

Card sort - problem prioritisation



To prioritise issues identified by the community.

After identification of all the problems, prioritisation of these is done through the card sorting method. The participants are asked to arrange the cards according to importance, with the most important problem at the top and the least important at the bottom.

Steps

- Working with the participants, list the problems that emerged from the context analysis process. Write or draw each problem on a flash card.
- The facilitator should ensure that participants have a good understanding of the significance of social problems such as lack of education, health, ethnic/religious or other conflicts in the community, as there is a danger that economic problems or infrastructure will take priority.
- Start by asking the participants to put the cards in order of importance with the most important card at the top and the least important at the bottom.
- Then, to verify the initial prioritisation, pick up the bottom two cards and ask the participants which of the two they feel is more important.
- Place the least important one at the bottom and place the other card above it. Then compare this card with the next problem. Again, ask participants to select which card is more important to them and arrange it accordingly.
- Ask why the participants think each problem is more or less important than the others, as reflected in the order in which the problems have been arranged, and make sure this is documented

- Continue the process until all the problems have been compared and prioritised.

Power issues to consider

- Be aware of who is involved in prioritising the problems and whose perspectives are considered to be important. The facilitator needs to ensure that women, older people, people with disabilities and the poorest people have a say in deciding what is important and encourage them to help make decisions.

Suggestions for use

- Analysis of current context to form the basis for strategies to inform change
- Using the same methodology over time with an appropriately large sample, and if rigorously documented (i.e. taking names of participants and ensuring informed consent is obtained) means that this knowledge can be used as evidence action or change over time.