



## Policy Brief

### Participatory Development Management: the effective way to achieve development?

#### Background

The Pan Africa 2000 Network (A2N) is a Civil Society Organisation (CSO) comprising of 14 National Organisations<sup>1</sup> working with rural communities through various interventions in partnership with many stakeholders including government departments, research and training institutions, donors and other CSOs. With support from UNDP, the Network's major activities include the implementation of Participatory Development Management (PDM) with a focus on achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)<sup>2</sup>.

This policy brief draws on A2N's successes, lessons learnt and challenges of facilitating PDM in Kabale district, Uganda, and aims to inform government, donors and CSOs about the need to up-scale and institutionalise PDM as a capacity development initiative in their efforts to reduce poverty.

#### The Policy issue

In most African countries, the village community's experience of development is a process that comes to them from the government, donors or CSOs. Development is not a course of action that they usually initiate, monitor, control or own. Many governments have attempted to change this top-down approach to development, within the decentralisation framework, which aims to ensure that local communities down to the village level, determine and control their development.

**In practice, this system has had very little impact at the local community level due to lack of capacities so as to be able to take part in the planning process which has resulted in poor participation by the communities in development management. In practice, planning starts not at the lowest (village) level but at a higher one.**

The result is that local communities are excluded and the potential of decentralised governance to ensure the relevance, effectiveness, accountability and transparency of decision making is not realised.

**In order to ensure participation in development management at the community level, A2N (with support from UNDP) has developed a strategy for PDM in order to ensure participation in development planning at the community level and strengthen lower planning units.**

<sup>1</sup> The A2N participating countries are: Burkina Faso, Burundi, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Mauritania, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

<sup>2</sup> The MDGs are: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; Achieve universal primary education; Promote gender equality and empower women; Reduce child mortality; Improve maternal health; Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other disease; Ensure environmental sustainability; Develop a global partnership for development.

## What is PDM?

PDM is a building block approach to decentralised development management which empowers local communities to develop their own plans and to implement them. Within the PDM framework, communities are mobilised and facilitated to generate development plans, which are progressively built into and integrated into higher government planning units.

## PDM values and principles

- ◆ Promoting transparency and accountability.
- ◆ Encouraging inclusiveness.
- ◆ Influencing higher levels of governance.
- ◆ Supporting self reliance through local action, based on vision driven plans.
- ◆ Building managerial and technical capacities.
- ◆ Targeting the vulnerable and marginalised.
- ◆ Working in partnership with all stakeholders.
- ◆ Approaching development in a holistic manner.
- ◆ Rewarding best performance and celebrating success.

## Putting PDM into practice

With the support of Village Community Facilitators, the community analyzes their current situation through the village profiling process, draws up a long term vision, develops a 3-year strategic plan to realise the vision and develops an action plan to start implementing the strategic plan.

The village plan takes into consideration what the community can do by themselves, what they can do with some outside assistance and what they cannot do by themselves but needs to be done to improve their lives. The community also monitors and manages the development plans and makes adjustments where necessary on the basis of lessons learnt.

The village plans (Local Government level 1) are then integrated into plans of the next level of government (level 2); level 2 development plans are integrated into level 3 and level 3 development plans are integrated into the National Development plan for MDG attainment.<sup>3</sup>

## PDM stakeholders

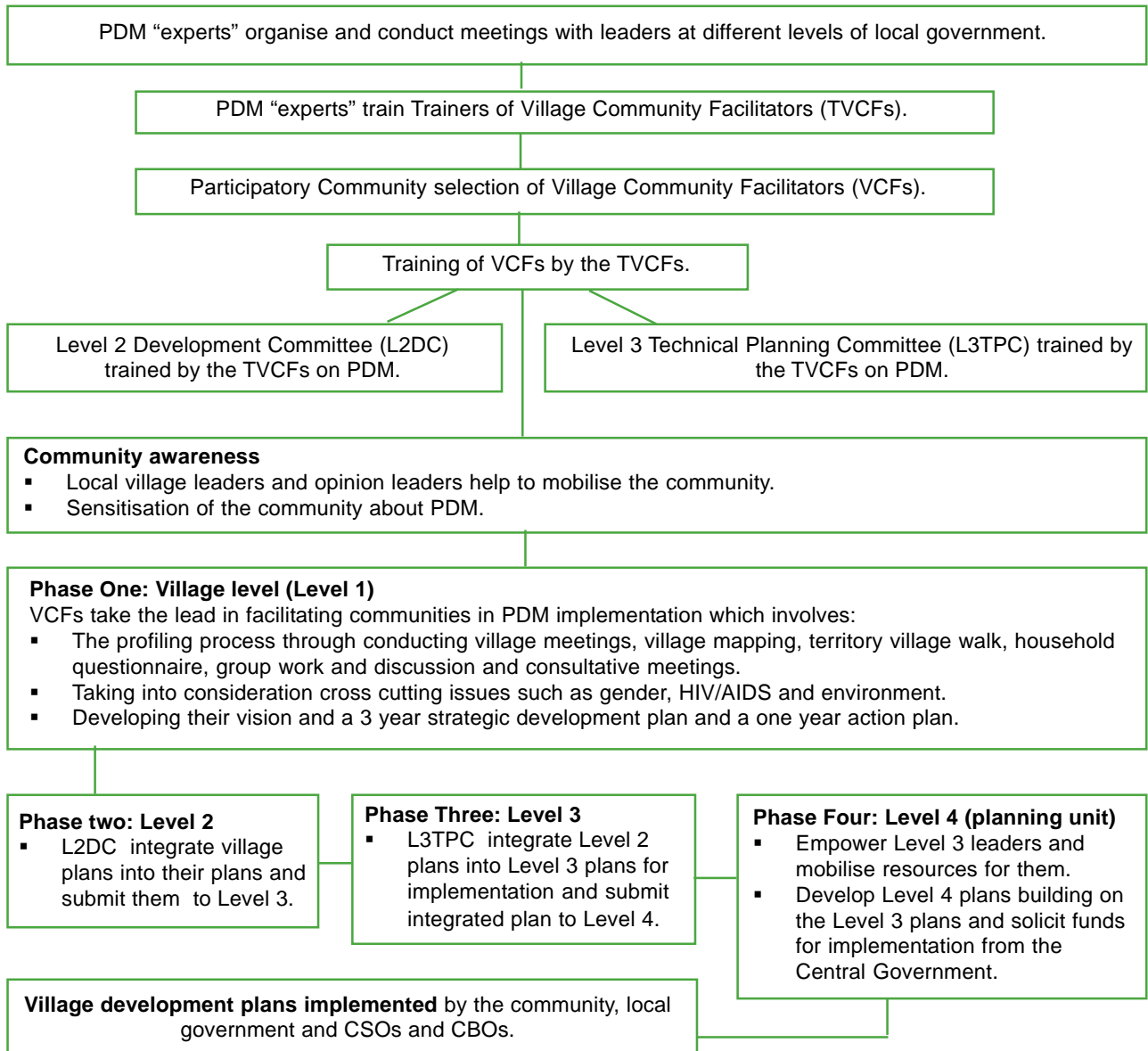
PDM requires the participation of all stakeholders in the planning and decision making process so as to improve the quality of service delivery to citizens. These stakeholders include:

- ◆ The primary beneficiaries – the community members
- ◆ The different levels of Local government
- ◆ Central government
- ◆ The private sector
- ◆ CSOs
- ◆ Donors

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<sup>3</sup> Different countries have different structures of local governance. What is important to note is that the PDM planning process involves all the different levels up to the national level.

## The PDM process



## How PDM has taken decentralisation to the village level

In August 2003, The Government of Uganda<sup>4</sup> contracted A2N-Uganda to facilitate PDM implementation in four out of the eight districts that were selected to pilot PDM with the view to spreading it to the rest of the country. The four districts are Kabale, Kalangala, Jinja and Busia. In Kabale district A2N-Uganda facilitated PDM implementation in Bubare Sub-county in the following villages: Kashaki, Kyantobi, Kashenyi, Butobore, Kagarama, Bwindi, Nangara and Muyanje.

As a result, six trainers of the VCFs were trained, who in turn trained 258 VCFs; all the communities in the sub-county were sensitised about PDM; all community members participated in developing village plans and the parish plan; 48 members of Parish development committees were selected and trained; and 19 members of the sub-county technical planning committee were trained. As a result, there are 129 village plans in place, 8 participatory Parish strategic plans were made and one harmonised and integrated sub-county strategic plan is in place.

The Village plans were also submitted to the Ministry of Local Government but due to limited resources, only the Kyantobi Village plan was selected to be implemented. The plan had

<sup>4</sup> Through the Aid Liaison Department, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MFPED).

agricultural activities as a priority and therefore A2N-Uganda, with support from UNDP, was contracted by the Ministry of Local Government to implement the agricultural aspects of the village plan. As a result, A2N-Uganda encouraged Kyantobi Village community to develop the spirit of community cooperation in solving their problems, introduced them to new and appropriate farming technologies, exposed them to the benefits of building physical and social infrastructure (such as roads, piped water etc) and assisted them in growing apples and avocados which have increased their income.

Testimonies from the benefiting community<sup>5</sup> in Kyantobi Village illustrate the impact PDM has had in their lives from ensuring that their voice is heard in the planning process to enhancing their livelihoods through improved farming and incomes.

**Kabale District used to formulate plans based on insufficient information from a few elected leaders but as a result of PDM, there is now participatory planning which has improved service delivery to the community and ensured that decentralisation governance has reached the Village level.**

## Recommendations

Despite the successes in Kabale District and the other pilot districts, PDM has only been scaled up in 10 out of the 72 districts in Uganda due to lack of resources and policy support for its institutionalisation. Therefore, the main objective of decentralisation (through PDM) of enabling village communities to participate in development planning and management is yet to be achieved.

There is consensus among development agencies and within Local Government that decentralisation needs to be deepened down to Village levels in order to reduce poverty and promote sustainable livelihoods. Uganda's pilot phase has demonstrated that PDM has the capacity to achieve this goal but needs to be institutionalised and scaled up for greater impact. In order to achieve this, A2N recommends the following:

- ◆ Best practices and lessons learnt by Donors, Local Government and CSOs need to be documented and shared widely among the various stakeholders.
- ◆ Village plans need to be supported.<sup>6</sup> Implementation of the plans is very important if communities are to be empowered and decentralisation put into practice. Local Governments need to work in partnership with donors, CSOs and the private sector in order to mobilise resources for operationalising the PDM process.
- ◆ During the pilot phase in Uganda, integration of the Village plans into Parish Plans has proved to be difficult since the other Villages in the Parish were not following the PDM approach. It is therefore important that PDM is Implemented in all villages at Local Government Level 2, so that plans at this level are evolved from the village plans in accordance with the building block principle of PDM.
- ◆ Involvement of the various CSOs and the private sector needs to be encouraged at all levels in order to utilise available resources and reduce duplication of services and projects.
- ◆ Handing over responsibilities to the community to steer their own development by local leaders should be encouraged so as to empower the communities.
- ◆ Government policies should support PDM and harmonisation of the policies needs to be effected so that the planning system in the country becomes uniform and integration of plans becomes systematic through Villages (level 1), Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4 up to the National level.

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<sup>5</sup> Taken from a case study and several testimonies recorded in A2N's report "Participatory Development Management in Kabale District (2002-2006)".

<sup>6</sup> The estimated cost of implementing PDM is \$581.40 per household.