

# **THE ESSENCE OF THE COMMUNITY BASED APPROACH TO THE FORMATION OF SUSTAINABLE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT**

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The overall objective of the community based approach to sustainable local development is to create an enabling environment for long-term self-sustaining socio-economic and community development at a local level by promoting local self-governance and community-based initiatives.

The community based approach to sustainable local development is implemented in Ukraine by UNDP. It was used in UNDP projects: Crimea Development and Integration Programme (CIDP); Chernobyl Recovery and Development Programme (CRDP); Municipal Governance and Sustainable Development Programme (MGSDP) and Community Based Approach to Local Development (CBA).

According to research by the Kiev International Institute of Sociology (<http://cba.org.ua/ua/library/documents>) specific objectives of this approach are listed as the following:

1. Improve living conditions in rural, semi-urban and urban communities throughout Ukraine by promoting sustainable rehabilitation, management and operation of basic social and communal infrastructure and services through community-based self-help initiatives.

Community organisations, relevant local (village and municipal), rayon and regional authorities carry out the rehabilitation of basic social infrastructure and municipal services within major national MDG (Millennium Development Goals)-based priority:

- health;
- energy;
- environment;
- water management.

During the introduction of community projects, each participating community is guided through the following steps of participatory community development:

- sensitization and community self-assessment;
- formation of community organisations;
- community development planning;
- project identification, prioritization and implementation;
- follow-up (community progress review mechanism established so that community members can codify past achievements and build on them).

2. Demonstrate effective participatory local governance and decentralized management mechanisms throughout Ukraine for public service delivery by promoting inclusive, self-governing community organisations undertaking self-

help initiatives in partnership with local authorities, private business entities and other stakeholders.

The dialogue between community organisations and local authorities is formalized through the establishment of Local Development Forums (in case of CBA Project) and the like. Such forums are composed of representatives of local authorities and community organisations, private business, public utilities companies, and local NGOs.

3. Enhance relevant professional skills and knowledge of community organisations and local authorities to initiate and maintain participatory local development process on social economic development and public services delivery.

UNDP Projects developed institutional capacities of community organisations and local authorities to identify community needs and priority, to manage and monitor participatory local process for a sustainable social-economic development and efficient public service delivery. UNDP Projects provided training and support to ensure that efforts are carried forward to implement community development plans. Various village, municipal, rayon and oblast resource centres are created for community mobilisation.

For communities to become self-confident and raise their self-esteem, the approach provides a transfer of previous positive achievements demonstrated by UNDP Projects in a significant number of settlements in 24 regions of Ukraine and in Autonomous Republic of Crimea.

According to the approach methodology, the interested communities gather general meetings and create community organisations which might take various legal forms (NGOs, BSPs, ACMH etc.). To form a community organisation, it must be formed by at least 80% of households of the corresponding community. The priorities of community development are settled in a democratic way (by vote or survey).

The community based approach to the formation of sustainable local development activates «dormant» social capacity and willingness of people to help themselves. Such characteristics of social capital as antipaternalism, respect for traditions, the inclusion in the decision making process and the propensity to cooperate are affected to the biggest extent. The positive effect of the community based approach is most evident on such socio-economic indicators as employment and population dynamics.

Therefore, the methodology of the community based approach to sustainable local development must actively be engaged in the short- and long-term socio-economic development of the areas and regions of Ukraine.

Ideas for the policy revealed during the research:

- the success of the methodology depends on the cultural and historical features of the local communities' previous development;

- self-help approach was often inefficient in terms of the dominant leadership or weakness of social organization;
- the success of the methodology is most likely in terms of a partnership between community, government and specialized organizations.

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