

Improving the effectiveness of community-driven development in Sierra Leone

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Highlights

Evidence impact

- Findings on the significance of collective action and community participation informed changes to the GoBifo project's operation manual.

Factors that contributed to impact

- The research team and the implementing agency have a long-standing partnership to assess various aspects of the community-driven development approach in a post-conflict setting.
- There was widespread demand from NGOs, donors and governments for more evidence on the impact of the popular community-driven development approach to promoting democratic and accountable local institutions.

Impact evaluation details

Title: [The GoBifo project evaluation report: assessing the impacts of community-driven...](#)

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Status : Completed March 2012



Context

Sierra Leone has witnessed an era of poor governance and civil war, coupled with widespread and chronic poverty. The country has gradually shifted towards decentralised governance. However, women have been traditionally kept away from participating in local governance. International donors, governments and NGOs have been investing substantial resources in the community-driven development approach, which emphasises local participation in and control over project implementation.

The GoBifo pilot project (GoBifo means ‘move forward’ in Krio) was implemented by the Institutional Reform and Capacity Building Project (a joint initiative of the government and the World Bank). It aimed to build social capital and increase the inclusiveness of community decision-making in a post-conflict environment.

Lack of participatory decision-making in local politics was seen by many as a contributor to the long-running conflict in Sierra Leone. However, critical evidence gaps remained in understanding how GoBifo’s community-driven development approach would improve local governance, build institutions, and influence community dynamics and authority structures beyond the immediate sphere of the project activities and delivery of public goods.

GoBifo’s impact evaluation was led by the Evaluations Unit of the Institutional Reform and Capacity Building Project, with technical assistance from the Centre for Evaluation of Global Action. The researchers assessed the project’s impacts on social capital and inclusiveness of community decisions.

Evidence

The findings suggest that GoBifo was a reasonable mechanism to deliver local public goods efficiently, at a low cost and in a transparent manner. However, there is no evidence to show it was an effective method to strengthen social capital or to fundamentally alter local hierarchies and decision-making processes in this context.

Evidence impacts

Informed the GoBifo operational manual

The findings informed changes to the GoBifo operations manual. The manual now focuses on the importance of multi-stakeholder participation, inclusiveness, participation of women and youth, conflict resolution, coordination, and greater monitoring of community participation.

Suggested citation

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