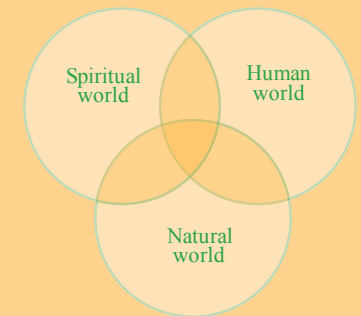


What is endogenous development?

The word endogenous means 'growing from within'. Endogenous development is development that is based mainly, though not exclusively, on local strategies, knowledge, institutions and resources. It involves a continuous process of adaptation and innovation, starting from within the local community. It implies working *with* people instead of working *for* them. A key criterion for endogenous development is that it is controlled by local actors. One aim of those involved in supporting endogenous development is to enhance the capacity of farmers to solve their own problems, and so broaden the options available to them, without romanticising their views and practices. Working in this way, peoples' own strategies, culture and worldviews stand at the centre of the endogenous development efforts.

The endogenous development process requires a conscious re-definition of the relationship between local people and the supporting agency. This does not imply, however, that all local values and beliefs should be embraced uncritically, and all modern development options rejected. In endogenous development, both local and external resources are taken into account, and one of the main objectives is to find the best way to combine these, based on people's own priorities and criteria. Supporting endogenous development can also imply strengthening traditional organisations and forms of exchange, as well as producing for local, national or international markets.

Endogenous development is based on local resources and livelihood strategies. The Sustainable Livelihood Framework, used as guiding framework by many development organisations, recognises the following local resources: natural resources (water, forest), human resources (knowledge, health), social resources (family structure, leadership), economic-financial resources (credit, market) and produced resources (roads, communication). In endogenous development it is recognised that the local identity and worldview of the people involved underpin the use of these local resources. In these worldviews - and thus in the use of the local resources - a balance is sought between three spheres of life: the human world, the natural world and the spiritual world. Thus well-being is where these three worlds meet.



This book presents the field experiences of the Compas partner organisations, and these highlight the following contributions that supporting endogenous development can make:

1. Giving a voice to the poor

The perceptions of poverty and well-being of the poor themselves may differ from those of the planners, policy makers and development agencies. Listening to the voices of the poor is essential for any development programme, especially if we want to understand what they mean by well-being, communication and development.

See CIKS (p. 12-13), CIKOD (p. 18-19) and FUNDECAM (p. 50-51)

2. Identifying local resources and possible solutions

The cultural dimensions of development problems are often little understood and poorly addressed. It is essential to take into account the cultural dimension of the problem at hand, and to include this when identifying possible solutions.

See FOL (p. 48-49) and KPP (p. 40-41)

3. Acknowledging faith and giving meaning

The role of religion and how people give meaning to life are often not acknowledged or understood by development professionals, while these often determine the decision-making processes in all aspects of life. Acknowledging religious values can therefore also create strong motivation for supporting community organisation and sustainable development.

See FUNDECAM (p. 14-15)

4. Fine-tuning options to the local context


The solutions to the problems of the poor, and the methodologies for achieving them, cannot be the same in all contexts. They need to be placed within the particular socio-cultural context, which may vary from ecosystem to ecosystem, from economy to economy, and from culture to culture.

See IDEA (p. 20-21)

5. Building on traditional institutions

Cooperation for development should include the participation of local leaders in policy debates and





development programmes. This can result in a revitalisation of local leadership and a new balance between traditional and state governance.

See Oxlajuj Ajpop (p. 26-27) and Italy (p. 30-31)

6. Empowering women and promoting gender equality

Women are central in any development effort. They play a vital role in the informal sector, as well as in traditional institutions and decision-making processes. In many traditional societies men and women are not equal, but have complementary roles of equal importance. At the same time, controversies surrounding gender relations must be taken seriously.

See CIKOD (p. 28-29)

7. Strengthening local economies

Most of the rural poor depend on local resources and their products are often used locally, within local marketing systems. Traditional marketing strategies often include reciprocity mechanisms and social relations.

See SAEDP (p. 38-39)

8. Building on organic farming practices

Many endogenous development efforts include organic agriculture, based on ecological principles and conserving biodiversity. These efforts seek new balances between production for local consumption and the wider market.

See FIOH (p. 36-37) and PFARD (p. 42-43)

9. Enhancing bio-cultural diversity

Traditional resource strategies are often resource conserving, favouring diversity in all possible aspects. Those supporting endogenous development can consciously strengthen this aspect, by accepting and promoting the cultural dimension of biodiversity.

See CIKS (p. 34-35)

10. Balancing traditional and modern practices

In endogenous development people try to find a balance between modern and traditional practices. For example, local health traditions can be documented, assessed and revitalised, by building on various

medical systems.

See FRLHT (p. 46-47)

11. Educating for endogenous development

In most countries, formal education - from primary school up to university - is primarily intended to prepare students for urban and modern life. The examples show how education can respect and revitalise cultural identity and create new opportunities.

See Agruco (p. 56-57), Ceprosi (p. 54-55) and Gandhigram (p. 58-59)

12. Inter-generational learning

Young people are faced with the challenge of integrating modernity into their lives without losing their identity. Various examples in this book show ways of supporting inter-generational learning, in which culture plays a pivotal role.

See CECIK (p. 22-23) and BRIT (p. 60-61)

13. Engaging in personal transformation

The endogenous development approach requires a process of self-reflection by all actors, including development practitioners and farmers. For development workers it requires an attitude of openness and respect, and the capacity to stimulate joint learning. As a result of the process, local people have regained awareness of their identity, including the potential of their own local resources, knowledge and culture.

See Semillas (p. 16-17)

In today's world rural communities and traditional societies are increasingly influenced by elements of the global market economy. Controversies are part of this reality, as they are an inevitable part of life and development. Within this reality Compas aims to stimulate dialogue, both within the cultures (intra-cultural dialogue) and between cultures (inter-cultural dialogue). Endogenous development is an empowering process of the community, in which cultural awakening, creation of unity and participatory action are important elements. In this process the local community does not aim to fence itself off from the global world, but to connect to it in such a way that local qualities and values remain, and become the point of reference.

