Community Driven Development in Bolivia: Impacts on Empowerment and Community Participation for Men and Women

In 2007, over nine percent of World Bank lending supported Community Driven Development (CDD) projects, yet there are still few studies that have been able to rigorously show impacts of these projects on development outcomes. CDD interventions typically combine block grants with capacity building, institutional strengthening, and decision making training. Promoters of these interventions argue that they have the ability to improve community participation, empowerment of women and marginalized groups, and sustainability by placing decision making power in the hands of the communities themselves, to determine how to prioritize and address local development challenges. This evaluation seeks to contribute to this area of study by fleshing out the impacts of a CDD initiative in Bolivia on empowerment, community participation, and gender specific effects on program outcomes.\textsuperscript{1,2}

The Community Investment in Rural Areas Project of Bolivia (Proyecto de Inversión Comunitaria en Áreas Rurales, PICAR) distributes financing for CDD projects designed and implemented by communities themselves with the objective of improving access to infrastructure and basic services within the most marginalized rural communities. PICAR has three phases of implementation: 1) capacity building for decision making, 2) project implementation, and 3) follow-up support, evaluation, and coordination. PICAR will be rolled out in 51 municipalities within 4 departments of Bolivia. The municipalities included in the PICAR program were selected based on their consecutively high levels of nutritional vulnerability. From the eligible municipalities the PICAR program will use a baseline survey to select approximately 200 communities for participation.
The Government of Bolivia has expressed an interest in implementing PICAR using a randomized phase-in with approximately 100 communities receiving co-financing in 2013 and another 100 are receiving co-financing in 2014 (expected timeline). However, if the phase-in is not randomized, evaluators will use matching techniques to identify a comparison group.

The objective of the impact evaluation is to estimate the impacts of PICAR on changes in community participation, social capital, changes in women’s empowerment at the community level and the household level, time savings due to the infrastructure projects, and changes in children's health outcomes. Since there will most likely be endogeneity between projects that succeed or fail and outcomes of interest, the estimation strategy that will be applied is an intention to treat model - the treatment group will include all households within communities that were eligible for project co-financing in that year.

**Timeline:** The baseline household survey was collected in 2012; a follow-up will be done one year later in 2013 and then a second follow-up will be completed two years after program implementation at the end of 2014.

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