TARGETING IN DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE
An annotated bibliography

A) CONCEPTS AND THEORIES

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Abstract: This paper interprets case studies and theory on community involvement in beneficiary selection and benefit delivery for social safety nets. Several considerations should be carefully balanced in assessing the advantages of using community groups as targeting agents. First, benefits from utilizing local information and social capital may be eroded by costly rent-seeking. Second, the potential improvement in targeting criteria from incorporating local notions of deprivation must be tempered by the possibility of program capture by local elites, and by the possibility that local preferences are not pro-poor. Third, performance may be undermined by unforeseen strategic targeting by local communities in response to national funding and evaluation criteria, or by declines in political support.


Abstract: Community-based (and driven) development (CBD) projects have become an important form of development assistance, with the World Bank’s portfolio alone approximating 7 billion dollars. This paper reviews the conceptual foundations of CBD/CDD initiatives. Given the importance of the topic, there are, unfortunately, a dearth of well-designed evaluations of such projects. There is, however, enough quantitative and qualitative evidence, from studies that have either been published in peer-reviewed publications or have been conducted by independent researchers, to gain some instructive lessons. We find that projects that rely on community participation have not been particularly effective at targeting the poor. There is some evidence that CBD/CDD projects create effective community infrastructure, but not a single study establishes a causal relationship between any outcome and participatory elements of a CBD project. Most CBD projects are dominated by elites and, in general, the targeting of poor communities as well as project quality tend to be markedly worse in more unequal communities. However, a number of studies find a U shaped relationship between inequality and project outcomes. We also find that a distinction between potentially “benevolent” forms of elite domination and more pernicious types of “capture” is likely to be important for understanding project dynamics and outcomes. Several qualitative studies indicate that the sustainability of CBD initiatives depends crucially on an enabling institutional environment, which requires upward commitment. Equally, the literature indicates that community leaders need to be downwardly accountable to avoid a variant of ‘supply driven demand driven development’. Qualitative evidence also suggests that external agents strongly influence project success. However, facilitators are often poorly trained and inexperienced, particularly when programs are rapidly scaled up. Overall, a naïve application of complex contextual concepts like “participation”, “social capital” and “empowerment”-is endemic among project implementers and contributes to poor design and implementation. In sum, the evidence suggests that CBD/CDD is best done in a context-specific manner, with a long time-horizon, and with careful and well designed monitoring and evaluation systems.


Abstract: Recent debates about integrated impact assessment, have tended to treat participatory approaches and methods as a fashionable frill added on to
more ‘expert’ quantitative and qualitative investigation. This paper argues that, far from being an optional add-on, participatory approaches, methods and behaviors are essential for the new agendas of pro-poor development and ‘improving practice’. Recent evidence shows that participatory methods can generate accurate quantitative data as well as capturing local priorities, different experiences of poor people and potential for innovation in relation to causality and attribution. They can also be cost-effective for focusing quantitative and qualitative investigation. The main challenge is ensuring that mainstreaming them does not compromise their role in giving poor women and men more voice in development priorities, policies and practice.


**Abstract:** for much of its history, social policy has involved choices about whether the core principle behind social provisioning will be “universalism”, or selectivity through “targeting”. Under universalism, the entire population is the beneficiary of social benefits as a basic right, while under targeting, eligibility to social benefits involves some kind of means-testing to determine the “truly deserving”. Policy regimes are hardly ever purely universal or purely based on targeting, however; they tend to lie somewhere between the two extremes on a continuum, and are often hybrid, but where they lie on this continuum can be decisive in spelling out individuals’ life chances and in characterizing the social order. This paper is divided into two parts. In the first part, the author discusses the forces behind the shift from universalism toward selectivity in using social policies to combat poverty in the developing countries. In the second part, a review of the lessons from such policies, he considers the administrative difficulties of targeting in the poor countries, the political economy bases of policy choices, and the consequences of policy choices for individual incentive. Mkandawire pays special attention to cost-effectiveness, because advocates of selectivity in the fight against poverty raise it as the main argument in its favor.

5) Platteau J.P. **MONITORING ELITE CAPTURE IN COMMUNITY-DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT**, Development and Change 35/2, Institute of Social Studies, Netherlands, 2004

**Abstract:** a lot of attention has been paid to improving ways of assessing the effectiveness of development interventions. this is to be welcomed, especially with regard to community-based or participatory aid projects, since considerable resources are currently being earmarked for these by almost all types of donor agencies, including large international organizations. such projects are vulnerable to elite capture at local level and this problem must be mitigated if most of the aid funds thus disbursed are to reach the intended beneficiaries. this article discusses several methods available to achieve that objective. in particular it argues that the sequential and conditional release of aid funds may not be sufficient to keep elite capture well under control, making it necessary to resort to the coordination mechanisms among aid agencies such as multilateral reputation mechanisms. even these are not going to be effective enough, however. in the end an active role will have to be played by the ultimate purveyors of aid money, whether the tax payers or the contributors in fund-raising campaigns.


**Abstract:** Community-Based Development (CBD) is being currently proposed as the main avenue to fighting poverty and circumventing the shortcomings of state
-directed aid resources. Largely as a response to critiques of top-down development, most bilateral donors and big international organizations have indeed started to include participatory elements in the design of their large-scale development assistance programmes. The most important advantage usually associated with these programmes consists of the informational gains arising from the proximity of local decision-making bodies to the target populations. By contrast, one serious potential difficulty lies in the vulnerability of such programmes to capture by local elites. The paper examines these two aspects critically in the light of economic theory and principles and reviews whatever empirical evidence is available. On the one hand, it appears that informational advantages of the CBD approach are not always as decisive as they might seem. On the other hand, the elite capture problem is not a priori more serious in a decentralized than in a centralized approach. Political economy models lead to indeterminate conclusions and to have to be content with identifying factors that are more or less conducive to effectiveness of decentralized development. The paper then proceeds by discussing the possibility of mitigating the elite capture problem through various reputation mechanisms, both multilateral and bilateral. Problems raised by multilateral mechanisms are brought to light with a special focus on aid disbursed by foreign donors to local communities or groups. Attention is therefore turned to a bilateral, local leader-disciplining mechanism that relies on a sequential disbursement procedure supported by a fraud detection technology. One of the conclusions reached on the basis of such analysis is that too quick and massive a rush on CBD may prove self-defeating in the sense that the share of aid resources actually reaching the poor will be low if donor agencies are impatient to achieve results. Furthermore, stiff competition among foreign donor agencies engaged in CBD is likely to yield the same perverse result. This is so not only because competition tends to make reallocation of aid funds more costly in the event of a detected project failure (in the sense of elite capture), but also because of the presence of careless agencies which, for various reasons, do not implement the sort of sequential disbursement mechanism envisaged.

7) Platteau J.F. and Gaspart F. *Disciplining Local Leaders in Community-Based Development* Centre for Research on the Economics of Development (CRED), Belgium, June 2004

**Abstract:** Recently, a lot of attention has been paid to improving ways of assessing the effectiveness of development interventions. This is to be welcomed, especially with regard to community-based or participatory aid projects, since considerable resources are currently being earmarked for these by almost all types of donor agencies, including large international organizations. Such projects are vulnerable to elite capture at local level, and this problem must be mitigated if most of the aid funds thus disbursed are to reach the intended beneficiaries. This article discusses several methods available to achieve that objective. In particular, it argues that the sequential and conditional release of aid funds may not be sufficient to keep elite capture well under control, making it necessary to resort to co-ordination mechanisms among aid agencies, such as multilateral reputation mechanisms. Even these are not going to be effective enough, however. In the end, an active role will have to be played by the ultimate
purveyors of aid money, whether the taxpayers or the contributors in fund-raising campaigns


**Abstract.** The authors develop an evaluation method that combines qualitative evidence with quantitative survey data analyzed with propensity score methods on matched samples to study the impact of a participatory community-driven social fund on preference targeting, collective action and community decision-making. The data come from a case study of five pairs of communities in Jamaica where one community in the pair has received funds from the Jamaica social investment fund, JSIF while the other has not - but has been picked to match the funded community in its social and economic characteristics. The qualitative data reveal that the social fund process is elite-driven and decision-making tends to be dominated by a small group of motivated individuals. But by the end of the project there was broad-based satisfaction with the outcome. The quantitative data from 500 households mirror these findings by showing that ex-ante the social fund does not address the expressed needs of the majority of individuals in the majority of communities. By the end of the construction process, however, 80 percent of the community expressed satisfaction with the outcome. An analysis of the determinants of participation shows that better educated and better networked individuals dominate the process. Propensity score analysis reveals that the JSIF has had a causal impact on improvements in trust and the capacity for collective action, but these gains are greater for elites within the community. Both JSIF and non-JSIF communities are more likely now to make decisions that affect their lives which indicates a broad-based effort to promote participatory development in the country, but JSIF communities do not show higher levels of community-driven decisions than non-JSIF communities. The authors shed light on the complex ways in which community-driven development works inside communities - a process that is deeply imbedded within Jamaica's socio-cultural and political context.


**Abstract:** Two trade-offs have been widely seen to severely constrain the scope for attacking poverty using redistributive transfers in poor countries: an equity-efficiency trade off and an insurance-efficiency trade off. This article argues that recent economic theories and evidence call into question the view that these trade-offs seriously constrain the scope for fighting poverty using transfers. The extent of the trade-offs is often exaggerated, and they may not even be binding constraints in practice given market failures. There appears to be scope for using carefully designed transfer schemes as an effective tool against both transient and chronic poverty. However, for the same factors that weaken the trade-offs also suggest that efficient redistributive policies might look rather different to the programs often found in practice.

Abstract: Policy-oriented discussions often assume that “better targeting” implies larger impacts on poverty or more cost effective interventions. The literature on the economics of targeting warns against that assumption, but evidence has been scarce. The paper begins with a critical review of the strengths and weaknesses of the targeting measures found in practice. It then exploits an unusually large micro data set for China to estimate aggregate and local-level poverty impacts of the country’s main urban antipoverty program. Standard measures of targeting are found to be uninformative, or even deceptive, about impacts on poverty and cost-effectiveness in reducing poverty. In program design and evaluation, it would be better to focus directly on the program’s outcomes for poor people than to rely on prevailing measures of targeting.


Abstract: Program funding and design choices by the central government can greatly affect the targeting performance of decentralized social programs. The allocation to a province should depend on how successful it is at reaching the poor with the extra resources, rather than how poor it is. New measurement tools can help monitor performance with limited data. National antipoverty programs often rely heavily on provincial governments. The center targets poor provinces in the hope that they will reach their own poor. Without successful intra-provincial targeting, however, even dramatic redistribution from rich to poor provinces can have little impact on poverty nationally. However, data for assessing performance at provincial level are often far from ideal. Can a centralized government monitor the performance of decentralized social programs in reaching the poor when their benefit incidence is unobserved? Ravaillon shows that the poverty map and the corresponding spending allocation across geographic areas allow one to identify the latent differences in mean allocations to the poor versus the non-poor. The national measure of targeting performance is also subgroup-decomposable. Ravaillon uses an application to an antipoverty program in Argentina (Trabajar II) to assess performance in reaching the poor and to measure the relative contributions to the program's performance - before and after reforms - of the center's provincial reallocation and decentralized targeting. Funding and program design changes led to large gains for the poor, although with diverse performance across provinces. Program funding and design choices by the central government can greatly affect the targeting performance of decentralized social programs. The allocation to a province should depend on how successful it is at reaching the poor with the extra resources, rather than how poor it is. Design choices should provide incentives for provincial governments to target resources to the poor. Finding feasible ways to monitor their performance and adjust central government's efforts accordingly are then crucial to better outcomes for poor people.


Abstract: While there is worldwide agreement on poverty reduction as an overriding goal of development policy, there is little agreement on the definition of poverty. The paper reviews four approaches to the definition and measurement of poverty - the monetary, capability, social exclusion and participatory approaches. It points out the theoretical underpinnings of the various measures, and problems of operationalising them. It argues that each is a construction of reality, involving numerous judgments, which are often not transparent. The
different methods have different implications for policy, and also, to the extent that they point to different people as being poor, for targeting. Empirical work in Peru and India shows that there is significant lack of overlap between the methods with, for example, nearly half the population identified as in poverty according to monetary poverty not in capability poverty, and conversely. This confirms similar findings elsewhere. Hence the definition of poverty does matter for poverty eradication strategies


**Abstract.** The use of the term “targeting” in eradicating poverty is based on an analogy—a target is something fired at. It is not altogether clear whether it is an appropriate analogy. The problem is not so much that the word “target” has combative association. This it does of course have, and the relationship it implies certainly seems more adversarial than supportive. But it is possible to change the association of ideas, and in fact, to some extent, the usage has already shifted in a permissive direction. The more serious problem lies elsewhere—in the fact that the analogy of a target does not at all suggest that the recipient is an active person, functioning on her own, acting and doing things. The image is one of a passive receiver rather than of an active agent. To see the objects of targeting as patients rather than as agents can undermine the exercise of poverty removal in many different ways. The people affected by such policies can be very active agents indeed, rather than languid recipients waiting for their handouts. Not to focus on the fact that they think, choose, act, and respond is to miss something terribly crucial to the entire exercise. This is not just a terminological problem. The approach of what is called targeting often has this substantive feature of taking a passive view of the beneficiaries, and this can be a major source of allocational distortion. There is something to be gained from taking, instead, a more activity-centered view of poverty removal. Let us begin with the central case—the core argument—in favor of targeting. The theoretical point in favor of targeting in antipoverty policy is clear enough: the more accurate a subsidy in fact is in reaching the poor, the less the wastage, and the less it costs to achieve the desired objective. It is a matter of cost-effectiveness in securing a particular benefit. Or, to see it another way, it is one of maximizing the poverty-


**Abstract.** Public spending programs aimed at alleviating poverty can either be broadly targeted at categories of spending or narrowly targeted at types of people. Each approach has benefits and costs to the poor. It is often claimed that narrow targeting of the poor will allow governments to reduce poverty more effectively and at lower cost. But narrow targeting often has hidden costs, and once these costs are considered, the most finely targeted policy may not have any more effect on poverty than a broadly targeted one. Both approaches also have hidden benefits, although less is known about their impact. Targeting can help, but it is not a cure-all. Reducing poverty calls for broadly targeted social sector spending combined with narrower targeting of cash and in-kind transfers to specific groups. It is also important for governments to experiment with schemes that offer better incentives, to carefully monitor the costs and outcomes, and to be flexible and pragmatic in their policy responses. Copyright 1998 by Oxford University Press.