



## **Report on Consultations with CSOs on the Action for Voice and Inclusive Development (AVID)**

### Introduction

The Action for Voice and Inclusive Development (AVID) is a Hewlett Foundation funded programme which seeks to support and work with organisations of disadvantaged social groups (citizens) to increase their voices and participation in governance, inclusive access to quality public goods and services and contribute to the sustainability of these organisations as vehicles for citizen mobilisation. AVID targets organisations and or networks whose activities aim to champion the development and promotion of rights of selected underserved groups, including peasant/smallholder farmers, market women, rural women, youths, persons with disabilities and Fulani ethnic groups. These six groups, identified as part of Hewlett Foundation country strategy scoping study are described as those with most needs yet to be met, experience severe levels of marginalization and have clear advocacy issues they are tackling.

Towards ensuring that the AVID Call for Proposals is tailored to the needs of these selected groups, targeted consultations were held with representatives of these groups/organizations working with them to understand the issues they are faced with, ongoing initiatives to address the issues and unfinished businesses. Four zonal consultations (Southern, Middle, Central-Western and Northern zones) were held by Community Based Organisations (CBOs), networks and alliances. The consultations engaged participants from market women associations, Fulani regional networks, peasant/small farmers associations youth networks, CBOs working with women and persons living with a disability.

In all, a total of 28 organizations were engaged in the zonal consultations. The table below tabulates the issues as discussed in the zones.

	<b>YOUTH</b>	<b>PEASANT FARMERS</b>	<b>MARKET WOMEN</b>	<b>FULANI GROUPS</b>	<b>PWDs</b>	<b>RURAL WOMEN</b>
What do we see as the critical needs/concerns of your targets/communities/constituents?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Lack of unemployment for employable youth leading them into menial jobs</li> <li>-Lack of role models for the youth.</li> <li>-Apprenticeship challenges</li> <li>-Most young girls suffer Parental neglect and control which leads to teenage pregnancies</li> <li>-High tax on sanitary towels posing menstrual hygiene challenges for girls</li> <li>-Drug abuse by the youth.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Loss of land and soil fertility for crop cultivation because of Galamsey.</li> <li>-Sand winning as an economic activity causes lands to lose topsoil and soil nutrients.</li> <li>-Housing and building projects claiming most arable lands for cultivation</li> <li>- High cost of Fertilizer</li> <li>-Raiding of farms by cattle.</li> <li>-Proper methods of pricing</li> <li>-unavailable storage facilities during bumper harvest leading to underpricing and farm produce perishing.</li> <li>-Processing machinery</li> <li>-Irregular rain patterns</li> <li>-Abuse of power by security officials - Herder, farmer, and security personnel clashes</li> <li>-Access to land (especially for women in the upper east),</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Poor access to business loans for expanding businesses.</li> <li>-Market women are faced with the problem of not being consulted in fee fixing. In instances where they have consulted the consultation format is not familiar and unfriendly.</li> <li>- Political interference in the leadership of market women association, leading to weak advocacy on issues pertinent to managing the markets (peculiar to Ho Municipal)</li> <li>- No platform for accountability from the municipals on the management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Discrimination in access to Education and health services (They are seen as foreigners)</li> <li>-Radicalism as a form of defensive mechanism toward intimidation.</li> <li>-Poor social cohesion between cattle farmers and crop farmers</li> <li>-Security issues as most fulanis suffer extremism.</li> <li>-Modernization of cattle business through the ranch concept.</li> <li>-Trans-human challenges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unequal distribution of the common fund among PWDs.</li> <li>Disability friendly walkways is lacking to most building making then inaccessible</li> <li>Inconsistent receipt of the Assemblies receipt of the DACF. No Funds have been received in the last two years.</li> <li>Lack of jobs for PWDs.</li> <li>Platforms to express themselves and be represented in decision making.</li> <li>-Access to information in influencing the design of public infrastructures both at the national and local levels</li> <li>-Monitoring by government officials in implementing PWD friendly infrastructures.</li> <li>-Information in accessing support from government -- Representation and participation in local and national level decision-making platforms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poverty.</li> <li>Own land and resources.</li> <li>Single parents.</li> <li>-Access to health facilities and education for their children.</li> <li>Bad cultural practices e.g. widowhood rites, witchcraft accusations</li> </ul>

		<p>agricultural inputs, and improved seedlings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Climate Change586</li> </ul>	<p>of revenues from markets</p> <p>Market space.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Unstable forex (dollar rates)</li> </ul>			
<p>What is your understanding of the drivers of these challenges?</p>	<p>Poor quality of our education especially in the rural areas which makes education unattractive to the youth.</p> <p>Lack of role models for the youth to look up.</p> <p>Poverty</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Increase in building projects for human habitation.</li> <li>-Farming is not attractive to the youth. Peasant farming is laborious and expensive currently making it unattractive to the youth</li> <li>-Access to information services on government supported programmes</li> <li>-Lack of subsidy on Agric products for smallholder farmers</li> <li>-Political hijack of services and equipment, with only political affiliate access services, like tractors, improved seedlings etc.</li> <li>-Lack of access to seedlings and farm equipment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Lack of consultation in modes that market women understand</li> <li>-Access to shops in the market</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Not recognized as nationals.</li> <li>Language barriers.</li> <li>Exploitation</li> </ul>	<p>Views of PWDs not considered and not represented in decision making.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Lack of access to basic social services</li> <li>-Lack of access to information</li> <li>-Stigma and discrimination</li> <li>-PWDs not being included on national level activities</li> <li>-Lack of access to healthcare and retaining PWDs in school especially basic school</li> <li>-Poor access to public facilities</li> </ul>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Unequal distribution of resources</li> <li>-Challenges in accessing and liaising with Ministry of Food and Agriculture to access farm equipment and inputs especially by women</li> </ul>				
<p>What is/are already taking place? What strategies have they used in the past to address these challenges/meeting needs and what lessons have they learnt?</p>	<p>Support to youth through apprenticeship. Unfortunately, most of them stop along the way.</p> <p>Advocacy, empowerment, and sensitisation against teenage pregnancy works to some extent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Building capacities through economic empowerment of young mothers</li> <li>-Educating rural and market women on</li> </ul>	<p>Developing Community Action Plans for sustainability of issues that have been captured over and over</p>	<p>A new location has been assigned to market women while the big market is under construction. However, market women are faced with robbery and other vices as the place is not secured.</p>	<p>The President has set a board on cattle ranching committee to help solve the issues of farm raiding. Sensitisation Advocating for Fulani children to attend school</p>	<p>Cash disbursements have been reviewed. Funds are used to support small scale businesses of PWDs (procure fridges, fufu pounding machines etc and distributed to PWDs who apply to access the funds)</p> <p>Creating awareness via radio on challenges of underserved groups to garner more support</p>	

	financial management					
What should be done? Should be built on to consolidate?	<p>-Advocacy for school patronage.</p> <p>Skills development and apprenticeship.</p> <p>Sensitisation on opportunities available for youth to tap into. NCCCE to be supported to roll out education on civic responsibilities. Empowerment sessions to keep girls and boys focused.</p> <p>-Radio campaigns and advocacy on youth matters</p>	<p>-Extension services are necessary for thriving farms.</p> <p>-Value addition through the processing of crops. Advocate for organic farming</p> <p>-Consultations with DA and Farmers on Sand winning and Galamsey</p> <p>- "Operation cowless": advocacy for herders to confine their animals</p> <p>-Securing storage facilities for farmers</p> <p>-Standardised pricing to reduce losses</p> <p>-Building capacities of farmers to venturing into farming non-perishables produce.</p> <p>-Irrigation farming</p> <p>- to attract the youth Livestock for women farmers</p>	<p>-Government should have consultations directly with market women in the districts to have a true reflection of the challenges.</p> <p>-Representative of market women in parliament to put their needs and issues up for redress- Support market women groups with business management training including bookkeeping, stock taking, etc</p>	<p>Promotion of social cohesion between farmers and herders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Advocacy to upscale A new system of cattle rearing in ranching (Model ranch)</li> </ul>	<p>Developing Community Action Plans for sustainability of issues that have been captured over and over -Self-help groups to be more visible to support PWDs</p> <p>-Building capacities of PWDs</p> <p>-Engaging traditional?? to put sanction mechanism in place to punish communities who discriminate against PWDs</p> <p>-Engaging the use of positive PWD terminology</p>	<p>Empowering women through skills training.</p> <p>- Visiting CAPs for sustainability of issues that have been captured over and over on women issue: <small>Commented [EA1]: check</small></p>

**Below are some participants' experiences**

*'Gari farmers are cheated every time. There is no proper way to measure our produce as a result buyers take advantage of it and decide on their own measurement.'*

*'Security personnel have over the years protected these herders because the security officials are owners of these cattle so farmers are helpless when these cattle destroy their farms.'*

*'There have been instances where girls have been raped by these herders and security officials did nothing about the case. The girl's uncle was given GHS 40 to take the girl home and that was the end of the case.'*



**Some participants' shared experiences with the challenges they face:**

*'Farmer groups are shifting from producing perishable produce to non-perishable produce to avoid farmers to be in a haste to sell their produce and make loses. This according to her will allow them some time to find buyers who will offer the worth of their produce.'*

*'Most children with disabilities are not able to complete their basic education because there is no disability friendly access to the classrooms. Children are compelled to stop schooling at a point because access to their classrooms becomes their greatest challenge.'*

*'Persons with disabilities mostly shy away from engaging in public activities because of stigma hence unable to represent their groups.'*

*Fulani groups are usually faced with language barriers. Often, they are unable to explain themselves very well when there are challenges with farmers which caused their death, homes burnt and cattles killed. They have lived with the communities for so long but the culture does not recognise the.*



**Synthesis of key issues for the AVID Call** The issues emerging from the consultations are classified into two-*issues common to all key groups*, and issues *pertinent to specific groups*. It is recommended that the AVID Call is crafted to maintain a balance between the general and pertinent issues of the identified groups.

Issues common to all groups	Issues pertinent to market women/Rural women	- Issues pertinent to fulanis	- Issues pertinent to peasant farmers	Issues pertinent to young people	- Issues pertinent to PWDs
Improving access to information (regarding government policies and programmes) and access to public services in education and healthcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improving women's business management skills/entrepreneurship</li> <li>- Promoting mobilization and organizing power</li> <li>- Supporting women's access to land for productive work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promoting social cohesion (between herders and farmers) and integration of fulanis</li> <li>- Promoting education of Fulani girls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhancing access to market for produce</li> <li>- Enhancing storage facilities for farm produce</li> <li>- Introducing pricing schemes for produce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supporting skills building and apprenticeship</li> <li>- Behaviourial change and good moral behaviour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improving disability inclusion on DA plans and projects</li> <li>- Promoting PWDs participation in local governance</li> </ul>
Improving spaces for engagements and dialogues between groups and duty bearers at local level					

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

***Based on the consultations the following broad areas can be considered as focus areas for the call***

Focus on projects that will amplify voices of women and youth

Projects that will explore innovative means to support the activities and initiatives of informal and less structured associations

Linkages of structured coalitions with loose and unstructured networks working on the same issues

Working with community radio and media networks to domesticate the issues of underserved population to engineer responsiveness of duty bearers

## **CONCLUSION/REFLECTION**

Across zones, we learnt that the groups engaged were very passionate about their concerns. Continued engagements with these groups will help assure them of the wealth of support and resources available to address their concerns and needs. Engaging underserved groups requires tact and patience to listen and digest their concerns with them. We see a group passionate to see changes happen within their spaces and eager to take advantage of opportunities to engage to address their issues. Overall, the consultation was helpful in steering the conversation towards the design of the call. Input from participants focusing on their critical needs, challenges and what is currently being done will deepen the understanding of the target groups in ways that will support their activities to better serve their constituents.