

Efforts towards Endogenous Development in Bolivia

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Abstract

Due to two recent changes in the Bolivian law, both the council members and the civilians of the Bolivian Municipals are now able to administrate their share of resources. In order to support the Municipals in the execution of their new right, the government declared that for each Municipal a five year development plan (PDM) must be elaborated. The PDM must involve visions and development strategies concerning economic, human, institutional and environmental aspects. The elaboration of the PDM must be carried out by its council members, representatives of the citizens and a non-state party.

This paper discusses the applied methodology and the gained experiences in the elaboration of the PDM for the Municipal of Tapacarí (Andes of Department of Cochabamba-Bolivia). The authors represent the non-state party. In contrast to many other non-state parties the authors organized the elaboration of the PDM for Tapacarí keeping to the guidelines for endogenous development.

The team for the elaboration of the PDM was formed by 5 council members, 15 non-state advisers (7 university researchers and 10 students) and 15 representatives of the citizens of Tapacarí. The team took part in 5 planning meetings, 6 local promotion visits, 25 field workshop diagnoses with 2100 citizens (representing over 20000 people), 4 desktop analyses, 4 participatory meetings and 5 validation processes. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as well as existing needs were identified. A main municipal vision and economic, human, institutional and environmental planning strategies were formulated.

The elaboration of the PDM recognized and incorporated the local citizens. The local community was given the opportunity to be involved in a process to plan their own development. The entire procedure demonstrated that the visions and strategies of the local people do not always coincide with the national development policies and the ideas of the non-state party. The visions of the citizens were highly related to the use and management of their natural resources. We conclude that a participative elaboration of a PDM is an excellent dialogue platform that allows the Andean local communities to participate in their own endogenous development obtaining a long-term sustainability and local empowerment.

Keywords: Bolivia, endogenous development, local empowerment, long-term sustainability, rural Andean communities