

**A CED Training Guide for Peace Corps Volunteers**

**Module 3**

**Developing a CED  
Strategic Agenda**





## **MODULE 3**

# **DEVELOPING A CED STRATEGIC AGENDA**

### **A VOLUNTEER'S STORY**

*A long, long time ago in the Peace Corps, back in the early 1960s, a Volunteer in Latin America, who later became the acting director of the Peace Corps, worked with a community group. The Volunteer discovered many community concerns. This community needed potable water, more educational opportunities for the children, better access to health care, and methods to market the agricultural products they produced.*

*Nevertheless, all the community members talked about doing was building a wall around the cemetery. In spite of the Volunteer's articulate arguments for the benefits to be derived from other projects, the community remained steadfast in its determination to build a cemetery wall. The Volunteer was persuaded to help the members to organize and carry out their project.*

*In building the wall, community members gained confidence in their ability to work together, to plan, and to complete a project. The community group went on to complete other projects with the support of the Peace Corps Volunteer and on its own.*

*The Volunteer never did figure out why building the wall was so important to the community. However, he recognized the value of the trust and community capacity that were built during the construction process.*

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In some ways, a community economic development (CED) strategic agenda is like a meeting agenda. The key people arranging the meeting gather information and decide which items are important enough to include on the agenda. In developing a CED strategic agenda, a core group of community residents leads the community in gathering information to analyze how the community is today, helps the community visualize how they want the community to be in the future, and then decides what items need to go on the CED strategic agenda for community action.

A community may have a clear and compelling idea for a CED project they want to work on now. If this is the case, they may not be interested in exploring other ideas. Provided the idea has widespread support, it may be practical to move ahead with planning and implementing a project to follow through on this idea. However, in most cases a community requires time, leadership, and resident participation to understand the present conditions affecting the economic well-being of community residents and the possibilities for improvement, and to arrive at consensus on a CED strategic agenda. By engaging in the activities and reading the materials in this module, you will gain the skills and techniques that prepare you to work in a participatory way with community groups to set a CED strategic agenda. By the time you complete this module, you should have acquired the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be able to:

- Demonstrate practical methods for developing a CED strategic agenda.
- Describe a Volunteer's role in developing a CED strategic agenda.
- Discuss the differences between the asset and problem approaches in exploring community concerns.
- List five decision-making techniques and give examples of how they might be used in a CED setting.
- Explain the advantages and disadvantages of small and large CED projects.

Members of communities everywhere have at least six basic concerns:

1. Income
2. Housing
3. Health
4. Education
5. Transportation
6. Security/Safety

Governments are severely strained and unable to meet the escalating demands for health, education, transportation, and security/safety services. Increasingly, communities look to their own resources or those of private business within their communities to provide these human services. Adequate housing for residents continues to be a concern for many communities. Unemployment or underemployment in developing and redeveloping countries is a major concern. In all six areas of concern there is the potential for CED to make a change—to build community capacity and to improve the economic well-being of a community. To address community concerns in ways that lead to long-term sustainable solutions, the whole community—young and old, men and women, majority and minority residents—should be involved. Participation is essential in building the capacity of communities (see Module 2, “Building Community Capacity Through Participation”).

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*What is the difference between  
an obstacle and an opportunity?  
Our attitude towards it.  
Every opportunity has a difficulty and  
every difficulty has an opportunity.*

— J. Sidlow Baxter

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In Module 3, “Developing a CED Strategic Agenda,” we explore:

- The key elements in developing and implementing a CED strategic agenda.
- Gathering and analyzing information on community concerns, resources, and vision for the future.
- Decision-making tools to assist a community in developing a CED strategic agenda.
- What a strategic agenda for one community might look like.

To implement a strategic agenda, the community will need to plan and manage individual projects. How to design and manage projects is not covered in these CED training materials because the Peace Corps has excellent Project Design and Management (PDM) training materials. In fact, most Peace Corps posts offer PDM training to Volunteers and Counterparts. Check with Peace Corps staff to determine whether PDM training is available in your host country, and whether it can be arranged.

**ACTIVITY 3:1**

**THE ROLE OF THE VOLUNTEER IN DEVELOPING  
A CED STRATEGIC AGENDA**

Think about the role a Volunteer should play in organizing a CED strategic agenda. What role should you play as part of a community team?

Individually review the following questions and then fill in the blanks. When you have completed the task, share your answers with others in your training group. Develop a consensus on the most effective role(s) a Volunteer can play.

1. A Volunteer's power should come from:  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. A Volunteer's productiveness depends on:  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. A Volunteer's value to the group/organization should be measured by:  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. A Volunteer's responsibility is to communicate:  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. The best kinds of support a Volunteer can give a group/organization are:  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. A Volunteer's commitment to the group is demonstrated by:  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. The two most important roles a Volunteer should play are:  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. The most perplexing paradox a Volunteer must cope with is:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Continued

Activity 3:1, continued

When you have come to some consensus, think about and discuss the following questions:

- Were there any answers of your fellow trainees that surprised you?
- What were some of the differences and similarities about the Volunteer's role within the group and the role you would typically play if you were a long-time member of the community?
- How might you use what you learned in this exercise during your Peace Corps assignment?

For more ideas on a Volunteer's role in development see the Resources section at the end of the module.

Before developing a CED strategic agenda, we pause for a minute to remind ourselves of some principles, or key elements, which help ensure the success and sustainability of a CED effort. These six key elements enforce the dual goals of CED—improving the economic well-being of a community and building a community’s capacity to take responsibility for its own economic future.

## **KEY ELEMENTS IN COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

**Key Element 1: Consensus and consensus building through the active partnership of the main socioeconomic and political actors at the community level.** This means creating a process and atmosphere that:

- a. Unites the community’s socioeconomic actors and creates collaborative links across political barriers and differences.
- b. Ensures interaction between the private and public sector.

**Key Element 2: The bottom-up approach,** which:

- a. Mobilizes to the utmost the local human resources and actors.
- b. Makes the local actors responsible for the local development process.
- c. Sensitizes the local actors to be responsible to build up consensus around the strategic development policies for their community. “Consensus building” and the “bottom-up approach” are ideal concepts; however, they are not always easy to introduce.

**Key Element 3: Human and organizational capacity building at the local level.** This means upgrading the local human and technical skills to undertake and make sustainable the CED process. An important aspect of organizational capacity building is the development of financially sustainable activities.

**Key Element 4: Synergy and catalyst effect.** To create trust and co-responsibility between the community actors for the development of the long-term goals of the CED process, it is important that short-term visible results are achieved. The creation of good local examples has a high degree of motivation and a “synergy effect,” and can act as a catalyst in getting a community to take action.

**Key Element 5: Globalization at the community level.** This means a process whereby:

- a. Policies for community development are designed to complement and contribute to national and international economic policies. In this way, isolated initiatives and actions are folded into overall strategic development policies.
- b. CED organizations establish links with other communities within their region and with national and international organizations and agencies.



**Key Element 6: Raising public awareness.** To ensure:

- a. The constant mobilization of community resources, whether human, financial, managerial, or political.
- b. The democratic development of the process and the relationship between organizations and the whole local community.

The local press and media (if they exist) have to be mobilized. The local media can and should be one of the key actors in promoting a dialogue among all the socioeconomic actors in the community. They can facilitate democratic consensus building and promote the bottom-up approach. If no local media exist, CED organizers need to take practical actions to raise public awareness of the CED process by posting fliers in public places, holding “town meetings,” talking to people on the street, etc.

(Adapted from ILO/COOP–UNDP/RBEC *Regional Local Economic and Employment Development Programme Final Report*, March 1996.)

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*The beginning is the most important  
part of the work.*

— Plato, c. 428–348 BC

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## **GATHERING AND ANALYZING COMMUNITY INFORMATION**

Think about the economic life in a community where you lived for several years. Which companies were the major employers? What were the economic roles of men, women, and children? What were the community’s economic problems and its economic competitive advantages? What did community members value—maintaining a beautiful environment, local cultural events, their schools and universities, a convention center, or the excellence of a local agricultural product? How could you tell a family was “well off” in the community—by the neighborhood they lived in, by the cars they drove, by the schools their children attended? Who were the “movers and shakers” in the community? What were the skills of people living in the community? These are the types of questions a group of community members needs to be able to answer before they can decide on a suitable CED strategic agenda.

By undertaking a systematic gathering of information and analysis a community gains a deeper understanding of its situation. At the same time, this process enables community members to work together and begin the process of forming a cohesive working group. Analyzing the community also provides the basis for the initiation of the CED process. Finally, this step in the CED process provides baseline information from which the community can monitor its progress and evaluate its results.

For all the reasons discussed in Module 2, “Citizen Participation in CED,” all community members who are willing should gather and analyze information and together decide on a CED strategic agenda.

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*Two eyes see better than one.*

— Mauritanian Proverb

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First, get together with some like-minded citizens who are interested in improving the economic well-being and capacity of the community. This core group might come from an existing community organization, a consortium of organizations, or it might be a new group of community members concerned about one issue such as education for children, drug or tobacco use, or crime. In addition, gather other key or strategic players such as a tribal elder, a councilperson, the mayor, business leaders, nongovernmental organizations (NGO) leaders, and/or the town’s religious leader. Often these actors will make the difference in the success of a CED effort. Actors vary by culture and country; their blessings can make a project move quickly and effectively towards success. Be culturally sensitive as to how actors are invited to join the process. In one culture, it might be a very formal letter requesting participation; in another, it may be one elder asking another to participate. The important thing is that everyone in the group is interested in promoting positive changes in the community. A group of about a dozen is recommended to start; smaller groups may have problems if anyone drops out, and a larger group may make it difficult for everyone to be heard.

Whoever brings the group together might also take the responsibility for beginning the discussion of community concerns and community capacity.

The core group, including other actors, determines:

- The boundaries for the community they are planning to work with.
- What information they already know and what information they need to gather about the community. Note: gather only information you really need.
- Who will gather the information? How?
- Who will analyze and summarize the information to illustrate the community’s concerns, opportunities, and vision for change? How?
- How decisions will be made as to what is included in the CED strategic agenda.
- How the CED strategic agenda will be presented to the community—how the community will become aware of the CED strategic agenda?

Community assessment is time well spent. It grants the community the opportunity to define its own priorities, to decide what will change and what will not. Community assessment can become a complex and time-consuming task if taken as a highly scientific investigation—but do not let this happen. It can be an informal, enjoyable, and useful analysis for all when people are involved using appropriate participatory methods and techniques.

There are two basic approaches to community development. Both can be applied in a participatory manner. The *Appreciative Inquiry* (AI) approach begins with what is present in the community rather than what is absent. Although the identification of problems has its place, it can take a half-empty approach. The appreciative approach looks at the capacities, skills, assets, property, and resources of the community and its members. It focuses on creating or rebuilding relationships among local residents, associations, and institutions, bringing them together to multiply power and effectiveness. It also looks at ways to capitalize on what is working and expand, modify, or enhance the community's economic possibilities.

A *problem-solving* approach starts differently, beginning with problem recognition. The problem that is “seen” is often just the tip of the iceberg, and the real problem may be much deeper and more complex than it appears. Gather as much data as possible about the stated problem, including hard data, such as facts, history, and procedures, and soft data, such as feelings, opinions, and attitudes. A problem will look different from different vantage points. Defining the problem so that everyone can agree and accept it is a critical step in the problem-solving process.

The problem-solving process then moves to uncover the root cause or causes of the problem. The root cause(s) can be uncovered by using a variety of tools and methods, such as brainstorming, force field analysis, and cause-and-effect diagrams. The next step is to create as many solutions as possible and then to use decision-making tools to decide on the best option.

## Contrast Between Problem-Solving and AI Approaches

### Problem-Solving Approach

Felt Need: Identification of the Problem

Analysis of Causes

Analysis of Possible Solutions

Action Planning (Treatment)

Basic Assumption: An organization is a problem to be solved.

(Reprinted with permission from Cooperrider, D. L., and Suresh Srivastva. *Collaborating for Change: Appreciative Inquiry*. Berrett-Koehler, San Francisco, 2000. p 23.)

Problem or deficit approaches and appreciative, asset, or strength-based approaches are not exclusive of each other. They are on a continuum. During an assets-based resource inventory, information regarding “problems” or “deficits” may surface. During a problem analysis, people may talk of “opportunities.” This information is important to know and use in designing CED activities. The important lesson is that how you begin the dialogue, with assets and strengths or with problems, may influence the energy level and empowerment of the participants. Beginning with the positive is usually more stimulating and encouraging. In other words, your first questions are fateful.

### Appreciative Inquiry Approach

Appreciating and Valuing: The Best of “What Is”

Envisioning “What Might Be”

Dialoguing “What Should Be”

Innovating “What Will Be”

Basic Assumption: An organization is a mystery to be embraced.

## A Continuum of Approaches to CED

Problem-Solving Approach	Deficits-Challenges-Concerns-Issues-Assets-Strengths	Appreciative Inquiry Approach
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As you plan ways to collect community information, you should also be aware that culture plays a significant role is what information is given and shared in a society and how that information can best be collected.

Tools to gather information can be structured using the appreciative/asset/strength based approaches, the problem/deficit approach, or a middle ground of addressing questions or issues. For example, a survey or focus group might frame questions either in an appreciative way or in a way that encourages respondents to look at the community’s problems, roots of the problems, and solutions to problems. Numerous books have been written on methods of gathering information, including observation, structured interviews, role-plays, drawings, etc. The Peace Corps book *PACA: Participatory Analysis for Community Action* (ICE No. M0053) contains a number of information-gathering techniques (see

Resources section at the end of the module). Examples of three information-gathering methods are presented below: Johari’s Window, Focus Groups, and an Expenditure Patterns Survey. As you read the text and do the Johari’s Window activity, think of the implications of using each method with an appreciative a problem-based approach.

Johari’s Window is a tool that helps groups understand that by gathering information from a variety of sources and perspectives a more complete understanding of the situation is possible. The concept behind Johari’s Window is that each community is a mystery, partly known and partly unknown. Named after its authors, Joe Luft and Harry Ingham, who were concerned with different styles and processes of interpersonal communications, Johari’s Window assists us in understanding that individually we do not have all the answers and through working with others we can learn and grow.

### JOHARI’S WINDOW

<p><b>Open Knowledge of the Community</b></p> <p>What the community knows and what the outsider knows.</p> <p>Known to the community and known to the outsider.</p> <p>Both parties know each other at least superficially, and the relationship seems friendly.</p>	<p><b>Community’s Blindness</b></p> <p>What the outsider knows and what the community does not.</p> <p>Known to the outsider and unknown to the community.</p> <p>The outsider can see problems and their solutions clearly, but the community members (group) do not see them at all.</p>
<p><b>Community’s Hidden Knowledge</b></p> <p>What the community knows and what the outsider does not.</p> <p>Unknown to the outsider and known to the community.</p> <p>The community members (group) have certain feelings, beliefs, values, fears, etc., which only insiders are aware of. They are hidden from the outsider’s view.</p>	<p><b>Knowledge That Will Be Revealed</b></p> <p>What the community does not know and what the outsider does not know.</p> <p>Unknown to the community and unknown to the outsider.</p> <p>Neither party knows the other well. However, they may get to know each other better in the future in the course of working together over a period of time.</p>

(Adapted with permission from: Srinivasan, L. *Tools for Community Participation*. Prowess/UNDP–World Bank Water and Sanitation Program, 1993.)

### **ACTIVITY 3:2**

#### **JOHARI'S WINDOW**

Draw a blank diagram of the Johari's Window box. With your training community make a list of what you know about the community. Invite community insiders, language instructors, and other host-country nationals to participate by making lists of what they know about the community. Once everyone has ample time to develop his or her own list, begin by sharing your list one item at a time in small groups. Place this information on your blank Johari's Window in one of the four boxes. For example, if you know that the medium income for the community is 400 pesos, but no one else does, that would go in the upper right-hand corner, Community's Blindness. Information that only community insiders know goes in the lower left-hand corner, Community's Hidden Knowledge. Information that community outsiders and insiders know goes in the upper left-hand corner, Open Knowledge of the Community. Information in the lower right-hand box, Knowledge That Will Be Revealed, will be based on various pieces of information gathered together or through discussion or insight.

After you have completed Johari's Window discuss the following:

- What were some of the differences in the types of knowledge of insiders and outsiders?
- Were there cultural differences in how information was presented or viewed?
- What new knowledge about the community revealed itself?
- How might you use the Johari's Window tool at your site?

Note: This might be a useful activity to do with your Counterpart after you have been at site for a few weeks.

Continued

Activity 3:2, continued

**ACTIVITY 3:2**

**A VARIATION**

It might be fun to do the exercise instructing one group of insiders and outsiders to list things about the community that they appreciate and another group of insiders and outsiders to list the community's problems.

Questions to discuss:

- Did using the appreciative or problem approach affect the energy of the groups?
- Was different information gathered using the two approaches?
- Would more information be revealed about the community if both approaches were used and the results combined?

Johari's Window makes the point that Volunteers usually relate to a community from the "blind" window, tending to believe they have the "right" answers to the community's problems while the community members are considered "blind" to their situation. It also points to the importance of Volunteers learning about the community's or group's feelings, beliefs, and values. It is not easy to learn these things until a level of trust is established. Trust is the starting point. Respectful listening and providing the community with opportunities to share their concerns, successes, assets, and problems is the way to develop trust. Finally, Johari's Window combines the community's experience, knowledge, wisdom, customs, and beliefs with the Volunteer's skills and different perspective to produce a new knowledge, revealed to everyone committed to the improvement of the community.

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*To raise new questions, new possibilities,  
to regard old problems from a new angle,  
requires creative imagination.*

— Albert Einstein

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## **FOCUS GROUPS**

Focus groups are a technique for gathering qualitative information. A focus group usually consists of five to 10 individuals. Depending on the information to be gathered all members can be from one segment of the community (i.e., youth or business owners), or they can represent diverse members of the community. Focus groups can be used to:

- Collect opinions, beliefs, and attitudes about issues of interest to the community.
- Check out assumptions about people's views on a community issue.
- Encourage discussion about a particular topic.
- Create energy and excitement about a topic from the comments that participants' make and the ideas they share.

Focus groups are an excellent way to gather information, but they are not the only way. Before deciding to use a focus group, carefully consider whether it is the best way to gather the information you need. Also, consider combining the focus group method with other data-gathering methods, such as interviews, surveys, or research into secondary sources.



To clarify, a focus group is about people’s feelings, beliefs, and perceptions. It is not:

- A quantitative research method. A focus group provides qualitative information.
- A brainstorming session. Although focus groups generate fluid discussion, they have a definite format and a set of structured questions.

Focus groups have some advantages: They provide an opportunity for obtaining in-depth information; they can be conducted inexpensively; they are more personal than a survey because they bring people together; and the results can be gathered quickly. However, there are also disadvantages: A competent facilitator is needed to conduct the focus group; group dynamics can be difficult to control; time is limited, so the number of questions that can be asked is also fairly limited; it can be time-consuming and challenging to assemble a focus group; and because the data are verbal, it can be difficult to analyze and interpret.

The particular questions posed in a focus group are critical. The first couple of questions should be warm-up questions to put the group at ease. To be effective, focus group questions should be open-ended, focused, and move from the general to the specific.

**EXAMPLES OF INEFFECTIVE AND EFFECTIVE QUESTIONS**

INEFFECTIVE QUESTIONS	EFFECTIVE QUESTIONS
Do you favor the community undertaking plans to develop a day care facility? (This is closed-ended and elicits a “yes” or “no” response.)	What do you consider to be the advantages of the community undertaking plans to develop a day care facility? (This is open-ended; it encourages people to think and respond.)
What do you like best about the proposed CED strategic plan? (This is too general. It should focus on a specific point.)	What do you like best about how the CED strategic plan is being communicated? (This is focused; addresses how the plan is communicated.)
Why do you refuse to support a farmers’ market in the Central Square? (This question is biased and may make participants defensive about their answers.)	What do you think might be the advantages and disadvantages of opening a farmers’ market in the Central Square? (This question is more balanced, asking for both advantages and disadvantages.)

Explain to focus group participants why the information is being collected and how it will be used. Assign someone, not a focus group member, to keep good notes. Thank participants for their time and input.

It may be necessary to conduct a series of focus groups to gather the information the core group needs to prepare a CED strategic agenda for the community.

During your training look for opportunities to use focus group methodology to gather information about your fellow training participants' or host country friends' opinions, beliefs, and attitudes.

### **AN EXPENDITURE PATTERNS SURVEY**

This is but one example of the many surveys that are used to gather quantitative and qualitative community economic information. Other surveys might address transportation needs, housing requirements, skills, education and job experience of community residents, or safety and security concerns.

When designing and conducting a survey, you should:

- Keep the questions simple and the survey short (no longer than two pages).
- Ask only for information that is absolutely necessary.
- Ask community residents to complete the survey. There are several ways to approach residents:
  - Go door to door.
  - Set up a table at the local elementary school or another public place.
  - Ask organizations if you can send a representative to one of their meetings to hand out surveys.

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### **Sample Expenditure Patterns Survey**

**Introduction:** Include an introduction to your organization and what it hopes to accomplish in the community.

**My questions are about your general shopping patterns and your sense of what community businesses have to offer.**

1. What percent of your purchases do you make in the community? \_\_\_\_\_
2. If not 100 percent, why not? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How close should a business be located to your home in order for you to shop there?

1/2 kilometer      1 kilometer      > 5 kilometers

Continued

4. How do you reach businesses in the central area of town?
- |         |                          |
|---------|--------------------------|
| On foot | By public transportation |
| By car  | Other _____              |
5. What kinds of businesses are needed but not currently located in the community? (Circle all that apply.)
- |                 |                |                  |
|-----------------|----------------|------------------|
| Bakery          | Beauty salon   | Auto repair shop |
| Laundromat      | Barbershop     | Tailor           |
| Shoe store      | Hardware store | Cinema           |
| Furniture store | Bookstore      | Other _____      |
| Bank            | Restaurant     |                  |
6. Do you ever buy products or services from people who have home-based businesses? If so, what products or services?
7. Do you know people in the community who could start a business to provide more of the things that you need? If so, who and what type of products or services could they provide?
8. Would you be interested in starting a small business in this community? If so, what type of business?
9. Would you be interested in a training class that teaches the basics of starting a small business? Yes or No?
10. Would you consider volunteering one or two hours a week to help with a community project? Yes or No?

\* \* \* \* \*

How might a CED group use the information contained in the Expenditure Patterns Survey to improve the economy in the community?

- Educating local vendors about what kinds of things people want to buy.
- Educating local consumers about using their expenditure power to encourage retail stores to provide the products and services they want.
- Promoting new businesses or expanding existing businesses to fill gaps in the goods and services available in the community.
- Educating local business people about starting businesses of their own.

Gathering community information can be a fun and creative experience. However, it is important not to get stuck in the information-gathering phase of developing a CED strategic agenda. Community members need to feel that the process is moving at a pace that does not result in the loss of momentum

and motivation. From time to time check with the core group to determine if they feel sufficient information has been gathered and it is time to move to the decision-making phase.

## **DECISION MAKING**

Decision making must consider the culture of the community. Some of the methods below will be acceptable decision-making tools in one culture and not in another.

There are many tools available to assist organizations in making effective decisions. In this module we include activities to illustrate two techniques that are easy to understand and use, force field analysis and a criteria matrix.

Some of the pitfalls of decision making are abuse of political power, personal preference, poor leadership, or a “macho” demonstration of decisiveness. At times, Volunteers are either pressured into or pressure others into certain projects based on expertise, level of knowledge, or ease of accomplishment rather than the aspirations and desires of the community. Two guiding principles in making community decisions are:

1. Be inclusive—make certain the diversity of the community is represented.
2. Be transparent—make decisions in an open way.

Decision-making tools and methods are designed to avoid some of the pitfalls and make the decision process more inclusive and transparent.

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*The way to get good ideas is to get lots of ideas  
and throw the bad ones away.*

— Linus Pauling, American chemist

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Effective decision making is a process of evaluating choices. Consider ranking, prioritizing, and scoring alternatives to make the right choice. By pulling together information, and considering different points of view, the group can usually make better decisions than most individuals make alone. Once again participation becomes a key. When people are excluded from the decision-making process, there’s little chance for emotional ownership or a sense of buy-in.

The group has worked hard to ensure that the community is involved. Selecting the key players in the decision-making process is critical. Remember, the primary objective is to come to a consensus on the CED project. If everyone supports the decision, it will be implemented and it will work. Some simple decision-making tools include:

### **INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS**

This is a natural first step in the process: discuss a list of options, think out loud, bounce ideas off other people, and discuss the advantages and disadvantages. This method begins the “airing” process in which you discover what others are thinking about the various alternatives. It is also a way to get other key stakeholders’ opinions.

### **BRAINSTORMING**

Brainstorming was not designed for decision making per se, but it is a method that generate thoughts and ideas on alternatives and in doing so leads to a greater understanding of the alternatives. After generating a list of ideas by brainstorming, ask some of the following questions to narrow the choices and/or make a decision as to how to proceed:

- Which alternatives seem most practical?
- Which alternative would be the easiest to accomplish?
- Which alternative would be the most difficult?
- Which alternative would provide the most economic benefit?
- Which alternative do you know no one will support?
- Which alternative do you think everyone will support?

### **ELIMINATION**

Often times the list of alternatives generated by a community or group can be overwhelming. Through informal discussions and brainstorming the group finds alternatives that are unworkable, politically too difficult, or just do not have enough support. Begin to eliminate these from your list. To continue the elimination process look at other factors such as cost, risk, time, talent, and expertise.

### **PRIORITIZING**

There are many ways to develop a list of priorities. One way is to create a list that identifies alternatives from the best or most workable to the worst or least workable: have each member of the group priority rank the alternatives. Another way is to rank the alternatives by individual preferences: from best to worst. Try prioritizing by gut feeling or intuition or individual comfort zones. These are creative ways that people can prioritize the alternatives. Think of other creative ways to prioritize: which alternative will make the greatest contribution to the environment; which will have the most positive impact on youth.

**COMBINATION**

At some point in the decision-making process the group will discover that two or three alternatives can be combined. Try to sort alternatives by common themes or focus, such as town beautification, education, or partnerships. By sorting the list it is possible to think creatively about each idea and ways to combine them. This process can shorten the list of alternatives and minimize possible overlap.

### ACTIVITY 3:3

#### USING A DECISION-MAKING TOOL: CRITERIA MATRIX

We evaluate certain criteria when we make decisions. When you were deciding on a college, you probably considered the cost, the educational program, reputation, and distance from home. In joining the Peace Corps, you may have considered your finances, health, length of service, and opportunity for adventure.

Think about what kind of site you would like, where it would be, what the work would be like, the housing, transportation, and food.

Then develop a thoughtful list of criteria. Criteria are accepted standards, common-sense benchmarks, or proven yardsticks on which your decision may be based. Criteria are also used to make judgments regarding your alternatives.

For a rural site, some examples of evaluation criteria might be: using a mountain bike for transportation, being the first Volunteer assigned to the site, potable water, a hot climate, and full use of the local language needed. For an urban center, the criteria might be: close to health facilities, an established project, a lower level of language skills required, and a fully furnished apartment.

#### Criteria Matrix: An Example

Rating Scale: 1 to 5, with 5 = the best

Alternative Solution	Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Criteria	Summary Rating
Site Location	Rural Site	Mountain Bike	First PCV	Hot climate	High skill level in the local language needed	
Hefty	4	1	5	1	1	12
Zambong	1	4	4	5	2	16
Bageo	2	3	1	5	3	14
Bali	5	5	2	5	4	21

Continued

Activity 3:3, continued

The summary rating in the criteria matrix indicates that Bali is the site you would prefer. It is important to keep in mind that the Peace Corps country staff probably will have a different set of criteria in matching Volunteers to sites.

To assist you in communicating with the staff and thinking through your own criteria, you should establish your criteria and combine them with what the Peace Corps country staff has told you. In most countries, your site selection will be made in consultation with you.

**Criteria Matrix**

Rating Scale: 1 to 5, with 5 = the best

Alternative Solution	Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Criteria	Summary Rating

Once you've completed the exercise, consider the following:

- Did the matrix assist you in thinking through alternatives and interests?
- Did you want to change the criteria?
- Were you able to communicate your criteria and alternatives clearly?
- What are other applications for this process?
- How can you apply this process to your future work? Any suggestions?

Criteria matrices are useful decision-making tools for groups as well as individuals. Often groups gain insights into what is important as they select the criteria to use in evaluating alternative activities, projects, or agenda items.

Note: A copy of the criteria matrix is included in the appendix to Module 3.










**FORCE FIELD ANALYSIS**

Force field analysis is a tool to assist people in determining the feasibility of an activity, project, or agenda item. This tool helps people visualize the forces that are driving the item under discussion and those that are restraining it. The tool is simple to understand and use. At the top of a sheet of paper write the name of the item under discussion. In the left-hand column list those forces that are driving the item and in the right-hand column the forces that are restraining it. For each item draw an arrow toward the center line that represents the consensus of the group as to the power of the driving or resisting force. Evaluate the number and power of driving and resisting forces in deciding if the item under discussion is feasible or not feasible.

Example of force field analysis:

**Offering Free Start-up Business Classes at the Secondary School**

DRIVING FORCES	RESTRAINING FORCES
Young people wanting to start businesses 	Local business owners not wanting more competition. 
Microfinance institution that wants to make loans to new businesses 	Teachers fearing their classrooms will be left in a mess 
Parents wanting job opportunities for their children 	Lack of a competent teacher willing to conduct the classes free 
	Parents worried that their sons' and daughters' grades may suffer from lack of study time. 

What conclusions can you draw from this short example? Perhaps “free” classes are not feasible. Would the force field analysis change if the plan were to charge a small fee for the business classes?

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### **A LEARNING MOMENT**

Choose a local CED concern in your training community. Propose a solution and ask some of your fellow training participants, language teachers, and a technical trainer to conduct a force field analysis to determine if the solution is feasible. Does the Force Field Analysis help you see ways the solution might be modified to increase its feasibility?

\* \* \* \* \*

There is no right way to present a CED strategic agenda. Some communities present them in long, detailed reports, others on one page. Below is an example of one community's CED strategic agenda. It represents a lot of work in gathering information and deciding which concerns the community wants to address. There is still much work to be done. The community has to implement its strategic plan (Module 4) and design specific projects to address each item on the CED strategic agenda (see Peace Corps project design and management materials), and finally it has to monitor and evaluate its efforts in following through with the agenda (Module 5).

#### **CED STRATEGIC AGENDA: AN EXAMPLE**

##### **Village of Bradner CED Strategic Agenda September 2000**

This strategic agenda points to areas where the people of Bradner—its most important asset—can make a difference in determining their future. At a community forum on September 5 community members reach consensus on the following agenda for community action.

This agenda was agreed on by Bradner's citizens after reviewing information about:

- |  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| Industrial and Agricultural Diversity              | Household Demographics |
| Transportation                                     | Youths' Community      |
| Utilities and Infrastructure                       | Health Services        |
| Community School                                   | Village Appearance     |
| Central Business District<br>(retail and services) | Recreation             |

Continued

CED Strategic Agenda, continued

**Priority items:**

- Health services —need to attract a doctor to the community. This may require the community to renovate space for a medical clinic and/or provide housing for a doctor.
- Recreation—community youth need local wholesome activities after school and in the summer.
- Village appearance—customers are not attracted to the central business district, and some properties in the village are not in good repair. This may require a project to encourage residents to renovate the outsides of their buildings, work with public officials to enforce existing ordinances related to littering and building code enforcement, and civic action to plant trees and flowers in the area.

**Additional items:**

- Fire station—replacing the fire station will improve the safety of citizens and their property. This may require a ballot initiative for a tax to build the station. Determine if any regional or national funds are available for this project.
- Day care—a number of mothers need and want to work but have no reliable affordable day care. This may require working with churches and neighboring communities to develop a viable, sustainable day care facility.

**Items bearing on the future economic development of Bradner:**

- Continue the planning process—find an organization that will take on the responsibility of continue CED efforts permanently.
- Improve the community’s housing alternatives—create an atmosphere for residential growth that will allow for increases in the population and maintain the existing “quality of life.”
- Structure economic development and growth—work to retain and promote existing businesses and seek to attract new small industrial firms.

**Action:** A community forum is planned for October 15 to identify individuals and organizations interested in planning projects and activities to implement the three priority items on the CED strategic agenda.

## PROJECTS LARGE AND SMALL

Often Volunteers and communities develop big, grand ideas for economic development. These ideas can be exciting, fun, and stimulating for the whole community. Big, grand ideas can be seen as a way to generate enthusiasm and commitment and spark interest. Big ideas are ways to open people's imaginations to possibilities. Yet, big projects also come with big challenges and many constraints that can deflate enthusiasm quickly. If a community or a group has not had much experience working together or developing projects, it is best to think small.

Starting out with small, meaningful projects can give the group a sense of accomplishment. Successful small projects can demonstrate to the group and others in the community that they are serious and effective. Starting with small projects also enables the group to develop its leadership structure both formally and informally. It also enables group members to understand other's strengths and weaknesses, and to recognize the talent that each member brings.

The greatest challenge in starting with small projects is ensuring that the project is important and meaningful to the group. Often small projects can be trivialized and made to seem frivolous. This can discourage a group and make the project seem nonessential. Work through your decision making very carefully with small projects, particularly the first project.

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*Go to the people, live with them, learn from them, love them. Start with what they know, build with what they have. But with the best leaders, when the work is done, the task accomplished, the people will say, "We have done this ourselves."*

— Lao Tzu, China, 700 BC

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## KEY TERMS

Key terms are defined as they are used in this module. Building a local language vocabulary of terms related to CED prepares you to function effectively in this area of development. Work with your language instructors to find the appropriate translation and definitions in the local language. Record the translations and definitions in the space provided.

**Agenda** is a list of things to be done.

**Appreciative Inquiry** is an approach to building capacity and fostering innovation within groups, organizations, and communities. Through Appreciative Inquiry community members focus on their past successes and existing strengths to develop a common vision for the future and initiate action to achieve it.

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**Asset-based approach** (also referred to as a strength-based approach) is a community development strategy that starts with what is present in the community and the community's strengths. Asset-based approaches focus internally on the community and its relationships.

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**Problem-based approach** focuses on identifying a community's problems and discovering the roots of these problems before providing solutions for the problems.

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**Strategic** refers to the planning and conducting of large-scale operations, usually a long-term plan for action.

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## **RESOURCES**

*Collaboration Handbook: Creating, Sustaining, and Enjoying the Journey.* Michael Winer and Karen Ray. (Amherst H. Wilder Foundation.) 1996. 179 pp.

Gives expert advice on how to establish and operate a successful collaboration, including how to find and attract the right people, build trust, and change conflict into cooperation. Handbook includes numerous worksheets, sidebars, and tips for a successful collaboration.

*PACA: Participatory Analysis for Community Action.* (Peace Corps ICE.) 1996. 350 pp. (ICE No. M0053)

Participatory Analysis for Community Action (PACA) is an approach used to facilitate communities' exploration of their own realities in order to make changes they desire. Based on earlier participatory analysis methods, such as Rapid Rural Appraisal and Participatory Rural Appraisal, PACA turns the appraisal activity into a process where the development agent and the community develop a partnership that leads to community control of their own projects. As a defining criterion, PACA distinguishes the role of gender in development by applying the participatory exercises with separate groups of women and men, girls and boys, which allows the community to compare and analyze together the roles that shape their reality. In similar ways, PACA

can be used to understand age, ethnicity, or any other source of societal differentiation that has implications for development. The tools can be used in schools, organizations, institutions, and any other group, rural or urban, where different voices need to be heard.

*Roles of the Volunteer in Development: Toolkits for Capacity Building.* (Peace Corps ICE.) 2002. 225 pp. (ICE No. T0005)

This unique publication is a series of toolkits that can be separated into seven booklets. The introductory booklet provides an overview of the Peace Corps' philosophy of development, introduces the capacity-building roles a Volunteer might play, and then provides guidance for Volunteers in identifying what roles they will play. The other six booklets each address one of the roles: Learner, Co-Trainer, Co-Facilitator, Mentor, Change Agent, and Co-Planner. In each booklet, there is a chart delineating the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for the role; background readings on the role; and activities to learn more about and gain skills in carrying out the role. The booklets can be used as self-study, or used in conjunction with training sessions.

*Strategic Planning Workbook for Nonprofit Organizations.* Bryan W. Barry. (Amherst H. Wilder Foundation.) 1997. 72 pp.

A workbook that defines strategic planning; explains its relevance to nonprofit organizations; and provides a step-by-step guide for developing, implementing, and updating a strategic plan. Appendices include a summary of a situational analysis, an example of a strategic plan, and strategic planning worksheets.

*A Guide to Mapping Consumer Expenditures and Mobilizing Consumer Expenditure Capacities.* John P. Kretzmann and J. L. KcKnight. (ACTA Publications.) 1996. 45 pp.

*A Guide to Mapping Local Business Assets and Mobilizing Local Business Capacities.* John P. Kretzmann and J.L. McKnight (ACTA Publications.) 1996. 71 pp.

**Internet:**

[www.aed.org](http://www.aed.org) — Academy for Educational Development–International Development Group

[www.ncced.org](http://www.ncced.org) — National Congress for Community Economic Development

[www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org) — World Bank website with links to all its programs, publications, and other international development organizations

[www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org) — United Nations Development Programme

[www.pactpub.com/PMEdpdf.html](http://www.pactpub.com/PMEdpdf.html) — Participating Agencies Collaborating Together

[www.worldlearning.org](http://www.worldlearning.org) — International development and training organization

[www.idealists.org](http://www.idealists.org) — great information and links

[www.astd.org](http://www.astd.org) — American Society for Training and Development

[www.sid.org](http://www.sid.org) — Society for International Development

Many of these sites have great links to other sites that will be helpful to your work.

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## **TRAINER'S NOTES**

### **MODULE 3 DEVELOPING A CED STRATEGIC AGENDA**

#### **Overview:**

Activities and readings in this module prepare Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) to work with community groups in a participatory manner to gather information, analyze information, and design an effective community economic development (CED) strategic agenda.

#### **Time:**

Reading	1 hour
Activities and debriefings	5 hours

#### **Materials:**

Flip chart paper, markers, tape, copies of the force field analysis worksheet and the criteria matrix worksheet.

#### **Preparation:**

Discuss the role of a Volunteer in gathering information and designing effective CED strategies with the Peace Corps programming staff and decide on the major points to cover.

For community-based, center-based, and hybrid training models, identify situations and opportunities for trainees to practice community information-gathering skills and decision-making techniques. Structure an opportunity for the trainees to explore how residents of their training community feel about their community's economic development and what residents would like to see happen in the future to improve economic conditions. The Peace Corps has developed a number of community entry techniques, some of which involve gender analysis that may be adapted for Volunteers working in CED projects. See the Resources section at the end of the module.

## **TRAINER'S NOTES**

### **ACTIVITY 3:1 THE ROLE OF THE VOLUNTEER IN DEVELOPING A CED STRATEGIC AGENDA**

#### **Overview:**

This activity sensitizes training participants to their role(s) and provides them with an opportunity to reflect on their role(s) in the CED process.

**Time:** 1 hour

#### **Materials:**

Flip chart, markers, tape, and the following questions, copied and ready to distribute:

1. A Volunteer's power should come from:
2. A Volunteer's productiveness depends on:
3. A Volunteer's value to the group/organization should be measured by:
4. A Volunteer's responsibility is to communicate:
5. The best kinds of support a Volunteer can give a group/organization are:
6. A Volunteer's commitment to the group is demonstrated by:
7. The two most important roles a Volunteer should play are:
8. The most perplexing paradox a Volunteer must cope with is:

#### **Preparation:**

With the Peace Corps staff, think through key points you would like Trainees to understand about their role in the context of your post. Each country has its own unique concerns, issues, and challenges. For example, in some countries, forming a new group without direct permission of the local Peace Corps office is a concern; in others, working with certain groups in the community may have been problematic in the past; in others, it is gender issues, or political concerns. You may want to invite the country director or other Peace Corps staff to this session. For a general discussion of the Volunteer's role, read *The Roles of the Volunteer in Development: Toolkits for Capacity Building*, listed in the Resources section at the end of the module.

#### **Debriefing the experience and processing the learnings:**

In addition to discussing the questions in this activity, take time to talk about specific issues that affect a Peace Corps Volunteer's role in working with community groups in the context of your country's cultural, political, and economic environment.

## **TRAINER'S NOTES**

### **ACTIVITY 3:2 JOHARI'S WINDOW**

#### **Overview:**

Often we assume what other people know, and that they possess the same information that we do and that they value it equally. Johari's Window provides training participants with a tool that can be used to explore others people's ideas, thoughts, and dreams in a respectful manner that builds trust.

**Time:** 1 hour

#### **Materials:**

Draw the Johari's Window box on a flip chart, and hand out individual copies of Johari's Window, with lots of blank space.

#### **Preparation:**

Ask language instructors, some host families, and others to participate in this exercise. Explain that this exercise allows training participants to practice a data-gathering technique, and ask them to share their knowledge of the training community using the Johari's Window.

#### **Debriefing the experience and processing the learnings:**

Possible responses from the group:

- What I thought were major issues in the community, such as the road conditions, transportation, and sanitation, were not of major concern to the community. The community was more concerned with employment and school conditions.
- I was amazed at how much the community members knew about each other.
- I realize you need to gather information from many sources to gain a full understanding of any community and that community members need to hear from each other.
- I think it would be really interesting to go through this process with a small group in my community that is interested in doing a CED project.

## **TRAINER'S NOTES**

### **ACTIVITY 3:3 USING A DECISION-MAKING TOOL: CRITERIA MATRIX**

#### **Overview:**

To provide training participants with experience in using the criteria matrix decision-making tool, which can be modified to use with their community.

**Time:** 1 hour

#### **Materials/Preparation:**

Work with your Peace Corps staff in developing this session; it will work quite well with a discussion on site selection and site selection criteria. This session also will assist the staff in gathering important information from the trainees on site preferences.

Make a copy of the criteria matrix worksheet for each trainee. Familiarize yourself with decision-making tools, particularly the criteria matrix. The materials listed in the Resources section at the end of this module provide additional information.

#### **Debriefing the experience and processing the learnings:**

This activity provides a chance to discuss the post's method of matching Volunteers to sites and to explain the criteria that the Peace Corps staff used in the process.

- Did you want to change the criteria after you saw the possibilities?
- Were you able to communicate your criteria and alternatives clearly?
- What are other applications for this process? How might this tool be used in helping a community reach a decision on items to include in their CED strategic agenda?
- How can you apply this process to your future work?

<b>Criteria Matrix</b>							
<u>Rating Scale: 1 to 5, with 5 = the best</u>							
<b>Alternative Solution</b>	<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Summary Rating</b>

