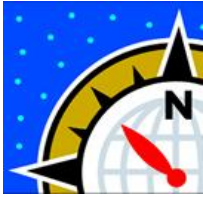# CENTER FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Class Syllabus OL 101 From the Ground Up
CSDi Online Learning
OL 101 From the Ground Up: Designing Community-Centered Projects with Sustainable Solutions **PDF**
http://www.csd-i.org/online-learning/

From the Ground Up: You will leave the course with practical field tools and develop a range of skills: needs assessments, community workshops, and discovering evidence-based activities. The course is designed to be used as a vehicle for you to develop a real project, in real time, during this course.

Assignment 1. What's the real problem?

1. Read the document on participatory needs assessments and conduct an informal assessment with a few community members to uncover important community needs/problems. List the needs identified and organize them into a clearly described problem statement—a development challenge that you are going to solve with your project design. We want this as real as possible.

> If you live in Manchester or Chicago or Wellington—rather than Nairobi or Madras—and aren't sure where to turn for project ideas—we can develop real projects for you in one of the following manners:
> 1. Go to a shelter, or an inner-city feeding program, or a drop in center for kids-at-risk and interview staff and beneficiaries about a new program that they would like to fund and launch.
> 2. Partner with someone in the class who is working in the field in development. Two of you working together on one project could create a project with profound impact. And think of the connections you will both be making.
> 3. Contact me. I can give you a real-life rural development challenge that you can design a project around.

Assignment 2. What's your theory of a solution?

This week we will clean it up your project's problem statement, develop a project goal, and search for 3 interventions that would fulfill your project goal.

Assignment 3. Will your theory of a solution work?

Research one peer-reviewed scientific paper for each of the three interventions and see if scientists have found evidence that the interventions are effective in solving your project's problem. Write a one paragraph summary of each papers' findings.

Assignment 4. Will the community buy into it?

1. Return to the community with your project concept to get their feedback and a hopeful buy-in.
2. Pick one of your evidence-based interventions and write a simple one page background guide that could be used by other field staff.

Assignment 5. How will you transfer the solution to the community?

1. Write a workshop lesson plan for introducing this intervention into a community, and then make an illustrated, How-to card to give to community members.
2. Brainstorm a list of 3 people that you would like to sell your project concept to: a donor, your boss, your professor. Make an appointment with one of them for next week.

Assignment 6. How will you organize your ideas for presentation to a donor?

1. Lay out your problem statement, goal statement, and intervention activities into a simple matrix that I will supply. This will prepare you for the next course: OL 102 where you will transform your project into something that can formally be presented for funding.
2. Share your project with someone that you would like to sell it to: a donor, your boss, your professor, someone in the development world for feedback.