

THE DDD MANIFESTO

ON DOING DEVELOPMENT DIFFERENTLY

Too many development initiatives have limited impact. Schools are built but children do not learn. Clinics are built but sickness persists. Governments adopt reforms but too little changes for their citizens.

This is because genuine development progress is complex: solutions are not simple or obvious, those who would benefit most lack power, those who can make a difference are disengaged and political barriers are too often overlooked. Many development initiatives fail to address this complexity, promoting irrelevant interventions that will have little impact.

Some development initiatives, however, have real results. Some are driven domestically while others receive external support. They usually involve many players – governments, civil society, international agencies and the private sector – working together to deliver real progress in complex situations and despite strong resistance. In practice, successful initiatives reflect common principles.

- They focus on solving local problems that are debated, defined and refined by local people in an ongoing process.
- They are legitimised at all levels (political, managerial and social), building ownership and momentum throughout the process to be 'locally owned' in reality (not just on paper).
- They work through local conveners who mobilise all those with a stake in progress (in both formal and informal coalitions and teams) to tackle common problems and introduce relevant change.

- They blend design and implementation through rapid cycles of planning, action, reflection and revision (drawing on local knowledge, feedback and energy) to foster learning from both success and failure.
- They manage risks by making 'small bets': pursuing activities with promise and dropping others.
- They foster real results – real solutions to real problems that have real impact: they build trust, empower people and promote sustainability.

As an emerging community of development practitioners and observers, we believe that development initiatives can – and must – have greater impact.

We pledge to apply these principles in our own efforts to pursue, promote and facilitate development progress, to document new approaches, to spell out their practical implications and to foster their refinement and wider adoption.

We want to expand our community to include those already working in this way.

We call on international development organisations of all kinds to embrace these principles as the best way to address complex challenges and foster impact. We recognise the difficulties, but believe that more effective strategies and approaches can generate higher and lasting impact.

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