Village Development Planning – Myanmar

Organization of data and information

together with knowledge pieces

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I. Data, Information and Knowledge

1. Like any other knowledge development, formulation of a village development plan involves organisation and analysis of data, information and knowledge in a structured way.

2. There is difference in the nature and applicability of data, information and knowledge.

    - *Data* is simply a statement of fact; e.g. 280 households (HHs) in a village, 10% of HHs are relatively well-off, while 80% are very poor
    - *Information* is contextualisation of data. Information assumes content when data is situated in a development context, i.e. when relevant sets of data are organised to explain, for instance, to provide structured information on income and wealth inequality
    - *Knowledge* is the most critical dimension of development planning because knowledge offers explanation in term of *why* and *how* of the data and information, that offers explanation and analysis of the causes and implications of income and wealth inequality, for instance.

3. Village Development Planning (VDP) invokes PRA (participatory reflection and action) as a tool to generate data, information and knowledge by involving all groups and income classes in a village through appropriate participatory mechanisms.
   Additionally, other established sources provide data and information, e.g. health related information from a rural health centre; education information from a village primary school.

II. PRA process

1. At the centre of participatory VDP is the strategic application of PRA process that provides for:
    - Opportunity to mobilise participation of all villagers in the development planning process
    - Opportunity for all groups and income and wealth classes to voice their development needs, ideas, insights and suggestions
    - Generation of data and information and well as, through probing and reasoning, knowledge

2. Therefore, it is important to set out organisational methods and mechanisms for conducting PRA exercise to mobilise active participation of village community

3. Two sets of organisational process mechanisms are used:

    (a) Village-wide (mass) meeting: e.g.
    - Village mass meeting to launch PRA exercise and to form PRA working group
    - Village mass meeting to decide village development priority and to form village development committee (VDC)

    (b) Focus group discussion: e.g.
    - Discussion amongst members of occupational groups such as farmer group, fisher group, etc. on issues problems and issues and their root causes, potential and barrier, possible solution pertaining to livelihood and small village business activities
    - Discussion amongst members of women group and elder group regarding social sector development problems and issues and their root causes, potential and barriers, possible solutions.

III. Organisation of data, information and knowledge pieces to perform development analysis

1. Data and information are transcribed into planning tables (from PRA generated data and information as well as data from other sources)

2. And knowledge pieces are used to do "story telling" or stories behind the data. The knowledge pieces are the notes taken during PRA exercise based on probing questions to understand *why* and *how* of the data

3. Data and information are structured into the planning tables to explain, elaborate and analyse:
   - Socio-economic and human development situation of the village population
   - Current development situation with respect to sectors such as crop, livestock, fishery, non-farm activities, infrastructure, electric power, etc. and themes such as natural resource management, gender development, disaster risk reduction measure, etc.
   - Development potential
   - Barrier and challenge

4. Knowledge pieces mobilised and elicited through PRA and communication with others such as through consultation with township department, are assessed and used together with data and information to articulate and prioritise:
   - Development goal and strategy
   - Project intervention
   - Budget and financing option

5. Outcome of organisation of data and information together with knowledge is a **Village Development Plan document** constituting the following aspects:
   - Socio-economic and human development situation of the village
   - Current development situation of the village
   - Development potential, barrier and challenge
   - Development goal and strategy
   - Macro policy and programmatic implications of the village development issues
   - Programme and project intervention
   - Budget and financing options
   - Plan monitoring and assessment
   - Implementation modality and arrangements
   - Organisational arrangement and financing mechanism for operation and maintenance of development schemes

The next presentation will cover key aspects of development issues and strategic plans and programmes of the two villages in Pyinmana township – Lei Lu Ai village and Nyaung Pin Tha village – where field-testing of the newly developed national approach or model for village development planning were conducted. The two VDPs were developed using the methods and techniques for organising data, information and knowledge pieces presented in this session.