



How to create sustainable development aid programs

Hildigunnur Finnbogadóttir

Lokaverkefni til BA-gráðu í Mannfræði

Félagsvísindasvið



HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS

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Abstract

This thesis examines the necessity of making development programs more sustainable and beneficial for aid recipients. Emphasis is placed on the need for awareness of *why* so many development aid programs have failed and how this failure can be avoided. The need for new approaches by both the donors and the recipients of aid is stressed. Also discussed are the most critical factors in the preparatory stage, the viability of aid programs, and steps to be taken to ensure success. Issues and variables like local ownership, empowerment, and community participation are reviewed alongside specific case studies. The important role of Anthropology in the design, implementation, and follow up is highly emphasized. A list of factors is included for the aid community to bear in mind in their future efforts to make aid programs more sustainable, and to achieve the long-term impact and the goals of all stakeholders.

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Abbreviation

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ESP	Brazilian English for Specific Purpose
EDB	European Development Bank
EU	European Union
IE	Impact Evaluation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WBG	World Bank Group

Introduction

I have become interested in development aid in recent years. This started when I went to Cambodia for three weeks to do voluntary work in a development program; I taught English to teenagers whose parents could not afford to send them to school. From my perspective, the manager did not run the program as he should have. He did not do his job properly, and was spending the program's income in his own interest instead of for the beneficiaries of the program. I had to pay a reasonably high sum of money for volunteering in the program, and this money was not spent as I had expected. After this experience I started to read more about development aid programs in an effort to understand their expected outcomes and how they were conducted.

There are around seven billion people living on earth, and over one billion are believed to live in extreme poverty, surviving on one U.S. dollar per day. Yet development aid agencies spend billions of dollars each year on development aid programs intended to improve these people's lives. In order to improve such people's situations, donors have to change the way development programs are planned and performed. There are many different theories on what has to be done in order to have a successful development program. Fairbanks et al (2009) point out that development organizations need to start working smarter, not harder. Moyo (2009: xix), on the other hand, believes that developing countries need a new model for financing development, one that offers economic growth and reduces poverty at the same time. Warren (2009, xi-xv) suggests that the beneficiaries need to be given adequate knowledge, training, and opportunities.

Donors and development aid workers are increasingly concerned that their assistance has not significantly impacted the economic well being of most developing countries over the last forty years. These people are re-examining their policies and work practice in order to achieve higher success rates. Gibson et al (2001: 3) believe that no matter how good the assistance is, or how many resources are coming in, the outcome depends on the political and economic institutions of the community and the individuals involved. Today, developing countries and aid organizations face an increasing demand for evaluation of the effectiveness of the resources in their development programs. This has led to an increased interest in more systematic evaluation of such programs (Bamberger, 2009: 44). Development programs can alleviate these pressures by looking at past programs to find new ways to succeed. What was done right and what was done

wrong in past situations? There is much to be learned from past experiences in order to make aid programs more sustainable and beneficial for the recipients in the long run.

Last year the Annual Report of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) focused on the importance of implementing sustainability and equity in development programs to increase the effectiveness of aid. According to the UNDP report, the central goal of human development is to provide opportunities and choices for all. “It is a collective responsibility towards the least privileged people today and a moral imperative to ensure that the present is not the enemy of the future” (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2011: v). The focus in this thesis is on how to ensure sustainability in development aid programs. I want to explore what needs to be done to make development aid programs more efficient and successful with long-lasting outcomes. This thesis aims to answer the following questions: What in the process of development aid programs must donors be aware of to guarantee higher rates of success? What makes some programs fail and others succeed? Are there any particular key success factors that make the difference in the outcomes of programs? If yes, what are these key factors and how can they be applied?

This thesis is divided into four main chapters. The first chapter introduces the meaning of development aid and sustainability. This chapter will give an introduction to development aid, the important actors in these programs, and the criticism they have received over the last decade. The definition of sustainability will be defined and there will be a short history of sustainability within development aid programs.

The second chapter focuses on ways of making the outcome of aid programs successful from the perspective of endurance and long-term impact. It discusses how programs should be designed, which elements are important and why. Local ownership, community participation, and empowerment have strong links to sustainable development programs and will be highlighted. Although they are considered important factors within development aid programs, they have also been criticized by some scholars. This criticism will be pointed out in the chapter. The end of the second chapter will demonstrate a few programs that have succeeded in making their efforts sustainable.

The third chapter explores some of the problems that may arise during the design and preparatory phases of such programs as well as during implementation. The last chapter examines how anthropology can be involved in the planning and implementation of development programs in order to sustain the intended impact. Anthropology can be applied in development aid programs, and can be especially helpful with the design of

such programs. Anthropologists can estimate the interests of the community and program directors should therefore rely upon anthropological studies.

1. The meaning of development aid and sustainability

This chapter will look at what development aid is, what it means, and how it is interpreted in this thesis. It will look at who the main actors are in contemporary development aid programs and some of the criticism that development aid has been under.

1.1 Development aid

There are many different definitions applied to development aid and how it should be performed. The definition of development, in general, is that it is a process of directed change. It implies “the objectives of the process and the means of achieving these objectives” (Lélé, 1991: 609). Gibson et al (2001: 7) describe development aid as a way to make the material conditions of individuals better. They believe that the purpose of development aid is to stimulate and preserve economic growth, economic and social justice, equity, economic and political independence, democratic development, respect for the environment, and equality between the sexes.

There are two categories of development aid according to Fairbanks et al (2009: 30-31). The first is the humanitarian aid that is short term and helps relieve future threats. There is also the economic development aid that usually comes around later and is long-term assistance. Economic development helps the beneficiaries to find solutions to their economic problems and identify patterns in their economic system. The ultimate objective of development aid is to help people to help themselves by stimulating local economic growth and to establish sustainable foundations for that growth. Development aid tries to replace sympathy with empathy. Many development agencies use both of these development aid categories; they start with the humanitarian aid and then move on to economic development. Moyo (2009: 7), on the other hand, divides aid into the following categories: humanitarian aid, charity-based aid (i.e. the organizations pay out to the community or the people), and systematic aid (i.e. aid payments made directly to governments).

Aid programs started out long before it was evident that they did not work or succeed. The main goal of these early programs was to eliminate poverty and promote reasonable growth within the community. The number and the scope of these programs

amplified after the Second World War but took off seriously in the 1960s (Boone, 1996: 289). There came a clearer definition of what success and failure looked like and how these programs should perform. There also came increasing growth and variety of development aid programs. Over the last few decades, more and more people are getting involved in development aid and the agencies, the organizations, and the donors have been increasing. In the next chapter these actors will be discussed.

1.1.1 Organizations in development aid

Development aid organizations are important actors in development aid; they participate in the democratic life, economic growth, and social progress of the countries that receive aid. A vital role of development aid organizations is to fund development programs (Lécuyer, 2002: 42). .

The funding of development programs is generally twofold. Developed countries have established units within their governments to manage outgoing aid to the developing world. These units either undertake the aid directly or allocate funds to international organizations. These organizations include the United Nations (UN), development banks like The World Bank Group (WBG), International Monetary Fund (IMF), The European Union (EU), The European Development Bank (EDB), The Global Fund, and The Asian Development Bank (ADB). The other channel for aid funding is through non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which are established for specific purposes such as the preservation of wild life, forests, and oceans, or to take part in direct country or territorial aid. The NGOs are financed directly by grants from individuals and companies who want their funding to represent their social responsibility and, above all, by different charity funds like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation etc.

(Finnbogi Alfredsson, former employee of The World Bank, personal communication. November 6, 2011).

Grants and donations as direct support to governments and specific aid programs are given mainly to the poorest countries with little or no natural resources. These countries are often totally dependent on foreign support to maintain minimal governmental structure and basic social services. Lending in different forms, however, is the modus operandi in development aid programs. In recent years the Chinese government has been keen on giving aid to developing countries that have desirable natural resources, mainly in Sub-Saharan Africa. This aid is built on the terms that repayments will be in these same

natural resources, such as oil, timber, minerals etc. (Schmitt, 2007). In the next chapter the focus will shift to the criticism that development aid has received in the last few decades.

1.1.2 Criticism on development aid

Development aid assistance has had to deal with increasing criticism since the late 1980s. The main criticism is that aid does not seem to be delivering what was promised and that it is not reaching the right people. Development assistance is also criticized for the high monetary investments and that these programs send thousands of foreign experts to the developing countries (Kuhl, 2009: 551). In Kuhl's (2009: 552) opinion, community and economic development should be a process by which developing countries uphold themselves.

A part of this criticism stems from the fact that poverty in certain Asian and African countries has become more severe today than it was half a century ago. One of the reasons for this may be because of the Structural Adjustment Policies (i.e. the poor governments received loans and in return agreed to embrace a free-market solution to their problems). Many African countries have loans tied to the IMF and WBG because of these policies. These countries have become heavily indebted and aid has not helped them to accomplish their development objectives (Moyo, 2009: 21). Even in countries with economic growth, the poor seem to get poorer and the small percentages that are rich are getting richer. In 2001 the UNDP documented that the gap between the rich and poor countries got wider and that the average household in Africa actually consumed 20% less than it did 25 years before (Peet and Hartwick, 2009: 9-10).

Development programs often fail to see the long-term picture in their projects. The development aid team, or the people involved in the program, might have a program that seems successful and therefore pullout because they do not see the purpose of staying any longer. The question is; where does that leave the people who are getting support from the program? And what happens when the funding suddenly stops? It often leaves the people in great shock. They have nowhere to go and they find themselves right back where they were before the program started. That is why Fairbanks et al (2009:33-32) argue that there needs to be economic development so that people can stand on their own feet and help themselves.

The problem is not in the lack of funding but in the limited local institutional settings and their capacity. The unwritten rules and norms of the communities and the individuals are a great threshold also to be overcome. Understanding the capability of the

local institutions and taking this into consideration in the planning of the program should be one of the fundamental steps in the planning and preparation for any development program. The program is more likely to succeed this way (Gibson et al, 2001: 10-11).

At the same time that development assistance can be criticized, it can also be praised for many of its accomplishments. Aid programs have been focusing on improvements within the local infrastructure; they have introduced new technologies, built roads, bridges, banks, schools and universities. Too often, economic growth has not followed the improvements within the infrastructure of the community (Johnston and Van de Walle, 1996: 2) and that is why sustainability is an important aspect in many development programs today.

1.2. Sustainability in development aid

The mission of all development aid programs is to sustain the changes that the program intended to implement. The term “sustainable development” was first introduced in 1980 when the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) presented the World Conservation Strategy with the goal to achieve sustainable development through the preservation of living resources. Later, at a conference on Conservation and Development in 1986, it was argued that sustainable development should revitalize growth, change the quality of growth, satisfy basic human needs (work, food, energy, water and sanitation), maintain a sustainable population level, and also protect and increase resource bases. In addition, sustainable development should encourage a re-examination of the technology and economics in the decision making process. This includes combining environment and economics in the decision making, combining international economic relations and making development more participatory. In 1987 the phrase “Sustainable Development” became an important factor for international aid agencies and a slogan for developmental activists following the report “Our Common Future” that was published by the World Commission on Environment and Development (Lélé, 1991: 607-611). The report defines sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Alley and Leake, 2004: 13).

The UN held a conference in 1992 that examined environmental and development issues that made “sustainability” one of the main principles for most governments around the globe. At the conference, the UN presented “Sustainability Indicators” as key

approaches in the development world. In 1997 the UN presented “Sustainable Development” as their main objective, and in 2001 they presented a specific Sustainable Development Indicator Task Force that was to develop the indicators further. As a consequence, many programs since 2002 have received their funding based on these indicators (Rametsteiner et al, 2009: 61-62).

The UNDP 2011 report focused on sustainability and equity. The report argued for the importance of understanding the links between these two concepts in order to expand human freedom. The UN also believes that equity, empowerment, and sustainability are important in development programs because they help expand people’s choices in the world. It argues that although there has been progress in human development in recent decades, this progress cannot continue without the implementation of strategies that also reduce environmental risks and inequality. The report investigates how societies around the globe can implement a win-win solution by using these main factors (UNDP, 2011: 3-14).

As in the UNDP 2011 report, Anand and Sen (2000: 2035) also stress the importance of equity and see sustainability as a matter of equity, in which the capacity for wellbeing is shared between people today and in the future. The purpose of sustainability is to make children today as well off as possible, and also to ensure that future children will be just as well off.

1.2.1 What is sustainability?

The progress and paths of sustainability in development program has now been roughly mapped. The definition of sustainability in development programs has also evolved as an reflection of the increasing demand for real impacts of development aid. What is sustainability and what does it mean for a development program to be sustainable? Sustainability can have various meanings. Lélé (1991: 609) sees the concept of sustainable development aid as the process of change that can be continued forever, while Shediak-Rizkallah and Bone (1998: 87) offer a few other definitions. One of their definitions refers to the ability of the establishment left behind by the project to continue to perform at an appropriate level over a long period of time, even after the financial, managerial, and technical assistance comes to an end. Their research suggests that when planning a sustainable program, it is necessary to have a clear understanding of the meaning of sustainability. The operational indicators used in monitoring sustainability over time also need to be clear. Sustainable programs require the use of programmatic approaches and

strategies that favor long-term program maintenance. They believe that sustainability comes from many factors including the design of the program, the program's process, the organization's setting, and the environment of the program.

The term "sustainability" is often used to describe the long-term effects of development programs, instead of the phrase "successful". Consequently, when a program is considered sustainable, we can say that the program has also succeeded. It has achieved its goal: to be able to continue even after the donor's funding has expired (Lélé, 1991: 609).

Donors have started to subscribe to the policy of sustainability because the program is believed to be more likely to succeed even after the departure of donors. For a program to be sustainable donors must insist on education and training of the locals. Through such programs, locals can come to know their rights and become familiar with opportunities awaiting them as well as what practices are needed to further stimulate economic growth. The community will become more rational in its own affairs and understand their own responsibility for the development of the community. This is believed to help them take control over their own future and the future of their community (Swidler and Watkins, 2008: 1184).

Lyons et al (2001: 1237) believe there has to be a commitment to the local community to achieve sustainability. In order for this to succeed, there has to be awareness and empowerment within the community. Both the donors and the recipients must undergo change. There has to be shared conviction and mutual responsibility in order for the change to come through. Lyons et al see sustainable development as "the ability acquired and held by communities over time, to initiate and control development, thus enabling communities to participate more effectively in their own destiny" (Lyons et al, 2001: 1237). This thesis has now contributed a deeper understanding of what development aid program is and why internal sustainability is believed to be the most vital factor in many programs.

2. Implementing sustainable aid programs successfully

This chapter examines the factors that are important for a program to have in order to succeed. What matters most when it comes to a program's success is often not just an increase in funds, but improvement in the delivery of services and strengthening of the

organization. In this chapter we look at possible ways to create a development aid program that will succeed, show positive results, and be sustainable.

2.1 Designing a sustainable development program

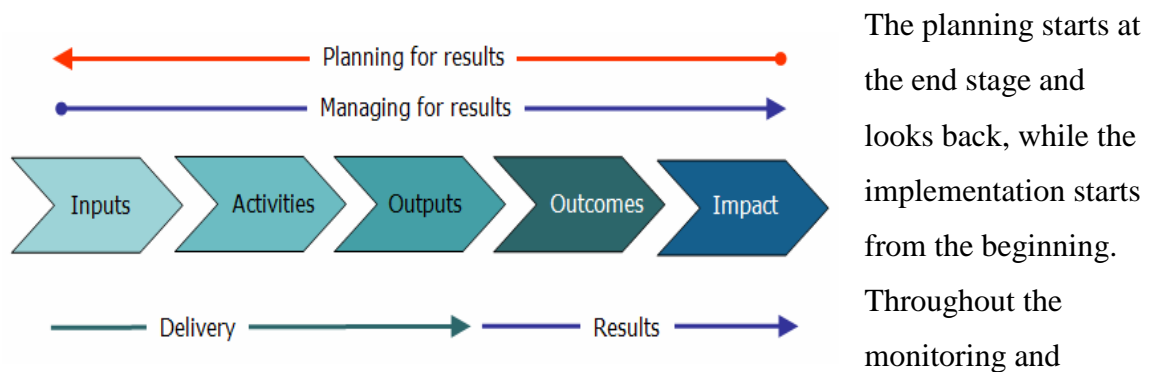
Designing a sustainable program can be a challenge. There are many aspects that have to be taken into consideration, including how to make sure that these aspects hold throughout the program. Karlsson et al (2006: 1380-1381) presented an action plan with key elements needed for the implementation of such a program. First of all, organizers and planners have to identify the main hindrances and prerequisites for a sustainable outcome of the program. They have to study the internal and the external environment in which the recipients live and their needs. The next step is to conduct an assessment to identify the important sustainable aspects to apply to the program (the inputs), set the short-term goals and milestones, and formulate an action plan to achieve these goals. In this preparatory phase, the insight and the studies conducted by anthropologists can positively influence the success of the program. This determination for sustainability should be an ongoing thread throughout every aspect of the program and everyone involved should be aware of these goals. Communication with the donors is also important; they have to be informed of the progress made at every step and understand the program's plan and objectives. After these initial steps the program is put in action. Documentation, monitoring, and evaluation should guarantee absolute awareness of the proceedings and help to avoid the possible failure of the program. The executioners must be ready and willing to make a change of plan if necessary.

Monitoring and evaluating the development program is an important part of a potentially sustainable program. Sporkley (2009: 6) introduces a system called Results Based Management, Monitoring and Evaluation. The goal of this system is to identify the problems and opportunities together with the beneficiaries and the stakeholders. The objectives have to be clear and the resources have to be readily available. The system helps identify and manage the risks/assumptions and increase the knowledge base.

In Sporkley's (2009: 6) research, this system should be integrated into the culture of the aid organization and the processing of all programs within it. The focus of the development staff and partners should be on achieving the outputs, the outcomes, and the sustainable impacts. Strong organizational leadership is needed to carry out this system. The main goal is to achieve good results by implementing activities that bring out certain

outputs (products or service) for the stakeholders. An easier way to explain this is by using the Results Chain to plan the process of the program (see picture).

In the beginning of the process there is a clear definition of the purpose of the program, as well as what the outcome (medium long) and the lasting impact should be.



evaluation of the program, this chain must be the center of attention for all participants.

Sperkley believes that the failure rate of funded programs that aim to achieve sustainability has been too high. The main cause of these failures is misplaced targets, timelines, and measures due to external conditions. The Results Based Management minimizes the external conditions that have a negative effect on the program; the system develops a direct solution to the problem and should make its own measurement indicators (Sperkley, 2009: 1-5).

Another important factor, Impact Evaluation (IE), may be used to evaluate whether the program is accomplishing its intended objectives. IE estimates the changes in outcome and the impact of a program. It also helps the managers, planners, and policymakers assess whether the program is succeeding or failing. IE ask questions like: can the program achieve its objectives? Is it efficient and cost-effective? Are we covering the target population? Are we using the right resources? It is a constant evaluation of budget, time, and development. The purpose of IE is to improve the quality of the program and it can be done without an extravagant amount of work (Bamberger, 2009: 9-30).

There are a few key factors featured in successful development programs. It is important for the program's success to follow these factors because they are lessons learned from past failure and success. To make a development program sustainable, it is critical to assess every step in the preparatory phase in order to be aware of potential failures (Mosse, 2005). There are many factors that need to be taken into consideration and they will be covered below.

In order to succeed there has to be a clear understanding of what success for a particular program might look like. Goals have to be clear to everyone involved. These

goals have to be followed throughout the program and in every step of the decision making process. There has to be a shared concern within the program team to identify the possible signs of failures; it is not only the manager's concern if there is a problem ahead. Everyone involved should be informed and stay alert so they can all work on the solution together. It is important to have flexible and realistic ideas and rules regarding possible failure areas throughout the planning. Another consideration is that the data (the baseline) has to be sound, because it impacts the decision making process. The program must be under constant evaluation, including monitoring and analysis, throughout the program. This way the team can be prepared if something comes up that will affect the program and appropriate changes can then be made (Mosse, 2005).

Communication is a key element in any successful program. Managers and staff must encourage productive communication so that team members can work together on any problems that might occur and find a relevant solution. Communication with the beneficiaries is also important. Furthermore, the project team should keep the stakeholders and the potential users informed about the proceedings and provide them with appropriate information throughout every step. What sometimes happens, according to Hamilton and Kusek (n.d.: 78), is that those who are working on the program get blinded by their own high expectations and do not see when a problem occurs. This particular problem can then grow and eventually become so big that the program will not have a chance at succeeding. The project team can also get too distracted by one specific problem and lose sight of other problems that might have evolved into bigger concerns. For this reason, among others, it is vital to ensure an effective communication system from the beginning to the end, in which all decision makers are involved (Mosse, 2005).

It is important to initiate clear accountability, responsibility, and decentralized decision-making in development aid programs. It is also important that each member of the project team be aware of his/her role in the program and what he/she is expected to deliver. At the same time, individuals must be able to foresee the possibility of failure. The managers and their teams must be able to identify potential upcoming problems in the program in order to work to avoid them. Everyone must be involved in this forethought and bring their ideas of possible failures to the table. A good way to do this is by playing the "what if" game. It should not be expected that everything will work perfectly from the beginning; every factor should be anticipated and prepared for. Documentation of the lessons learned from past projects is important for every organization and influential dissemination of that knowledge. To increase the rate of success, the planners have to be

knowledgeable of the past failures and successes. Constant feedback and monitoring is important to guarantee the maturity of the organization (Mosse, 2005).

All of these aspects mentioned above are important both before and during the initiation of a development aid program. The objectives of most aid programs are to have long-term impact and to sustain the changes that the program intended to produce. How can the people involved ensure that the program will carry on after they leave? How should they construct the program, from the beginning to the end, to ensure its outcome and sustainability? These questions will be considered below.

2.2 Local ownership

Preparation and planning are the most important stages in ensuring the successful outcome of an aid program. Yet, in these stages, the positive reactions from local recipients are too often taken for granted. Anthropological studies and knowledge of the local circumstances, and how it can be applied in the program, are extremely valuable and crucial to avoid this oversight. There are many reasons for disappointing results from development aid programs; the lack of a sense of ownership by the locals is often considered one main reason. The ruling classes in the developing countries often view aid programs as an ordinary normal process and do therefore not feel nor take the responsibility for the problems that need to be solved by the program. The wealthy often do not relate to these problems and are not affected by them. The WBG initiated an obligatory procedure in their programs where the local ownership is critically evaluated to increase the efficiency of their programs (Kuhl, 2009: 551-552).

The intention in sustainable programs is to provide the necessary start-up funds from donors and then the program should continue without any external support. The idea is to replace dependency on aid with this one-time start-up funding and transition it into a sustainable program. This approach most often relies on voluntary work from the members of the community and on educating the people (Kremer and Miguel, 2004: 1-2). One way to make programs sustainable and successful is to create local senses of ownership and dedication. In doing so, the locals are made active participants with their voices and their interests are integrated into the program (Swidler and Watkins, 2008:1184).

Local ownership and direct participation of stakeholders in the program is a major concern today for most development agencies. These agencies are looking for innovative approaches and better results. Increased ownership allows the community to participate in

the provision process and assist in determining the assets and resources needed to fulfill those goals. The locals should participate in the production process, in which the efforts and other resources of the program are calculated. They should also have a say in the consumption process and in deciding whether to continue if things do not proceed as planned (Gibson et al, 2001: 13-15).

Kleemeier (2000: 932) sees local ownership as one of the main issues that must be included in development programs from the beginning to the end. The first thing that has to be done is to inform the community or the government about potential costs and responsibilities. The community can then make a decision as to whether or not they can handle the program. The local community can accept or refuse the program because they are ultimately in charge of the responsibilities once the program is completed. Effective training is vital in order to strengthen the organization. The community has to learn about the technology and material supplies needed in order to take over. The community will act as a watchdog and they will have certain ownership responsibilities over the supplies while the program remains ongoing. The locals who have been charged with taking over must be trained. They will carry out the maintenance and repairs, because they know how the program was previously functioning and what has to be done if a problem arises. There has to be an agency and field staff in place to serve the donors/clients. In all of these phases, the community should actively participate in the program, including the maintenance of performance and finance.

A co-management approach, in which the responsibility is shared between the local community and the government, has shown it can improve the management of resources. Co-management allows the decision-making process and burden of responsibility to be shared between everyone involved. It is important for everyone involved in the decision-making processes to understand the potential impact of their decisions. That is why it is important to incorporate research and learning into the decision-making process. The focus should be on learning *before* the management component begins, and the information involved in the program has to be shared with everyone. The emphasis in the learning phase should be on what the user community wants to know (Garaway and Arthur, 2004: 6).

The outsiders involved in design, financial donations, and other areas of the development program often have certain ideas about how the programs should be operated and the desired outcomes. Too often they forget to ask the locals about what they want the program to achieve. The donors are not able to estimate the interests of the community and

they should therefore seek out and rely on anthropological studies. Donors have a tendency to lose sight of for whom the development aid program is actually intended. While the donors will continue to have a say, it is the community and the recipients' needs that must take precedence in all respects (Swidler and Watkins, 2008:1185).

It is difficult for "outsiders" to understand the needs of the community, because they typically do not live within the community or know it very well. They do not know how to respond to the community's needs. They cannot learn the needs of the community in a few weeks; they must experience it for longer periods in order to understand it. The community can best explain their own needs. In programs where "outsiders" are used to determine the needs of a foreign community, local ownership never really takes place (Lyons et al, 2001: 1235). Local ownership is an important aspect in sustainable programs, but there are also other important factors, such as empowerment and community participation.

2.3. Empowerment and community participation

Community ownership in development programs allows for the necessary involvement of the beneficiaries. The community has to participate and help with the design of the program because they know what is best for their community and what the priorities should be. Here we will discuss the importance of community participation and empowerment.

In order to get the local community involved, there has to be empowerment. Empowerment is considered as one of the most important elements in securing sustainability. The word refers to the realization of rights and the strengthening of an individual's position in his/her society. This process helps the community to gain political influence and relevant legal authority. The main purpose of empowerment is to give people control over their own livelihoods without the interference of external agencies. Empowerment helps people to preserve their dignity, to survive, and to gain control over their destiny (Lyons et al, 2001: 1234-1235). Rifkin (2009) sees empowerment as a tool used to do something special for the poor and those with little to no power within their community. Empowerment is used to change their way of thinking about their own abilities and talents.

Organizations that design development programs should focus on contributing to the empowerment of participants. One example of empowerment is to educate people in

how to read and write. Empowerment can take place everywhere around us, including in schools and in jobs, and it should therefore be the main focus in development aid programs. Empowerment is linked with community participation; these two concepts work together and affect one another. When combined they give the community control and autonomy, which creates self-awareness and more responsibility for their well-being (Lyons et al, 2001: 1234-1246).

Community participation is defined as when members of the community “develop the capability to assume greater responsibility for assessing their needs and problems, they want to plan and act to implement their solutions, create and maintain organizations in support of these efforts and evaluate the effects and bring necessary adjustments in goals and programs on an ongoing bases” (Zakus and Lysak, 1998: 2).

There are a few factors that are considered to be of utmost importance when it comes to implementing programs involving community participation. Political conditions have to accept and support the community participation approach and the interaction at all levels of the program. Community participation is therefore an administrative system that promotes and accepts local authority for the decision-making process of the program. It is a delivery system where the institutions, professionals, and managers are committed and supportive. They should also have experience with attempting to respond to the community’s needs in creative ways among themselves and the government. The community also has to be open to the development program; it has to be willing to accept responsibility and give their consent and commitment to the program (Zakus and Lysak, 1998:5).

Increasing community participation is an important aspect in making development programs more sustainable (Kleemeier, 2000: 931). Kleemeier found two studies conducted by the WBG, in 1995 and 1997, that supported his theory. These studies looked at whether participation of local people positively impacted the programs and sustained the changes initiated by the program. Both of these studies were based on 120 actual projects and both looked at rural water supply projects and focused on community participation. These studies came to the conclusion that community participation has a positive impact on the sustainability of development programs. One of these studies came to the conclusion that community participation was the single most significant factor in achieving local capacity and a functioning water system.

An aspect of community participation in sustainable programs is to use the locals as volunteers and employees. It can help them improve their lives and the lives of their

communities. They get the training they need and learn about how to cope in the world. The young people want to work for organizations for various reasons. The money they receive for each workday, which helps them to survive, is one of the main reasons; they can sometimes earn enough to buy necessary items for themselves and their families. This line of work also gives participants valuable credentials and helps them to make contacts that might be useful in the near future (Swidler and Watkins, 2008:1189). They educate themselves and possibly gain control of their own destiny. Individuals obtain training and experiences that may help with their future employment (Zakus and Lysack. 1998: 2).

When using community participation it is important to have a good relationship between the donors and the local government. It is the donor's role to develop strategies in line with the government. The local governments need to become more involved in prioritizing, planning and initiating the aid program and in the monitoring and evaluation phase. The donors should merely provide technical assistance and evaluate the program without intervening. Donors also have to support the political liberalization and democratization because it highlights the outburst of civic associations. This empowers local communities and should make local governments more aware of the needs of their people (Johnston and Van de Walle , 1996: 108-116). Although community participation and empowerment are considered important, some scholars have also criticized them.

2.3.1 Criticism on empowerment and community participation

The scholars that have criticized empowerment and community participation will be explored in this chapter. Cornwall and Brock (2005: 1044-1045) criticize what they consider to be so-called buzzwords, including “participation”, “empowerment”, and “poverty reduction”. They believe that these new concepts and approaches give people a false sense of optimism. These words appear to create a world in which everyone is involved in the decision making process for issues that directly affect their lives, or that hunger will be eradicated and vast opportunities created. These words foster certain senses of warmth and connote nice things. They have gained significance in the development industry, but Cornwall and Brock believe that these buzzwords have not yet entered the terrain of development policy. Have these buzzwords made any difference in the world? To answer this question, it is important to look at what has been done in the name of these concepts. Has it led to real differences or is it only a new concept used to cover up “business as usual”? These words are a trend and are offered to people in a hope for a

better life. Cornwall and Brock believe that in a few years the development industry will bring in new buzzwords to deceive others, most of all the development industry itself.

Cleaver (1999: 597-598) believes that community participation has become somewhat of an act of faith in development programs; we believe in it and do not ever question it. He sees little evidence of the long-term effect of participation and does not think that it has improved people's lives. He believes that the focus should be on creating economic growth and to make social changes, but not to implement participatory programs. He argues that it is necessary to make a more "complex model of the nature of participation and a more honest assessment of the cost and benefits to individuals of becoming involved in agency and state directed development processes" (Cleaver, 1999: 608-609).

Leal (2007: 539-546) argues that community participation is a phenomenon that took place in the mid-1980s. After the phenomenon started, aid agencies around the world began making sure that their development programs focused on community participation. The professionals and consultants made sure that methodological packages such as Participatory Rural Appraisal, Participatory Learning and Action, and Community Based Needs Assessment, were all involved. Leal says that this phenomenon should not surprise anyone, because the development industry has kept on reinventing itself in the face of its failures. Leal propounds some interesting questions regarding participation. He asks questions such as: In what do we wish to participate? Can we continue to accept our development projects as alibis for development by transferring ownership to the poor in the name of empowerment?

Lyons et al (2001) studied the relationship between participation, empowerment, and sustainability in South Africa and examined whether these factors were linked with one another. Their results found that some of the participants became jealous of each other; some were more empowered than others and even made personal agendas top priority. Conflicts evolved between the participants and within the community. In these cases, funds that were meant for the program had to be removed from the community and put back in the hands of "the outsiders" because the participants misused the responsibility that was given to them.

Lyons et al showed that empowerment is more likely to succeed if there are many participants and if there is equal access to information and essential training. Problems can arise with an outside agency during the community participation process, demonstrating the political cost of such agencies. Local or developmental rivalries can occur, which is

just one of the issues to be dealt with in aid development programs. The structure of the participation changes and the participants are not always the same. The local participants often have different views and approaches than the tactics applied. These different views can sometimes transform into conflicts among the participants and can even jeopardize the program's success.

A problem can occur because the phrases “community participation” and “empowerment” are not well understood. Every program is different and it is not always clear which characteristics the participations need to have, or what kind of training should be applied. Other problems can arise when the community does not share the same priorities and values, or have respect for cultural differences, gender differences or differences in socioeconomic status (Lysack and Zakus. 1998: 3).

Saito-Jensen et al (2010: 1-2) consider that participatory approaches can actually create new dictatorships instead of improving existing inequality or the unbalanced power structures. They suggest that policies should focus on including “minimum social standards, democratic elections and decision-making and third party engagement” to minimize the risk of domination (Saito-Jensen et al, 2010: 8-9).

The above section demonstrated some of the risks of using community participation and empowerment as a tool in order to gain sustainability. This is not always the case because many sustainable programs have succeeded and are still functioning to this day.

2.4. Experiences from sustainable programs

Creating a sustainable program consists of intense planning and consideration of risk. There are many things that have to be considered throughout the process. Programs that have succeeded in creating a sustainable outcome will be presented below.

Thottam (2011: 22-25) studied how the politician Mr. Kumar was able to turn the state of Bihar, once the poorest and most lawless state in India, into a model of Indian reform. Mr. Kumar became chief minister in 2005. He tackled destructive corruption, reinstituted law enforcement by filling thousands of vacant police posts, and ended political interference in the law enforcement. Growth has followed these security improvements: farmers are getting their grain and milk to the market without fear of being robbed, and shops are staying open longer now that people do not fear stepping out after dark. In absolute terms, the economic changes are modest and give people more choices.

Bihar's annual average economic growth has been 11% since 2006, the second highest in India.

Another successful program is the Brazilian ESP (English for Specific Purposes) program that was initiated in the 1980s. Its goal was to have long-term impact and to be sustainable. In 2005, 25 years later, it was still going strong. The objective was to establish a development program in which local participants were trained to take over and lead with local resources. The project's goal was to teach English for specific purposes with a few universities selected to be involved. The objective was for the teaching to be carried out by local teachers and students, instead of by outside agencies or experts. The ESP teachers were involved in all stages of the project, the design, data collection, and interpretation (Celani et al, 1988: 5).

The elements that differentiated the Brazilian ESP project were the project design and planning phase. Local teams were closely worked with and the decision-making was collective. Decisions were made regarding the objectives of the program, the size and scale of it, and, most importantly, the drive to create Brazilian "ownership" of the decision-making process. All the textbooks used were local and based on local resources. A centre of communications was established, the project was made open to admission for people from other institutions, and there was no anxiety or pressure in obtaining the support of the Ministry of Education. Another thing that stood out in the Brazilian ESP program was that an individual participant could be involved as a member of the local team, while also participating in the group of teachers involved in research at a national level (Holmes and Celani, 2006).

One of the main reasons for the sustainability of the Brazilian ESP program was the applied methodology, and that the methodologies were tested in a classroom and then adapted to local needs. Even though the Brazilian ESP program has succeeded, there were some decisions and steps made along the way that the organizers regret. One of these was the lack of base-line data, where supportive appropriate data would have been collected before the project even began. Their main sources came from an investigation that only consisted of interviews with locals. In hindsight, they would have encouraged PhD or research-based MA investigations (Holmes and Celani, 2006: 117-119).

The Life Abundant Program is another successful program, which was implemented in the beginning of 1980 in Cameroon. Its main focus was on the need for health-supporting operations in isolated mountain communities. It was a local development program in close cooperation with provincial health care authority. The

program took place in four villages and is now active in 40 Primary Health Centers and 14 Integrated Health Centers. The program was built on the needs and wishes of the recipients. The program became sustainable because of support from the Village Health Committee and the Church. The local chief was also given ownership, which made a great difference to the program (Eliason,1999).

A study conducted by Bossert (1990) laid out some of the contextual factors and project characteristics of development programs. He compared the programs that were more sustainable to those that were relatively unsustainable. His study focused on five U.S funded health programs in Central America and Africa. He wanted to find out if the programs continued after the funding ended. He took the example of Zaire in 1990; the government was so weak and corrupt that it undermined the efforts of NGOs. He also found additional factors, such as the private sector, socio-cultural elements, and donor coordination, which can have a great affect on long run program sustainability. Bossert found that in all of these countries, the sustainability of the programs was affected by the perceived effectiveness of the program and the program integration. The management of the program had to succeed, along with administrative leadership and training.

When it comes to the financial part of the program, there are two sources of funds that can be used to continue the program after donor funding ends. There is governmental contribution at various levels and also cost recovery mechanisms, where the beneficiaries pay for the service provided by the program's output. The program is dependent on whether or not these sources of funding have been developed during the lifetime of the program or not. The programs that are externally funded at high levels throughout the process are more likely to become unsustainable. The financing of programs during their current and future operations is the key success-factor in sustaining the changes and progress introduced by the programs. Thus it is necessary to have a reliable and realistic budget.

Bossert (1990: 1021) found that programs with solid training components were more sustainable than those without training components. Constructive training of human resources is crucial for the success and positive outcome of all sustainable development aid programs. Those who receive training in turn train others, which creates respect for the program and offers workers a deeper understanding of how the program functions. Programs were more likely to succeed if they were designed and approved in respectful negotiation between the government and the agencies for international development.

According to Bossert (1990) we can see that it is important for a program's sustainability to have clearly defined goals and objectives. There are many elements that can affect the sustainability of a program after donor funding ends. The two major factors are economic deterioration and weak governmental institutions. These factors cannot be controlled but should be taken into account in the planning and preparation of the program. Managers and planners should modify the project to reduce the effect of these factors. These factors greatly impact the entire program and can influence the ultimate success of the program. The designers and managers of the program can also control the program characteristics. Lessons can be learned from these groups, and precaution should be taken during design and evaluation of such programs (Bossert, 1990: 1017). Success is a state that all programs seek, but it is unfortunately something often hard to reach. There are many obstacles along the way that can affect the outcome of the program.

3. Problems that arise and affect sustainability

Presented above are programs that have succeeded in becoming *sustainable* programs, alongside a list of factors considered important for a program's success. The following chapter, however, goes over the problems that often arise both in the design of the program and throughout the program. These problems can have an impact on the results of the program and often lead to failure. It is good to know and be aware of these problems in order to avoid them.

Evaluation is important throughout a program, yet it is very difficult for the managers and donors of a program to monitor and evaluate progress from a distance. These external parties seldom know what goes on at all times; they might be unaware when something goes wrong and then be unable to fix the problem. Consequently, it is important for people included in the execution of a program to remain close by and make sure it is being implemented according to plan (Swidler and Watkins, 2008:1184).

Development aid programs are generally designed to help people and solve public problems, but the managers of such programs must be realistic. They have to recognize and be conscious of the possibility for failure. Attention to these possible failures is the best guarantee of success. To be able to recognize the failure, managers have to remain aware at all times. They must use the system and follow all indicators and suspects through monitoring and evaluation of the program. In this way, they can catch the potential failure before it becomes severe. Programs will not become sustainable if

managers are unaware of the risks and unprepared to respond timely to them. Managers have to be aware of the threat of failure; they need to take reasonable steps to avoid potential failure. Mistakes are bound to happen, but it is up to managers to correct problems in an appropriate manner (Hamilton and Kusek: 71-75).

Many things have to go right for a program to be sustainable long-term. According to Johnston and Van de Walle (1996: 49-66), there are four critical weaknesses that help explain why aid in Sub-Saharan Africa is not succeeding. First, there is lack of recipient ownership. Donors often try to dominate the program without paying attention to the local government's own interest. The government rarely identifies with the aid being provided.

Second, there is poor coordination of aid. There are hundreds of development aid programs in the world and often many in each country. They each have different approaches, strategies, procedures, requirements, and share little to no cooperation. It is hard for the governments in countries receiving aid to keep up with every program locally taking place. Governments must try to bring these foreign programs into harmony with their own local development strategies and coordinate donor efforts. Research has shown that aid is most effective when the government controls aid coordination and local priorities shine through. An African country might have many development aid programs that are each focusing on different aspects. This can create confusion and discomfort, which is why the government has to have certain rules and coordinate with the development programs.

Third, there is the inability to cover recurrent cost. Aid-funded programs are often not continued when there are no funds left. People involved in the program, including the designers and managers, might not recognize the problem or fail to plan for withdrawal. This is important because it negatively affects sustainability.

Finally, there are the stand-alone projects. Donors often structure their aid programs through their own activity instead of integrating it with the government. This gives the donors more flexibility in the short-term and helps them to reach their immediate goals. This makes it hard, or even impossible, however, for local governments to coordinate with the donors. Local governments must play a role in the design, process, and evaluation of aid in their own countries (Johnston and Van de Walle, 1996: 49-66).

People who seek help from development programs are usually committed to making a change. They want to survive and they want to be able to bring food to their family table every night. Fal (2009; 83-89) believes that we have to promote a so-called five-step industry development approach. These five steps include analyzing the current

situation, setting detailed sector objectives, understanding target customer needs, and developing an action and investment plan. He believes that the locals do not want quick fixes served to them on a silver platter; they want to contribute and participate in the process of change and improvements. In Fal's approach, the local stakeholders work together to increase competitiveness in the industry.

When initiating a program in which outside trainers train villagers, the trainers themselves need to be appropriately prepared. Furthermore, they have to be aware of their roles in the program and be determined to succeed. The lack of good trainers and good volunteers can doom a program to fail. Therefore it is important to provide individuals with relevant information, education, and to teach them how to communicate effectively with the locals and other people with whom they work (Swidler and Watkins, 2008:1188-1189).

Lyons et al (2001:1236) see communities as temporal beings. Needs in a community may shift or change over time, and the focus of the program may change within the community. We cannot assume that development aid programs can remain indefinitely sustainable (Lyons et al, 2001: 1236).

There is disagreement over the importance of making development programs more sustainable and free from a constant flow of donor funds. Kremer and Miguel (2004: 42) propose that many development programs fail because development agencies prefer to fund sustainable programs without a need for long-term constant funding. Their study focused on intestinal worms, which affect one out of four people worldwide, and the associated medical assistance and education given to people in Kenya. They examined so-called sustainable approaches and found that none were effective at fighting intestinal worms. The program needed ongoing donor funds to be able to serve the local community sufficiently.

There are a few uncontrollable elements that affect the outcome of development programs, including the level of corruption in a country. This is a concern for the donor community, because they then believe their funds are paying for unproductive and corrupt expenditures. At a hearing in 2004 before the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, experts argued that around 100 billion dollars have furthered corruption instead of going towards the intended development aid. Others estimated that roughly 25 percent of the funds from The World Bank since 1946 have been misused (Moyo, 2009: 52). Now we will turn to the importance of anthropology in the success of development aid programs.

4. Anthropology as a tool for successful development aid programs

Anthropology has been involved in development programs for about a century. The British colonial administration in Africa was among the earliest cases of anthropological collaboration in so-called development programs. The anthropologists researched areas of specific interest to the administrators and participated in the training of the servants bound to work in these countries. Anthropology was seen as a tool to help administrators understand, and in some cases control, the behavior of the people they dealt with. After the Second World War and the professionalization of development programs, more opportunities were created for anthropologists to work within development organizations (Gardner and Lewis, 1996: 26-29).

Anthropology was believed to be important for development because it provided infrastructure for sustained self-reflection by the people being studied, which would ultimately produce self-assessment. Anthropology empowers individuals by providing a better context in which they can represent themselves, their culture, and their concerns (Gardner and Lewis, 1996: 41). Anthropology can provide appropriate tools to help people within a given community to identify their own problems along with the solutions to these problems. Anthropologists can help find new ways of viewing and approaching the local community. "Anthropological insight can also provide a dynamic critique of development programs and help push thought and practice away from over systematic models and dualities to a more creative direction" (Gardner and Lewis, 1996: 4). Anthropologists are primarily interested in the workings of the beneficiaries, knowledge, and power. Mosse (2005: 242-243) sees the potential for anthropologists to participate in policy creation, but this can only occur if they are in close contact with the development aid agency or organization.

The role of anthropologists in previous development programs was to improve the efficiency, provide technical advice, and identify cultural and social elements that could slow down development. Some agencies still use this approach while others only hire anthropologists as consultants. Programs that use anthropologist for a short period, not allowing them to be involved in the execution of the program, usually do not have much long-term influence. The timeline of many programs is short; there is time pressure, which unfortunately is meant to please the donors more than the receivers. Waal (2002: 252-254) claims that complete involvement of the anthropologist is vital instead of only bringing him/her on as a consultant. Anthropologists today are increasingly partners in the

development practice and their role is more recognized. There are many theories and ways in which anthropology can be used when approaching a development program, but these depend on the focus and the intended applications.

Donors in both Europe and North America increasingly collaborate with NGOs. Their approach is based on increased local involvement, and a higher degree of partnership and empowerment, which requires more cultural awareness. This is where the value of anthropology comes in to play. Anthropology can appropriately be applied to the study of development and humanitarian aid, because the main priorities of such programs are to deliver relief, to sustain the programs, and to bring justice to local communities. It is necessary to involve political, economic, social, and cultural aspects in development aid programs, and anthropology is vital to understanding these elements (Waal, 2002: 252-254).

Anthropologists can furthermore help people involved in development work to create solutions and build programs that are sensitive to the needs of the beneficiaries. Anthropology brings important knowledge to human organizations the developing countries to harness and take advantages of opportunities emerging in their countries (Hooper, 2009:216-217).

Anthropology creates empathy for the recipients of aid and awareness of power relations manifested in the aid encounter. Anthropological studies foster concern for the real meaning of the aid, extend the pre-studies and can make the programs more effective. The aid industry has become an important subject for anthropologists and their involvement has become vital to making development aid more successful (Waal, 2002: 260-265). Anthropology provides the tools that are useful in studying the complex segmentation of the groups that the aid program is meant to serve. There are many powerful ways of looking at various groups of people, but anthropologists can help to select the appropriate approach for each development program (Hooper, 2009: 216).

Anthropologist should be included in the preparatory stage of development programs to ensure the application of effective methodology. Anthropology's main subjects within development aid are the "social technologies" of the program, the assessment of food needs, the goal of sustainability, and ensuring that the aid reaches those who need it the most. Through fieldwork, methodology, and sensitivity to the demands of the community involved, anthropology has proved itself an essential instrument in aid development programs (Waal, 2002: 251-267).

Conclusion

The ultimate objective of development aid is to help people to help themselves by stimulating local economic growth and establishing sustainable foundations for such growth. This paper identifies those aspects of aid programs that program teams must be aware of in order to guarantee successful development.

I have been most surprised by the astonishing number of programs that fail and how the ignorance of potential failure on the part of the program teams is often the very downfall of such programs. Critique of empirical traditional aid is growing along with the awareness that different approaches are needed. The need is clear for developing countries to take the lead role in deciding what kind of aid they need and how it should be delivered. The governments of these nations must become more selective and strategic in their acceptance of aid. Anthropologists must also play a key role in all stages of development aid programs in order to ensure effectiveness and sustainability.

Approaches and attitudes to development aid must change from all sides, including the recipients and the organizations working on behalf of donors. The trends towards change are already apparent but they must move faster. The political situation in many of the target countries has hindered progress. Aid has often been taken over by people who do not have the beneficiaries' best interests at heart. This is intolerable for all parties and donors should be stricter about the conditions for giving aid to those countries without initiative to increase the future welfare of their people through the creation of management capacity and infrastructure. Aid organizations need to be more aware of governance systems in the target countries. They also need to be aware of their program's potential for failure and the consequent waste of resources.

Until recently did the aid community see the high failure rate as an unavoidable fact in the delivering of development aid. But this attitude and approach is no longer tolerated when the information needed to avoid failure is readily available and to minimize failures must the consciousness of the potential failure always be there to keep the project team on the attentive all the time. To increase the effectiveness of aid, the recipient countries must increase their own awareness and take control of the aid they accept. Developed countries must consolidate their efforts to build responsible approaches and capable infrastructure in the developing countries. The responsibility rests with those that

have been selected, or self-selected, to lead their country forward. The time for this is now, not tomorrow.

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