

## Community-led planning of wage employment programmes – Experience from Ethiopia

### **Introduction:**

In public employment programmes, programme-level control and accountability can be supplemented with inputs from beneficiaries and communities. These inputs have taken different roles in different countries but the essential element is feedback in the form of planning, grievance reporting, monitoring, and redress. Community participation can enhance transparency and accountability if it encompasses areas such as participatory project planning and selection. Beneficiaries and community members having the more access to information and the more involved in key stages of program planning, they are more able to hold programme implementers accountable.

### **Background:**

Ethiopia's public employment programme – the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP), launched in 2005 targets 'woredas' (districts) that suffer from severe environmental degradation and limited access to infrastructure. The programme seeks to address these issues through integrated watershed development principles. The PSNP projects result in the creation of community assets that contribute to sustainable livelihoods and long-term developments such as soil and water conservation structures, feeder roads, social infrastructure, water supply for human and livestock consumption, agriculture activities, and small-scale irrigation facilities. These community assets now provide the foundations of valuable services to the target communities.

One of the key principles of PSNP projects is that they should entail community participation and commitment wherein the community participates in the selection, planning, monitoring, and evaluation of projects. In essence, PSNP projects are required to be accepted and approved by the community.

### **Details of the Intervention:**

PSNP requires the project selection to be handled at the community level using a planning process based on the concept of community-based participatory watershed development (CBPWD). This approach was developed by the Government of Ethiopia over a period of many years, in collaboration with the World Food Programme and other agencies.

A "community" is an agreed-upon entity within the local government system. It typically consists of a socially homogenous and identifiable human settlement within a defined micro watershed. Project selection starts from the bottom up and depends on the participation of community members living in the relevant micro watershed. The community is prioritised as a stakeholder as they are the people who will live with the results, and the programme is one of their tools for addressing food insecurity. In this manner, poor households are assisted while contributing to the development of their locality.

Development agents together with 'kebele' (neighbourhood associations) staff provide the community with an introduction to watershed management principles. Community members are informed that they are welcome to participate in the planning process; they are encouraged to elect a dedicated and representative Community Watershed Team (CWT) to streamline and spearhead the planning process. The CWT leads a participatory survey in order to create a map and an inventory of community assets. The CWT undertakes several planning activities including baseline development, detailed natural resource survey and mapping, socioeconomic survey and constraint analysis, analysis of focus areas and priorities, problem identification and ranking and developing a vision for change. The resultant community development plans are required to include three main components: socioeconomic baseline, natural resource baseline, and community development map.

**Impact:**

Findings from a 2011 PSNP review indicate growing levels of community participation in selecting, prioritising and planning projects. In fact, the literature revealed surprisingly high level of direct individual household-level community participation in project planning. Most communities had developed comprehensive plans with the required elements in place. The review indicated a high level of quality related to the preparation of the community-led plans which led to the development of infrastructure in line with the needs of the communities being served.

*Source: Subbarao, K., Del Ninno, C., Andrews, C., & Rodríguez-Alas, C. (2012). Public works as a safety net: design, evidence, and implementation. The World Bank.*