Points for Consideration
Gender-responsive Asset-based Approach to Needs Assessment (GAANA)

Overview:

Traditional needs assessment approaches look at what is missing in a community. Recognizing the weaknesses and gaps that exist when using the needs assessment approach, many scholars advocate for the use of asset/capacity building approach to identify what is available or potentially available to a group/community. However, even the asset-based approach tends to assess communities without consideration of the differences in access to resources in terms of their gender roles, potential, and existing power structures among various community members. The Gender-responsive Asset-based Approach to Needs Assessment (GAANA) tool is designed to help a conduct needs assessment by focusing on assets/capacities of different gender groups by examining their capacities in terms of access to resources as well as their roles and power relations. GAANA helps to identify the existing access mechanisms, underlying power relations, organizational, agency, community, fiscal, and individual people skills. This approach is useful as it goes beyond analyzing existing assets/capabilities available in a community or among a group of people and examines access mechanisms as well as existing structures and power relations that may make it hard for other members of the community or groups to utilize the existing assets.

Points to consider:

Each community or group of people has existing power structures and access mechanisms that hinder or make it easy for others to have access to resources or opportunities while making it hard for others. Therefore, it is important to make sure that when analyzing existing or potential assets/capabilities of each group or community considerations or focus be given to examining the access mechanisms. These mechanisms can be rights-based, structural and/or relational.

The process:

1) Identify participants (Extension users, non-Extension users, community leaders, women farmers, etc):

2) Have participants work in two discussion groups: 1) Assets 2) Needs. In each Asset group, ask participants to identify existing/potential assets/capacities, describe access mechanisms to the existing assets/capacities and their ability to access those assets. In each Need group, ask participants to identify existing/potential issues/concerns and describe access mechanisms to the existing issues/concerns.

3) In your community, you may have as many assets and needs groups as you like depending on gender, age, location, etc.

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Assets/capacities discussion group
 a) Participants are individually guided to identify assets, capacities, and strengths
 b) Individuals are asked to describe their knowledge of existence of the listed assets
 c) Individuals are asked to describe how they learn about the existing/potential assets and who has access to the existing assets. (Assets/Strengths Worksheet 1)
 d) For each asset, individuals are asked to categorize the access mechanism to these resources into three groups, namely: **rights-based** (having legal access or not), **structural-based** (ease at which they are able to access these resources in terms of physical access such as transportation infrastructure, capital and technology) and **relational-based** (laws, either legal or customary, that exist and how they influence their ability to access these assets/resources) (Assets/Strengths Worksheet 2).
 e) Add a cluster name to each asset (e.g., education, health, transportation, organizations, etc.).
 f) Meet as one discussion group to compare and contrast what was individually generated.
 g) Combine the lists and discuss options to learn about each cluster and how to leverage assets.

Issues/concerns discussion group
 a) Participants individually identify community issues and concerns.
 b) Individuals are asked to describe their knowledge of existence of the listed concerns.
 c) Individuals are asked to describe how they learn about the existing/potential concerns and who is impacted the most by the concern. (Issues/Concerns Worksheet 1)
 d) For each concern, individuals are asked to categorize the mechanisms that makes certain groups more vulnerable into three groups, namely: **rights-based** (not having legal access), **structural-based** (if they are not able to access these resources in terms of physical access such as transportation infrastructure, capital and technology) and **relational-based** (laws, either legal or customary, that exist and how they increase their vulnerability) (Issues/Concerns Worksheet 2)
 e) Add a cluster name to each asset (e.g., education, health, transportation, organizations, etc.).
 f) Meet as one discussion group to compare and contrast what was individually generated.
 g) Combine the lists and discuss options to learn about each cluster

Conclusion/Wrap-up
 a) Meet as one group and have each group present their findings and reach consensus
 b) For each identified need, ask the group to identify the assets/capabilities that can be used to address the needs as well as the existing/potential access mechanisms that need to be in place to ensure that the needs are addressed.
 c) Develop an action plan.

Comparing traditional needs assessment to GAANA:

Traditional NA	GAANA
• Begins with discrepancies and gaps	• Begins with assets and strengths
• Focuses on external solutions	• Identifies accessibility and power relations
• Focuses on quantifiable solutions	• Focuses on internal capacities

References:

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