



Capacity-Building  
& Knowledge Sharing  
for Small and Medium  
Organizations (SMO)

## Baseline Data Collection: Qualitative Data Collection

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# Qualitative Data Collection

*Qualitative data collection captures people's experiences, opinions, attitudes and feelings. Focus group discussions and interviews are often used to collect qualitative data.*

## **Advantages:**

- Data can be collected on a range of topics that cannot be easily understood through other data collection methods (i.e. surveys);
- Interaction with respondents allows for greater depth to the responses and gives insights on the participants personal context;
- Unique perspectives might be discovered.

## **Limitation:**

- Results only represent the perspective of the participants.

Planning for qualitative data collection requires:

- A plan for sampling and recruitment of respondents;
- A data collection tool that asks good questions;
- Logistical planning;
- **A moderator who has good technical and communication skills.**

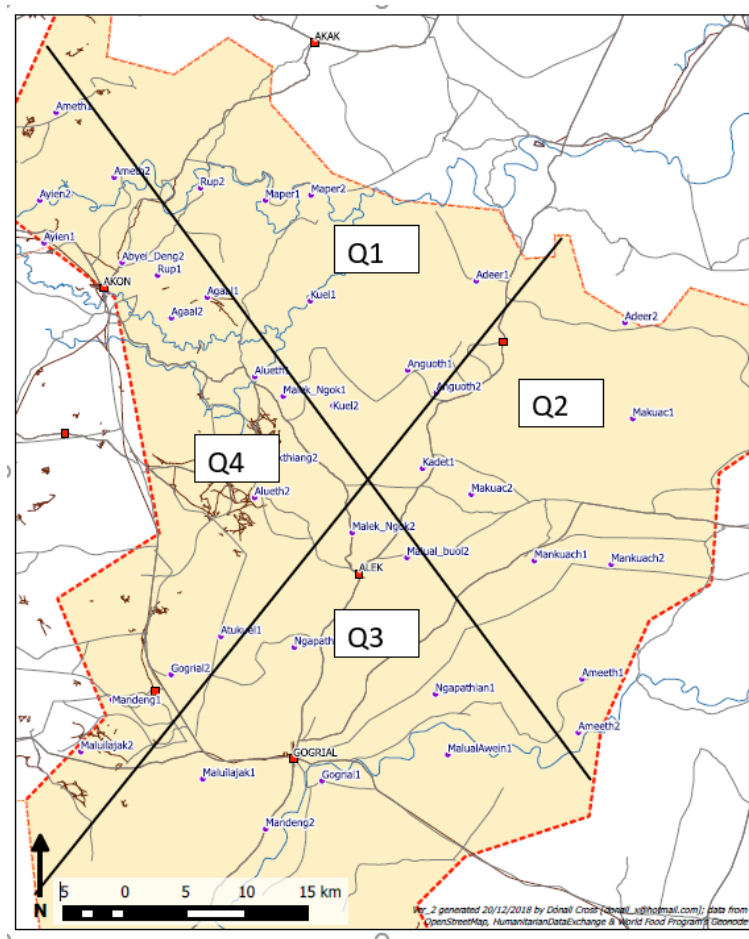
The quality of qualitative data collection is dependent on the ability of the moderator (data collector) to interact with respondents in a manner that is supportive, safe and respectful. For comprehensive information related to training data collectors in communication skills see, “Quality Information in Field Research” [https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/69357/TDR\\_IRM\\_PCT\\_05.1\\_eng.pdf;jsessionid=2403D78923A82B9DC3318EA82B824453?sequence=1](https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/69357/TDR_IRM_PCT_05.1_eng.pdf;jsessionid=2403D78923A82B9DC3318EA82B824453?sequence=1)

# Sampling for qualitative data collection

*As you prepare to collect qualitative data, think about all your potential target informants and develop a plan for who you will include in your data collection. A detailed plan will help you organize your thinking.*

Target Group	Sub-groups	# FDG	# KII	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria	Incentives
Community Members	New mothers (>20 years)	4	-	-First baby and multiples -Live birth in the last 6 months -Delivered in a health facility -Mother is >20 years old	-Did not deliver in a HF -Mother<20 years	-Soda/snack -Travel allowance
	New Mothers (15-19 years)	4	-			
	New Fathers (>20 years)	4	-			
	New Fathers (15-19 years)	4	-			
Health Providers	Community health workers (M)	2	-			
	Community Health workers (F)	2	-			
Other Stakeholders	Minister of Health	-	1			None
	Local Leaders	-	6			None

# Sampling for qualitative data collection



As you plan for qualitative data collection, think about the area where you will collect data. Plan to collect data from all quadrants where your project will operate.

Collecting data from only easy to reach locations or from respondents who are easy to gather will bias your data.

# Communication Style

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Our communication style is affected by our expectations. Without knowing it we expect others to behave or react like we do.

A good communication style reduces the impact of our own expectations and asks questions about the other person's ideas and feelings.

A good communication style tries to understand the perspective and intention of the other person while withholding our own opinion.



*It is important that data collectors who collect data for your project receive training on good communication.*

# Asking good qualitative questions

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## What's in a question?

### Closed Questions

- Are usually answered by “Yes”, “No” or a number;
- Often provide little valuable information.

Example:

*Did you like the course?*

### Biased (or leading) questions

- Often used to confirm the idea or opinion of the researcher/data collector;
- Implies or contains its own answer.

Example:

*Do you agree that the course was very good?*

### Open questions

- Ask a person to describe something;
- There is no right or wrong answer;
- Are often felt by the respondent to be neutral;
- Communicate a wish to learn and understand the intention of the respondent.

Example:

*Tell me what it was like for you when you attended the course.*

# Asking good qualitative questions

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What?

How?

When?

Where?

Who?

From whom?

Can you think of an example?

In what way?

What happened when?

How did that feel for you?

What happened next?

Can you describe that?

Can you tell me a little bit more about that?

## Open Questions

# “Why” is a special type of question

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Why?

“Why” often makes people feel uncomfortable.

“Why” can make people feel judged – they may want to defend themselves.

Be careful when using “why” questions. They can lead to bias and ruin communication.

**Question:** “Why did you give her that medicine?”

**Response:** “I gave her the medicine because I had it at home. I had no money for other medicine and the hospital is very far away. You probably do not understand that because you can afford good medicine for your children from the hospital.”



# Developing an interview protocol

*An focus group discussion or interview protocol provides a roadmap for the facilitator or interviewer to follow to guide the conversation. A protocol should provide instructions for starting the discussion, gaining informed consent – including consent to audio record the interview – and pre-formed questions and probes.*

## **Interview protocol for project XX:**

### Introduction

### Consent

*“May I start the audio recorder now?”*

### **Questions**

#### **Background information:**

1. *Were you able to attend all eight sessions of the course?*

Probe: *If no, how many sessions were you able to attend?*

*Why were you unable to attend some of the sessions?*

#### **Engagement with the course:**

1. *What motivated you to take the course?*

2. *Can you explain to me what it was like for you when you first came to the course?*

Probe: *What happened when you arrived?*

*Who did you meet?*

*Do you still keep in touch with anyone who took the course with you?*

*If so, what motivates you to keep in touch with the people who you took the course with?*

Thank you for your participation in this interview.

An interview protocol should never be a final document. The facilitator must have the skills to use the pre-formed questions as guides to develop the flow of the conversation as the interview unfolds.

Probes are an important of an interview protocol. Probes help the facilitator pre-think questions that may move the conversation to a deeper level of understanding.

# The Facilitators Role

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**The role of the facilitator is to:**

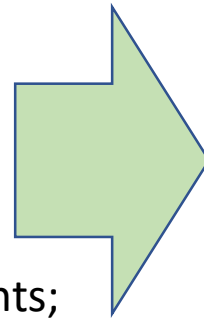
- Introduce everyone – create a comfortable, safe environment;
- Provide information about the study/project;
- Explain consent;
- Establish ground rules (next slide);
- Guide the discussion (with open questions and probing);
- Watch for:
  - Novel contributions;
  - Persistent participants;
  - Quiet participants;
- Listen (actively);
- Balance the discussion;
- Keep the schedule;
- Open the conversation to questions at the end (“Does anyone have any questions?”);
- Thank the respondents for attending.

# Ground rules:

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## **Ground rules for focus group discussions:**

- There are no right or wrong answers;
- Everyone's contribution is important;
- Everyone gets the chance to talk;
- Participants should not interrupt other participants;
- Mobile phones should be turned off;
- The conversation in the FDG is confidential.



A good strategy for starting a focus group discussion is to use a flipchart to brainstorm ground rules with participants at the start of the discussion. Be prepared to probe for the items listed on this slide but also encourage your participants to add other ground rules to the list.

# Logistical planning:

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## **Audio recorder tips:**

- Always use two audio recorders;
- Be sure you are using a good quality digital audio recorder;
- Ensure that you have a quiet location. Noises, including vehicles, wind, music, children playing in the background may make it impossible to hear your audio recording. A good audio recorder may have adjustable settings to reduce background noise;
- Test your audio recorder before you start!

## **Remember to:**

- Translation of the interview protocol;
- Plan for consent;
- Get permission;
- Organize for a good location;
- Prioritize privacy/confidentiality;
- Give your participants sufficient notice about the date/time for the interview/focus group discussion;
- Think about incentives;
- Consider if participants will have to travel to attend the interview/focus group discussion – and if they will be compensated for those costs;
- Consider the need for childcare.

# Thank You!

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