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REDEFINING DEVELOPMENT

*Resolving Complex Challenges
in Developing Countries*

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Redefining Development

Resolving Complex Challenges in Developing Countries

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Abstract: In 2015, the Old Fadama slum of Accra, Ghana, was a government “no-go zone” due to the generally lawless environment. Participatory action researchers (PAR) began working with three stakeholders to resolve complex challenges facing the community and city. In three years, they created a PAR cross-sector collaboration intervention incorporating data from 300 research participants working on sanitation. In 2018–19, the stakeholders addressed the next priorities: community violence, solid waste, and the need for a health clinic. The PAR intervention was replicated, supporting kayayei (women head porters) in Old Fadama, the Madina slum of Accra, and four rural communities in northern Ghana. The process expanded, involving 2,400 stakeholders and an additional 2,048 beneficiaries. Cross-sector collaboration worked where other, more traditional development interventions did not. This PAR intervention provides developing-country governments with a solution for complex challenges: a low-cost, locally designed tool that dramatically improves participation and results in projects that impact the public good. This Element is also available as Open Access on Cambridge Core at doi.org/10.1017/9781108867849

Keywords: cross-sector collaboration, international development, complex challenges, Africa, participatory action research

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