate, that "*no magic formula or a prescriptive set of rules exists to successfully bring community empowerment to scale. While in some cases moving to scale too quickly (normally under external pressure to scale up fast) poses serious risks, in other cases community empowerment programs are designed from the onset to effectively operate on a large scale*" (Snetro-Plewman, et al, p.17). Both the documents and experiences related in the interviews point to the understanding that when scale is an issue, initiatives should explicitly include a thoughtful strategy for scaling up from the very beginning. Maintaining impact and expanding geographically are not mutually exclusive when it come to community mobilization for the well-being of children.

10. Use of Human Rights Standards

Use of Human Rights Standards
- Some Reference — 20%
- Strong Emphasis — 10%
- No Mention — 70%
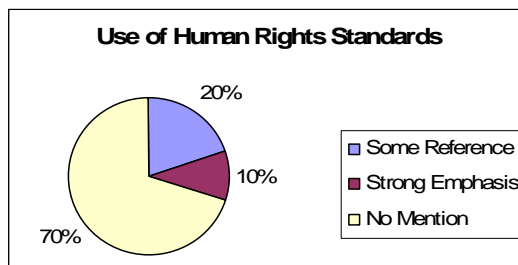
Interviews and Documents

One interesting contrast is the fact that many of the documents on engaging with communities for child well-being mention the importance of human rights. Within child protection documents, this language was more prominent, perhaps because child protection programs deal more explicitly with rights violations against children, and so a common language is necessary. Even though the documents mention human rights much more often than practitioners did, none of them advocate the approach that is so common in conflict and post-conflict contexts of using the CRC as a "training." Rather, most see human rights as a beneficial and unifying foundation for practitioners and agencies, and as a "basis for action" rather than the action itself being training in rights.

Most practitioners either did not mention, or mentioned with only in passing the issue of the use of human rights standards in programming. Some mentioned them as a useful conceptual framework but cautioned against placing too much emphasis on them in programming activities. This is not because they are not seen as important, but because as one respondent said, *"human rights have been used as more of a blunt instrument than a useful tool."* This refers to the practice of

> *The most successful community-based initiatives take human rights as the basis for action and incorporate the key elements for change.* (Innocenti Digest, 2005, p.23*)*
>
> *A rights-based approach is a conceptual framework that integrates the norms… of the international human rights system into the policies, programs and processes of development…It also requires community leaders, [and] community members, to consider their roles as both rights holders and duty bearers."* (UNHCR, 2007, p.10)

agencies entering a community, presenting the articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) to community members without considering context or community norms, and expecting simple knowledge of rights for children to result in behavior and attitudes that support the well-being of children. The issue with this approach is not only that it does not work, but also it can imply that there are no indigenous structures for the well-being of children and can potentially pathologize practices that are driven by poverty as opposed to lack of concern for children.

Implications

Perhaps what this indicates is, as the above quote states, human rights have become an opportunity to have a common language but that a consensus has not yet developed as to how to actually work with communities to realize them. There needs to be a more strategic understanding of how human rights can be used to support the well-being of children when agencies are engaging with communities. Inherent in this is an attitude of respect and appreciation, as well as transparency about agendas, as mentioned above, but particularly important when thinking through using (but not imposing) a conceptual framework such as human rights.

FACTORS THAT CONSTRAIN GOOD PRACTICE

1. Donor Requirements

Donor Requirements

5% 0%

- Some Reference
- Strong Emphasis
- No Mention

95%
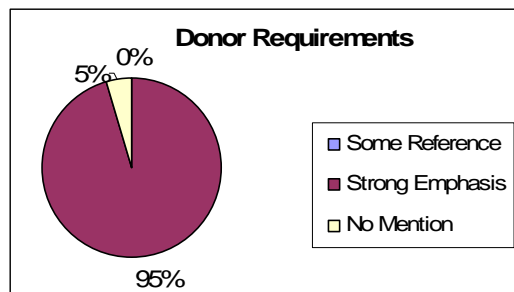
All of the practitioners but one placed very heavy emphasis on the requirements of donors as a constraint that often interferes with good practice when engaging with communities. This is perhaps unsurprising but nevertheless a point of strong convergence. The specific constraints mentioned ran a gamut from the length and unpredictability of funding to its timing and amount (too little or too much). The emphasis was strong and varied enough to reduce concern that donors were being used as scapegoats for agency shortcomings.

One of the most strongly felt and consistent concerns that practitioners voiced was the fact that donors define and drive the agenda, and yet demand at least rhetorically that participation be central to programs throughout all phases of implementation. These paradoxical and contradictory demands then lead to rampant tokenism and a corruption of participatory practices that often leaves communities feeling manipulated. It also encourages a default to the deficits model of aid. However, some practitioners also mentioned that this not a dead end. In fact, agencies often just submit to donor demands without attempting any dialogue. As one interviewee said, "*Yes donors can limit how we do programming with communities- but I also feel they can be persuaded, and sometimes we are just too afraid to try and we don't talk to them."*

While donor constraints were rarely mentioned in the documents, many of them related to working with communities to address the impacts of HIV/AIDS did discuss the need to provide funding for community groups predictably, in manageable amounts, or over a long period of time. This idea of "drip feeds" (see above) is gaining purchase within agencies and communities, as well as with some donors.

Implications

One of the unique issues of international aid and the way it has evolved is that, unlike most industries, the "customers" that pay for projects are different than their "consumers." Donors rather than the communities

themselves therefore set the demand and create the priorities for the product. This dynamic contributes to discrepancies between how communities are approached and how they might be engaged for effectively.

It is important to stress that interviewees did not mean to imply that donors are all intransigent and demanding without any understanding. The learning can and often does go both ways, and donors as well as agencies can and do change and alter their strategies and structure in order to promote effective and appropriate engagement with communities. The implication for action, however, is that there is a strong need for focused, results-oriented dialogue among donors, agencies and communities in order to make some significant shifts in this aspect of the "architecture of aid."

2. **The Requirements of Project Planning**

Some practitioners discussed how the "project model" can become a constraint, and can create such rigidity of timelines, indicators, and outcomes that constructive and respectful empowering engagement with communities is compromised. This is obviously related to the above-mentioned constraint of donor requirements, since they set the agenda for project requirements. However, it also has to do with increasing emphasis on a certain type of accountability and the measurement that it entails as well as discussions of cost-effectiveness and other economics-influenced perspectives. Most documents did not mention in any great detail the requirements of the "project model" as a constraint, although many outlined how capacity building can help communities understand and tap into project funding or contribute to reporting.

Implications
The flexibility necessary for social change to happen in organic, innovative and unexpected ways is often undermined by formulaic project requirements and by the measurement of outputs and outcomes that some practitioners argued do not really matter in the long run. Telling communities what they must measure is also one way to ensure that the second approach in the Typology rather than the third is the one used. This is because, by specifying the intended results of an engagement rather than enabling the community to define them, the agency is retaining ownership of the process. This approach has the advantage of being able to specify the project objectives to be pursued, but doing so brings with it the responsibility to provide the necessary resources. It also makes continuity of the necessary activities dependent on the ongoing provision of those resources. The community is being told what to do and what to look for and measure and must conform to the agenda outlined by the agency.

3. **Other Agencies' Practices**

Other Agencies' Practices

- 10% No Mention
- 33% Some Reference
- 57% Strong Emphasis
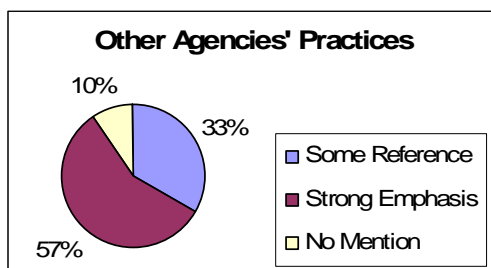
Interview Quotes

"Sometimes a dependency mentality is created by other agencies and institutions, and this can make it very hard to mobilize communities…"

"Sometimes people have been disempowered by programs and also just the way we as agency representatives talk to them…Often we have to deal with our own feelings of guilt and desire to rescue people."

A population that has been previously exposed to aid will engage differently with aid organizations than one that has not. A certain (aid) dependency, passivity or disinterest may have developed.... (ALNAP, 2003, p.54)

Like donor requirements, the issue of the practices of other agencies came up very frequently and with emphasis. Most practitioners discussed dependency issues that can come up when communities are exposed to agencies that engage them only through the first approach of the Typology (service delivery). The issues around remuneration (see above) also came up in conjunction with other agencies, as did the idea of "NGO shopping," which can occur when there is bad coordination and beneficiaries compare benefits from different NGOs operating in the same area, and position themselves according to which NGO offers the most desirable response to their situation. Such experiences linger in a community and can undermine both current and future efforts for effective community engagement. Documents also mentioned the above constraints, although to a lesser extent than interviewees. In various evaluations reviewed it was mentioned in passing, often in conjunction with questions of remuneration for community members.

Implications

Many documents and practitioners call for better coordination of agency practices, and this remains an issue, despite attempts at improvement. But what the above certainly points to is the need for guiding principles on agency engagement with communities. There is such a disparity of understanding around terms like "participation," "community-based," and "community-driven" that unless aid agencies and donors come to a consensus on what the different types of engagement look like on the ground and when and where the various categories of the Typology may or may not be appropriate, confusion and conflicting practice will remain an issue.

4. Conflict-Affected Contexts

Conflict

29% 38%
33%

☐ Some Reference
☐ Strong Emphasis
☐ No mention
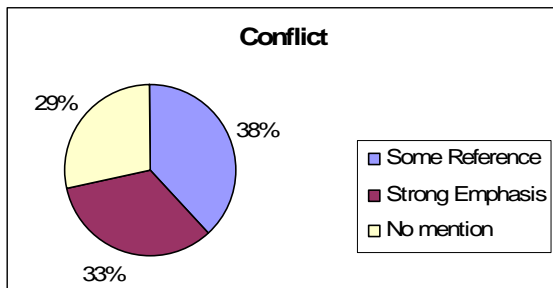
> *Quotes*
>
> *"There are times when we are dealing with children's issues when quite honestly we don't want the community managing things, especially in some camp situations where recruitment can become a huge issue and where we need to be primarily concerned with protection."*

There is consensus that conflict affects engagement with communities, but discussion with practitioners of how much it affects it and in what ways led to some divergences of opinion. However, most admitted that, outside of short-term acute emergency conditions, which may entail some level of "rescue," there is something of a false dichotomy between emergency and development contexts.

Two themes emerged showing that practitioners and some resource documents do see a conflict-affected setting as having potential constraints. The first goes back to 'the architecture of aid" and the fact that despite best intentions, agencies operate within an industry that has a set structure of aid in emergencies and situations of displacement. Practitioners pointed out the contradiction inherent in the aid structure in conflict contexts, where donors ask for participation and inclusion to be part of projects, but are often only willing to fund in one-year or even six-month cycles.

Particularly in emergencies, competition for funding can be quick and fierce and the rhetoric it calls forth can preclude meaningful distinctions between the best approach and the best sounding approach. As one respondent with experience in conflict situations put it: *"In the humanitarian context, the boat sails quickly and is very short term, so no wonder people scramble for money before they know what they are doing. Sure, it's good to talk to the community first but you are out there talking to them with your pants down so to speak, when you have no assurances that there will be funding to do anything."*

The second theme that many practitioners and documents pointed out speaks to the very notion of community and what happens in a conflict, especially when people are displaced. Because the social fabric is strained if not torn apart, trust and unity, which are essential to positive engagement with communities, may not be present in the same way. Nevertheless, one point of consensus among practitioners was that we have never really tried to overcome the industry-led deficits model that dominates in situations of displacement. They noted that this allows for a potentially false dichotomy to arise between what is appropriate in development versus emergencies.

Implications

One reason that conflict is such a difficult constraint is that community ownership and mobilization tend to emerge from a sense of collective self-interest. Where trust is low, it is harder for people to come to the conclusion that their individual interests will be best served by collaborating with others. However, this certainly can happen in camp settings, although it may take longer than in a setting where relationships are already established, and it may require a different approach than in a more stable context.

> *"We need resources that don't just take Level 3 [of the Typology] and say do it no matter what the context."*

Some practitioners with experience in emergencies were critical of donor requirements in such circumstances that call for rapid results that are not just outputs. They pointed out that it is not reasonable to expect proof of long-term impact given the context and short timeframe. **Nevertheless, most of those with a background in conflict situations expressed a desire for more analysis of how to measure outcomes of emergency response and for the development of guidance on good practices for mobilization in a conflict-affected context.** This is a significant next step to consider, since so often work for the well-being of children takes place in conflict-affected areas. It is important to give attention to conflict resolution and peacebuilding, which can help resolve conflicts.

5. <u>Power Dynamics and Exclusion</u>

Internal and external power dynamics were mentioned in both interviews and documents as major constraints that can affect agency engagement. Practitioners discussed power dynamics within communities and how they can interfere with mobilization (and specifically with inclusion), and also power dynamics between agencies and communities. The latter were discussed in the section on attitudes, and are not addressed here. Most practitioners and documents mentioned power dynamics within a community with strong emphasis.

Practitioners mentioned the importance of not romanticizing communities, of understanding that there are different subgroups within communities and recognizing that the exclusion of some groups can lead to ineffective or uneven mobilization. Others questioned whether intra-community power dynamics are even something that can be explicitly addressed through agency engagement. One said "*Is it our responsibility to change power dynamics – is that even something we can do? - or will they change through the process of the initiative naturally?*"

Beyond the issue of recognizing power disparities within communities, child protection practitioners pointed out that communities sometimes support action that is harmful to children. Examples cited included supporting the recruitment of child soldiers and encouraging harmful traditional practices.

Documents also addressed this issue of power dynamics, again emphasizing both tensions between agencies and communities and also tensions and exclusive practices within the community that can hinder positive change and mobilization for children. *"It is important to note that communities tend to include multiple sub-groups that have different needs and which often compete for influence and power. Facilitating genuine community participation requires understanding the local power structure and patterns of community conflict, working with different sub-groups and avoiding the privileging of particular groups"* (IASC, 2007, p.64).

Implications
Agencies should approach communities realistically (not romanticizing their characteristics) and try to discern their internal power dynamics, including exclusionary practices that may have negative effects on children. As one of the documents mentioned, "*Power differences are the greatest challenge to effective community mobilization, partly because these differences are difficult to see*" *(Wessells, 2005, p.3).* It is particularly important to be constantly reflective and to seek the involvement of "invisible" sub-groups" in the community's process. This may require time to achieve and careful thought as to the best approach. A head-on demand by the agency may not be the most effective approach, as it has the potential to shift ownership of the initiative to the agency.

Power dynamics may or may not be changed through an agency engagement with communities, but some practitioners questioned whether the current practice of agencies requiring certain "quotas"— specific numbers of women and/ or children—on committees is an effective way to address uneven internal power relations. Power dynamics are an important issue and agencies have a well-intentioned and often laudable desire to change what they see as internal injustices through prescriptive tactics. But this practice and how it actually affects power relations is controversial. Nevertheless, whether or not power relations are or can be changed through the engagement of an external agency, at the very least, an acknowledgement and understanding of them is crucial to promoting effective mobilization for children.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A WAY FORWARD

There are many potential implications for agency practice in the observations presented above. The following are the major recommendations that emerged from the analysis of documents and interviews:

1. **Encourage discussion and reflection on attitudes and values within agencies.**
   To improve the effectiveness and quality of community engagement, it is important for agencies to give greater attention to attitudes when orienting and training personnel. This applies to all four approaches to community engagement in the Typology. Agencies should consider how to orient and train for, as well as monitor, attitudes of expatriate and national staff members regarding the community members with whom they interact. In addition to training, equal or greater emphasis should be given to organizational culture, and processes that shape staff attitudes. Agencies that have developed effective approaches to addressing staff attitudes and values should document and disseminate their methods and lessons learned.

2. **Create opportunities for increased dialogue and engagement with donors**.
   There is a great need to engage donors to develop improved systems of funding and reporting as well as time frames for action that will facilitate effective work with communities. The Typology can be a useful reference point. Discussions with donors should address funding parameters for the four different approaches to community engagement, relevant benchmarks and outcomes appropriate to the approach taken.

3. **Develop a more robust research and evidence base for good practice.**
   For each category of the Typology, there needs to be stronger research and evidence that undergirds its assumptions about the strengths and limitations of each approach to community engagement. Comparative operations research could help clarify the factors to consider when determining which of the four approaches is the most appropriate to achieve particular results in a given context. Such studies should give particular attention to community expectations and assessments of the different approaches to engagement.

4. **Make space for community feedback.**
   The communities with whom agencies work, while often at the receiving end of initiatives, rarely have a chance to assess and help refine agency approaches based on their experiences. Agencies would benefit from a greater focus on community perceptions, and such information could improve the reality base for discussions with donors.

5. **Create a mechanism for the development of guiding principles.**
   It would be beneficial for agencies that engage with communities to have a common reference point of guiding principles. The Typology should be refined and could be used as a framework for organizing such principles. If so, the guiding principles should avoid implying that there is a

hierarchy of approaches. Guiding principles for community engagement should include particular attention to the implications of conflict for community engagement, as many practitioners who work in less stable contexts mentioned this as a gap in resources, The document should be relatively concise, including broad principles on what is appropriate when engaging with a community. It should not attempt to specify particular methods for how to engage with communities. It should also include definitions of key terms.

APPENDIX 1: NAMES AND ASSOCIATIONS OF INTERVIEWEES

(In alphabetical order)

	Name	Current Organizational Affiliation
1	Sybil Baloyi	World Relief Mozambique
2	Neil Boothby	Columbia University: Mailman Program on Forced Migration and Health
3	Steve Brescia	World Neighbors
4	Wayne Bleier	Christian Children's Fund (CCF)
5	Mark Canavera	Save the Children UK
6	Andrew Couldridge	Independent Consultant
7	Jill Donahue-Thompson	Independent Consultant
8	Geoff Foster	Family AIDS Caring Trust
9	Stefan Germann	World Vision International
10	Peter Gubbels	World Neighbors
11	Jessica Lenz	Independent Consultant/ Child Protection Specialist /Founder Creative Empowerment, LLC
12	Mark Lorey	World Vision International
13	Lynette Mudekunye	SAVE the Children - UK
14	Kery Olson	Firelight Foundation
15	Marie-Helene Pare	PhD candidate, Department of Social Policy and Social Work, University of Oxford.
16	Veejay Rajkumar	Independent Consultant
17	Jennifer Sklar	International Rescue Committee
18	Marie de la Soudiere	International Consultant, Care and Protection of Children in Adversity
19	Paul Stephenson	World Vision International
20	Mike Wessells	CCF/Columbia University (Program on Forced Migration and Mental Health, Mailman School)
21	Brenda Yamba	SAVE the Children UK (Mozambique)

APPENDIX 2: LIST OF REFERENCES/ RESOURCES REVIEWED

ALNAP (2003). Participation by Crisis-Affected Populations in Humanitarian Action: Handbook for Practitioners. ODI, London: UK. (http://www.odi.org.uk/alnap/publications/gs_handbook/gs_handbook.pdf)

ARC (2001). Community Mobilization Module. (http://www.savethechildren.net/arc/files/main.html)

Banjade, J. (2007). Delivering Enterprise Development and Social Services in Conditions of Fragility in Nepal. IRIS Center of the University of Maryland and FIELD-LWA project, funded by USAID.

Birdsall, K. & Kelly, K. (2007). Pioneers, Partners, Providers: The dynamics of civil society and AIDS funding. Research conducted for the HIV and AIDS Programme of the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa. OSI: South Africa. (www.cadre.org.za/pdf/Pioneers_Partners_Providers.pdf)

Birdsall, K., Ntlabati, P., Kelly, K. & Banati, P (2007). Models for Funding and Coordinating Community-Level Responses to HIV/AIDS. CADRE: South Africa. Global Fund. (http://www.cadre.org.za/programmes.htm)

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APPENDIX 3: ILI WORKING GROUPS

1. Working Group on Building an Evidence Base

While a great deal has been written on how to do participatory work with communities, it doesn't appear that much research informs such guidance. Developing a stronger evidence base has the potential to improve the quality and effectiveness of agency engagement with communities and to convince donors of the value of supporting well-grounded work. This working group will address some specific questions regarding how to work most effectively with communities. Two areas have been identified in which research would be valuable.

The first would be a multi-country study of child protection and welfare committees. In the last 12 years, the mobilization on a wide scale of community committees to address child protection and well-being issues has become a very common approach in response to the impacts on children of both armed conflict and HIV/AIDS. At least one country (Sierra Leone) has included provision for such committees in national legislation. Assessments have been done in Malawi, Zambia, Uganda that have suggest the value of such committees but which have also raised questions about the roles that such committees can be expected to play, the relationship between the way mobilization is done and committees' sustainability, and the roles (and limits) of ongoing external support. A multi-country study could be valuable to inform agency practice, government roles, and donor funding. It would require the involvement of multiple stakeholders to design, implement, and fund the study.

A second area in which research could be useful concerns children's participation. While there is an extensive literature advocating children's participation and providing guidance on how to promote it, there does not appear to be a strong evidence base concerning its impacts on children's safety, well-being, and development. Measuring outcomes where children are actively involved in programming and comparing these with situations where the objectives are the same but children are simply intended to be beneficiaries could help inform practice and influence future program funding. Given that there are a multiplicity of roles that children can play in various stages of programming in different contexts, numerous comparisons would ultimately be needed to broadly inform practice regarding children's participation.

Next step

Develop an inter-agency working group to plan studies and seek resources to implement studies in one or both areas.

Leaders

The group will be led by Livia Iskandar of the PULIH Foundation-Indonesia (livia_iskandar@yahoo.com)

2. Working Group on Staff Values, Attitudes, and Competencies

Local-level staff members are crucial to effective engagement with communities for child well-being. They are a linchpin that can make or break many programs. This working group will examine the values, attitudes, and competencies required to enable local-level staff to engage effectively with communities in a variety of contexts across the relief-development continuum. The working group will explore good practices in staff recruitment, retention, and capacity building. The group will likely develop a report that summarizes findings for use by members and other agencies in refining their human resource practices. There is a need to examine the values, attitudes, and competencies required to enable local-level staff to engage effectively with communities in a variety of contexts across the relief-development continuum. Additional issues to consider include staff recruitment, retention, and capacity building.

It is necessary to develop in these personnel the appropriate skills, attitudes and values conducive to success in trying situations, and these need to be translated into practicable implementation guidelines for work at the front line. Competencies, attitudes and values are interconnected and their cultivation is both an art and a science: what we do and how we act and respond emanates from our beliefs; how we relate to communities and the environment depends on our views; how we implement projects is a result of our technical skills. These all converge where an agency's aim is ensuring child well-being in vulnerable communities.

Competencies are technical skills needed for effective project management in the field—the application of knowledge in a field setting. In general, the development of field competencies is a "learning-by-doing process"—one must first find someone with the right attitudes and values and then allow them to develop the skills on the job. Key competencies include: facilitation, capacity-building, how to adapt to the norms and customs of another culture, tolerance for ambiguity, the ability to work in fluid situations, how to manage one's emotions and constructively handle stress, active listening skills, cross cultural communication, how to validate other people's feelings and views, identification of relevant local or technical knowledge and how to relate it to one's work. Front line agency personnel must be flexible and results-oriented (as opposed to goal-oriented because goals can change), and they need to be able to work effectively in a team.

Values are more of an abstract concept and reflect the things we believe to be good or important in a general sense. Important values include respect for honesty, the rights of the individual to dignity and autonomy, inclusivity, participation, and the inherent value of all human beings.

Attitudes encompass our views towards something, e.g. other people, communities, issues, the environment. Key attitudes include respect, humility, compassion, flexibility, and openness, as well as viewing all people as useful and important and being non-judgmental.

The group intends to arrange a consultancy to compile, analyze, and synthesize examples of good practice, then hold a workshop to review and refine outputs of the consultancy. During the consultancy, the group will consider relevant work of other agencies such as The Listening Project and People in Aid. Another step would be to solicit and review examples of good practice from ILI members and other agencies. The aim would be to determine what set of value, attitudes, and

competencies matter and how to approach building them. The group proposes to convene a workshop in a Southern context. It and would like to partner with other groups in these steps.

Leaders

The group will be co-led by Louis Mwewa of the Lupwa Lwabumi Trust (louismwewa@yahoo.co.uk) and Mark

Lorey (mark_lorey@wvi.org) of World Vision International.

3. Working Group on Refining ILI Typology and Conceptual Framework

A primary goal within ILI is to research and form consensus around what constitutes good practice on the part of external agencies that engage with communities in various ways to support child well-being. A first step towards this goal has been the development of a typology (created by John Williamson and refined by ILI) that informs our understanding of different levels/types of external agency engagement, which in turn can be used to help identify "best practice" within various contexts. This typology is a work in progress and has been a major focus of discussions within ILI. The purpose of this working group is to help move forward the refinement of the typology, including structural issues (e.g., preconditions, static/dynamic models), definitions of key related terms (e.g., "participation," "ownership") and overall conceptual framework that together can inform ILI's work towards researching, identifying, and sharing best practice. The group will draw on the experiences and perspectives of ILI member agencies, southern partners, and other external informants to provide exemplary case studies and solicited feedback on key questions aimed at refining the typology. A secondary goal of the group is to explore the possibility of expanding the literature review that was conducted for the ILI Report on Engaging with Communities for Child Well-Being. If funds are available, the group will draft, in consultation with ILI, a TOR for a consultant to lead this project. Once data has been gathered (6-9 months) and disseminated for initial feedback (3 months), the group proposes that ILI meet in June 2009 for the purpose of reaching consensus on: 1) conceptual framework/typology; 2) overarching and context specific principles of best practice; 3) developing plan for sharing best practice findings.

Leaders

The group will be co-led by Isaac Jacob of Children's Fund Afghanistan (isaac@cfafghanistan.org) and Kerry Olson (kolson@firelightfoundation.org) of Firelight Foundation.

APPENDIX 4: BRIEF OUTLINE OF PARTICIPATORY METHODS, RRA, PRA VERSUS PLA

The differences between the various participatory methods and approaches is not always clear, but the following chart from CARE's publication, *Embracing Participation in Development: Worldwide experience from CARE's Reproductive Health Programs with a step-by-step field guide to participatory tools and techniques* is helpful to distinguish between some of the common methods used.

Acronym	RRA	PRA		PLA
Name	Rapid Rural Appraisal	Participatory Rural Appraisal		Participatory Learning and Action
		Shorter version	Fuller version	
Primary Purpose	Extractive, mostly quantitative data from surveys	Extractive but using community for qualitative information	More participatory, but mainly to get information for assessment	Empowerment of community to take on-going self-development
Time-Frame (involvement of outsiders)		1-2 days in community	3-7 days in community	On-going commitment over many months or years
Benefit to Outside Agency	***	***	**	*
Benefit to Community Members		*	**	***

(CARE, 1999, p. F-ii)