Community Driven Development in the Philippines

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Sector(s): Political Economy and Governance

Fieldwork: Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA)

Sample: 5,940 households, and 198 municipalities with 198 surveyed villages

Target group: Adults

Outcome of interest: Empowerment

Intervention type: Empowerment training Community-driven development

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Data: Millenium Challenge Corporation

Partner organization(s): Millenium Challenge Corporation (MCC), World Bank, Department of Social Welfare and Development , Social Weather Stations

Community-based approaches to development, also called community-driven development (CDD), seek to empower local communities to identify and implement the projects they most need. Researchers evaluated the impact of a national community-driven development program in the Philippines on governance, social capital, and socio-economic welfare.

Policy issue

CDD has become an increasingly common tool used by governments to address the needs of low-income communities. The CDD approach is characterized by the movement of responsibility over resources and planning decisions to local decision-makers in an effort to more accurately and efficiently identify the needs on the ground. Empowering communities to take charge of their own development may also lead to long-term effects on how they perceive their own role in governance, with improvements in accountability, transparency, and the quality of decisions. This study endeavored to provide an independent assessment of the impact of a national community-development program and to contribute to broader research about the socio-economic, governance, and social capital impacts of CDD programs.

Context of the evaluation

A keystone poverty reduction initiative of the Government of the Philippines is the Kapit-bisig Laban sa Kahirapan-Comprehensive Delivery of Social Services (KALAHI-CIDSS, or KC). KC is a CDD program implemented by the Department of Social Welfare and Development of the Philippines (DSWD). KC targets low-income communities in the country's 48 poorest provinces (out of 81). In 2011, KC received US$120 million in funding from the United States government's Millennium Challenge Corporation Compact in

the Philippines and US$59 million in loan funding from the World Bank. The MCC contracted IPA to carry out an impact evaluation of the program.



Citizens collect local government benefits at a town hall in the Philippines.

Photo credit: Roel S. Bagon, Shutterstock.com

Details of the intervention

Researchers partnered with Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) to conduct a randomized evaluation of the impact of the KC program on multiple outcomes, including access to key services, the quantity and quality of participation in local governance around decision-making and implementation, and knowledge and awareness of local governance. The survey sample consisted of 198 villages (one randomly selected per municipality) and 5,940 households (thirty randomly selected per village). The 198 municipalities were paired within each province based on similar characteristics (99 pairs) and then randomly assigned through public lotteries to receive the KC program or serve as a comparison group.

The KC program trained the communities and their local governments, both at the village and municipal levels, in choosing, designing, and implementing public projects called “sub-projects." This was done through a five-stage program known as the KC Community Empowerment Activity Cycle (CEAC). Roughly one-third of villages receive sub-projects each year, although some villages may have received multiple sub-projects and others none over the course of the project. Most sub-projects are programmed to be implemented within six months; thus the stages of preparation, funding, and implementation generally took nine to twelve months and were called a cycle. The same process was repeated over three one-year cycles, with cycles two and three having a condensed CEAC phase since communities had already become familiar with the project and process.

Data for the estimate of outcomes and impacts of KC came from multiple rounds of data collection exercises, each involving several instruments including a household survey, village survey, a Structured Community Activity, qualitative focus groups, and qualitative key informant interviews. Each round of data collection was implemented by Philippines-based survey firms and overseen by the Millennium Challenge Account-Philippines and IPA.

Results and policy lessons

Research ongoing; results forthcoming.