

The Capability Approach and Fair Trade: The Case of Women in Business Development Incorporated in Samoa

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Overview

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- ▶ Participatory Appraisal Methodology Based on the CA
- ▶ Women in Business Development Inc (WIBDI) of Samoa
- ▶ WIBDI and Fair Trade
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Introduction

- Examine the usefulness of the Capability Approach for appraising development projects
- Aim of development projects should be to expand to develop capabilities and choices that people have reason to value.

The Capability Approach

Sen (1999) p17 “ With adequate social opportunities, individuals can effectively shape their own destiny and help each other. They need not be seen primarily as passive recipients of the benefits of cunning development programmes”

The Capability Approach

- *“The capability approach provides the intellectual foundation for human development. This approach considers human well-being, participation & freedom to be central economic and social objectives.”*
 - Amartya Sen, founding president of HDCA
www.capabilityapproach.com/index.php

Participatory Appraisal Methodology Based on the Capability Approach

- Focus Groups and semi-structured interviews allow for evaluation of a programme's progress in terms of criteria that are especially relevant to the participants in the programmes
- Aim to determine the expansion of capabilities in terms relevant to the participants
- Use of photographs to demonstrate significant changes identified by participants

Why Focus Groups?

- Interviews with groups may be more instructive than those with individuals because group members have an overlapping spread of knowledge, covering a wider field than any single person (Chambers 1997)
- Focus groups can be a rapid and resource-efficient way of gathering information about complex relationships (Keleman, Hellin and Bellon 2009)

Participatory Appraisal Methodology Based on the Capability Approach

- The needs for rigour and accountability required by the funding agencies.
- The need to be practical for NGOs and Community Organisations to implement on a regular basis given their constraints of time and financial resources.

The Application of this Methodology to the Women in Business Development Inc (WIBDI) of Samoa

“That women and youth in Samoa are able to contribute fully to the development of themselves, their families and their country through income generation, job creation, and participation of women in the village economy.” WIBDI Annual Report (2002 p1).

WIBDI Projects

- Fine mat weaving and sponsorship programme
- Microfinance and small business training
- Skills training
- Organic certification of farms to international standards
- Virgin coconut oil production
- Fair Trade labelling
- Niche market linkages for coconut oil, bananas, coffee, vanilla
- Disaster mitigation
- Regional outreach throughout the Pacific region
- Facilitating export to international markets



WIBDI and Fair Trade

- Fair trade certification process
- Contracts to supply international markets
 - Organic coconut oil to The Body Shop
 - Misiluki bananas and coffee to New Zealand and Australia
- What do the producers see as the benefits they have received from the fair trading relationship with WIBDI?

Example of an Interviewed Group

- “We did not dream we could support ourselves in our own community, but there are ways we can get an income in villages to support ourselves”.

Organic farmer at Falelatai

- “We look now not only for the money but also for the quality so that we can supply to other countries that want oil.”

Producer at Satupaitea

- “The change really was that my children got skills in producing this new type of oil, and now gaining experience to produce high quality standard to meet the market required... and they can do it here in our village”
- Taga Faiesea Producer

- “I can see women... the way they do it they’re doing much better. They can see a big difference – as well as the oil and bananas they can grow the veges take it and sell it. It’s a learning experience.”
- Producer in Gagaifo

- “...we get extra income that assists increasing the income to meet our daily needs, send the children to school, develop family, fill the vehicles, meet community obligations in the village, church donations and extended family too. We offer to help with these... we are sure of our income. We are happy with these changes - we didn't expect [them].”

Siumu Lafua Faatiga Producer

- “They [the people involved in WIBDI] don’t feel so vulnerable - it just changes what’s up here [in their head]. Here with the vulnerable people you don’t just come here and say “LALALALALA”. There is a way to reach these vulnerable people and they [WIBDI project officers] do. They’ve got that way of concern. They come once a week or twice a week or sometimes 3 times a week and they find me in the field or working with the coconut. It’s like working hand in hand.”

Taga Producer who had returned to her family village after 20 years working in California

Study Findings

- Common *initial* impetus for their involvement was to find a source of income for their family
- What kept their involvement going (and the strengthened the commitment of the wider community to the village projects) were a number of non-income opportunities that arose from taking part in the community enterprises.
- Contrast with employment outside village such as factory work

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- Longer term gave them and their families' choices to participate in the cash economy. They also gained skills such as budgeting and commercial abilities that could be in demand in the more formal labour market should they decide to try to join it.
- Flexible working hours so that could fit their work obligations around other important village commitments such as child care and important cultural activities such weddings, funerals and church attendance.

Study Findings

- Increased choices for children
- Use of local Resources
- Employment
- Supporting the family
- Involvement of other family members
- Reduced reliance on remittances
- Continued revival of Traditional Crafts – especially fine mats
- Contribution to local Church and Community
- Better access to services

Perspectives on the development process that are revealed in the case study

- Limitations of only looking at income as a measure of success.
- Conscientization - Participants were reflecting on different possible alternatives becoming available to them in their lives.
- Development is not only about participants learning new skills but also about “discovering” what they can do.

Photographs

What are the choices and opportunities for you and your family from participation a fair trading relationship?

















Conclusions

- In developing poverty reduction programmes within the CA perspective the individual participants are consistently placed at the centre with an emphasis on the “agency aspect” of the individual.
- This is in the sense of someone who not only acts and brings about change, but whose accomplishments can be appraised in terms of his or her own standards and aims.