Intermediate Technologies (57)

Often the simplest and most benign level of technology that can effectively achieve the intended purpose in a particular location will be the most relevant. These intermediate technologies are particularly useful to underdeveloped rural areas, which may lack the specialized expertise or infrastructure to operate and maintain high technology. When seeking to promote the livelihoods of peoples through the process of technology transfer, it is important to be careful and creative in mapping out projects and types of technologies to be placed in a community to reach maximum use and benefit to those it is intended to support.

Consultants and development advocates must ensure that proper measures are taken to ensure relevance and usefulness. In these cases it would seem appropriate for communities and technologists to come together in a participatory process for mapping out needs, infrastructure and culturally relevant solutions.

Written by Justin Smith

Durable Assets (58)

Development that helps to increase durable assets people have such as land, machinery, or livestock can empower peoples to be self-sufficient even in times of hardship. Durable assets can be summarized within four categories: natural capital (natural resource assets), reproducible capital (durable structures or equipment produced by human beings), human capital (the productive potential of human beings), and social capital (norms and institutions that influence the interactions among humans).

Development practitioners, community members, and individuals can consciously pursue the acquisition and sustainability of durable assets to promote income generation activities and support a greater level of economic security to the most vulnerable populations. Ultimately as a policy, officials in government could, through pressure from social change advocates, develop initiatives to enable individuals and communities to both acquire durable goods, and assist in protecting those assets that they do possess, such as land from external threats.

Written by Justin Smith

Civic Capacities (85)

The path to social and economic empowerment can be blocked due to a variety of circumstances including illiteracy, a lack of information, limited access to health care, few durable assets, political marginalization, etc. From the grassroots to the international sphere, peoples are seeking ways to encourage and develop capability of individuals and communities to actively engage in creating the life they desire to live through promoting access to health, higher literacy, and the ability to collectively engage in public political action. Direct interaction with local, as well as national-level officials and engagement in cooperative and adversarial politics can bring about accountability and increased governmental responsiveness. Affiliation with regional and transnational advocacy groups can assist accessing leverage for marginalized groups. Through engagement and a direction towards freedoms and capabilities peoples can prioritize their political battles that pressure government to pursue policies that actually equate to results in education, health and economic opportunity for those who lack these building blocks.

Written by Justin Smith

Self-Help Groups (105)

Individual capacity among poor peoples in the developing world (particularly women) to establish credit and develop self-sufficient businesses is often unrealized. Lack of assets and stable employment seems to support a view that they are not credit worthy, thus they are barred from a variety of economic opportunities. Organizing groups to support collective and individual credit acquisition, and formal and informal skills training, can assist peoples in accessing the capital necessary to initiate small businesses and ultimately help build livelihoods for families and communities. SHGs offer one approach to create associations of support for some of the most economically marginalized groups within society. Through the desire of women and other members of the community these SHGs can provide an organized structure for providing employability and ownership for peoples otherwise left out. Overall, communities themselves (and/or with the aid of NGOs working in the area) can act to develop similar groups, as these programs can be realized with relatively little resources from the outside.

Written by Justin Smith