

The Community Based Rural Development Program in Burkina Faso



For years, the top-down approach to community-driven development in Burkina Faso has impeded local development. People in rural areas often went lacking because of minor discrepancies in project funding.

For example, in the village of Ramatoulaye, people knew they needed access to safe drinking water, land facility management, and a stable food supply. However, they also knew that in the past many projects were not decentralized, and only in very few cases could local people choose their own micro-project to be financed by donors; and the amount offered was often insufficient.

Recently, the World Bank, the Government of Burkina Faso, and other donors (IFAD, UNDP, and Denmark) partnered in creating the Community Based Rural Development

Program (CBRDP) to give rural people power and authority over their own projects and initiatives.

When CBRDP was presented to Ramatoulaye, people embraced it fully. CBRDP empowered them to elect local officials, who were then trained on local development and project management. With this new expertise, officials could communicate to the designers of CBRDP what their village needed. Residents of Ramatoulaye now boast about their new water well, cereal bank, and land management facility.

CBRDP began in October 2001, as a Community Driven Development (CDD) project to enable people to drive their own development at the local level. Initially, the World Bank proposed to only fund 2,000 villages with an IDA credit of \$66.7 million. These 2,000 villages were selected by a technical consultation group made up of government officials and local civil society organizations. The technical group worked with and trained Village Commissions for Territory Management (CVGT). The CVGTs are elected local village governments, who have the authority to manage local development projects and public funds.



With the help of the technical group, each CVGT analyzed its own village and produced an official document called the village local development plan. The village local development plan provides a detailed description of the village, its current situation, and describes the types of projects that would be most beneficial to people.

Once created, the plan is submitted to a provincial committee made up of local donors and non-government organizations. It is then sent to the CBRDP steering committee at the national level for final approval and funding.

After approval, villages are given direct funding through a decentralized commercial account. Each CVGT then uses the funds to hire consultants and laborers to build their project. According to task team leader Emmanuel Nikiema, most of the villages choose projects involving schools, health centers, housing for teachers, literacy centers, land management facilities, reforestation, livestock infrastructure, and small dams.

Each village is extremely proud of its projects. When World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz made his first tour of Africa, he was shown the Ramatoulaye village. The women there told him how well the village was doing thanks to CBRDP. But, they also insisted that more funding from CBRDP be given so that local development could continue. TTL Nikiema also believes that to continue servicing 3,184 villages and 2.9 million people, which is far above the initial proposal of 2,000 for Phase 1, more funding will be needed.

CBRDP has begun preparation for Phase 2. In Phase 2, all 8,000 villages in the country will be covered. Phase 1 was so successful that TTL Nikiema said many of the non-covered rural municipalities, or group of villages are becoming impatient and are pushing the government and parliament to begin the Phase 2 on a grand scale, so that every rural municipality has the opportunity to begin leading its own local development.

Everyone acknowledges the success of CBRDP. In fact, the foundation set by CBRDP for local governments has been monumental for Burkina Faso, which will hold its first country-wide rural municipality elections in 2006. The minister of territory administration and decentralization says "The CBRDP prepares the way for rural decentralization."