

Community Development and Economic Justice

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Development

- Definition: to realize the possibilities of, to grow, unfold or expand gradually, to elaborate or enlarge, to progress from earlier to later stages of maturation

Goals of Development

- Development emphasizes *exchange* and *equity* not charity.
- Rather than focusing on deficiencies, development uses/enhances a person's/community's current skills, abilities and resources. It does not treat symptoms of a greater problem.

What is Economic Development?

- Definition #1: Places the well-being of people and quality of life above the narrow calculations of corporate profit and political empire building.

Additional Definitions of Economic Development

Definition #2: The Three E's

- ***Empowerment*** – willingness and ability of people to take charge more fully of the development process.

Local residents bear the burden so it is a matter of simple justice that theirs should be the prevailing voice in the decisions about plans to implement.

Empowerment can't be given or legislated but can be encouraged and nurtured.

The Other E's of Economic Development

- *Education* – mechanism through which empowerment is fostered
- *Entrepreneurship* – crucial role in sustenance and vitality of urban life
e.g. CDCs, self-employed individuals, co-ops, small businesses

Additional Definitions of Economic Development

Definition #3: process by which residents make the economy better serve their fundamental needs, such as:

1. Right to a decent job
2. Right to economic security, decent housing, healthcare
3. Right to participate as fully as possible in decision-making affecting their livelihoods
4. Right to preservation of cultural integrity

Additional Definitions of Economic Development

Definition #4: Development is a process not measured in simply dollars and cents. Projects are measured by how well it contributes to the overall development process, how well it satisfies basic rights.

Example: groups involved in grassroots economic development either improve financial well-being of low-income people through fostering economic independence and self-reliance or directly challenging existing corporate and government policies.

Only comprehensive strategies that integrate both political and economic approaches can adequately address people's needs.

Goals of Economic Development

- Democracy not Growth
 1. Affirmative Action
 2. Job Quality
 3. Democratic Control
 4. Political Strategy

Economic Development vs. Community Organizing

- Economic development is a long, gradual process unlike organizing which goes for quick and winnable issues.
- It involves the cooperation of many not confrontation.



Economic Development vs. Economic Growth



It is possible to have growth with equity or growth through and toward equity.

What is Community Economic Development?

- Definition: process of returning control and ownership of economic decisions to people most affected by those decisions
- Goal: Improve community's economic and social strength
- “resources that nourish households”
- Emphasizes action close to home
i.e. no Walmart but banking in neighborhood and local purchases

Mission of Thai CDC

Founded in 1994 on the idea that all peoples have a basic right to a decent standard of living and quality of life, our overriding mission is to:

“advance the social and economic well-being of low and moderate income individuals in the greater Los Angeles area through a broad and comprehensive community development strategy including human rights advocacy, affordable housing, access to healthcare, promotion of small businesses, neighborhood empowerment and social enterprises.”

Community Development Fundamentals

- Must start locally.
- Looks at “community economics” – are we putting money and resources into the local community to nourish the neighborhood?
- “community development” is more than a collection of streets and buildings.
- Neighborhood economy is more than a place for exchange of \$.

Additional Community Development Fundamentals

- Community development is development of people, activities and institutions that enable the community to build itself up.
- Must link local community to the world at large – no community can live in isolation.
- A better and more secure world future rests on building blocks of strengthened independent, interdependent communities.

Challenge of Community Development



“Think globally, act locally”

What Community Development is Not

- Not smokestack chasing
- Starts at home with resources a community already has
- Not franchise on every block
- Not about producing pet rocks
- Not about fixing up neighborhood but creating mixed neighborhoods by achieving development without displacement
- Not about fighting for a bigger piece of the pie but increasing the size of the pie

Thai Town as a CED Strategy

- Places the well-being of people and quality of life within the area as paramount
- The development of Thai Town should address the fundamental needs of its residents for decent jobs, economic security, and decent and affordable housing
- It would provide an opportunity for people to take charge of the development process more fully

Thai Town as a CED Strategy

- Entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in the sustenance and vitality of Thai Town
- Overall, the goal of Thai Town is to improve the financial well-being of economically disadvantaged people through fostering economic independence and self-reliance
- Thai Town emphasizes *exchange* and *equity*, focusing on the community's current skills, abilities and resources
- Thai Town can improve the area's economic and social strength
- Thai Town can develop resources that will *nourish* households and neighborhoods

Additional Mission and Objectives of Thai Town

- Promote neighborhood pride, multi-cultural exchange and cultural tourism
- Identify and create economic development projects, e.g. cooperative markets, community banks, business incubators
- Promote unity among diverse ethnic groups in the area
- Encourage start up of Thai businesses in the area
- Promote beautification of the neighborhood through an organized citywide plan aimed at improving the streetscape on Hollywood Blvd.
- Promote democratic decision-making in the Thai community by allowing Thais to be actively involved in the future of Thai Town
- Improve housing and other amenities for low-income families
- Create a community center that will serve as a business, community and cultural center
- Create infrastructure and institutions that will support future community projects
- Heighten awareness of Thai culture
- Promote cultural preservation

Additional Mission and Objectives of Thai Town

- Preserve the Thai community's cultural integrity
- Enhance an ethnically diverse area
- Put demands on the greater polity and local institutions
- Encourage Thais to interact with the greater community
- Ask for concessions not as Thais in Thailand but as Thai Americans residing in LA
- Advance social and material goals requiring participation and interest from the rest of the Thai community as a united entity
- Act of assertion of one's community consciousness
- Declare that the Thai community exists in LA, occupies a space, defining itself as a community associated with a place in history
- Engage Thais in a community building process
- Count Thais as more than just another part of the "rich tapestry" but a united entity that can come to a consensus

Long Term Thai Town Plan

1. **Housing**
Making housing decent and affordable for individuals and families in the community.
2. **Commercial Revitalization**
Create an atmosphere in the community in which economic institutions (industry, small business, retail, etc.) find it attractive to conduct business while simultaneously retaining and multiplying the consumer dollars in the community economy.
3. **Jobs and Employment Training**
Create quality jobs for local residents and eliminate high levels of unemployment in low-income communities. Also, provide training so that individuals may develop skills necessary for gainful employment.
4. **Small Business Development.**
Induce specific entrepreneurs (i.e. retailers and vendors) to locate in and service the community markets; making financial resources accessible to small start-up investors; developing commercial and industrial space. Overall, business development strategies have multiple goals aimed at strengthening a community's economy, such as creating jobs, training workers, providing needed services, and attracting and circulating money in the neighborhood.
5. **Land Use and Amenities**
Advocate proper and socially responsible land use to benefit the community (i.e. building schools, hospitals, gyms, recreation centers, creating parks and open space), and determining the ownership of the land. Provide amenities such as public libraries, cultural institutions, senior and youth centers. Provide security such as having an on-site police substation.

Long Term Thai Town Plan (Continue)

6. **Social and Human Services**

Develop long-term strategy for greater involvement in social service oriented economic development. Explore the potential for human services (health, educational, and social) to become economic development activities.

7. **Financial Services**

Provide financial assistance that would help fund special projects (i.e. arts, cultural, recreational), help start up specific business incubators.

8. **Transportation**

Advocate for public transportation network and incentives.

Measuring the Success of Thai Town

The success of Thai Town should be measured on how well it contributes to the overall development process and how well it satisfies the basic rights for decent jobs, economic security, and decent and affordable housing.



HOLLYWOOD COMMUNITY STUDIO MISSION

- The HD-OD project empowers the people of Hollywood to transform their lives and their community. We accomplish this mission by:
- **Linking** residents, small businesses and community organizations with local opportunities and services that will help them meet their goals;
- **Facilitating** the creation of a shared vision for the future of our community;
- **Encouraging** active and effective participation in public life;
- **Promoting** equitable and sustainable development;
- **Measuring** the change redevelopment brings to our community; and
- **Sharing** the results of our research with the community and beyond.

Planning with the Community

