

VOICE OF THE RURAL WORLD

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THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT



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It highlights the rural world's life and activities of
the member movements belonging or not to the Federation

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Dear Readers,

Greetings from International Secretariat!

VMR 129 deals the topic on the Role of Local Self Governments in Rural Development. Local government administration is one of man's oldest institutions. The earliest form of local democracy itself originated and developed along the lines of local governance initiative in the ancient Greek City States. From a macro-economic point of view, over the last few decades, insufficient resources have been allocated by national governments to rural infrastructure (roads, storage facilities, marketing networks, etc.) and social services (education, health, safe drinking water, sanitation, etc.). It is evident that there is a glaring gap between the rural and urban areas in terms of infrastructural, resources distribution, human resources development and employment, which has made rural development imperative. Local government is the focus of government efforts at promoting development. It becomes obvious overtime that to effectively develop, the people must be adequately mobilized. A purposeful combination of the local (peoples) effort/energies with that of government with the objective of improving socio-economic conditions and encouraging political participation is a key factor in rural development.

The idea of local government is to bring governance closer to people in the grassroots for participation in governance, service delivery to enhance socio-economic development and good governance. It represents the objective expression of the energies of mobilized rural communities in concrete and tangible projects



such as roads, clinics, schools, potable water and other communal initiatives that benefit the people.

While central governments are unlikely to have the capacity to assess the diversity of local conditions or local requirements and capabilities, local governments have comparative advantages, because of their better knowledge of local needs and priorities, their proximity to local users, and the pressure of local constituencies for greater accountability and transparency. However, decentralized local governments have also a number of weaknesses, particularly because of the lack of clarity of the existing regulatory frameworks concerning their real responsibilities, inadequate access to financial resources, and vertical relationships with sectoral ministries, as well as a lack of financial and human resources. They are also better placed to identify the poor, to respect local social identities, to value forms of collective action and self-help preferences, to support social inclusion.

Poverty reduction can be achieved primarily through agriculturally based development, in which local government must play a role in promoting local economic development, coordinating the inter sectoral activities and bridging the service gap between national and local level; this can be achieved only by means of gradual political, institutional and fiscal decentralization.

The local level is the scale at which people meet face-to-face, create partnerships and alliances, find synergies and complementarities for mutual support, and devise strategies relevant to the particular conditions of their community. It is in recognition of this that many countries of the world have undertaken programs of decentralization, devolving to the local scale responsibility for economic development in their jurisdictions.

Enjoy your reading

George Dixon Fernandez
Secretary General



THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT



Local development, also called grassroots development, is a process that uses local initiatives at the small community level as a driver of economic development.

For some, especially for Anglo-Saxon researchers who then speak of community development, it is the consequence of the failure of state-led development; for others, it is a way of breaking with the heavy trends of globalization; for others still, it is a space of empowerment of private actors facing the failure national political powers...

What are we talking about?

The notion of development

Beyond its economic, social, cultural, spatial and sustainable dimensions, development is often interpreted as a process of transformation that accompanies growth in a long-term evolution. This process is closely linked to the concept of progress.



The notion of local

It is based on the notion of territory, but here too we can understand this notion in different ways:

- the administrative division, sometimes arbitrary and without correspondence with human geography
- the identity belonging
- the field of action, around a coalition of development actors

In any case, we could agree that local development is above all an economic and social, even cultural dynamic, more or less concerted, driven by individual and collective actors in a given territory. We could also talk about a process

that makes it possible to develop priorities, to choose actions based on the knowledge and proposals of the population groups living in a given territory and to implement the available resources to meet these proposals. Local development encourages a



focus on actors rather than infrastructure, networks rather than established institutions, to give men/women and groups directly concerned a decision-making function on the actions they carry out.

To better define the notion of local development, we can quote a definition: “Local development is not growth, it is a cultural, economic and social movement that tends to increase the well-being of a society. It must start at the local level and spread to the next level. It must enhance the resources



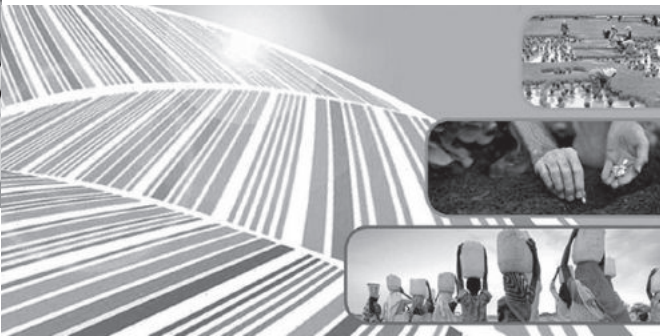
of a territory by and for the groups that occupy it. It must be global and multidimensional, thus recomposing sectoral logics”.

Some examples

In developing countries, local development is based on actions that mobilize local initiatives at the level of small communities and inhabitants themselves, possibly with external technical or financial support.

- mini-infrastructure: digging a well, installing solar cells to power a village, creating a school
- setting up micro-cooperatives or microcredit associations
- initiatives of certain inhabitants in a personal or family capacity at the level of agricultural, commercial, craft enterprises, taking advantage of local resources and markets and using efficient methods.

For example, in Burkina Faso, local development is defined as “a dynamic process in which organized and mobilized actors initiate and implement



activities in a given area with a view to improving their living conditions”.

Local development has a content that is political, economic, social and environmental. It involves several actors such as the State, local elected officials,

populations, civil society organizations, the private sector, technical and financial partners, etc. It is implemented through instruments such as the municipal development plan, the regional development plan, development plans and funds.



water, lighting, cultural and recreational facilities, childcare and other public goods and services essential to the quality of life on the territory.

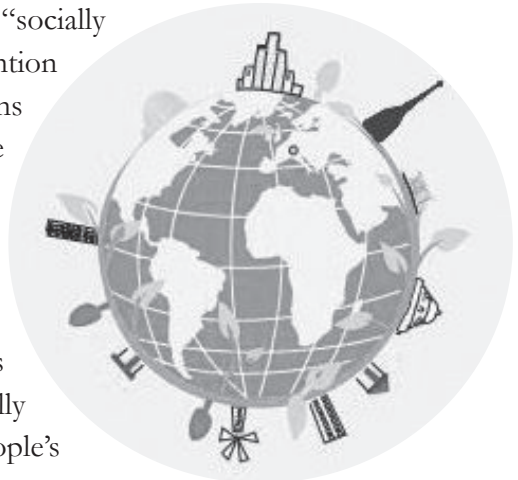
- They simultaneously monitor the territory and promote measures that contribute to its sustainable development (green zones, control of greenhouse gas emissions, waste management, etc.).

It is at the local level that people meet in person, create partnerships and alliances, find synergies and complementarities for mutual support, and develop strategies tailored to the specific conditions of their community. It is because they recognize this fact that many countries have undertaken decentralization programs, giving local governments responsibility for economic development on their territory.

For decentralization of responsibilities for local economic development to be effective, high level governments must put in place legal frameworks that give Local Regional Governments (LRGs) clear mandates that ensure that local authorities and their staff have the necessary training and financial resources to fulfil their roles.

Characteristics of local economic development (LED)

Economic development must be “socially just”, inclusive and pay special attention to women, youth, populations at risk of exclusion (because of their origin), ethnicity, religion or disability. It must be “environmentally sound” and ensure that future generations have the same opportunities as those living today; “culturally grounded” and strengthen people’s





capacity to give meaning and purpose to participation in the social and economic life of their community.

LED is participatory. It is based on partnerships between local authorities, the private sector, the university and other educational centres, other public sector and civil society actors to promote business activity at the local level. Local governments provide leadership and coordination in the planning and implementation of LED initiatives, either directly or through delegation of authority to community organizations.

This is a “bottom-up” approach from the bottom up. It cannot be “top-down”, i.e. implemented from above or imposed by any external body, national government, financial entity or international cooperation agency. It depends essentially on an effort of inter-institutional articulation, cooperation and coordination with the aim of adopting a common approach to integrated development. This includes social, cultural, environmental and institutional actions at both the local (municipal, provincial, regional, state) and national (federal) levels.

The composition of this stakeholder group may vary from one community to another. As indicated by good territorial development practices, a “four-





screw” engine is required as a minimum, i.e. an impetus that involves the active participation of the local public sector, the private sector of the company, the knowledge sector and civil society. By specifying a little more:

- Public sector: LRG policy makers, qualified technical staff; representation from other levels of national, regional and local government.
- Private sector of the company: producers’ associations, chambers of commerce, employers’ organizations, social economy, solidarity economy and informal economy. - Civil society: trade unions, NGOs and third sector associations, citizens’ organisations, women’s associations, social networks, traditional leaderships. Knowledge sector (research, training-diffusion): educational institutions, universities, distance learning centres, research centres, means of communication.
- Financial sector (public or private): local savings banks, credit unions and micro-financial institutions, traditional financial system, guarantee funds, seed investment programs, international organizations.
- Regional integration and international cooperation bodies: territorial cohesion policies, cross-border programmes, sectoral development programmes, social inclusion programmes.

Conclusion

As we have seen, local development is based on an association of various partners so that it is a guarantee of success and lasts over time. To do this, it is necessary to :

- Initiate a dialogue with local, regional and even national governments to ensure that the needs and concerns of local development groups are clearly understood and supported by relevant policies and programmes;
- Ensure that their local economic development strategies, plans and initiatives are well coordinated and developed in harmony with national



development strategies, and that they take into account the local cultural context and national priorities;

- Ensure that all community voices are heard by promoting participatory processes in their economic development efforts.

For this development to be a guarantee of success, it is necessary to :

- Establish well-defined legal frameworks to enable people to be key players in the economic development of their communities;
- To provide LRGs with access to sufficient sources of funding to play an effective role as initiators, catalysts and drivers of local economic development in their communities;
- Provide support to LRGs to build the institutional capacity and skills necessary to play their role effectively in economic development;
- That all parties, men and women, youth and adults, be involved in this development

At FIMARC, we believe that this development is possible. We have the expertise on the ground, we do not always have the necessary financial resources, but we are open to dialogue between the various stakeholders, local development managers, public and private partners, associations, trade unions and all people of good will who believe in the future of the rural world.





FIMARC NEWS

FIMARC ASIAN SESSION ON “TO PROTECT AND STRENGTHEN FAMILY FARMING IN ASIA AND RAISE AWARENESS ON PEASANT RIGHTS -CHIANGMAI, THAILAND

FIMARC Asian Formation session on “To protect and strengthen family farming in Asia and raise awareness on Peasant Rights “ was held in Chiangmai, Thailand from 26 January -1 February 2017. 35 Rural leaders of FIMARC Asian movements from India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Philippines, Indonesia, South Korea and invited members from Myanmar and, Cambodia participated in the programme. Our allied and networking organizations such as la via campesina, MIJARC, WFFP etc were also part of this important continental formation session.

The study session allowed the participants to discuss the current situation of family Farming in Asian countries and the scope, policies and initiatives that can support it in the

future. It also gave an opportunity to look at the real needs of farmers and rural people in order to strengthen and enhance family farming systems. More over the participants were able to get awareness on the Peasant rights process

The FIMARC ASIA SEMINAR 2017 on Protecting and Strengthening Family Farming and Peasant Rights focussed on the Experience sharing of the family farmers of the Asian member movements to protect and strengthen their rights. Family farming contributes to many livelihood options for the poor rural world in terms of the social, economic and environmental advantages such as creating employment, maintaining good cultural practices, sustainable rural development and preserving ecosystems. The family farming concept has been widely chosen as an effective tool to sustainable development from the grass root level for a balanced ecosystem, fighting against the global climatic change. The main goal of the formation session was to have a strategic planning and concrete



interventions of the movement at Asian level with a view to strengthen family farming and to create more awareness on Peasant Rights.

With this continental session, FIMARC initiated genuine and coordinated dialogue between different actors and organizations at various levels, such as Via Campesina, MIJARC, WFPF, Assembly of the poor, Thailand etc. which work on family farming.

**UN INTER
GOVERNMENTAL
WORKING GROUP ON
RIGHTS OF PEASANTS AND
OTHER PEOPLE WORKING
IN RURAL AREAS -4TH
SESSION- HRC IN GENEVA
-MAY 15-19, 2017**

FIMARC brought the Voice of southern Farmers to raise their concerns and aspirations in relation to the peasant rights declaration of the UN at Human Rights Council in Geneva. FIMARC already involved in the UN process on peasant rights in Geneva for the last years and participated in all the working group sessions so far. FIMARC is part of the collective lobby group along with

Via Campesina, CETIM, and FIAN etc. FIMARC made 3 interventions on different articles of the draft declaration of the Peasant Rights and organised and participated in different lobby meetings to get the support of some governments as well as to change the opinion of couple of EU Governments in favour of the declaration. Wolfgang Scharl (Germany), George Fernandez (India), Medard Meyanga (Cameroun), Gabriel Falghun, Elisabeth Pariat, Marcel Favre and Gerard Boinon (FIMARC GTDH members, from France) were part of the delegation of FIMARC in the 4th session of the UN Inter governmental Working group on Rights of Peasants and Other people working in rural areas.

**FIMARC DECLARATION AT
HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

FIMARC delegation participated in the regular session of the human rights council in September 2017 in Geneva to support and follow up the Peasant rights process .We strived with great effort to approve the resolution of Human Rights Council to continue the process on



Peasant Rights .Even though many northern governments were either against or abstained ,we were able to mobilise the support of southern countries.

**FIMARC PARALLEL
CONFERENCE ON RIGHT
TO FARM SAVED SEEDS
AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY-
HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL-
GENEVA 16 MAY 2017**

FIMARC organised a parallel conference on Right to farm saved seeds and Food sovereignty in collaboration with CETIM on 16 May from 1-3pm, Hall XXIV of the Human Rights Council in Geneva.The main objective of the panel discussion was to raise the importance of peasant seed system and influence the article of the draft declaration on Peasant Rights to Seeds.

Speakers:

Medard Meyanga, Cameroon, FIMARC Pan African Coordinator

Gerard Boinon, France, Human rights group member of FIMARC

George Fernandez, India, Secretary

General of FIMARC

Malik Özden Switzerland, Director of CETIM MDIAKHATE Fall, Senegal, Via Campesina-Africa

The adoption of a UN declaration on ‘the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas’ are a historical demand of organizations representing the various populations. The need to protect these populations is increasingly stressed by various forums, including the bodies of United Nations. The right to farm seeds and genetic resources is a powerful means to reach towards the realization of the right to food, in all rural areas, South and North.

**MEETING OF THE
INTERNATIONAL
CATHOLIC SOCIAL ACTION
MOVEMENTS-JUNE 2017**

FIMARC participated in the coordination meeting of the International Catholic Social Action Movements which was held from 2-3June 2017 in Paris. The main objective of the meeting was to create stronger catholic social action network and collective actions.



FIMARC Asian Session on “To protect and strengthen family farming in Asia and raise awareness on Peasant Rights - Chiangmai, Thailand

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