



THE AGDF-DAWN PARTNERSHIP- WHY, WHEN, AND HOW

Revolutionising Community Development through the COLDET Project



Ara Growth and
Development
Foundation
Together We Succeed



INTRODUCTION

AGDF: Ara Growth & Development Foundation dedicated to community rejuvenation

DAWN Commission: Development Agenda for Western Nigeria focused on regional growth

Partnership Focus: Pioneering community-led development initiatives with Ara as pilot community

WHY COLDET FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT?

Beyond Linear Thinking

Traditional development approaches often treat symptoms while ignoring underlying dynamics

Example: The Kiribati Case

An aid program increased coconut farming incomes but inadvertently led to 33% increase in overfishing, worsening the original problem

Three Common Failures in Development Work

- Recurring Issues: Problems that keep coming back despite interventions
- Whac-a-mole: Solving one problem creates another elsewhere
- Backfire Effect: Well-intended actions making situations worse

More Examples

- Mining: unintended causes, e.g. pollution of Osun Osogbo River
- The new use for median on Lagos-Ibadan expressway
- Road construction in Nigeria and Lagos State

LINEAR VS. COMPLEX PROBLEMS IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Linear Problems: Mechanical, predictable challenges with clear solutions

- Infrastructure repairs, technical training, resource distribution

Complex Problems: Complex, unpredictable challenges requiring systems approaches

- Community governance, economic development, social cohesion, resource management

Ara's Development Challenges: Primarily "complex problems" requiring holistic approaches

- Resource mobilisation, community empowerment, and sustainable development require addressing interconnected factors simultaneously

WHY COMMUNITIES SHOULD TAKE LEAD IN DEVELOPMENT

- Rice plantation in Ogun State - It took a northerner for them to know their soil is excellent for rice production. Now their forest may have to go to protect the investment in rice.

WHY ARE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATIONS WEAK?

- Lack of proper governance structure that elicits trust signals
 - Lack of development strategy and capacity, leading to wrong priorities
 - Lack of resource mobilisation/stakeholder management strategy
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- Farming communities with cooperative societies funding consumption
 - Apapa community experience

INSPIRATIONAL CONTEXT

- Community Development Corporation in USA: A 2018 report by the Urban Institute found that there were approximately 5,720 CBDOs across the U.S., collectively holding around \$54 billion in assets.

Asset Categories

- Real Estate Holdings (Affordable housing units, Commercial properties, Community centres and public spaces, Community land trusts).
- Financial Assets (Cash reserves, Investments, endowments, Loans and mortgages, grants and subsidies)
- Infrastructure & Facilities (Schools, training centres, and childcare facilities, Health clinics)
- Transportation assets (buses, shuttle services for community programs)
- Equipment & Operational Assets (Office equipment, computers, furniture, supplies, Construction/farming equipment)
- Programmatic Investments (Small business incubators and loan funds, Workforce development and job training programs, Educational and after-school initiatives)

WHY - THE VISION

Asset Categories

- **New Approach to Development:** Moving from top-down to community-led initiatives
- **ARA2035 Agenda Alignment:** "The AGDF has launched the ARA2035 Agenda to rejuvenate our ancient community. This initiative aligns perfectly with DAWN's COLDET project."
- **Transformative Potential:** Creating sustainable pathways for growth and community empowerment

THE COLDET PROJECT

- **COLDET:** Community-Led Development Toolkit
- **Purpose:** "The COLDET project aims to revolutionize community development and Ara town will serve as the pilot field for this innovative toolkit, which is designed to empower communities to drive their own development agendas."
- **Innovative Approach:** First-of-its-kind strategy for grassroots development initiatives

WHY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS NEED THE TOOLKIT

- **Enhanced Capabilities:** Structured frameworks for planning and implementation
- **Resource Access:** Improved ability to mobilise support and partnerships
- **Sustainability:** Tools for ensuring long-term project viability

WHEN - PARTNERSHIP TIMELINE

- **Recent Milestone:** MoU signing in March 2025
- **Current Phase:** Pilot implementation in Ara town between April and June
- **Future Roadmap:** Evaluation, refinement, and potential expansion

HOW - SYSTEMS PRACTICE AS OUR METHODOLOGY

Definition: A structured approach that identifies and addresses complex community challenges as interconnected systems

- **Core Principle:** Do not fix a part of a system (treating symptoms); fix the whole system (addressing root causes)
- **Key Framework:** Views communities as dynamic, interconnected networks where changes in one area affect the entire system
- **Implementation Focus:** Identify interconnections, feedback loops, and leverage points for sustainable community transformation

SYSTEMS PRACTICE APPLICATION IN COLDET

- **Systems Mapping:** Working with community associations to visualise interconnections between local challenges, resources, and opportunities
- **Feedback Loop Identification:** Understanding how community actions reinforce positive or negative outcomes
- **Leverage Points:** Identifying strategic intervention areas with multiplier effects
 - Focusing on areas where small changes can produce large, sustainable outcomes
- **Participatory Systems Analysis:** Community members actively participate in system mapping and solution design
- **Dynamic Mapping:** Visual tools for communities to understand their own systems
- **Collaborative Learning Frameworks:** Structured approaches for testing assumptions and adapting strategies

HOW - IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

- **Community Association Role:** Central to successful implementation
- **Participatory Approach:** Community-driven identification of priorities
- **Capacity Building:** Training and support for association leaders
- **Collaborative Implementation:** Technical support from DAWN and AGDF experts

Benefits of Using Systems Practice

- Prevents unintended consequences
- Creates sustainable, community-owned solutions
- Builds capacity for ongoing community-led development beyond initial interventions

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EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- **Short-term:** Enhanced community engagement and participation
- **Medium-term:** Implementation of priority development projects and job creation
- **Long-term:** Achievement of ARA2035 Agenda goals and sustainable development model
- **Legacy Impact:** "This partnership aims to revolutionize grassroots development in Southwest Nigeria, with Ara town serving as the pilot location."

NEXT STEPS & ENGAGEMENT

- **List of Community Associations:** participation in needs assessment
- **Upcoming Activities:** Field survey, community forums, and technical support meetings
- **Q&A Session:** Addressing your questions and gathering feedback