Community Development—Theory of Change

Frank G. Cookingham…October 2016, January 2019
TE is by Christians for Christians

- Transformative Evaluation as developed by Cookingham is a narrow approach to program evaluation.
- The evaluand is transformational community development programs (TD) as described by Bryant Myers in *Walking with the Poor*.
- The approach is developed by Christians for Christians who monitor and evaluate TD programs.
TD Program Sector Goals

- TD programs include goals for health, education, family income, etc. Transformative Evaluation provides information about the extent to which those goals were achieved. It provides information about how those achievements have improved quality of life for program participants and others.
TD Program Sector Goals (2)

- From a transformation perspective, the interactions among those who engage in the community development program, and the interactions between those engaged in the program and community residents not engaged, are more important than the extents to which sectoral goals/objectives are achieved.

- TE is designed for transformational development (TD). Therefore, to understand TE you need to understand the theory of change for TD.
TD Program Theory of Change

- What are the key factors that enable desirable individual and social change? In TD the key to such change involves people understanding the essence of a Christian worldview that respects the present culture.
- The theory is that such understanding occurs as development agents living out of a Christian worldview demonstrate love for participants as they facilitate implementation of the development program.
Primary Obstacles to Change…TD Theory

- Web of lies believed by the poor that convinces them there is no better future for them.
- Web of lies believed by the non-poor that prevents them from supporting holistic community development.
- Faith groups in the community that do not understand the critical role they must play in community development.
- Reluctance to confront sin in the community that creates deception, distortions and distractions that harm relationships central to improving quality of living.
Primary assets for change…TD Theory

- Skill in thinking holistically.
- Concern for the well-being of neighbors.
- Willingness to risk doing things differently without having guaranteed outcomes.
- Ability to critically reflect on undesirable consequences of actions, and to create alternative ways forward less likely to end up with similar undesirable consequences.
Final Thoughts

- In Transformational Development the key to the individual and social change desired most involves people living out of the essence of a Christian worldview that respects the present culture.
- TE provides information about change in the program communities associated with individuals and groups loving God and neighbor.
May your monitoring and evaluation work deepen understanding about what matters most in community development from a kingdom perspective.
Resources

• Explore www.EvalFrank.com, especially the other five TE orientation slide presentations.