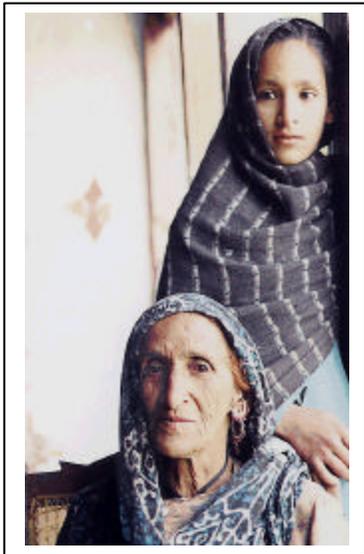


Cultural Assets for Poverty Reduction in Social Funds and Community Driven Projects

***Breakout Session: June 6, 4:30-6:15 p.m.
One Washington Circle Hotel, Presidential Board Room***

Communities in the Global Context. As the issues of globalization become more widespread, communities are beginning to realize the importance of finding ways to improve their opportunities while conserving their sense of who they are and what they value in life. This translates into new opportunities for the World Bank to help poor people build on their strengths.



Community-driven development (not just community managed development) can be greatly enhanced by supporting poor groups to take stock of their values and strengths, as they plan their priorities. In addition, the Bank can help local communities and associations to develop sustainable income-generating opportunities based on what they treasure in their own lives. These resources include their cultural identity and values, traditional knowledge, skills and talents, as well as their relationship to their community and to their natural and cultural setting.

Culture is now being recognized as a development asset: cultural capital can be used in a dynamic sense to address the problems of poverty and globalization -- both by energizing and empowering people, and by opening new opportunities to them.

The Evolving Markets. At the same time that poor communities want forms of development that do not erode the meaning and identity in their lives, the global market is starved for uniqueness. This is why cultural, ecological, and adventure travel are the fastest growing segments of the international tourism industry. This is why there is accelerating international demand for high quality craftsmanship and design in home products, wearables, and building construction and decoration. And this is what is fueling the new “world music” market. Working with local communities and associations and linking them to international markets -- via internet, socially conscious networks, and appropriate international trade associations -- can be an important new contribution of Social Investment Funds.

Community Organization and Self-Confidence. Further, by supporting groups, associations, and communities to undertake activities that speak to who they are and what they value in life – such as setting up community-based radio stations for public information and cultural programming, or supporting the protection or conservation of sites with deep meaning to them -- Social Investment Funds can energize poor groups, help them to organize, and encourage their creativity and self-confidence.

Examples for Social Funds. Social funds and community based projects already explicitly acknowledge the importance of building on local norms and practices, using participatory

decision making and increasing local capacity. Examples of activities which can support and build on cultural assets, through SIFs, include:

- **Community Facilitation.** Technical assistance to train facilitators within communities, to help the communities take stock of their own strengths and values, as an input to their participatory planning for sub-project development;
- **Community-Based Tourism.** Helping communities to identify and start businesses that conserve and build on their cultural assets – such as community-based tourism – and facilitating linkages and partnerships with growing international markets such as the adventure, cultural and eco-tourism industry
- **Artisanal Businesses.** Financial and technical assistance in product development and marketing for artisans to improve incomes, coupled with workshops and consultations to help them organize, and technical support to help them access relevant international markets;
- **Public Radio.** Helping community-based organizations start grassroots public radio stations, and develop programs in local languages -- to provide public information, informed debate, and cultural programs (e.g., music, story-telling); and to promote self- and inter-group respect.;
- **Grassroots Libraries.** Assistance to communities in setting up self-managed grassroots libraries and links to grant-based book sources and contributions;
- **Historic Conservation.** Urban revitalization through restoration of historic buildings for community use; and
- **Natural Resource Management.** Supporting communities' traditional natural resource management, such as water harvesting practices reinforced as appropriate technology.

Gains for the Poor. There are multiple gains from integrating cultural dimensions into the Bank's work:

- **providing new opportunities for poor communities** to generate incomes from their own cultural knowledge and production, and to grow out of poverty;
- **catalyzing local-level development** through the diverse social, cultural, economic, and physical resources that communities have to work with;
- **conserving and generating revenues from existing assets** -- reviving city centers, conserving socially significant natural assets, and generating sustainable, significant tourism revenues;
- **strengthening social capital** -- in particular to provide a basis for poor, marginalized groups to pursue activities that enhance their self-respect and efficacy, and to strengthen respect for diversity and social inclusion, in order to share in the benefits of economic development; and
- **diversifying strategies of human development and capacity-building** for knowledge-based, dynamic societies: e.g., through support to local publishing, library services and museum services -- especially when they serve marginalized communities and children.

Summary and Conclusions of Break-out Session, June 6, 2000

20nd International Social Investment Funds Conference

Introduction. We had a rich discussion of SIFs that are helping communities

- to improve their services (such as water supply by water harvesting); and
- to create income-generating opportunities by drawing on their values and cultural strengths, their skills, knowledge, and traditions. SIFs in Yemen, Bolivia, Guatemala, Tanzania, and Romania were discussed and analyzed.

Lessons. Some common problems came up in SIF design. For example,

- SIFs that weren't designed to enable cultural sub-projects had a harder time combining cultural assets with poverty reduction;
- People in charge of the funds couldn't respond to variety and so, tended to ignore demand;
- Communities didn't have much capacity, and needed pre-investment resources;
- Income generating projects (community-based tourism, artisanal enterprises) that were not developed with market links weren't as sustainable.

Conclusions and Recommendations. The group discussed how to improve structures and processes in SIFs -- to enable projects that build on cultural assets.

The following 5 points seemed key:

1. Promote Public Awareness Raising, with examples of subprojects in which communities can draw on their values, skills, traditions and improve their lives. This is crucial to help people to get rid of preconceptions about what SIFs will support and stimulate their creative thinking about their opportunities. Use mass media and communities' entertainment (theater, song), as well other ways, to get these messages across.
2. Facilitate Community Participatory Planning: Build on your strengths. This is training of community members -- to help groups
 - To think openly about what they value and want to be part of their lives;
 - To assess their own strengths – skills, knowledge, traditions, identity – on which they can build opportunities;
 - To identify not only needs, but also how to respond to them in ways that confirm what they value in life, and that mobilize their strengths.
3. Identify broad areas and sources of assistance during preparation, to respond to likely demand.
 - Preparation should include diagnosis to identify likely sorts of cultural enterprises, community educational activities, and other culturally based projects for which there is likely to be demand.
 - Preparation (and, as necessary, follow-up TA under the project) should identify sources of expertise and ascertain their interest in participating -- individuals, trade and professional associations, that are active and well respected in their markets. (Examples: the Adventure Travel Society is credible in development of

community based tourism; the BBC and Radio Netherlands can provide superb technical support for community based radio stations, and so on.)

4. Organize appraisal assistance: PCU should contract out -- not appraise “unconventional” subprojects themselves.
5. Enhance PCU roles:
 - To train facilitators in communities – on participatory planning and sources of TA
 - To give communities two opportunities to get TA funding – to develop feasible proposals and to get advice for implementation,
 - To help communities to network and form associations to work with markets;
 - To contract out for business brokerage to help communities develop market links. Credible trade associations and networks operating in international niche markets can organize business brokerage between screened companies in their markets and communities with relevant sub-projects.

Mutual Support. The group decided it would be useful to set up a list-serve for people working on SIFs that include cultural assets. This will let us work as a support and learning group, to put questions to each other, and share ideas and experience.

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