Needs and Issues Prioritization Process in Communities

enhancing citizen's participation in decision making...

What?

Issue prioritization is the ranking of community development needs in order of importance. The ranking of the community's priorities must be mutually agreed by all groups to ensure that the focus is on issues that need the most urgent attention, in accordance with the perceived importance to the whole community.

Who?

Everyone in the community is involved in the process. It is facilitated by community leaders who ensure that there are safe spaces for all community groups to dialogue, agree and prioritize their needs. The composition of community groups differs across communities; varying from age group to marital status to ethnic groups.

Steps in Issues Prioritization Process

1. **Mobilization of community groups**
into smaller groups of men, women, youths, persons with disability to identify their developmental needs or issues in a participatory way.

2. **Groups identify issues**
based on need in safe spaces using certain tools.

3. **Groups rank the issues**
based on importance and urgency to the community and participants.

4. **Communities harmonize and categorize issues**
pulling all the identified needs from the various groups.

5. **Communities document issues**
after harmonizing the prioritized needs.

6. **Communities present issues**
to relevant authorities or ministries by the communities.

The process should be participatory to ensure the needs of all community members are captured, at least to a reasonable extent

The groups should be representative of all community members

Power imbalances and biases that may hinder full representation of certain members should be addressed

christian aid

Detailed steps and processes involved in community needs and issues prioritization

1 Community leadership mobilizes various community groups (Men, Women, Youths, Persons with Disability) on an agreed date, mainly at the community town hall to identify their developmental needs or issues. This is done to ensure that the needs of everyone is taken into consideration. In doing this, participatory approaches are used such that the different groups are involved and engaged in this critical decision-making process.

2 These groups identify their issues based on need, in their safe spaces, where each group agrees through consensus on their most important needs. In most cases, certain tools are used in deploying needs/issues identification. Focused group discussions (group interviews), community asset mapping or scorecards could be used in doing this.

3 These issues are ranked based on its level of importance to the group participants/communities. The issues may include construction and renovation of infrastructure such as schools, roads and health centres, community security.

4 At the harmonization stage, the different groups come together to do this. The facilitators collate all needs identified from the various groups, identifies those that appear across all the groups and prioritize them by voting. The need with the highest number of votes becomes the first prioritized issue of the community and the voting process is repeated till the community comes up with 3 prioritized needs.

5 After harmonization, these prioritized needs as identified by the community is written either on a Community Charter of Demand (CCD) template or community's letter headed paper and signed off by the Traditional ruler, Town union president, Woman PG/woman leader, Youth leader and PWD leader. These signatories must not be political.

6 Communities identify the relevant stakeholders at specific levels to submit their needs. In some cases, more than one stakeholder can be engaged including Senators, Representatives in the Federal House of Assembly and State House of Assembly, Local Government Chairman, Philanthropist, Community Members.

christian aid