

The SWEET SPOT of Community Development

When Community Development becomes TRANSFORMATIONAL

--Jeff Power, 18 June 2010

Global Hope Network International (www.GHNI.org) helps the poorest villages of the world transform themselves. Here are critical elements to ensuring that our Transformational Community Development (TCD©) programs are truly *transformational*:

COMMUNITY-BASED

Community – It sounds obvious, but we have to base our program within a community. The community has to see themselves as a community. A community is a group of people who have a sense of unity and belonging. A true community is small.

Ownership – Community ownership of the program is irreplaceable. The community has to want to change. The people of the community have to choose, above all, to assume responsibility for their own development and for the development of their community. They must believe *they themselves* are the key to their community's future.

Leadership – The community must choose respected leaders among themselves to lead the development effort. Those leaders must have the vision, time and interest to drive their community's development. They are in charge of leading the development program... and we then become the assistants, the coaches, the trainers of those leaders.

CATCHING THE KEY IDEAS

Knowledge transfer – Everything changes once the community leaders grasp that the greatest wealth we give a village is knowledge, more than money. Then the community becomes eager to learn the development knowledge that will fuel their future.

Holistic approach – Development that is transformational must happen on several fronts simultaneously. The five development sectors in our TCD (water, food, wellness, income and education) are common to ALL communities worldwide, from the smallest villages to the largest cities. The community must see that *continually developing themselves in those sectors* is the common framework of transformation worldwide.

Problem Solving – When the leaders regularly gather their people to constructively solve their community's problems they are on a great path!

Local Resources – Transformation is near when the development leaders instill a mindset of, "Let's look around to see what resources are available *right here or nearby* to solve our problems."

Self-Sustainability – Dependence is the worst possible curse! The community's development leaders must constantly ensure that each development step *releases* them from dependence and *empowers* them toward self-sustainability.

BUILDING MOMENTUM

Outside Investments – The community agrees that their worldwide partners' investments are there to selectively multiply their own investments, never to replace them.

Projects as Models – We help implement specific development projects such as farming, water, income methods, etc. as models to be learned from, replicated and improved upon by households throughout the community.

Initiative – We're approaching the sweet spot of development when the community members say, "We have an idea for how we can do that ourselves, even better!" Now things begin to take off!

CELEBRATING!

Sharing the Wealth – A community gets excited when other communities see their great progress and want to come learn from them! They then become catalysts of change in *helping other villages!*

Hitting the Marks – We cheer the community on as it reaches sustainability in each of the five TCD sectors (water, food, wellness, income & education)!

Eye on the Exit – From the beginning of a development program the community is wise to keep remembering, "We're looking forward to the day when we no longer need outside help, just many outside friends!"