From Clients to Citizens
Communities Changing the Course of their Own Development

Edited by Alison Mathie and Gordon Cunningham

‘This is a terrific book.’
Caroline Moser, Professor of Urban Development, University of Manchester.

‘A wonderfully insightful exploration of the new frontiers of community development, this book is a must-read for students, teachers, activists and policy-makers alike.’
Michael Edwards, Director, Governance and Civil Society,
The Ford Foundation.

‘This volume is an essential antidote to expert-dominated views about how communities are “developed” through external initiatives. A rich combination of analysis, geographic variety and diversity of cases show where, why and how people’s own capabilities, resources and efforts make an enduring difference to their lives and to society.’
Dr Alan Fowler is a former president of the International Society for Third Sector Research (ISTR).

Communities worldwide act on their own initiative, drawing on their own resources of leadership and solidarity and, in spite of poverty, to achieve their own goals. Development practitioners have too often viewed poor communities as helpless and disadvantaged, and have encouraged their dependency.

From Moroccan villages that secured irrigation infrastructure with the help of returning migrants, to Egyptian youth leaders who wanted a soccer pitch for their village, and an indigenous women’s cooperative in Ecuador that now exports medicinal plants, this book presents case studies of communities that first built on their own assets, before seeking assistance from outside.

From Clients to Citizens is aimed at community workers, researchers and policy makers who want to take a fresh look at community development.

Alison Mathie and Gordon Cunningham are on the teaching faculty at the Coady International Institute at St Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia, Canada. Their research explores asset-based approaches to community development and local organizing, and identifies government and donor policies that encourage such active citizen participation, especially in Kenya, Ethiopia, the Philippines, India and Vietnam.

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