

## 論文の内容の要旨

論文題目     Community-Level Capacity Assessment for  
Sustainable Development in Rural Africa  
(アフリカの持続可能な農村開発に向けたキャパシティ・  
アセスメント)

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Despite the large amount of funding and various development interventions over the past decades, extreme poverty, one of key challenges in Africa, has not been abated significantly. To tackle multi-dimensional challenges in rural Africa, past development programs led by central governments or external organizations alone have clearly shown their limitations. Consequently, local capacity development deserves more attention than ever as a means of reducing poverty and promoting sustainable development. However, the meaning and critical aspects of capacity, as well as how capacity should be measured, often remain vague — despite frequent references to the term ‘capacity’. Furthermore, there is no framework or practical tools for assessing local capacity, particularly at the community level in the context of rural Africa. Such circumstances have led to a relatively low impact of capacity development efforts as well as a limited elucidation of specific dimensions and key roles of capacity. Against this backdrop, undertaking a critical assessment is indispensable to examining roles of local capacity and exploring effective and efficient approaches to capacity development to ensure sustainable development outcomes in the long term in rural Africa.

This study aims to develop a capacity assessment framework that can 1) analyze the capacity of rural communities (particularly development leaders), 2) identify capacity assets (strengths) and capacity gaps (room for improvement) at the community level, and 3) examine linkages between local capacity and sustainable development — for recommending feasible capacity development approaches and contributing to long-term sustainable development in rural Africa. For accomplishing these objectives,

a series of research activities has been undertaken. First, existing theories, concepts, methods, practices and perceptions concerning capacity and capacity assessment have been reviewed through a wide range of literature and national- and local-level dialogues in Ghana and Malawi. Subsequently, field research activities, including preparatory research (February-March 2015), data collection (August-September 2015 and February-March 2016) and feedback sharing and validation (August-September 2016), were undertaken in 6 communities in the Wa West District in the Upper West Region of Ghana and in the Mulanje District in the Southern Region of Malawi respectively, totaling 12 communities. The communities were selected based on distribution of geographical and administrative areas and developmental project history. Regarding the latter, selected study sites include a) communities that previously worked with external projects and/ or have ongoing projects for integrated rural development with components of capacity development (8 communities) and b) communities that have never worked with any external project (4 communities).

The assessment examined functional capacities, which are soft skills of development leaders in communities for facilitating community-driven development, as a main pillar of this research. Key dimensions of functional capacities examined in the context of rural Africa include: “Mutual Accountability”, which is a foundation for enhancing development at the community level (e.g., forging trust, transparency through information-sharing mechanisms); and “Engagement, Participation and Ownership”, which also promotes community-driven development in a proactive manner. Another type of capacity, i.e., technical capacities, have been also reviewed and cross-checked with functional capacities as well as sustainability of development outcomes. While the number of technical capacities is innumerable, two key technical capacities, i.e., “asset management” and “disaster management”, have been selected for thorough assessment. The assessment also analyzed 16 key development sectors, which have been selected based on the context of rural Africa, for comparison with levels and qualities of capacities.

The afore-listed dimensions have been examined mainly through focus group discussions (FGDs) with separate groups of men (194; averaging 16.2 in each community), women (287; averaging 23.9), and development leaders (87; averaging 7.3), totaling 568 participants in the 12 communities. Observations and individual interviews with 102 respondents, consisting of both men and women ranging from the young and middle aged to the elderly, have been undertaken for cross checking with the results obtained through FGDs. The capacity assessment results have been computed using a 0-5 scale for each indicator that has been clearly defined in the rubric.

The capacity assessment results revealed that not only the mere existence of an institution/platform for development but also the level of its functionality has been clearly reflected in some specific indicators. It has been found that communities with higher capacity tend to manage development processes, resulting in a higher likelihood of sustaining development outcomes. The evidence of distribution of relief items after the severe flood which hit the Mulanje District in 2015 showed strong linkages between consequences of such processes and the level of capacity in mutual accountability. The capacity assessment also disclosed other key elements that affect the sustainability of development outcomes, such as the mindset of development leaders (e.g., how they perceive their assets) and levels of ownership for community-driven development in both external projects and self-help efforts. With respect to external support, positive effects have been observed in technical capacities and development outcomes; however, there are limited contributions to functional capacities and limited scope of sustainability.

Through this research, it has been affirmed that key dimensions of the capacities identified are useful and valid perspectives with which to assess capacity at the community level in rural communities in Ghana and Malawi. Capacity assessment tools for facilitators have been developed for its possible applications in other parts of Africa accordingly. By observing feedback and activities during repeated visits, it has been found that capacity assessment can serve as a learning tool for facilitating changes in mindset and actions, impacting the sustainability of development outcomes. The assessment results also highlight implications and the following recommendations have been drawn for future interventions of development projects: i) more emphasis on functional capacities with a long-term perspectives, ii) creating more opportunities for communities to forge an institutional platform of development leaders consisting of diverse groups of respective communities and proper succession plans after their terms, and iii) application of community-level capacity assessment as a potential tool for promoting sustainable development in rural communities in rural Africa. Based on the findings, this research has thus concluded that community-level capacity assessment and capacity development with an increased focus on functional capacities can contribute to the sustainability of development outcomes.