Kilamba Kiaxi Municipal Development Forum: A forum for engagement between government, citizens, service providers, private sector, and civil society

Good practice in the musseques of Luanda

LUPP Principles for Good Practice

- Partnership with community members and key stakeholders, such as public service providers, is key to promote participation and sustainability.
- Solutions must be affordable to urban poor, yet financially sustainable.
- It is important to focus on strengthening community capacity to improve their lives.
- Ensure community and government ownership of initiatives with clear roles and responsibilities and accountability mechanisms in place.
- Mobilise community members and key stakeholders to best develop and plan sustainable solutions.
- Establish a code of conduct for key stakeholders to follow.
- Value existing knowledge and ideas.
- The impact of initiatives must be assessed at the household level.
- Find ways to ensure the voices of women and children are listened to and they are active participants in the decision-making processes.
- Ensure child protection policies are available to stakeholders and community members.
- Promote equality, non-discrimination and inclusion.

Support for the creation of institutional mechanisms for dialogue and debate between government and citizens is essential for promoting participatory democracy and community led development. The example of the Kilamba Kiaxi Municipal Development Forum (KKDF) in Luanda is a strong and positive example of such a mechanism for dialogue in action, where the municipal government, representatives of the local community and private sector meet on a regular basis to shape the future of the municipality, based on the participation of all, including the urban poor. The forum has been meeting since 2001 and is a key instrument for change in Kilamba Kiaxi.

LUPP identified a number of interconnected problems in Kilamba Kiaxi that combined to hinder the development of the municipality, namely:

- Important local actors such as the government, private sector companies and community organisations were promoting local initiatives in a disjointed manner, without a clear development plan for the municipality.
- There was a lack of information available regarding the different initiatives being implemented in the municipality, which meant that the potential impact of these interventions was reduced. Few partnerships existed to maximise the possibilities for development that local initiatives presented.
- Not every local problem had a local solution. Many solutions required connecting the different communities and sectors within the municipality, as well as connecting with other levels of the government.

Through a process of socio political analysis and consultations with key partners, LUPP and the Kilamba Kiaxi Municipal Administration decided to establish an open space, not controlled by the state, for constructive and regular dialogue between the communities and local government focusing on the potential for development within the municipality.

Giving voice to citizens and devolving power to local authorities promotes participatory democracy and ensures socio economic rights are achieved.
The Kilamba Kiaxi Development Forum

Rules and procedures
The forum approved its first terms of reference in March 2002. This fifteen point document has since been revised to reflect the juridical status of the forum.

A functional space
Since the forum was launched on 14 September 2001, 28 executive plenary sessions and three extraordinary sessions have been organised.

Participation and representation
Total participation during the 28 executive sessions was in the region of 2,800 participants, or approximately 100 per meeting. This includes 75 municipal and communal administrators from other provinces, representatives of state ministries, parliamentary deputies, public companies, UN agencies, and donors.

The diagram below analyses the sectoral composition of participants at the FDKK.

The following box outlines participation from various state and government institutions, including invitees (parliamentary deputies, provincial government) and participants (local government):

Objective of the forum
The main objective of the development forum is to create a participatory and inclusive space for engagement between local government, service providers and the local communities in decision-making processes that affect the community’s future.

The forum is a mechanism for sharing information and creating synergies between local government, public companies and the local community in developing solutions for local concerns, and implementing government plans at provincial and national levels. The participatory planning processes associated with the forum generate political momentum in the municipality in promoting local development.

Concrete forum activities
The following list outlines some of the activities undertaken by the permanent working group for social and infrastructural matters of the KKDF, as well as work carried out by the ad-hoc working group for sanitation and environmental issues:

- Creation of the first local rubbish collection service (SELL) in April 2002 using a community management structure, as well as introducing community payment for the service;
- A partnership was facilitated between the National Institute for Roads and Bridges (INEP) and the Municipal Administration for the construction of a bridge and three aqueducts on Coronel Ivadi road. Project concluded in 2003;
A partnership was supported between the National Environment Administration, the Municipal Administration and Resident Area Development Organisations to plant trees along the Olímpia Macueira road and the Pascoal Luvualu Polytechnic Institute park in 2004;

Partnership links were facilitated between the municipal administration, Luanda’s Fairs and Market Board, and the Resident Area Development Organisations to construct public toilets and a community crèche at the Imbondeiro market in Palanca;

Creation of an Executive Secretariat (as a support and supervisory organ for the forum to assist monitoring processes of forum decisions);

The concept of the municipal fund was institutionalised as a mechanism of development within the municipality.

How the Development Forum works

Executive meetings of the FDKK

Every eight weeks there is an open meeting of the development forum where all local actors are welcome to attend and discuss issues related to their local community. These executive meetings are highly visible moments in the life of the local community. These meetings, as well as meetings of the permanent working groups created by the forum, aim to:

- Promote engagement between local government, the private sector, community organizations and local residents to implement activities based on a common vision of the municipality;
- Increase information and understanding within the community, thereby maximising the potential impact of projects and programs implemented;
- Facilitate the creation of partnership and collaborative action;
- Support the identification and analysis of problems that impede progress in the municipality.

Permanent working groups

The forum has created a number of permanent working groups that deal with social and infrastructural issues where local community representatives (elected volunteers from the development forum) sit with technical representatives of the public water company, EPAL, the public electricity company, EDEL, or local government departments, in the search for solutions to local problems. The mandate of the permanent working groups is to analyse the proposals and recommendations made within the development forum, in association with the municipal consultative council, and present concrete proposals to the forums.

Executive Secretariat

The Executive Secretariat is the only permanent and executive organ of the forum and is comprised of contracted professionals and volunteers representing different social sectors (private, public and community). The Executive Secretariat is responsible for drafting the development forum’s strategic plan, preparing the agenda for sessions of the forum, the calendar of activities related to the forum, and organising the logistics.

Forum chairmanship

This is an autonomous organ that operates within the development forum’s terms of reference. It is elected by participants of the forum on the basis of an action plan and its mandate runs for four executive sessions of the forum. The Forum Chairman is responsible for coordinating and facilitating all executive meetings and permanent working group activity.

Municipal Fund

This fund is an initiative to promote transparent and effective resource management, and is run as an institution of the development forum. It reports to and is accountable to the forum. The Municipal Fund is presided over by the local administration, which has two members on the Fund’s board. Other members are drawn from the communal federations of Resident Area Development Organisations, otherwise known as ODAs, the Church municipal council, and the association of local businesses. The principal duty of the Fund’s board is to manage and collect funds to finance and monitor communal projects and local initiatives through public tendering processes.
Impact of KKDF

The KKDF created a new dynamic of 'being together regularly'. Starting from a context of isolation and of little confidence in local institutions, the local administration and community now insist on organising forum sessions. This is beyond doubt a change of attitude in the direction of active citizenship.

The forum, by its very nature, is a new experience of innovative engagement, consultative and open dialogue, and transparency in Angola. The forum's adoption within the Kilamba Kiaxi Municipal Administration's governance structure increased its acceptance as a credible process of participatory democracy and local development. Furthermore:

- There is recognition of the municipal forum model as a municipal administration governance model in other provinces and by the Fundo de Apoio Social (FAS);
- The model has been accepted as a mechanism for collecting and disseminating information within the FAS promoted citizen information centres;
- The model is being promoted within the MAT (Ministry of Territorial Administration)/UNDP (UN Development Program) decentralisation pilot project in Kilamba Kiaxi and recently CARE and UNDP signed a MOU for joint collaboration;
- Based on the experiences with the Municipal Development Fund, UNDP has started to establish mechanisms for inter-governmental transfers;
- The first national forum on local administration adopted the municipal forum model for processes of consultation and participation;
- At the request of the Andulo Municipal Administrator from Bié province and civil society organisations in Lubango, the development forum model is being replicated in Andulo and in Lubango.

Strategic information

The forum and pro-poor spaces

Open debates on issues of general concern, discussion and the search for consensus on matters related to the municipality, as well as the participation of excluded groups such as women and the disabled who influence decision-making, are central to the life of the forum. In this sense, the forum is a mechanism that gives voice to the urban poor.

Inclusive as well as participative space

The Angolan constitution and various national laws not only authorise the right to freedom of speech, expression and association, but also protect consultative principles and spaces as well as the participation of citizens in the management of public affairs. The dilemma lies in who controls these spaces. The degree of control determines not only inclusivity and participation, but also the democratic nature and transparency of debates and decisions. Experience also shows that even in democratically elected institutions, inclusion and participation in debates and decision-making processes is often restricted to political circles. The KKDF tries to address this dilemma by being a totally open space where any participant or person interested in the development of the municipality can feel they are participating. For this reason:

- Participation is guaranteed through a public invitation to the forum within the community and local government infrastructures;
- Community members participate without restriction as individuals or through the organisations that represent their interests;
- It is the responsibility of each member at the forum to engage with other actors to secure their participation in matters of interest to the municipality;
- The agenda of each forum is the responsibility of all individually and collectively;
- Decisions (forum considerations and recommendations) are made by the members present by consensus or through voting.
Focus on municipal development

The presentation of government programmes, projects and plans, of public service providers, and of local community planning initiatives, organised by ODAs or Residents’ Committees reveals divergent visions, priorities and interests. The KKDF facilitates constructive engagement between these competing interests, be these political or sectoral, or through:

- The identification and creation of new collaborative initiatives between local government and the community organised in ODAs or Residents’ Committees;
- Exercise of transparency in relation to information, management and accountability for commitments made and resources used.

Operational information

Technical aspects

The forum is a process and a politically sensitive event, which is why its announcement and launching must be a solemn and public act. This will help to allay any doubts people may have regarding the forum and help strengthen commitment to what the forum represents.

As a model, the development forum is based on principles laid out in the terms of reference, subscribed to by the participants that are recognised as owners of the KKDF. Among the principles are the following:

- The development forum is an open space for any individual or collective entity, organisation or institution functioning in the Kilamba Kiaxi municipality;
- Organisational representatives (Municipal Administration, NGO and Church network, etc.) at the KKDF must have a mandate from their organisations to be forum members;
- The municipal forum is a functional institution that meets regularly on the summoning of the Executive Secretary and is led by the presidency;
- Democratic elections guaranteeing rotation of the presidency occur periodically;
- It is connected with other processes and dynamics for local discussion and planning such as the municipal and communal consultative councils, communal thematic meetings, meetings of Residents’ Committees, where matters for the agenda of KKDF sessions emerge;
- Invitations for the executive and public sessions of the forum are by invitation, emitted by the KKDF Executive Secretariat;
- The forum is not a civil society assembly or a meeting of local administration officials. Consequently, the presidency has the authority to begin a session once the Municipal Administration representative is present.

Social aspects

By virtue of its informative character, the municipal development forum exercises an advocacy role in matters related to children, women, the elderly and disabled, as well as raising awareness and seeking solutions to protect the rights of vulnerable people, such as those affected by HIV/AIDS.

The development forum encourages and supports the participation of citizens, residents and the community to organise (in groups, associations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), companies, nuclei, cooperatives, federations, etc.) so as to deepen the connections between local governance, service provision, and the management of resources for different initiatives and interest groups.

Institutional aspects

The municipal forum model is a space of engagement and negotiation between different institutions in the search for better solutions for the development of the municipality. This is achieved through the technical analysis of the permanent working groups and by the response capacity of the municipal fund. This is laid out as follows:

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<th>Development Forum agenda emerges from within local debates and actions (Resident Area Development Organisations, Residents’ Committees, Associations, etc.)</th>
<th>Development Forum Executive Secretariat</th>
<th>Municipal Development Forum (promotes consensus, recommendations)</th>
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<td>Municipal Consultative Council with Municipal Administration decisions and programmes</td>
<td>Municipal Fund with criteria for financing projects based on consensus of Municipal Development Forum</td>
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Financial aspects
The key participants of the municipal development forum are the Municipal Administration, the local community organised into development organisations, NGOs and Churches, and the private sector. It is their responsibility to participate and share the costs of the forum to ensure its functioning. This is done through:

- Mobilisation of resources to hold the forum sessions through the Municipal Administration budget and contribution from residents;
- Fundraising through the local private sector and other donors through the Executive Secretariat.

Sustainability of the KKDF
The question of sustainability of the forum is based on its legitimacy as a legal institution and its credibility to decision-makers within the law (17/99), as well as being a relevant consultative council within the democratic institutions of the future, particularly within local election structures. The positive and inclusive character of the forum, as well as its independence from state control in the support of negotiated development, means that:

- The municipal development forum is an institution subsumed under the municipal governance system and related to active citizenship within the municipality;
- The municipal development forum is conceptually associated to planning processes at the community level to guarantee appropriation by the residents.

Currently, there is a new law out (02/07) and how this relates to spaces such as the forum is being reviewed.

Lessons learned

- The development forum, despite being relevant for the decentralisation process, needs political commitment on the part of local government to achieve long-term goals and objectives.
- To facilitate the creation of a basic institutional arrangement for participatory planning, in a context where the experience of decentralisation is limited, it is necessary to empower and build the capacity of the local administration to understand and implement local government and good urban governance structures.
- A sustained and regular engagement between the local government and the community is successful when, on the one hand, the community understands its problems and structures its vision of development, and on the other, the local administration defines its duties well, and its devolved power.
- The development forum may cause frustration to those involved if it becomes a simple ‘talking shop’ without any capacity of response.
- Equally, the efforts of NGOs and basic community organisations in training local authorities are important to guarantee effective engagement and dialogue between the government and civil society. It is necessary that both parties be strengthened with conceptual tools and the capacity to engage.

How to replicate the model

The model is already being replicated in Bié province. Based on this experience, it is important to bear the following in mind:

- The municipal forum model is a capacity building process that requires time and diplomatic skills. Therefore the organisation replicating the model must recognise that such an initiative requires a long-term commitment;
- The municipal development forum is not a large meeting of civil society or of local government officials. Those replicating the model must explore the possibility of a partnership between the community and local government, before facilitating the development forum;
- Although one assumes that the creation of a municipal development forum is a long and onerous process, certain factors may reduce the exploratory phase, and time required to establish the forum. Among these factors are: a small geographic area; the availability of communication infrastructures in the municipality; the good will of the Municipal Administration; active partners in the municipality and a particular portfolio of programmes or projects in the municipality;
- Depending on the context, the cost of establishing the municipal development forum is high, estimated at US$72,000 per year, or a cost of US$60 per beneficiary (based on an average participation of 120 people in the forum sessions).
What is LUPP?

The Luanda Urban Poverty Programme (LUPP) is a partnership between CARE International, Development Workshop, Save the Children UK and One World Action. It is supported by the Department for International Development (DFID) and has been ongoing since 1999. The second phase, LUPP2, ran from April 2003 to September 2006. LUPP2 was implemented in four of nine municipalities in Luanda, namely Sambizanga, Cacuaco, Cazenga and Kilamba Kiaxi.

What does LUPP do?

LUPP partners work in collaboration with the Government of Angola to support the government to meet its declared goal of halving poverty levels by 2015. The programme is implemented in partnership with civil society organisations, NGOs, service providers and government departments/ministries. LUPP engages to promote pro-poor policies, especially in seeking to guarantee the provision of basic services to Angolan citizens.

The purpose of LUPP2 was to influence equitable, inclusive, pro-poor policies and best practices for Angola for poverty reduction in urban Luanda. The policy influencing agenda was the overarching framework of the programme. LUPP seeks to influence poverty reduction in Luanda by:

- Demonstrating effective, sustainable, inclusive and replicable best practice strategies (models, methods and approaches) for basic service delivery (water, sanitation, rubbish collection, community crèches), livelihood support (microcredit, savings, Business Development Services (BDS) and consumer cooperatives), social capital, governance and poverty reduction more generally which can be effectively replicated in poor urban areas to bring about positive change in the lives of poor urban families;

- Facilitating active learning and understanding on urban poverty issues and policies by key stakeholders and producing strategic information on the lessons, messages and methods emerging from the models and approaches, adapted to demands for policy relevant information;

- Strengthening the commitment and capacity of local authorities and civil society to promote and implement inclusive and participatory local development;

- Promoting greater engagement, inclusion and accountability between government and civil society on urban issues, largely through the creation of spaces in which different actors can come into contact with the lessons, messages and methods, absorb their implications and take forward the work of integrating them into policy and practice.

More information on LUPP can be found at www.luppangola.org