



Experience by Caritas Kiyinda-Mityana
In East Africa/Uganda

Background:

Uganda's decentralisation efforts have led to a steep increase in the number of districts. Instead of bringing services closer to the people, newly created districts often show limited infrastructure. In Kassanda district, this constrained services fuelled social problems. For instance, low access to school was connected to high rates of child abuse, gender-based violence, and early marriages.

Instead of designing programmes based on their assumptions, Caritas Kiyinda-Mityana used the policy dialogue approach to involve the community in identifying their most pressing issues and finding solutions.

Experience description

In 2018, Caritas Kiyinda-Mityana started using policy dialogue to identify policy issues. One of the first activities held was a workshop with community members on pressing issues. An important outcome of the workshop were maps drawn by community members situating service provisions in their villages/parishes. Together with the community members, Caritas Kiyinda-Mityana identified missing or too remote services. They found answers to the questions of who is affected by the problem, what is its cause, what are the effects of the problem if not dealt with and who is responsible? Within a short period of time, they had done a situational analysis for the whole sub-county on different issues. They then prioritized the problems and discussed how to solve them together.



Other characteristics



IMPACTS

- Increased interest and sense of entitlement in state services
- Community members know and demand their rights
- Parents assumed their responsibilities with regards to school enrolment



CHALLENGES

- Mistrust and fear of government reprisal
- Communities are wary of empty promises made by other agencies
- Increasing demands from communities towards Caritas Kiyinda-Mityana to solve identified issues



LESSONS LEARNED

- Time and patience is needed to gain community trust and discover problems and solutions
- Policy dialogue is a powerful and empowering method
- Communities know their problems best
- Communities should be involved in solution finding