



Impact of 55 development initiatives on wealth classes in Sandema, northern Ghana

are obviously ‘wrong’ or ‘distorted’. Evaluations often conclude that $x\%$ of development projects have failed, or $y\%$ have been successful, judgments that often are picked up and magnified by the media, public opinion makers and political entrepreneurs. However, the truth can not be captured in such simplistic conclusions and villagers and local officials in areas such as northern Ghana and Burkina Faso will brand them as simplistic generalizations that represent distortions of the truth as they see it.

In Sandema the workshop participants assessed the success or failure of a total of 341 development initiatives. The graph above illustrates the combined results of the values attached to the 55 ‘best’ initiatives and their impacts on the five wealth classes. It shows how a basically qualitative approach can yield rather robust quantitative results. 📊 The results probably come close to intuitive assessments of those who are familiar with the area, but the differences between the ‘types of development agent’ are subtle in degree, and should discourage us from making simplistic judgements.

It seems that many Ghanaians, whether literate or not, are experts in the subtleties of complexity thinking. ■

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