

**Guide for conducting the situational analysis – SAA**

**Tips before we start with the guide:**

The chief aim of the situational analysis is not data collection in the traditional sense; instead, it should aim at learning and getting a better understanding of underlying social determinants that influence behaviors related to SRMH through exploring, reflecting and learning with the community during the processes of the dialogue.

Interview guides will be developed, but not as strict instruction to go through the list of questions, rather to help facilitate a dialogue and guide the facilitators to touch upon and cover key areas/themes identified as a group. Otherwise questions should be posed in an open ended manner, and probing as a follow up to what participants describe, and support an- in-depth exploration and understanding of issues of community concerns. Using probing questions try to pull out deeper, richer information from the focus group participants. Additionally, try to supplement information by in-depth interviews with key stakeholders at the individual, community or institutional/facility level, based on information gaps identified in the course of the process and/or to triangulate some of the information from different groups.

**Few Steps to consider:**

1. **Identifying Themes for Exploration in the Community – Domains to frame the reflection questions**

* If there is a baseline or household data available, it can be used to inform and draw the themes for organizing/categorizing exploration points with the community
* If there is no data to draw from, or in addition to the use of the data, program staffs should reflect on and identify (additional) themes for community reflection based on their experiences of working in the communities over a long period of time.
* Define and try to link back the domains in line with project goal – refine the themes/domains and identify sub-domains or topics (see example in the box)

Examples of domains and sub topics from a project

1. Community Norms and Attitudes around FP Use

* Community awareness and use of FP
* Community dialogue around FP
* Community norms and stigma around FP

1. Gender Equitable Attitudes and Behaviors in the Household

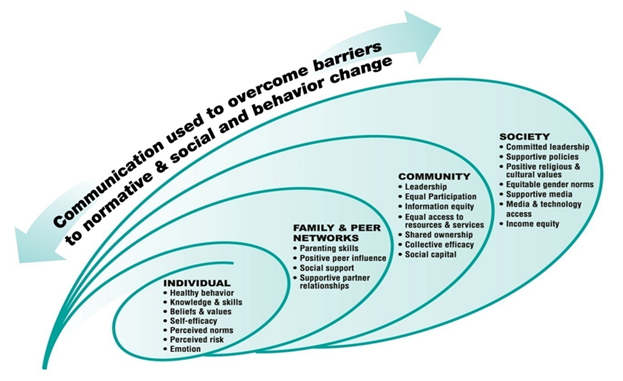
* Gender roles in the household
* Son preference
* Expectations at marriage
* Request for sex
* Inequality in fertility
* Decision making
* Access to resources

1. Access to and Quality of Family Planning Services

* Appreciation of services
* Supply availability
* Provider attitudes
* Under each topic develop open ended questions to be used for initiating discussion with community participants. (note that follow up questions based on discussions and responses of participants is key to facilitating an in-depth exploration, and that requires active listening and probing skills – SAA ToT module

1. **Planning for data collection** - gathering data on the social determinants that affect program outcomes. Few steps to consider include:

* Identify people to participate on the data collection.
* Form groups to work together: Each group should at least have two people and it is preferable to have at least one of them speaks the local language. It is good practice to involve local partners to take part in the data collection process.
* Group discussion and refining questionnaire: Go through each themes and questions under them as a group and refine, have a common understanding of the intention of each question or what information we are trying to get under each section. It is also recommended to role play the questioning and probing skills using the questionnaire during the discussion.
* Consider the different levels of influence while drafting/ refining the interview guide: and using the social ecological model could help us to think through this process. The socio-ecological models acknowledges the influence of interpersonal relationships, community structures, and the broader environment, emphasizing that behavior is a function of a person and its environment.

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The situational analysis should consider different levels and layers of influence while organizing the dialogue with the community. Making sure that issues at each level are captured and addressed in the interview questions, but also making sure that influencers and stakeholders at each level are invited and included in the dialogue during the situational analysis data collection.

**NB. This model can also be the basis to design interventions at different levels and or be deliberate about including key actors at different levels; it also helps in highlighting the key influencers in each context and prioritize actions towards the ultimate goal of social change.**

* Prepare required logistics: Duplicate enough questioner and necessary stationaries for each team; ensure required transportation is arranged for each team to travel to each site and back.
* Data collection schedule and communication with community: prepare a clear schedule for which team goes where and at what time. Make sure community groups are informed of the process, the time and site for the discussion.
* Schedule for daily debriefing: plan for a meeting point for each team to come together and debrief every day for the data collection timeframe.

1. **Process for collecting data/Information**

* Each team of data collector should have at least two people, one facilitator (primary interviewer) and the second co-facilitator (a note taker and observer. The observer can support the interviewer with elaborating with follow up questions or probing as needed.
* During community discussions, divide community participants into groups based on age and sex. Usually there could be a group of women, youth, a group of men, and, depending on the number of each group especially the women having separate groups for older women and a group of women of reproductive age could help to discuss on specific SRH issues.
* Questions should be asked in an open-ended fashion by co-facilitators. Using probing questions to obtain deeper, richer information from the focus group participants.

*It is important to note that, in addition to offering information on values and attitudes, the situational analysis process gives an opportunity to begin to identify influential people and groups in the community related to SRH related decisions and norms. These people could later be engaged with the dialogue processes and could support to initiate activities and enhance diffusion of new attitudes and norms, as they have the credibility among their community. So having them as aliens in the community engagement process is key to the smooth running and success of the project.*

If we can get the consent of the group, **recoding the discussion** could also be a good practice to ensure the information are captured and can be referred back as needed. Make sure to code/label each recording with enough back ground information of the session including the date, the time, the site, the participants group, the data collector team etc… this can be recorded prior to starting the group discussion, and while saving the recording with the correct information.

1. **Data Analysis**

In the situational analysis process, the data collection and analysis steps ideally occur iteratively, allowing identification of additional themes for exploration as data collection progresses. Some steps to consider to facilitate deeper exploration and understanding of underlying socio cultural issues, as well as advance the learning for staffs involved with the data collection, include:

* **Daily debriefing:**

Different teams conducting the interviews and focus group discussions should have a daily debriefing at the end of each day. This helps to ensure the note has captured the key information being discussed by participants, to highlight key issues to be considered for developing discussion and reflection sessions around, to identify issues for staff learning and be able to share notes and learnings across the different teams working on the situational analysis.

* Summarize key information (see Annex 1 for summary table)
* Clarify information, review learnings from the different groups, check if new themes have emerged and how to incorporate it
* Check and make adjustments as required for subsequent dialogues with the community
* Address any gaps and challenges related to the data collection based on feedbacks.

1. **Consolidation of analysis and write up of findings: summarize finding across groups**

This could be done in a workshop setting (write shop format) where all the teams included in data collection come together with their summary reports and detail daily documentation of sessions, and **aggregate findings under the key themes/ domains**.

*If budget is available an external facilitator can be hired to help do the process and help the team to develop the report of the findings categorized under each domain.*

In preparation to the meeting each group should do the following:

* Sort their information according to the themes
* **Prioritize** findings according to both the frequency and the relative importance.

This process should also be used to have **discussion and recommendation for designing dialogue** sessions with the community, based on finding from the situational analysis. Please note that this process establishes the foundation for designing dialogue content and selecting SAA intervention strategies that could challenge the identified social and gender barriers.

After reflecting with the community and analyzing the findings, the team should also **identify gaps** in their understanding of the community’s social context. And these will became themes for further exploration and analysis throughout the implementation of the program. Some examples of gaps from previous situational analysis process in Ethiopia included:

* Sex before or outside of marriage – is it happening, and if so, what are the dynamics between men and women?
* Stigma around FP use by single (widowed or divorced) women – What do we really know about the sexuality of this “invisible” group and why is it so sensitive?
* Decision-making on sex – who and how is it determined? When is it voluntary or not?
* Ideal family size - are there small families in this community and why are they small?

**Reflection journals:**

The other key issue to consider during the situational analysis is personal reflection of staff members. *Reflection Journals*: throughout the course of the workshop, staff members should be encouraged to answer specific reflection questions at the end of each day in an anonymous reflection journal. During the field explorations as well, staff participants are required to write down personal thoughts in the same journals. Please noted that many staff members noted that the process of staff self-reflection is an important part of any successful program.