**M5-T5-H1-Youth-led Agenda Setting Overview**

The first step of the young person’s role within a development initiative is to be part of setting the agenda for development. Here are two practical models of how young people can be involved with agenda setting gaining either the full community’s priorities or focusing on other young people’s priorities.

**COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

We strive to be led by young people and to follow a ‘bottom-up’ approach to development, ensuring that the communities we work in have ownership of our programmes and that they are active participants in the development process. We must therefore make sure that our programmes are addressing the genuine needs of each community and that the community itself – and young people in particular – are actively involved in the decision-making process.

Our stakeholder analysis will identify who should be involved in this process, but the focus should be on young people in the communities. We should look in particular at including the young people who are hardest to reach – those who do not currently take part in our activities, marginalised or vulnerable groups, a broad range of ages (15-25) and young women. This initial assessment should be used to create a clear picture of the problems that each community faces. It also enables the community to have their voices heard and gives them ownership of the programmes. Staff will also gain a clearer picture of the broader context of the community.

There are many tools to facilitate this process, and different ones work better for each individual context and the participants involved. A variety of approaches should be used wherever possible. Here are a few examples that can be adapted and used by country programmes in this process

**Example 1: Community Mapping**

Community mapping recognizes that the communities we work with hold the most knowledge about their communities and are best placed to inform decision-making on development projects. It empowers and enables communities to look at the problems it faces, as well as the solutions that are possible. This is a useful activity to identify the main issues that a community faces, but care must be taken not to raise the expectations in terms of what specific areas Restless Development will be addressing.

A map of the community is developed by its members and is continuously built in order to include all areas representing the problems and needs of the community. This same map can also be used to identify the community’s resources. Particular groups should be represented distinctly on the map. For example, the local employment office may be a positive place for men in the community, but perhaps women are not welcome.

**Example 2 : Scorecard**

The scorecard measures a community’s perception of the state of service delivery in selected sectors. Selected indicators with respect to the sectors are scored by community members on a scale of 1 to 5. The data is then aggregated, analysed and shared to inform community advocacy. The method of data analysis depends on the objective of the of the exercise. In some cases, mostly descriptive analysis is required to get the information needed, hence analysis of quantitative data ended at the descriptive statistics level. This is back-stopped by qualitative data, all collected through focussed group discussions including women groups, service user groups, and service provider groups. Please refer to the scorecard data collection tool attached.

It is important that the process is followed by validation meetings with key informants and opinion leaders. It is pertinent that collected data is validated before widely sharing their results.

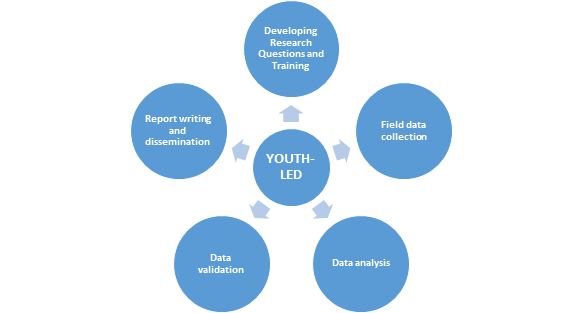
Scorecard can be conducted using different methods and different tools. For example, a health scorecard can start with input tracking, a process that assesses the availability of services at health centres versus the legally required state of services. After that, focused group discussions can then held.

* **Purpose of the tool:** To collect information on a community’s experience of services (typically within a rural setting)
* **Advantages of the tool:**
* Highly participatory - young people can design their own scorecard
* Scorecards can complement a project
* Cheap and simple to implement
* **Disadvantages of the tool:** May not tackle the root cause of the issues uncovered
* **What skills or knowledge will you need to use it?** A strong facilitator to guide the scorecard development process, ensuring the full participation of all voices
* **Which young people can use it?** All youth
* **Country of origin:** Restless Development Zambia and Restless Development Uganda

**Example 3: Youth Parliament**

A useful model for gaining youth priorities and views on how to solve the problems and make use of the opportunities they identify while building their skills and confidence to engage in decision making processes.

* Made up of one youth representative from each parish within the sub-county
* The representatives are elected through a community meeting at sub-county level
* The number of youth parliament members were equivalent to the number of parishes.
* Executive positions included: Chairperson, speaker (who led the meetings), secretary, chief whip.
* The rest of the representatives were ordinary members, not more than 10.
* Gender equality was mainstreamed, making sure that 1/3 of the parliament were female.
* The parliament monitored their subcounty on issues that affect the youth in sectors of education, roads, and health.
* They would then call for community meetings and invite community members and duty bearers, and demand from duty bearers to answer to the issues.
* Each subcounty youth parliament held at least one youth parliament per quarter.
* Constant follow up was done by the youth and intervening organisation to follow up on the issues raised during the youth parliaments.
* Success of the youth parliaments depended on the commitment of their leaders.
* **What skills or knowledge will you need to use it?** A strong facilitator to guide the Youth Parliament process, ensuring the full participation of all voices
* **Which young people can use it?** All youth
* **Country of origin:** Restless Development Uganda



**Figure 1: Youth-led research cycle- Youth are central and leading on every stage of the process**

* Conventional research methodology can be adopted to suit the needs, experiences of young researchers by breaking down jargon and communicating the principles in a simple ways through examples and scenarios.
* Youth led research can validate conventional research especially in as far as how the findings relate to the daily struggles and lived experiences of youth. In this case it makes the often superficial presentation of conventional research findings resonate with the real experiences of young people.
* The research process should be viewed as a chisel, where each of the steps is not mutually exclusive but rather joined up and linked. Young people are the energy and catalyst that drive every part of the chisel and as such, their role should be seen to contribute to the overarching aims and objectives of the research process.
* It’s common for agencies to see young people as mere “data collectors” or “data entrants”, in which case they are not supported to visualize their contribution to achieving the strategic research objectives.
* Engaging young people across the research process would be the most ideal. That said even if this were not possible, young people should be encouraged and supported to visualize their strategic contribution to the ultimate research goals no matter the step they are called upon to contribute.