

Questioning as we learn: An introduction to critical thinking

Material for Higher Education students in Sierra Leone by INASP, UK



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Unit 5 - Snippet 118

The harsh realities and experiences of COVID-19 on communities and livelihoods have indicated that humanity must adjust, if it is going to sustain its economic activities. There is now a correlation between livelihood and global events. [...] With the news filtering in of new cases permeating into our towns and communities, it became clear that danger was lurking, and we would have to adapt.

There was real panic and fear as 'lockdown' became a new terminology being lived out, even in the communities. Guidelines for prevention of COVID-19 mounted, media became awash with jingles, graphics and infographics. But what happened to our communities and their livelihoods?

We watched as dwellers deserted their farm lands. We watched as people kept away from their stands in the market places. We watched as markets closed. We watched as the little money at hand for food fizzled out and purses became empty. We watched as hunger became another variable that erupted from the lockdown. We watched as farm crops spoiled, wares expired, or became rotten and damaged because of the lockdown. [...]

It dawned on us that community development and engagement should be re-designed. Most livelihoods in the communities we work in are physically based: farming, petty trading, artisans and members of the civil service. [...] Now, we have added COVID-19 to our community information and engagement. We found out that many dwellers have smart phones. So we felt that facilitating ICT and digital skills in creating awareness of their crops, prices and contacts for supply and packaging will add value to their lives.

They need first-hand information on policies relating to their livelihoods. Online business awareness and product sales are not rocket science. They can do it as well as cooperation and collaboration among themselves for negotiation of goods. We also proposed negotiating announcements in the local area on who has something to sell and where to pick it up as one of the good practices of post COVID-19 on livelihoods. Our communities need these updates.

Great lessons are learned with COVID-19, unarguably.

[Osuchukwu, N.P. (2020). <https://www.authoraid.info/en/news/details/1406/>, accessed 11 Sept 2020]