Community-Driven?
Concepts, Clarity and Choices for Community-Driven
Development in Con ict-Affected Countries

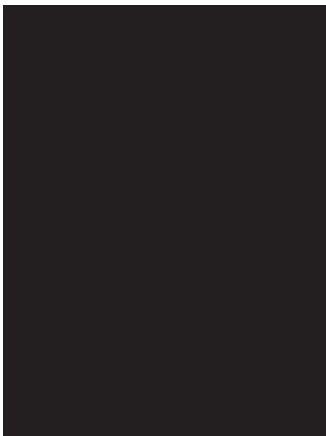# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

Executive Summary

The mixed evidence on the effectiveness of Community-Driven Development (CDD) in con ict-affected settings poses a challenge to donors, policymakers and practitioners who need to make justi able decisions about future investments in the use of the approach or the selection of alternative interventions. What explains the mixed results and why do we fail to observe consistent evidence of all the desired changes? A recent synthetic review of the impact evaluations of CDD in con ict-affected contexts proposes a number of possible factors including: programme design, timing or duration, input strength, context, theories of change, evaluation design or measurement or overly ambitious goals. This means we must get better at how we design, implement and measure CDD interventions.

This paper focuses on the lack of explicit theories of change because we believe that it has signi cant implications for all the other factors and overall effectiveness. Greater infusion of social theory and more explicit articulation of theories of change will help donors, policymakers, practitioners and evaluators in their decisions about the appropriateness of CDD for addressing a given problem, design options and contextualization, measurement strategies and suitable alternatives to which a given CDD intervention can be compared. In this paper, we discuss the process of developing more theoretically grounded CDD interventions and provide two examples of theories of change that each focus on a single outcome.

To develop more explicit theories of change we must clarify and prioritize the intended objective and outcome of a CDD intervention. Given its procedural and contextual adaptability, the CDD approach is often used in many different ways. One intervention or programme is often implemented in an attempt to stimulate different changes simultaneously. Whether the intention is to deliver tangible outputs in the short term, temporarily ll a gap, improve an ongoing process or contribute to broader social and political transformation determines the types of social theory and evidence that can be drawn upon and the extent to which CDD is a plausible mechanism for delivering on this intent. We must also determine whether improving socioeconomic welfare, governance or social cohesion (as opposed to all three) is the ultimate priority and whether and why changes in the other outcomes are necessary in order to achieve that ultimate outcome.

We must examine the core processes that lie at the heart of the CDD approach in light of social theory and contextual knowledge. Participation and ownership form the bedrock of every CDD intervention and are more than a standard set of activities. They represent a set of essential processes that includes: community de nition, information sharing, convening, deliberation, preference articulation, commitment and performance. We must understand how these activities would normally occur and the factors that shape whether and how they would occur within a CDD intervention. We must also determine which of the processes are most important for achieving the desired change in a given outcome. From this exercise, we also learn more about the conditions that need to be met within a given context for the intervention to stimulate the desired changes.

We must specify theories of change that are based on existing social theory, core processes and knowledge of context. All practitioners have a hunch or set of ideas about how their inputs might lead to the desired changes. We believe it is necessary to make more explicit educated guesses about how change would happen by focusing on a speci c outcome and social theory that relates to it. We provide examples of theories of change and related assumptions around interaction and deliberation, which can be further elaborated with application to a speci c context and tested using appropriate evaluation methods.

Giving theory more attention will inform policy, practice and learning. Persistent CDD-related questions about investment size, duration and comparable alternatives can be better speci ed and tested. Problem identi cation, context analysis and the development of prograe6de ni 0 11 303.63.63692 46GBT 1.458 TL /T1_2 1 Tf 1

Introduction

DRC: In Eastern Congo, the IRC is running a massive community-driven reconstruction program called Tuungane ("Let's Unite" in Swahili). The program is funded by DFID and began in 2007. Tuungane is based on the principle that allocating resources and decision-making directly to communities within a good governance framework unites populations and local authorities around common interests and promotes inclusive, transparent and responsible management of basic public services. Photo: IRC/Sinziana Demian

The International Rescue Committee has invested in Community-Driven Development (CDD) for over fifteen years. From Azerbaijan, Kosovo and Afghanistan to Liberia, Burundi and DRC, we have worked with local groups to address needs they have prioritized. We have invested in rigorous[1] evaluations of our CDD interventions in Liberia, DRC and Somalia in an effort to learn what works, how it works and how we may improve the effectiveness of our interventions. An evaluation of Phase I of our programme in DRC showed no evidence of impact[2] This is one of the largest impact evaluations of community-driven development in a conflict-affected context to date. With null results, it is even more difficult to determine whether and how best to use the approach to improve local socioeconomic, governance or social cohesion outcomes in DRC or other contexts.

The null results led to many speculations about where we possibly went wrong. Perhaps we should have made larger per capita investments or spent more time working with a wider range of local, regional and national stakeholders. Maybe we should have waited longer before evaluating the programme or used different methods and measures. It is possible that, for any number of reasons, what we did on the ground did not reflect what we had articulated in our programme logic. We have made significant adjustments to Phase II of the programme[3].

Even then, we cannot be completely sure that they will result in the changes we desire. However, we are certain that we must continue to challenge ourselves to do things differently.

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[1] The term rigorous is taken to mean evaluations in which estimation of the programme effects included estimation of the counterfactual.

[2] For the full report, please see: http://www.oecd.org/countries/democraticrepublicofthecongo/drc.pdf

[3] These include increasing the per capita investment, improving the monitoring and evaluation system, increasing the programme engagement with local government and developing a mixed methods evaluation, which includes a long-term assessment of Phase I.

DRC: A member of the Mungwahwerea's village development committee describes the democratic process the village followed when planning for the construction of a community center. Photo: IRC/Travis Ferland

This experience is not unique. It occurs within a wider process of critically examining the way CDD interventions are designed, implemented and evaluated across different contexts. There have been many efforts to learn about and improve the effectiveness of the CDD approach. From the articulation of the fundamental principles and logic of the approach to speci cation of the necessary and suf cient enabling factors (Dongier et al., 2003) to calls for more rigorous evaluations (Mansuri and Rao, 2003, 2004) and for more appropriate and adaptable approaches to monitoring and evaluation, longer timelines and more modest expectations about the nature and trajectory of social change (Woolcock, 2009), the scope of the conversation around CDD is widening. More recently, there is more operational guidance on scaling up CDD and implementing in different contexts (Binswanger-Mkhize et al., 2010;

de Regt et al., 2013), a growing evidence base with more impact evaluations using mixed methods and innovative strategies to measure changes in actual (not just intended or reported) behaviour (e.g. Sierra Leone, DRC), more long term research agendas across multiple phases of programming (e.g. research around the National Solidarity Programme and the Kecamatan Development Programme), more conjectures about causal mechanisms based on evaluation ndings (Fearon et al., forthcoming) and case studies of successful institutionalization of the CDD approach (e.g. Indonesia). There are suggestions for improving CDD (e.g. through the inclusion of local taxation mechanisms (Fugali, 2014) and catalogues of alternative strategies to development that are 'locally led and politically smart' (Booth and Unsworth, 2014). This truly re ects the efforts of a community that is learning by doing.

We want to contribute to this wider process of re ection and improvement by focusing on the theoretical grounding of CDD. Why (on what conceptual basis) do we think that CDD is an appropriate intervention strategy? What are the conditions under which it would work? What about the context would we need to know? This is the starting point for programme logic. Discussions on the 'microinstitutional foundations of the CDD approach' (Chase and Woolcock, 2005) and 'civil society failure' (Mansuri and Rao, 2012) provide useful conceptual frameworks for thinking about and developing CDD and other participatory development strategies. Through primary studies and synthetic reviews, evaluators of CDD have also provided suggestions about potential mechanisms through which CDD could have the desired effects (Casey et al., 2013; King and Samii, 2010). We seek to add to this body of work by examining the conceptual foundations of the CDD approach and discussing key steps in developing more speci c theories of change.

This paper is a call to step back from what the aid industry has accepted as a standard bundle of broad activities and outcomes and to examine the concepts and processes that form the core of the CDD approach. The objective is to help us make better decisions about whether and when CDD might be the appropriate strategy for accomplishing the desired changes and more informed guesses that are rooted in social theory and contextual knowledge about how and why we believe CDD might lead to those changes. Practitioners donors and policymakers must be able to answer the question: why would we expect CDD to achieve a given outcome in a given context? We need a response that goes beyond the many philosophical political and practical arguments that are often made in favour of CDD. The democratic, rights-based foundation of the approach, its adaptability and scalability, its viability as a mechanism for disbursing large amounts of aid resources with varying degrees of government engagement, its relative ef ciency (i.e. better matching of resource allocations with participants' priorities, reducing leakages, see Barron, 2010)

and the promise of multiple effects all make CDD an extremely appealing approach. Unfortunately, these considerations are often not accompanied by clear theoretical arguments and, in many cases, are given greater weight in decisions about whether to implement CDD or not.

Having clear theoretical starting points is important for several reasons. For donors, policymakers and practitioners, it helps to determine whether CDD is a plausible strategy for achieving a given outcome even before implementation. For practitioners and evaluators, it informs the analysis of context, relevant design options and the speci cation of our monitoring strategies. It also helps to generate more speci c and falsi able hypotheses and improve precision around what, how and when we measure change while helping all stakeholders to manage expectations, better de ne what 'success' might look like and identify the alternative strategies for achieving it.

Grappling with the theoretical underpinnings of what we do is particularly important for practitioners because even with larger long-term investments from donors and improvements in evaluation and measurement conventions, we may still miss the mark if we design in ways that are blind to the interaction between theory and context. If we are honest, even with theoretically sound and contextually appropriate designs and evaluation strategies, we may still 'get it wrong'. We may not observe the results we anticipate. Nevertheless, more explicitly articulated concepts, processes and theories would help us to specify what we were wrong about and potentially how we would do things differently in the future.

This working paper discusses a process for developing more theoretically grounded CDD interventions. The ideas discussed here emerged from reviews[5]

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[4] Critiques of the CDD approach and other participatory development strategies are an important aspect of the broader policy conversation and have been elaborated elsewhere (e.g. Mosse, 2001; Eversole, 2003; Putzel, 2004; Williams, 2004).

[5] See Annex A for search protocols and summary catalogue.

Starting at the End

The objectives of CDD programmes are often broad and unclear. Proponents of CDD have argued that the approach can have a positive impact on multiple aspects of social life, yielding concurrent or complementary improvements in welfare, governance and social cohesion or security outcomes. This has led to the critical observation that CDD designs have "been plagued by a panacea-type approach to goals" (King, 2013, p. 3), wherein "grand, interconnected" objectives are set (p. 31), often representing the "con uence of reasons" that motivated the selection of CDD as an intervention type in the rst place (p. 48). Before discussing how CDD might work, it is necessary to know and specify what we are attempting to achieve.

There is an apparent contradiction between a call for greater focus and clarity in de ning the objectives of an approach and a desire for that same approach to be demand- (community-) driven. The decision to fund a CDD intervention to achieve speci c objectives is not made by the intended participants. It is, therefore, a form of supply-driven-demand-driven programming. These supply-side choices can constrain or promote differing degrees of demand-side choice, making it all the more important for those choosing to fund and design CDD interventions to be clear about their motivation and objectives for doing so.

Clarifying Objectives: What are we trying to do?

In the absence of clearly stated objectives, it is impossible to construct reasonable arguments about how CDD interventions contribute to desired outcomes. Specifying the objective is a logical precursor to the development of theories of change without which it is very dif cult to accurately measure changes, make sense of positive, negative or null results or modify programme designs to potentially improve impact.[10]

In our discussions with CDD practitioners, both for this conceptual project and in other contexts, we observe that many struggle to de ne their objective with consistency, clarity and precision. This section of the paper proposes a number of ways to de ne clearer, more precise and relevant objectives, as an essential step in designing more theoretically informed, robust CDD interventions that are can be adapted to context and evaluated rigorously.

Getting stuff to people or changing how people do things?

A categorical distinction can be made between CDD as a means of delivering a product to people and CDD as a means of changing processes. All CDD interventions involve the delivery of resources to people. Arguably, giving decision-making power to local communities may affect various social processes within and between those communities. However, applying this distinction at the level of objectives results in a difference in focus, design, measurement and de nitions of success.

Whether the output is social infrastructure, a means to generate income, vouchers for poorer people to access services or something else, CDD intended primarily as a mechanism for the delivery of a product to people focuses on the relative ef ciency of the delivery mechanism. The participation of community members in various stages of the CDD intervention is important to the extent that this yields a more appropriate delivery of the most appropriate product(s). The focus of the participatory process would then be the revelation and articulation of preferences, the resolution of con icts resulting from different preferences and the smooth delivery of products. The decision to invest in a CDD 'product delivery' approach and the evaluation of its effectiveness would hinge on comparisons with other delivery channels and the potential added value of participation.

Conversely, CDD as a means to affect processes shifts attention to how the intervention in uences attitudes, behaviours and norms. The objective is to in uence a speci c set of processes that can be simulated within the CDD intervention such that experience with CDD can shape similar processes in the broader social context. In this approach, the role of product delivery is primarily to provide a means for people to experience the preference revealing, decision-making and broader collective action opportunities that CDD offers.

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[10] King notes the absence of an articulation of theoretically grounded and contextually relevant change pathways in the CDD programmes that she studied and calls for their development as a central element of her recommendations (King, 2013, p.49)

An example would be the expectation that the encouragement and involvement of women in CDD-related decision-making processes will lead to greater involvement of women in household and other communal decision-making processes.[11]

If the objective of a given CDD intervention is de ned in terms of affecting processes, those elements of the intervention that potentially in uence behaviour, attitudes and norms become the crucial focus of design, implementation and measurement strategies. Sound contextual knowledge of existing socio-political and social psychological processes becomes signi cantly more important than it would be for a 'product delivery' approach. Likewise, the timeframe of a 'process change' intervention would be arguably longer. Public information campaigns, civic education and transparency and accountability initiatives could provide appropriate alternatives for assessing the relative effectiveness and cost effectiveness of CDD as a means to affect processes.

Improving ef ciency, lling a gap or transforming institutions?

Another way to bring greater precision to the objectives of a CDD intervention is to be as speci c as possible about the extent to which the intervention seeks to improve ef ciency, or provide a temporary substitute or transform norms and institutions. These three functions are often bundled together, with a transformative aspiration typically implied in the framing of the intervention (sometimes for reasons of political or contextual sensitivity). However, each provides a distinct avour to a CDD approach and separating them out provides another lens through which to clarify and prioritize objectives.

The ef ciency function entails the deployment of a CDD approach to improve how an already existing process or delivery mechanism works.

11 This was an expectation of both the rst phase of the Tuungane project in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the National Solidarity

For example, one might consider CDD to be adept at revealing people's preferences regarding community investments and deploy this as a programming strategy to improve the targeting of public funds by local government. The involvement of local civil society and private sector groups may create additional resources and networks that improve the allocation and use of public funds. Conversely, the substitution function concerns the use of CDD to address system failures or the absence of functioning systems through temporary measures. The substitution function is often found in fragile or conflict-affected settings where the absence of central government investment in infrastructure or services in certain areas of the country or the lack of de facto decentralization leads to the adoption of CDD as a means of making social investments at scale. This approach has been used in Eastern Congo and Somalia. A substitution function is only temporary and need not indicate a lack of government involvement. In fact, a government may collaborate with the international aid community to adopt a CDD approach as a stopgap measure in response to the prior absence of investment in areas due to war, political neglect, economic policy failures or for other reasons. Afghanistan's National Solidarity Programme arguably fits this definition.

A CDD intervention with a transformative function seeks to fundamentally change some aspect of social life. This function is particularly prevalent when CDD interventions focus on governance: the notion of improvements in governance practices generally means the promotion of specific democratic norms of governance. This is unsurprising given that the basic definition of CDD is to give people greater choice over how resources are allocated, particularly in contexts where this degree of popular engagement with resource allocation decisions was previously atypical or non-existent. In the aftermath of conflict, CDD programmes that focus on social cohesion, 'peace-building' or 'conflict-mitigation' have explicitly transformative aspirations. The underlying assumption is that relations between previously warring groups can be transformed (i.e. improved) by participatory decision-making around issues of common interest.

Being more explicit and honest about the transformative vs. substitutive vs. efficiency aspirations of a CDD intervention helps to determine the relative weighting of different components of programme design and the most appropriate measurement and evaluation strategies. Tracing transformative aspirations back to a sound theory of change is one way to infuse an important dose of realism. As such, this conceptual lens is particularly useful in guiding CDD design discussions towards more humble and realistic goals.

Clarifying Outcomes: What type of change are we hoping to see?

For CDD interventions, we often anticipate and measure changes in welfare, governance and social cohesion. Nevertheless, we rarely specify whether changes in any of these outcomes precede, stimulate or supersede changes in the other outcomes. Treating multiple outcomes as equivalent products of a CDD approach and weighting them equally within a logical framework obscures the potentially complex causal relationships between them. For example, it is possible that progress towards a governance outcome might unintentionally undermine social cohesion by stimulating debate and revealing and intensifying intergroup tensions and rivalries, which were either latent or non-existent under previous decision-making arrangements.

If outcomes are bundled without clear hypotheses, decisions about time and timing become increasingly difficult during the design process. The duration of exposure to and number of repetitions of the intervention required to stimulate and observe a perceptible effect may vary significantly across the outcomes. This in turn has implications for the timing and structure of the measurement and evaluation of the intervention. Similarly, it is difficult to understand whether sequencing of certain activities is important without clarifying objectives and separating out different outcomes, their associated causal pathways and hypothesized timeframes.

Distinguishing between welfare, governance and social cohesion outcomes provides an opportunity to specify a primary objective and to weight design choices accordingly. This does not preclude the possibility that a given CDD intervention could have multiple effects. However, it forces the prioritization of outcomes in a way that encourages greater precision in the development of change hypotheses and corresponding designs. For example, there is a non-trivial difference between attempting to improve local governance relationships,

by instrumentally using resource allocation to stimulate local decision-making processes on the one hand, and seeking to invest resources locally to maximize welfare outcomes, while instrumentally using local consultation to more appropriately align these investments with the revealed preferences of programme participants, on the other. This difference could have implications for a range of design choices, such as the size of

In order to qualify as community-driven, interventions must have certain characteristics. In our view, the minimalist description of the approach indicates the essential components: the existence of a community decision-making mechanism to determine priorities and the provision of resources to achieve those priorities (Guggenheim, 2011). For the purposes of this paper, a (representative) community-level decision-making mechanism and (the allocation and use of) resources are taken as necessary and suf cient conditions for the CDD approach. This means that every CDD intervention must have, but need not be limited to, these two features.

The existence of these features depend on speci c processes that we have labelled core processes. We propose that CDD's core processes are: community de nition, information dissemination, convening, deliberation, preference articulation, commitment and performance (or execution), as outlined in Figure 1 below. The selection of these functions as core processes follows a relatively simple logic:

• First, there needs to be a 'community', which will be endowed with decision-making power. The community may be a natural unit of social or administrative organization and/or relatively new units created by the implementing agencies for the purposes of the intervention.

• Second, the 'community' needs information about the intervention, the opportunity to participate and the type of participation that is required.

• Third, in order for collective decision-making to occur, members of the community must engage each other whether as individuals, sub-groups or as representatives of pre-existing civil society organizations (e.g. community or faith-based organizations) to discuss, prioritize and deliberate over their development needs.

• Fourth, the members of the community need to come to an agreement about the way in which aid resources would be used. This requires that the community's preferences (over the use of resources) be revealed to the implementers and supporters of the intervention.

• Fifth, with preferences articulated and resources made available, communities engage with various stakeholders to elaborate and commit to a strategy for effectively using the available resources.

• Sixth, elaborating a strategy for commit te-.iGerative

Each loop in Figure 1 represents a core process and factors related to each core process that must be considered during the design of a given CDD intervention regardless of its specific objective and context. For example, the definition of community boundaries invariably shapes the social dynamics within and between communities. If the boundaries of the communities under the CDD intervention do not align with the boundaries of pre-existing units of social or administrative organization, the CDD 'community' could be bringing together groups of people who did not previously engage each other around development issues. This may be deliberate if the objective of the intervention is conflict management or peace building. However, this definition of 'community' means new rivalries and alliances may emerge as people categorize themselves along divisions that are salient as they compete for programme resources. Conversely, if CDD communities are also the units or groupings with which participants are most familiar, then pre-existing power dynamics that shape the community decision-making processes must be considered. In either case, the ways in which groups within a 'community' perceive and identify themselves and each other have implications for whether and how they will interact within the CDD programme. Intergroup dynamics are, in part, a function of community definition.

The figure depicts the processes as conceptually linear but, in practice, they are often not. There are plausible feedback processes e.g. as information is disseminated and gathered and adjustments to the intervention are made, there may be several stages of decision-making and preference articulation. The loops also indicate that several intermediate processes may mediate the links between each of the core processes. For example, after disseminating information, programme facilitators have to engage local norms, procedures and authorities around bringing people together and may have to adjust the format of the assembly based on pre-existing formal or informal patterns. This demonstrates the contextual and procedural adaptability of the core processes.

Grounding the core processes in theory and context

The set of design options for CDD interventions is partially determined by the core processes, the desired outcomes and their associated theories of change. In order to translate these core processes into concrete activities and inputs, practitioners must answer a battery of questions so that they can tailor the intervention to the context and the desired outcomes. One way to approach the design of an intervention is to envision a layered process in which one first elaborates the design implications of the core processes or at least the questions that need to be answered in order to identify preliminary design options. The next step would be to superimpose the specific objectives, outcomes and theories of change on this pre-existing rubric, again asking a series of questions emerging from having specified what must be achieved (objective and outcomes) and the plausible ways in which it could be achieved (theory of change). Taken together, the answers to these questions help to shape the final design.

The table below provides illustrative questions around the core process of community definition. The list includes practical and contextual questions that directly shape how the programme is implemented and context-adjusted theoretical questions that combine the contextual information with theoretical expectations in an effort to make the theory of change more context-specific. The table also includes examples of mechanisms that are important both to the core processes as well as for the theory of change and highlights critical assumptions about the core processes that can be empirically tested. Taken together, answering these questions can help practitioners to become clearer about their theoretical and contextual motivation, the requirements of their design options and the necessary trade-offs.

	Practical Questions What does a community look like? Who determines community boundaries? Are the chosen community units/boundaries pre-existing? How are community boundaries enforced? Who is recognized as leaders within these units? How is leadership communicated? How are communities de ned in relation to each other? Contextual Questions What are the most common units of social organization (beyond the family)? If community units predate the intervention, how were they constructed? By whom? Who are the leaders? What type of leadership is viewed as legitimate? Are pre-existing boundaries contested? How has the notion of community changed over time? Are community boundaries enforceable? If newly articulated, do community boundaries align with or cut across previous boundaries? Given the boundaries, which are the dominant dimensions of social identity within the community? Which are the dominant dimensions of identity in neighbouring communities? Is community leadership contested/contestable? Which dynamics based on dimensions of identity/difference have been institutionalized over time? How do these dynamics manifest themselves in everyday interactions, processes etc.?

	Context-Adjusted Theoretical Questions
	What is the theoretical value/function of the community?
	What type of social capital is being targeted?
	In what ways is social capital important/necessary given the objective of the intervention?
	What types and how much competition is expected/important?
	How is the relative size of subgroups expected to affect intra and inter-community relations?
	Which groups have been historically powerful or privileged?
	What are the pre-existing dynamics between majority and minority groups and are the same dynamics expected given the boundaries of the 'community' as defined by the programme?
	Potential Mechanisms:
	Networks and resources available because of group connections
	Ingroup-favouritism (depending on which dimensions of identity are made salient)
	Competition between specified communities or groups
	Realistic or symbolic group threat
	Opportunities for social entrepreneurship
	Group norms, sanctions, information sharing
	Assumptions:
	Newly articulated/designed communities are meaningful and can supersede or co-exist with previous and other forms of social organization (at least for the duration and purpose of the project)
	Change in community boundaries and leadership signifies change in power
	Newly articulated community units allow for new interactions and different forms of engagement across different groups of people
	The dominant groups will not be the same across all communities

A practitioner must determine whether the community is useful because of the social capital it already possesses or because it is a vehicle through which competing groups will be able to engage each other constructively while (hopefully) building social cohesion or because it is the administrative unit recognized by and linked to local formal or traditional leaders. The extent to which these functions can be fulfilled through the use of pre-existing structures or whether they require new configurations can then be contextually and theoretically justified. As a result, the parameters of a 'community' will not be based solely on logistical and implementation efficiency but also on sound theory applied in the given of context.

DRC:Community-based organizations; soap making vocational training. Photo: IRC/Sinziana Demian

Figure 2 – Theory of Change for Social Cohesion (Positive Intergroup Attitudes)
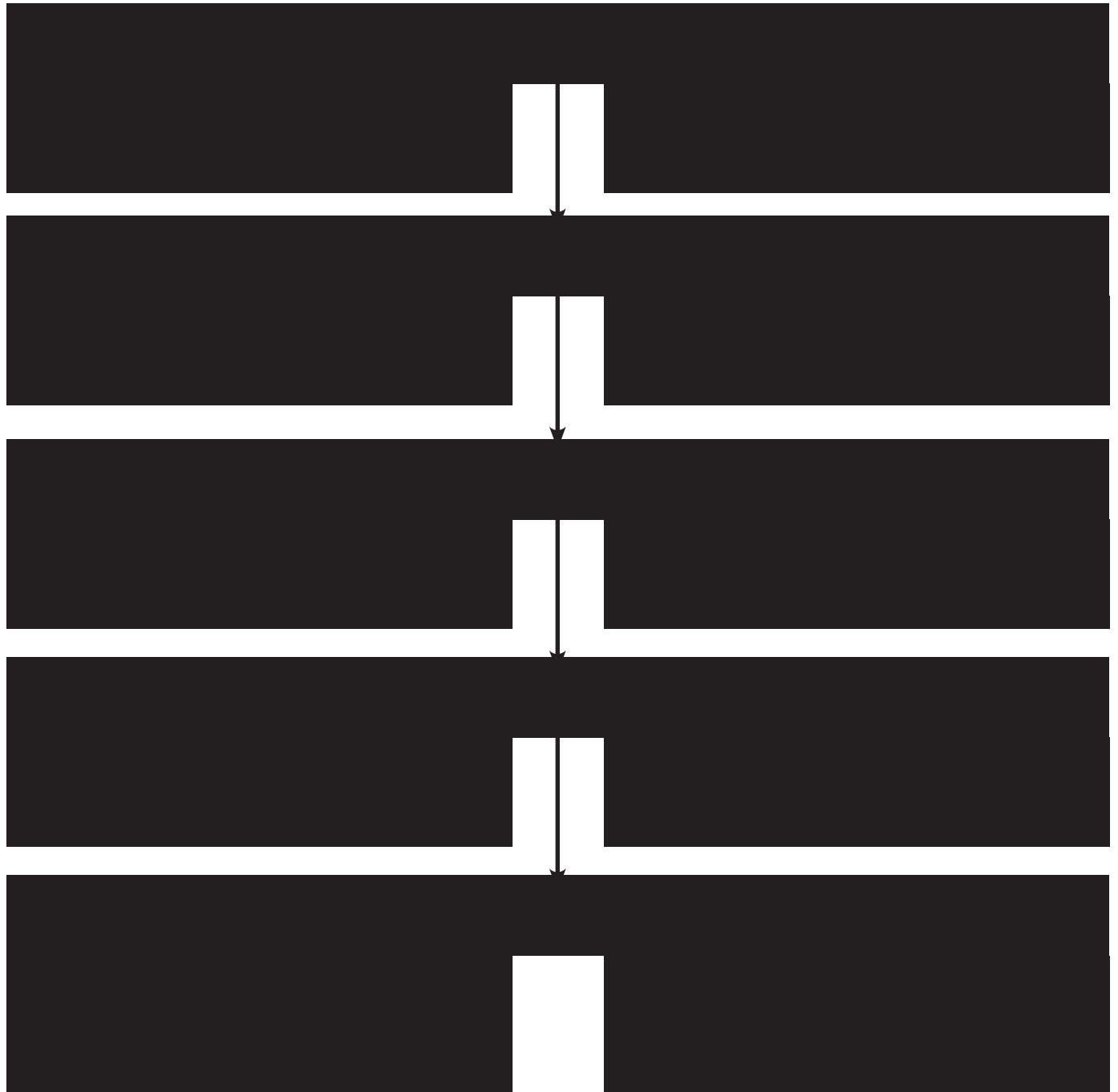
Where the salience of identities and their effects on politics, economics (and in this case development) change over time and across situations, the expectation is that CDD participants do not 'turn up' to CDD contact scenarios with fixed identities and that dimensions of identity that may be salient before the introduction of the CDD programme may not be the ones that are salient during the programme. This means that any given participant in a CDD programme has many possible identities in his or her repertoire and as such is a member of several 'groups' or 'communities' e.g. ethnic, religious, occupational, gender, political, age groups. Two practical aspects of CDD programmes undergird this expectation: the definition of community and the introduction of resources.

CDD, by definition, focuses on community-level development. However, the boundaries of a 'community' are often a function of logistical decisions made by implementing actors or administrative boundaries defined by government. Therefore, a 'community' for programme purposes does not always overlap with pre-existing geographical, administrative or social groupings. New boundaries are often drawn which may change the relative distribution of groups and the ways in which people think it is meaningful to identify themselves. Even if implementers were to deliberately bring conflicting groups together and repeatedly invoke a super-arching 'community' identity throughout the course of the intervention, it is not clear whether the group memberships that are associated with conflict or antipathy would be the ones that participants bear in mind during and after the intervention.

Whether the CDD intervention forms new communities or relies on pre-existing ones, the programme typically introduces non-negligible amounts of resources over which groups, who wish to benefit from the programme, are likely to compete. How people identify themselves and sort into groups in order to compete over these resources and the extent to which the dimensions of salience differ from the dimensions that are salient in the absence of the CDD programme will vary across context. Nevertheless, this theory holds promise because it does not demand that a large cross-section of the community participate or that participation be extensive. It only requires that group membership be readily identifiable and salient during and after the contact experience and that the contact experience be viewed as a positive experience.

Afghanistan: Life is looking better for the returning villagers of Kalar Shahi. Perched on a plateau an hour's drive south of Kabul, the village sustained severe damage during the Soviet invasion and the ensuing civil war. Houses were turned into rubble and residents fled to Pakistan and elsewhere. With its population now returning, the village is being rebuilt with the help of the IRC. "The road is smelly and there is rubble everywhere," says one villager. "It needs to be fixed". The reconstruction work is organized by IRC-supported "community development councils". These locally elected bodies decide which reconstruction projects to prioritize and seek funding for. Photo: IRC/Peter Biro

The theory of change does not hold if bringing different groups increases anxiety or stereotyping. The CDD experience may have a negative impact on cohesion if groups perceive that they have been treated unfairly (i.e. other groups benefit disproportionately), if group differences were amplified or if people who participate in the project are considered atypical of their group. For these reasons, how participants interact with each other and the programme are extremely important.

This theory of change applies equally to community or group leaders and to the average community member. Intergroup contact may influence intergroup attitudes and behaviours indirectly: observing or being informed that leaders of one's group interact with outgroup members or realizing that a friend who participated thinks or speaks positively of an outgroup member may be sufficient to alter the attitudes and behaviours of a group member who did not participate in the CDD intervention. In this case, the community members and their affiliates are learning about outgroup members by engaging them directly or vicariously.

Governance

Improving local governance is one of the most conventional objectives of the CDD approach. Governance can be defined as "regimes of laws, rules, judicial and administrative practices that constrain, prescribe and enable to the provision of publicly supported goods and services" (Lynn, Heinrich and Hill, 2001; 7). More simply, governance refers to the "rules and forms that guide collective decision-making (Stoker, 2004; 3). Improvement could mean changing knowledge, attitudes, practices, perceptions at the local level and strengthening relationships between local groups and governments at local, regional and even national levels.

The primary mechanism through which CDD is thought to improve local governance is broad-based community participation. CDD purportedly increases the quality and efficiency of local decision-making by promoting greater civic engagement, demand, accountability and new norms of civic behaviour and expectations (Wong and Guggenheim, 2005) and by reducing information problems, strengthening civic capacities (Mansuri and Rao, 2004). Where decentralized governments exist

and are engaged in CDD, the approach also purports to "enable informed input into public decisions and provide incentives to local government to empower local communities and be accountable to their input" (Dongier et al, 2002, p. 30) primarily by engaging communities with a particular focus on including (and empowering) the poorest and most vulnerable groups. In short, the processes and outcomes of local decision-making can be improved if the people most affected by these decisions are allowed to participate in them.

Within the framework of the core processes, participation includes convening, deliberation, preference articulation, commitment and performance. While all the processes may not be critical for stimulating a particular governance change and may give rise to multiple interconnected causal pathways, for the purposes of this paper, the discussion will explore the notion of participation as represented in one core process – deliberation. Deliberation can be described as debate and discussion with the objective of producing "reasonable, well—informed opinions in which participants are willing to revise preferences in light of discussion, new information and claims made by fellow participants" (Chambers, 2003; 309). The primary objective is to allow 'unanimous preferences' (Elster, 1998) to emerge. The notion of deliberation as a means of developing public policy grew out of an ideal conceptualization of democracy in which collective choices are made and social outcomes justified through public argument and reasoning among equal citizens (Habermas, 1998; Gutman and Thompson, 1996; Cohen, 1997). Deliberation is more than the exchange of words and ideas; it is public discussion that, in its ideal form, occurs under conditions where there is a norm of equality that allows participants to engage on equal footing in the discussions, where participants are not behaving strategically and the force of reason leads to a sense of consensus (Habermas, 1975; 1998). The basic notion is that deliberation allows for better and more acceptable policy outcomes by reflecting the 'will of the people'.

Figure 3 – Theory of Change for Empowerment – New Bases of Identi cation

The primary mechanism through which marginalized groups are empowered is the opportunity that argumentation provides for them to identify new or different ways of organizing and aligning themselves such that they will be recognized and can exert in uence on how decisions are made in the future. This process is one of very slow and incremental change. It may require many such engagements before the in uence of reorganized minority groups may be evident. This theory of change also assumes that deliberation practices are institutionalized or are viewed as the normal means of exchange.

There are other conditions that may render this theory of change more plausible. High levels of literacy and the inclusion of high-level public of cials in the deliberative exercises seem to reduce the power of the elite (Ban and Rao, 2009).[13] A review of the literature on collaborative governance[14] also provides some indications of potentially necessary conditions. These include: a high degree of interdependence and ongoing cooperation among the parties involved, strong organic leadership and adequate time for building trust where participants have had a history of antagonism (Ansell and Gash, 2008). Taken together, these conditions indicate signi cant investments in time and human resources in order to observe systematic changes in the engagement capacity of marginalized groups.

Among the biggest challenges to this theory of empowerment are the persistent barriers to participation faced by marginalized groups. CDD interventions typically emphasize the inclusion or representation of marginalized groups in decision-making processes. Some interventions include design features such as quotas, special committees or earmarked sub-grant allocations for marginalized groups. Under some conditions, these provisions may allow for the needs and perspectives of the marginalized to be recognized. However, as previously mentioned, more resourced, better connected individuals and groups tend to participate in CDD activities particularly when communities are required to compete for sub-grants within the CDD intervention. To ensure that marginalized groups are able to participate and that they have the requisite skills, con dence and opportunity to make rhetorical arguments is a dif cult task. It stands to reason that this theory of change around empowerment may only obtain under conditions in which marginalized groups already have signi cant capacity and experience in making fair reason-based rhetorical arguments to a diverse group.

Other more organic forms of contestation are also important. It may be the case that in cultures with strong oral traditions, contestation through stories (not necessarily arguments) may be common and facilitators may be able to leverage those traditions in a deliberative setting. In other settings, marginalized groups may be accustomed to mobilizational contestation, which is obstructive and adversarial (which may also pose a problem for attempting a deliberative engagement) or they may be accustomed to less overt forms of protest (Scott, 2008). This is the type of knowledge of context that will help practitioners determine the plausibility of change through deliberation.

This section outlined causal pathways that could plausibly lead to improvements in social cohesion and governance outcomes under certain conditions. These suggested theories of change, assumptions and causal mechanisms offer frameworks that can contribute to the design and contextualization of CDD interventions. They are two of many possible theories of change that can be further elaborated. With detailed contextual knowledge, practitioners can make theoretically informed decisions about practical design such as the actual groups and stakeholders that should be involved, the timing and duration of processes and the types of activities that need to be undertaken to operationalize the processes.

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[13] Based on case studies conducted in India.
[14] Collaborative governance is a governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative (Ansell and Gash, 2008; 544).

Implications for Policy, Practice and Learning

Over the last decade, investments in monitoring, research and evaluation of CDD and other participatory interventions have been signi cant. The evaluations referenced in this paper demonstrate some of the most extensive, thoughtful and rigorous assessments of CDD. They are even more noteworthy because they were undertaken in dynamic, relatively resource-poor and logistically challenging terrain. Contributions to the evidence base on the impact of CDD in con ict-affected contexts continue to be made through recent evaluations in countries such as Sudan[15] and Somalia[16]. Taken together, these efforts have paved the way for more critical and self-re ective conversations among donors and practitioners about what we know, what we do not know and what we need to know in order to make informed policy and programmatic investments. The biggest problem we face is that we are not seeing the types or degree of change that we (practitioners, policymakers and donors) had hoped to see and we are not sure why.

Policy and Practice

Practical alternatives: One of the most pertinent questions for the aid community is that of the counterfactual – what would be more effective and cost effective than a CDD intervention? Clarifying the desired outcomes of a given intervention is the rst step towards determining the range of practical alternatives to which that intervention can be compared. Once there is evidence of impact and systematic data that indicates the costs associated with the speci c activities under the CDD and comparison interventions, then cost effectiveness analyses may be conducted. This requires continued investment in rigorous evaluations of CDD interventions and their likely alternatives and mechanisms. If all wh.029el11 3oGse tf the.

Problem speci cation: Greater investments in identifying, learning about and diagnosing the problem CDD attempts to address will help decision-makers to determine the range of mechanisms that are most appropriate for a given context. If a CDD intervention is meant to address a poverty problem that stems from poor service delivery, its counterfactual will be very different from a CDD intervention that is meant to address a poverty problem that stems from poor livelihood strategies. Similarly, a CDD intervention

More clearly articulated theories of change (with their attendant assumptions laid bare) would give clearer indications of the types of data needed, the points at which they are needed and the appropriate methods for collecting them. This does not imply that theories of change perfectly predict causal pathways or definitively point to all the potential data that may be important. Neither should learning and measurement narrowly fixate on them. Theories of change are our best guesses, informed by social theory, evidence, context and experience, of how our efforts may result in a desired change. However, they do provide a framework for shaping our learning efforts, a benchmark against which we can compare expectations to reality and a means of more readily discerning when we are wrong. Theories of change also provide an opportunity to hypothesize about potential adverse and unintended consequences, which are also critical aspects of measurement and learning that are not often addressed in a systematic way.

Timing and Adaptability: A common concern around the timing of our measurement efforts in general and impact evaluations in particular is that they may occur too soon after a CDD program has been implemented. Similar concerns are often raised about the (relatively) short duration of the interventions themselves. The development of clearer, more explicit theories of change that have been informed both by social theory and knowledge of the context can partially address this concern. If we accept that the trajectory of social change is not linear or perfectly predictable (Woolcock, 2009), then we would also accept that an accurate estimation of the perfect moment at which measurement should occur is unlikely. Nonetheless, this implies the need for continuous efforts to learn and assess throughout the intervention and for a sustained commitment to adjust prior expectations about programme performance along the way. It also requires measurement and learning strategies that allow for observation and incorporation of emergent changes that are unpredictable and unique to the context. In addition to the use of longitudinal studies, the downstream benefits of randomization (Green and Gerber, 2002) could also be maximized such that the effect of having participated in a CDD programme (or not) is examined for other outcomes of interest.

Much of the discussion in this section is intuitive, yet these recommendations often do not translate into practice. While there are some examples of long-term, mixed methods measurement and learning strategies (e.g. research agenda around the Kacamatan Development Programme in Indonesia, National Solidarity Programme in Afghanistan), they remain quite rare, particularly in conflict-affected contexts. While the fragility and unpredictability of the conflict-affected contexts pose some challenges, efforts to develop and maximize measurement and learning strategies that are flexible and reliable require considerable time, capacity and resources. Even with more resources and the requisite capacities, the imperative to report on progress and demonstrate impact within specific pre-determined timeframes and according to pre-set targets will continue to pose a challenge. This is the point at which the learning and accountability functions of measurement and evaluation must be reconciled.

Liberia: A woman speaks at a community meeting in Barkedu, a village hard-hit by the Ebola virus
Photo: IRC/Peter Biro

Over the last four decades, the aid industry has invested increasingly in variants of Community-Driven Development programming in con ict-affected contexts. There have been considerable efforts to draw lessons from experience and the results of evaluations. General suggestions for improvement range from larger investments to greater engagement with government at national and sub-national levels to extended or repeated programme cycles. Advances in measurement and evaluation strategies are also evident.

Nevertheless, policymakers and practitioners need to get better at making clear statements about why and how we believe CDD interventions would lead to the desired outcomes. Informed by social theory and knowledge of context, these statements are important for CDD policy, practice and learning. They contribute to decisions about the types of problems that the approach can most effectively address, the appropriateness of a CDD intervention in a given context, the alternative strategies to which a given intervention should be compared and the types of contextual, operational and process information that is needed before, during and after an intervention. Most fundamentally, theory is the foundation of programme logic and design.

This paper suggests several steps towards developing an explicit theory of change for a CDD intervention. Deciding whether a CDD intervention is meant to primarily deliver outputs or change processes and behaviour and whether

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Notes

Rescue.org

NEW YORK

International Rescue Committee
122 East 42nd Street
New York, NY 10168-1289
USA

WASHINGTON, D.C.

International Rescue Committee
1730 M Street, NW, Suite 505
Washington, DC 20036
USA

LONDON

International Rescue Committee
3 Bloomsbury Place,
London, WC   2QL
UK

BRUSSELS

International Rescue Committee
Belgium
Place de la Vieille Halle aux Blés 16
Oud Korenhuis 16, 1000 Brussels
Belgium

GENEVA

International Rescue Committee
Rue Gautier
7 CH-1201, Geneva
Switzerland

BANGKOK

International Rescue Committee
Pong-Amorn Building
1028/5 Rama IV Road
Thungmahamek Sathorn
Bangkok 10120
Thailand

NAIROBI

International Rescue Committee
Galana Plaza 4th Floor
Galana Road off Argwings Kodhek
P.O Box 62727, 00200
Nairobi
Kenya