Rwanda Customized Module

Community Mobilization and Farmer Needs Assessment

Student Guide

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In 2016 the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS) developed the New Extensionist Learning Kit (NELK) modules https://www.g-fras.org/en/knowledge/new-extensionist-learning-kit-nelk.html on functional skills for individual extension staff, in response to the demand from its network. GFRAS continues to develop new set of modules covering different technical skills. The Learning Kit contains modules designed for self-directed, face- to-face, or blended learning and can be useful resource for individual extension field staff, managers, and lecturers.

Responding to the growing demand from extension and rural advisory service providers worldwide to adapt the modules to the local contexts, GFRAS has embarked on the journey to support the NELK Customization process. NELK Customization is understood as a **guided process as permitted by GFRAS** aimed as adapting the original module to suit the local context. Details on this process can be found on the NELK Customization Guide.

This **Community Mobilisation and Farmer Needs Assessment Module** is development as part of the NELK Customized package adapted from *Module 8: Community Mobilisation*.

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1. Before you begin

1.1 General instruction

This module should be used in conjunction with the workbook provided. As you read through the module, you will find different visual features that are designed to help you navigate the document.

Figure 1: Icons used to highlight important information throughout the manual

The module makes use of keywords (difficult or technical words that are important for you to understand). To ensure that you receive the full benefit from the module, keywords will be marked the first time they occur and defined in a box containing the keywords symbol. Make sure that you read the definition of any words that you are unsure about.

1.2 Activities

Each session in the module will contain various types of activities to help you become knowledgeable and competent. The module contains three types of activities:

A **pre-assessment** is to be completed before reading through the module overview and introduction, and a **post-assessment** is to be completed once the entire module has been covered. This will measure the degree to which your knowledge has improved by completing the module.

Each session contains one or more **session activities** to be completed, in the workbook, where indicated in the module. These activities measure your ability to recall and apply theoretical knowledge.

At the end of each study unit a **summative assessment** needs to be completed. These assessments are longer than the session activities and will test your knowledge on all the work within the study unit.

1.3 Assessment instructions

Keep the following in mind before doing any of the assessments:

- All assessments are to be completed in the provided workbook.
- The manual contains all relevant information you will need to complete the questions, if additional information is needed, such as the use of online sources, facilities will be made available.
- Work through the activities in a study unit and make sure that you can answer all the questions before attempting the summative assessment. If you find that you are not certain of any part of the training material, repeat that section until you feel confident.
- The summative assessment must be done under the supervision of your trainer at the end of your learning period.

1.4. End users

This training module is designed to be used by public and private Rwandan extension agents that face and interact with lead farmers (farmer promoters, Farmer field school facilitators) and most particularly smallholder farmers. The targeted categories, from 1 to 11 are included in Box 1.

Box 1: Rwandan Extension Categories

1=Cell development officer (CEDO)/IDP
2=Sector agronomist
3=Sector livestock officer
4=District agronomist
5=District livestock officer
6=District veterinary officer
7=District director of agriculture, livestock and environment
8=Veterinary pharmacist
9=Crop/agronomic advisor for a private company
10=Crop/agronomic advisor for an NGO
11=Other field staff for an NGO
12=Farmer field schools facilitator
13=Farmer-promoter
14=Other

Community mobilization and farmer needs assessment

Module outcomes

After completing this module, you will be able to:

1. Explain why community mobilization is important
2. Employ appropriate approaches for community mobilization
3. Design processes and methods of community mobilization strategies that involve women, youth and people with disabilities
4. Know and apply steps of farmer needs assessment and utilization of their results.

Module overview

In this module, you will learn what community mobilization is and why it is important by discussing the roles of culture and diversity in a community and by describing the roles of gender, youth and people with disabilities. You will learn about using appropriate approaches for community mobilization including planning and carrying out a livelihood assets assessment and analyzing, interpreting and applying the information from these assessments. You will also learn to recognize different problem solving approaches. In designing processes and methods that involve women, youth and people with disabilities, you will be able to discuss the role of leadership development in community mobilization and apply resource mobilization strategies in community mobilization.

Module introduction

Community mobilization is a process whereby local groups are helped to clarify and express their needs and objectives and in taking collective action to meet them. It emphasizes the involvement of the people themselves in determining and meeting their own needs. It is closely linked with participation and resilience and recognizes that the problems the local population may face cannot always be solved on an individual basis. The main purpose of community mobilization is to get the community to recover from any shocks they may experience and to be able to deal with similar situations in the future in a self-sustaining way.

Why does community awareness-raising require facilitation ability?

Regular opportunities for dialog with communities must first be established, in order to bridge the disconnect between public opinion and government thought processes/policies. In addition, the government must take responsibility for gaining the understanding of communities regarding the policies it implements, and should therefore learn communication strategies which encourage consensus building. For example, to increase the sustainability of water supply services, the conventional top-down method of government policy implementation must be replaced with a method which engages in dialogue with communities, so that communities can voluntarily identify problems and think of solutions together with the government, and thereby feel that they can work to choose their own solutions. To achieve this, facilitation, a communication skill which is the ability to effectively bring out ideas and independent action from communities, will be especially important.

Definitions of "Facilitation" and "Facilitator"
The word "facilitation," which forms the core theme of this module, has no clear definition in general everyday usage, but the Facilitators Association of Japan defines it as "Supporting the ability of a group of people to easily take action, and providing direction to ensure that actions can proceed smoothly. Working to promote group problem-solving, idea generation, education, study, and various actions related to knowledge creation activities." A person responsible for facilitation is called a facilitator. In the context of business meetings, this person is known as a "chair." In this module, facilitation is considered as one method for encouraging the participation of communities, as "a method for generating dialogue leading to consensus-building among residents of the communities, by raising resident awareness toward problem-solving." In this context, the people who use this method while overseeing dialogue between communities and project-related parties are called facilitators.

Complete the pre-assessment in your workbook.

Study unit 1: Culture and diversity including gender, youth and people with disabilities

Study unit outcomes

After completing this study unit, you should be able to:

1. Discuss the relevance of culture and diversity in guiding a local community to develop a vision; and
2. Describe the components involved in building a diverse and inclusive community that recognizes women and youth.

Study unit overview

This unit enables you to appreciate how different cultures and diversity can be used as opportunities to enhance your achievements as an extension professional working with rural communities.

Study unit introduction

The unit will introduce you to information and skills about the importance of culture and diversity, and about including all groups within a community, that you can apply in different situations of your work. You will learn more about how culture and diversity influence your approach to community mobilization and the importance of a vision for an inclusive local community. You will learn some skills to build a diverse and inclusive community, and enhance women, youth and people with disabilities participation in community mobilization.

Last but not least, you will also learn how to carry out a farmer needs assessment by being introduced to its key steps; including utilization of findings.

Session 1.1: Understanding culture and diversity

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

1. Recognize the importance of culture in community mobilization; and
2. Recognize the importance of diversity in community mobilization.

Introduction

Culture is a strong part of people's lives. It influences the following aspects of their lives: Views, values, humor, hopes, loyalties, worries and fears.

When you are working with people and building relationships with them, it helps to have some perspective and understanding of their cultures.

Culture and diversity

In any community, you will find that there are accepted practices and roles for each person that are determined by the community's culture. Different cultures will determine different societal norms and it is important for you as an extensionist to know what the norms are for the community you serve so that you can give the best advice for the situation.

When there are different cultural groups living in the same area, there is diversity. During your work as an extensionist, you may identify different ways in which the different cultures approach agriculture that can work together to benefit the community as a whole. Your role will then be to find out if the different groups would be willing to work together to better the situation for everyone in that area. This means you will try to recognize unique strengths and perspectives in individual cultural/ socio-economic groups to put them together in a way that will benefit the larger community.

Overcoming and preventing divisions

To overcome divisions, it is important to know where divisions exist. Where there are differences in cultures, there can be conflict and divisions. In a single culture there could be divisions due to age, gender, family ties and standards of life.

People who may not be related may live in the same village. While they have common interests and similar access to resources because they are in the same village, there may be conflict and division between different groups within a village. As an extensionist, it is important that you work equally well with all residents in a village so that there will be no feeling of preference for one group over another.

Age and level of education plays a role because there will be different expectations from members within a community according to their age and level of education. Young and educated community members may have different ideas about how things should be done. Traditionally, elders in the community are the decision makers because of their experience but skilled people are given consideration for new innovations and technological aspects.

Gender equality and education for all does not allow division of farming activities according to gender consideration but promotes division of farming activities

Importance of inclusion in decision making processes

Including people from different cultures in decision making processes will give them ownership of their development. Identifying where the decision-making power lies in a larger community will enable you to advise those who will influence others to make the changes. The decision makers will be able to say if a proposed change will be accepted by the community or not.

By being included equally, different leaders from different cultural groups are given an opportunity to reach a compromise with each other when sharing ideas to benefit the larger community.

How cultural groups influenced history

Culture has shaped farming systems, **land tenure**, inheritance, festivals and ceremonies, and traditional means of communication. These are all things that will influence the type of advice you would give a community as an extensionist.

From a historical point of view, **domestication** and cultivation of food crops caused a shift from a society of constantly moving hunters and gatherers to a society of settled village life. Settled life meant there were more permanent dwellings built. Later, the invention of grain processing and storage facilities came about.

Domestication of some animal species meant that people did not have to go out to hunt for food. Settled life also meant the beginning of division of labor and a slow division between rich and poor within villages. Farming systems developed over time from a rotational slash-and-burn system to one where **Crop intensification program**/ agriculture became a priority to cater for food security for the growing population.

As farming intensified and crop yields increased, so too did the population in a given area. In modern times, it has been found that the farming system used in a given area may be the result of the population of that area adapting to their surroundings and working with the resources available to meet their needs.

Land tenure: Who has ownership of land according to the law.
Domestication: Growing and developing wild food plants to turn them into the cultivated crops we know today. Taming wild animals over time to keep them as livestock.
Crop intensification program: Policy aimed at boosting agricultural productivity through an improvement of input use.

Complete Activity 1.1 in your workbook.

Session 1.2: Vision for inclusive local community

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

- Discuss diversity in a community;
- Describe the relationships between cultural groups;
- Identify the importance of building alliances within cultural groups; and
- Identify common issues among different cultural groups.

Introduction

People have very different views of what a **multicultural society** or community should be like or could be like. People struggle with different visions of a fair, impartial, moral and harmonious society. What kind of community do you envision for yourself? How will diversity be approached in your community? If you could have your ideal community right now what would it look like? If you can't have your ideal community right now, what will be the next steps you will take in building the kind of cultural community you want? This session allows you to understand diversity in a community and why it is good for different groups within a community to work together in an **inclusive local community**.

Multicultural society: A society that is made up of different cultural groups living together in the same community or area.
Inclusive local community: A community in which all people are accepted and included in the decision-making processes in the community.

Diversity in a community

Diversity in a community refers to the mix of people of different genders, ages, cultures and income brackets living in the same area. These are just a few examples of how people differ from each other. It is important to be aware of the diversity in a community in order to understand how people's livelihood is affected, and how they would cope in the event of a disaster or in a changing environment. It is also helpful to be aware of this diversity when you are planning interventions, identifying stakeholders and engaging with the community.

Relationships between cultural groups

Relationships between different cultural groups can be formed based on what those groups have in common. If they live in the same area, they will share access to the same resources and can form a relationship around that.

If there are vast differences between cultures, there may be conflict between groups because their ways of doing things do not agree with one another. As an extensionist, you should be aware of potential points of conflict when assessing a situation and planning an intervention. Find the strengths of each group and see if there are any common factors you can use to build positive relationships in the community.

Within cultural groups, the challenge of how cultural norms define division of labor and treatment of vulnerable members of that group exists. You should always be aware of these factors when planning your interventions so that you can make sure that your plan's proposed benefits are inclusive of all the sub-groups within a cultural group.

Building alliances and coalitions within cultural groups

People will be willing to work together when they know that they will mutually benefit from the alliance. If the benefit of working together outweighs the differences between cultural groups, then there is a very good chance that you can build an alliance between groups in an area.

You should find the strengths of each group and look at how these aspects complement each other, so that you can emphasize why working together will achieve more than if each group tries to work alone. Find the obvious conflicts between groups and see if there is any way that they could work together peacefully toward the common goal of the community as a whole.

Common issues that different cultural groups have

Different cultural groups living in the same area with access to the same resources will experience the same challenges. It may be that different groups will have different levels of resilience to these challenges as a result of their day-to-day living according to cultural norms.

In terms of food security, different cultural groups in the same area will have access to the same types of food crops and markets. Culture can determine how land is distributed and owned, and how food is produced and distributed. In the event of floods or drought, all people in that area will be affected, but the impact of the disaster will differ between cultural groups.

Complete Activity 1.2 in your workbook.

Session 1.3: Building a diverse and inclusive community

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

1. Recognize the importance of dignity and hope in community mobilization;
2. Build a team for community mobilization; and
3. Use community diversity in community mobilization.

Introduction

In order for people to commit to working on diversity, every person needs to feel that they will be included and important. Each person needs to feel welcomed in the effort to create a diverse community and that their culture is important to others. People are more likely to change when they are appreciated and liked, not condemned or made to feel guilty about their cultural backgrounds. It is important to include vulnerable members of a community when deciding which will be the most appropriate action plan to implement for the benefit of the community as a whole.

Dignity and hope in community mobilization

It is important that vulnerable groups within a community, such as the sick, elderly or people with disabilities, be treated with dignity.

When designing an action plan for community mobilization, especially during disaster situations, you will need to take any additional needs of the vulnerable members of a population that require funding or infrastructure into account. You will need to consider whether there is an adequate supply of clean water and sanitation to care for the sick, or prevent disease outbreaks. You will also need to check if there is adequate nutrition available for children, elderly, or sick members in a community by assessing what types of food crops a disaster struck or a displaced community has access to. You also need to take any livestock losses as a result of drought, flooding or disease outbreak into account and how this impacts a household or community.

In the aftermath of a disaster there may be households that are left displaced and destitute and it is important to treat those affected by the disaster with dignity.

When presenting the report of the impact of a disaster to a community affected by it, you should be sensitive to the fact that they are trying to deal with the sudden extreme change in their situation. When working with them to find a solution and an intervention that can help them recover, it is important to give them hope that their situation will change for the better and that they will recover from the shock. When people have hope, they will be willing to do everything they need to rebuild their lives.

Building a team for community mobilization

When building a team for community mobilization, you will need to assess what the community's needs are and find people who have the skills and capabilities to address all the different aspects of the proposed action plan to achieve the goal. To address diversity issues, your team will need to be diversified in order to relate to these issues and to be able to come up with creative ideas to address these issues.

Using community diversity in community mobilization

As mentioned previously, it is important to be aware of the diversity already present in the community you are working with so that you can have a better idea of which approaches to solving the problems would work best. You will also be able to motivate the community members to implement the action plan they need for change.

By encouraging different groups within a community to work together, the community as a whole will be able to solve their common problems more effectively and in a sustainable way.

Complete Activity 1.3 in your workbook.

Session 1.4: Enhancing women and youth participation in productivity

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

- Discuss the importance of gender differences in community mobilization;
- Identify the importance of youth participation in community mobilization; and
- Explain how to support women and the youth in community mobilization.

Introduction

Gender equality exists where women and men have access to opportunities and services, equal control over resources and an equal say in decisions at all levels. Evidence demonstrates that where gender equality is greater, there is higher economic growth and better quality of life for all.

Skilled youth participation in community mobilization

The youth are the future of a community. By encouraging youth participation in community mobilization you will be motivating them to feel that they add value in their community. It can teach them how to be responsible for their own success and that of their community. It may even encourage them to identify needs in their community and find solutions to address these needs.

There may be some cultural norms, such as only members of a certain age being allowed to make decisions in the community, that would normally exclude the youth from a wide range of participatory activities. Bringing education, competitions or information days to schools could be a good start in promoting an enabling environment for young people's participation in a broad range of processes and areas.

Support for women and youth in community mobilization

It is the norm for adult men to be the primary land owners in many communities. While women do grow food crops for household use, they will still rely on the majority of the household income to come from the men.

The youth, because of their age, will not have decision making power within a community and will also not be able to own land of their own. They will most likely be included in a supportive role to carry out designated tasks to contribute to their households. They are also of school-going age and may spend most of their time in school, if they are able to attend one.

Targeting and providing safety-net support for women and youth will enable them to contribute more to the community. Running programmes designed to empower women and the youth in a community, and providing them with education on issues directly affecting them, will encourage them to be positive influences on community change. When you include and talk to women and youths in a community, you will find that they can generate ideas and solutions to problems that affect them directly, which will give a more holistic perspective to the needs of the community that need to be addressed.

Complete Activity 1.4 in your workbook.

Concluding remarks

Culture and diversity will determine how you approach, design and implement an intervention for community mobilization. Understanding the differences that are found in a multicultural society will help you formulate a vision for an inclusive local community. Building a diverse and inclusive community means that women, the youth and vulnerable members of the population should be included when the action plan is designed. Women and youth have a lot to offer their community, but cultural norms often exclude them from contributing beyond carrying out their expected tasks. Make sure you offer support to these groups when implementing the action plan.

Complete the summative assessment in your workbook.

Study unit 2: Livelihood assets assessment

Study unit outcomes

After completing this study unit, you should be able to:

1. Describe the sampling and assessment planning process; and
2. Demonstrate the core components of livelihood assets assessment.

Study unit overview

This unit enables you to appreciate how **livelihood assets assessment** has become the basic framework for many organizations' programme analysis, design, monitoring and evaluation. It grows out of a **food security** perspective. It is based on the observation that food is only one important basic need and adequate food consumption may be given up for other more important needs.

Livelihood assets assessment: An assessment of all resources available to a community, including human capital and other assets such as land, crops, livestock, water sources and infrastructure.

Food security: Having reliable access to affordable, nutritious food in sufficient quantity.

Study unit introduction

The causes of poverty are complex. In this unit you will learn how livelihood assets assessment provides a framework to analyze and understand poverty and how people deal with it. You will learn more about the process of compiling a livelihood assets assessment. You will also be introduced to different data collection and analysis methods used in different assessment types.

Session 2.1: Gathering information

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

1. Set objectives;
2. Use appropriate assessment types for a given situation;
3. Identify what information is needed for a livelihood assets assessment; and
4. Use appropriate data collection methods for a given situation.

Introduction

The key to conducting a successful livelihood assets assessment is to take time before beginning an assessment to formulate objectives, determine the information needed for decision making and the most appropriate information sources and data collection methods. Even if time is limited, initial investment in the planning stage will save time later and provide the most useful information. It is also important to be flexible during the data collection process to pursue alternative pathways or follow-up on unexpected information. The assessment is a **dynamic process** where information collected early in the process will help shape some of the questions that are asked and the data that is collected later.

Dynamic process: A process that is constantly changing.

Setting objectives

It is important to set objectives so that you will know what the community hopes to accomplish from making changes. This end goal will depend on the situation. It is also important to think about whether your objectives and those of the community are the same.

Looking at it from a food security point of view, ask yourself if households in the community want to grow their own food. Would they rather want to start growing cash crops to buy their own food?

When thinking about how to advise your community, ask yourself what challenges they may face in meeting their expected goals. Are they willing to adopt new technology in achieving their objectives? What methods are acceptable to their cultural systems?

Livelihoods are dynamic because they are shaped by a number of different factors that are constantly changing. These factors include changes in access to specific markets, changes in food prices, available income sources within households, seasonal changes in livestock or crop farming and more importantly the impact on livestock and crop farming in times of drought or flooding.

Assessment types

There are a few assessment types you can consider. The baseline livelihood assessment looks at what is needed for normal day-to-day functioning of a household. It assesses whether a household has access to adequate resources and income to meet their basic needs in a sustainable way.

Different assessments can be done in the event of natural disasters, such as drought or floods, where the severity of the impact of this disaster determines the type of assessment you will do. This would be an initial livelihood impact assessment followed by a more detailed livelihood assessment. The time taken for each assessment type differs. Baseline and initial livelihood assessments are done in a matter of weeks, whereas the more detailed assessments can take up to a few months to complete.

Information needed for a livelihoods assets assessment

A household's basic needs are:
1. Enough food and clean drinking water;
2. Access to housing;
3. Health facilities;
4. Opportunities for education; and
5. Enough time to be active members in their community.

When doing a livelihood assets assessment you must consider if the following are available:
1. Natural capital;
2. Human capital;
3. Social capital;
4. Physical capital; and
5. Financial capital.

These concepts will be discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Natural capital

These are the natural resources available to the community, including farming land, grazing, water sources, wildlife and forests.

Human capital

Human capital focuses on the demographics of a community as well as the knowledge and skills the people in the community have. How many men, women and children are there in the community? What is the age distribution? How many children and youths are still of school-going age? How many men and women are of working age? How many women and men are of retirement age, or considered elders? Are the people, especially those who make up most of the labor force, healthy and physically capable of carrying out their tasks?

Social capital

This looks at the networks, affiliations, associations and social relations that are present in the community. This can include cultural groups and family groups. It is important to include this in your assessment because it will impact how willing a community is to engage in coordinated actions.

Physical capital

Physical capital refers to basic infrastructure, houses, vehicles, production equipment and technology and livestock and crops which can be used to pursue any livelihood strategy. These things can be used to increase financial capital.

Financial capital

This refers to the capital base of a household and the community. What is the source of income for the household? Are households involved in subsistence farming activities to provide food for them? Are there commercial cash crops produced in the area? Who is responsible for producing those crops? Who is responsible for distributing the income received from selling those crops? Are there saving clubs in the community to finance activities?

This includes cash, credit, debt and savings.

Data collection methods

Information on what resources are available to each household can be collected through different methods. These methods are described below:

- You can meet with key informants at district, sub-district and household levels and interview them or give them questionnaires;
- You can conduct household surveys that include information on the labor force and employment, health and nutrition, household income and expenditure, food consumption and food security;

- Population census data, if available, can be used to determine human capital availability;
- Agricultural census data, agricultural surveys, crop assessments and agricultural production estimates will generate data relating to food security;
- You can do qualitative livelihood studies on specific areas that will include analysis of farming systems, community surveys and **ethnographic studies**;
- Other sources of data are statistics on health services, nutrition services and social protection programmes in the area; and
- Maps, **geographic information systems** (GIS), **satellite imagery** and **watershed maps** can be useful when you need information about **agro-ecological zones**.

Ethnographic studies: Systematic studies of people and cultures.
Geographic information systems: A computer system for capturing, storing, checking and displaying data related to positions on the Earth’s surface.
Satellite imagery: Images of the Earth’s surface taken by satellites that provide details not otherwise shown on maps.
Watershed maps: Maps of rivers, basins or seas in an area.
Agro-ecological zones: Geographical areas with similar climatic conditions that determine their ability to support agriculture.

Complete Activity 2.1 in your workbook.

Session 2.2: Sampling and assessment planning

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

1. Use the correct steps in planning an assessment;
2. Use the correct sampling methods;
3. Determine sample size; and
4. Discuss bias considerations in sampling.

Introduction

Both the time and human resources needed to undertake livelihood assets assessments in the field are underestimated. The planning process takes time and is, more often than not, circular. All tasks should be started as soon as possible. Many of the steps will be undertaken concurrently and continuously throughout the assessment with the completion of one task sometimes requiring adaptation of another. Aside from developing the tools and methodology for the livelihood assets assessment, you should pay close attention to planning and carrying out the assessment at all stages in order to make sure that you successfully collect data and use resources.

Steps to planning an assessment

Before planning an assessment, some preliminary studies will need to be done. As part of the preliminary data collection you will do a context analysis, **stakeholder mapping** and engagement and **livelihoods zoning**. You need to allow enough time for face-to-face meetings and for conducting the various surveys. Pre-assessment activities include gathering information at national, regional and local levels and doing a field visit to collect data from government officials, local NGOs and meeting with key informants from the community.

Stakeholder mapping: Identifying all stakeholders and which have the most influence in the community.
Livelihoods zoning: The process of grouping together geographical areas where people have the same access to food and income and access to the same markets.

Next, you will need to identify the methods you would like to use to collect the data you need from an area. This is the preparation step where you will formulate objectives, select your sampling method, recruit your team and train them if necessary, and develop tools needed for the tasks to be carried out. In this step you will also set up your time allocation for your assessment as well as work out a budget. Pilot tests of the questionnaires should be carried out before the actual fieldwork begins and should be included in the time allocation. During fieldwork you will carry out different surveys such as market surveys and household surveys. You will identify which coping strategies are already in place. You will also do vulnerability and capacity mapping and hazard mapping.

Once all the data is collected, you should plan for daily data debrief sessions and analytical workshops so that you and your team can order the data and enter it into a database. The raw data must be cleaned and tabulated to make analysis and interpretation easier.

When the data has been analyzed and interpreted, the findings can be reported and shared with affected communities in the form of studies or severity analyzes for food and livelihood security. This information can be used to generate a vulnerability ranking for the area and thus to identify appropriate responses to a situation. . The following are the main steps in planning and assessment:

Introduction to sampling

Before collecting data you will need to decide two things. One is how you will collect the data you need, in other words, a sampling method. The other is how much data you will need to collect for your analysis to be meaningful, in other words, determining the sample size. You will also need to consider **bias** in your data. It is impossible to collect information from every area or from every household in a given area when doing livelihood assets assessments. To compensate for this, data is usually collected from a sample area to represent the whole area as closely as possible. It is important that the sizes of the data samples are big enough to be a meaningful representation of the real situation.

Bias: When you collect data, you will expect to get a certain result from the information. Bias refers to the difference between the actual results that were generated from the data analysis and the results you expected to get.

Sampling methods

The sampling method you choose will be determined by the goals of the assessment as well as constraints on time, resources, access and security.

There are two main methods to use in sampling, namely **non-probability sampling** and **probability sampling**.

Non-probability sampling is mainly used with qualitative methods such as selecting key informants or interviewing traders in markets. These sampling methods have a high chance of introducing bias into the results because it depends on the selective judge of community leaders.

Non-probability sampling: Any sampling method where some units have no chance of being selected or the probability of selection is unknown.
Probability sampling: A sampling method used when every unit has a chance of being selected, the probability of being selected is known and the selection of the sample is made using random methods.

There are three types of non-probability sampling methods, namely purposive, convenience and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling tries to minimize bias by selecting a sample which best represents the study population. Researchers do this by deciding which particular individuals or groups are best to interview. Convenience sampling results in bias because the respondents are chosen based on how convenient it is to interview them. This could mean that in a given area, communities that are easy to access will be interviewed instead of communities that are difficult to access. Snowball sampling is so named because it starts with a small sample and then as information is collected more samples are taken, in other words, it grows like a snowball. An example of this would be when you start interviewing some key informants you had identified in a community to get specific information on a situation. These informants might point you to others in the community who have experienced the same issues and who could provide useful information.

Probability sampling, or random sampling, is the method that has the potential to represent the entire sampling frame and is used where quantitative data is collected for statistical analysis. This method uses household questionnaires and the data collected from these can be expanded to a larger sample population. There are many probability sampling methods, but for the purposes of this module, only simple random sampling, systematic sampling and stratified sampling will be discussed briefly.

Simple random sampling is used when a list of every household or individual is available and respondents are randomly selected from the whole list using a random number of tables.

Systematic sampling is the most common sampling method used to select households within a cluster and is often used in camp situations and in urban contexts. It is used when there is a list of households and when there are no such lists but the population lives in the same geographical area and houses are arranged in a regular geometric pattern. After selecting a first household at random, the following households are visited 'systematically' using a 'sampling interval' determined by dividing the total number of households by the number needed to give an adequate sample.

Example 1: IImagine 400 households are on a list.
You need to interview 20 households. Choose the first household at random using a random number table. For this example, let's choose number 220. To determine the sampling interval divide 400 by 20. That gives you a sampling interval of 20. This means that every 20th households are selected starting from number 220, in other words, households 220, 240, 260, and so on. When you reach the end of the list, continue to the beginning until you reach the target number of 20 households.

Stratified sampling is used when the study population contains distinct strata or sub-groups that can be sampled independently and it allows information to be collected about specific sub-groups that would be difficult to collect if the population was sampled as a whole. This method is especially useful where livelihoods or regional groups need be looked at separately to understand the differences that are unique to these groups. It allows you to compare these differences. If the population figures are known, it is important to sample the sub-groups proportionate to the size of the whole population to maintain **statistical efficiency**.

Statistical efficiency: Making sure that the statistics you generate from your data are a true reflection of the actual situation in the field.

Determining sample size

The definition of a sample size is the number of sampling units required to give the level of precision you need. For the purpose of livelihoods assets assessments, a sampling unit is a household.

What is the correct sample size? This will depend on the sampling method you have chosen. The accepted rule for household food security and livelihood assessments when using purposive sampling is to sample 50 to 150 households for each area the assessment is designed to evaluate. Remember, the point of sampling an area is to represent its diversity accurately. The more diverse an area the more samples you will need, in other words, a larger sample size. When you use random sampling, a sample size of 150 to 250 households is recommended for every area you want to compare.

Bias considerations

Bias refers to the difference between the expected value and the true value of a parameter that is being estimated. There will be situations where sampling bias cannot be avoided due to different constraints. It is important that you are aware of bias and, if possible, choose the sampling methods that will minimize it best. Remember that selection bias is most likely to occur when using non-probability sampling methods. In purposive sampling it becomes important to choose the samples so that the assessment accurately represents the diversity in a population.

When using random sampling it is important that all members of the population have an equal chance of being selected. When data is extrapolated to refer to a larger population, sampling bias may occur if the data of the surveyed population did not consider diversity.

Complete Activity 2.2 in your workbook.

Session 2.3: Core components of livelihood assets assessments

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

1. Describe context analysis;
2. Discuss the importance of food security in community mobilization; and
3. Identify correct coping strategies for a community.

Introduction

Livelihood assets assessment approaches rely on a common logical framework built around core components whose analysis allows you to meet the broad objectives. Each core component and its associated set of indicators needs to be addressed in some form in order to ensure a minimal degree of shared understanding and permit comparative analysis across settings. The depth of analysis on each component will be different depending on the type of assessment being carried out and its specific objectives.

Context analysis

Understanding the context of the community you serve will help you to understand the factors that influence livelihood systems. The parameters within which the livelihood strategies function are determined by the information on the following aspects of an area:

1. Social;
2. Economic;
3. Political;
4. Environmental;
5. Demographic;

6. Historical; and
7. Infrastructure.

These aspects can help you identify which population groups are most vulnerable and who the main actors are in the field when it comes to local and national response capacity in a crisis.

Livelihood groups and zones

A livelihood group is a collection of people who share the same income and food sources. They have access to the same livelihood assets and are exposed to similar risks. A livelihood zone is a geographic area with similar food access as determined by geography, livelihoods dominant in the area and market networks. Grouping livelihoods will help you decide which interventions may be helpful to improve food security for particular groups in similar situations.

Markets and price trends

Markets are the backbone of economies. People living in cash or mixed economies will be dependent on markets to meet their basic needs. Market analysis is important in determining how the market trends will be affected in the event of a disaster. Market analysis provides important information about food access and availability. Price variations can occur according to season, or due to crisis or conflict.

Food security and community mobilization

Food security is determined by food availability and how easily and regularly people have access to food.

Food availability

Food availability is how much food is physically available in a given area. It depends on food production from fishery, animal husbandry and crop production systems. It also depends on food stocks and reserves.

The food production system used by a population will depend on the area because they will adapt their systems to suit the geography and rainfall conditions of the area they live in. This makes it important to establish a production baseline to determine how food is produced under normal conditions. The assessment of food availability should take into account any challenges that the community faces in producing food. This can include labor constraints or even assessing whether households have the purchasing power to successfully produce or purchase food.

Governments are usually responsible for keeping grain reserves for emergency situations to buffer the prices of such commodities. It is important to find out what the policies are surrounding this for the area you are assessing.

Food access

Food access is a way to measure a household's ability to get food that is available. It refers to whether households have enough income to buy food at markets. It can be a measure of a household's power in the community and how strong their social networks are. Increased food security and increased household income can be measured by how many households have food access.

Food consumption

The energy and nutrient intake of households is measured through their food consumption. How often people eat and the variety of their diet should be considered because food consumption patterns are indicators of a household's food access. Household food consumption patterns are also influenced by cultural and religious beliefs and traditional habits, where food taboos can restrict using food that is available in the environment, even if there is sufficient food available. Food usage can also be restricted for individuals in the household based on their age, gender and working status as governed by traditions.

Food utilisation and care practices

How a household uses the food that it has access to is called food utilisation. It includes food storage, processing and preparation, and distribution within a household. It also refers to how an individual is able to absorb and metabolise nutrients from food, a process which is affected by malnutrition and disease. Individual food consumption patterns are indicators of food utilisation.

Household food utilisation is influenced by access to water, sanitation and hygiene because this has an effect on the care practices in a home. Care practices refer to:

1. How infants and young children are fed;
2. How food is stored, processed and prepared in the home;
3. How food is shared in the home; and
4. What food habits and taboos are present in the household.

Care practices include how sick children, adults and the elderly are cared for and what hygiene practices are used by members in a household.

Coping strategies

Coping strategies are the actions that people take at a household level to manage their resources in times of hardship. This is an indicator of food access and livelihood security. Coping strategies can include food rationing in times of food shortage and changing food sources.

Economic coping strategies, such as buying on credit and labor migration can be implemented to preserve assets in times of hardship. When permanent strategies, such as sale of assets, are used as a coping strategy it indicates a crisis and it can permanently impact food security in an area. Adaptation to a severe situation is a long-term solution that encourages the development of new livelihoods. This includes pastoralists moving to areas where the rainfall and pasture growth is better or displaced farmers becoming small traders and casual workers to get through the hard times.

The severity and length of a crisis will determine whether people adopt short-term, temporary coping strategies or whether they adopt long-term, adaptive coping strategies to avoid becoming destitute.

Participatory vulnerability and capacity analysis

Participatory vulnerability analysis assesses the historical evolution of a local vulnerability context. It is useful to tell the difference between acute and chronic food insecurity sources and broad livelihood stressors.

Capacity analysis on a local level helps to design programmes that will engage stakeholders in a participatory way to better address vulnerability in the population and reduce the risks they face.

Complete Activity 2.3 in your workbook.

Session 2.4: Analyzing results

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

1. Analyze and interpret data in the assessment process;
2. Identify causes of food insecurity and risks to livelihoods; and
3. Establish a vulnerability ranking.

Introduction

Data analysis and interpretation should be done throughout the assessment process to identify major causes of food insecurity and risk to the livelihoods of a community so that corrective measures can be implemented to reduce the risks.

Data analysis in the assessment process

Data analysis should occur on an ongoing basis at every stage of the assessment process.

When preliminary data is collected, data analysis is used to make decisions about target populations, sampling methods and approaches. During training workshops, data analysis is used in designing the appropriate field tools. Analyzed data collected from pilot tests are used to refine the field tools and to define appropriate thresholds and norms for fieldwork.

Before leaving field sites once fieldwork has begun, data is analyzed so that the preliminary findings can be validated and then presented to the local authorities. During analytical workshops with team members, data is analyzed to gather additional insights that were not formally recorded. Once data entry is complete, analysis is done to put together results from different data sources, and analytic charts and models are prepared.

In workshops with local stakeholders, the results from data analysis are shared to build consensus on priority needs and responses.

Identifying principal causes of food insecurity and risks to livelihoods

With context analysis information and the identification of broad livelihood stressors, you can identify exactly which significant shocks have affected food availability, food access or food utilisation and caused risks to livelihoods for some or all population groups as a result.

When assessing the situation, it is important to distinguish **acute** risk factors from **chronic** risk factors, because the interventions will differ for each situation. For acute, short term interventions to be sustainable, you must make sure that there are no chronic risk factors that will undermine the response to the intervention.

Acute risk factors can be floods, drought or civil conflict that suddenly disrupt households from their food and income sources, upset local food production or disrupt trade routes and increase prices. Chronic risk factors affect the population's baseline food and livelihood security because they are long-term, structural, seasonal or recurring stresses that increase a population's vulnerability. Examples of chronic risk factors are HIV/AIDS, recurrent drought, political instability and **macroeconomic policies**.

Acute: An event that happens in the short term or immediately.
Chronic: An event that happens more slowly over a longer period of time.
Macroeconomic policies: Policies implemented by government that affects trade of a larger area or a country as a whole. Some policies can also affect global trade.

Determining the severity of livelihood insecurity

Once you have done a context analysis, it is time to analyze how the crisis has impacted each livelihood group to determine which group was worst affected by the situation. Seasonal risks can make the problem of food supply and food access worse in a local area.

Changes in household food and income sources, types of coping strategies used and changes in household food consumption patterns need to be noted. Market survey data that shows price movements for key commodities, impacts on labor markets and terms of trade also need to be looked at to determine the severity of livelihood insecurity.

Estimating the scale of livelihood insecurity

The scale of livelihood insecurity refers to how many households are affected and unable to cope in the event of a disaster. This can be calculated using the total population numbers for a surveyed area together with information about how many of those households are classified as vulnerable. Demographic information collected during fieldwork can be used to estimate the number of households and individuals in each of the different vulnerability categories. This calculation can be used by donor agencies to know how many people need help and what level of resources in needed to help them.

Establishing a vulnerability ranking

Vulnerability is defined according to the main causes of food insecurity and risks to livelihood. A vulnerability ranking identifies and prioritizes groups or zones for future interventions. In a population affected by the same acute crisis, not all groups within that population will experience the same severity of impact. This means their recovery rates will be different.

Groups or zones are ranked according to their relative vulnerability based on the key vulnerability criteria that the community identified during community-level vulnerability assessments as well as the key external indicators that assess the severity of food insecurity across groups and zones. Different sources of information need to be assessed together so that the vulnerability ranking reflects the concerns of the community and agencies and to make sure that the core indicators of vulnerability are the same across all groups and zones.

Complete Activity 2.4 in your workbook.

Concluding remarks

It is important to set objectives to know what the community hopes to achieve from the changes they make.

There are different assessment types you can use such as a baseline livelihood assessment to determine the day-to-day livelihood of a household, and a range of different assessment types to assess the impact of a disaster on a community.

Use systematic steps when planning your assessment to make sure you collect all the information you need to design an action plan. Choose the correct sampling method and sample size when collecting your data for assessment.

Complete the summative assessment in your workbook.

Study unit 3: Problem solving approaches

Study unit outcomes

After completing this study unit, you should be able to:

1. Describe community decision making based on data;
2. Explain the root causes of problems; and
3. Devise sustainable community solutions in a participatory manner.

Study unit overview

Problem-solving approaches are used to address many issues that come up on a daily basis in the local community. While you may have already engaged in solving problems, you have probably used many different approaches in order to achieve a solution. In this study unit, you will learn about defining a problem and its root cause rather than reacting to superficial symptoms. You will also learn how to devise sustainable community solutions in a participatory way.

Introduction

A structured, systematic approach to solving problems and making improvements ensures consistency, helps manage the community process, solves problems effectively, builds a convincing case for change, and presents a convincing rationale for community action. In this unit, you will be introduced to basic problem solving approaches that you can adapt to your work situations in the field.

Session 3.1: Defining problems and their root causes

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

1. Define a problem; and
2. Determine the root cause of a problem.

Introduction

Identifying the problem means doing a broad review of the current situation. Once you recognize the symptoms and have tentatively defined the problem, your team can begin to collect information about the nature of the problem.

Defining the problem

Why is defining a problem necessary for problem solving? The obvious answer is that you need to know exactly what needs to be changed to make a situation better. When you know what needs to be addressed, you can start designing your action plan to address the issue in a way that will give a lasting solution to the problem. You can start defining the problem that a community faces by talking to individuals living in the area and by doing additional surveys for the livelihood assets assessment.

Determining the root causes of a problem

Every problem has a root cause, which is the reason the problem exists in the first place. If you address the root cause of a problem, you are more likely to find a solution that fixes the problem and changes the situation that was present because of the problem.

In the context of a community's food security, the assessments and analyzes of data collected through various surveys in the field can help you identify the root cause of the problem of food access and availability. Ask yourself the following questions:

1. Does the baseline livelihood of a community make them more vulnerable to begin with?
2. What can be done to improve the baseline livelihood in that community to make them more resilient to possible disasters or conflict?
3. Are their farming or food production methods not adequate to make enough food available?
4. Can these methods be adapted in some way to increase crop yields?

Complete Activity 3.1 in your workbook.

Session 3.2: Participatory development of a basket of options

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

1. Identify a range of solutions in problem solving; and
2. Describe the importance of participatory development of different solutions.

Introduction

Once you have defined a problem, your immediate reaction may be to jump toward a particular solution. Remember that creative problem solving requires you to explore a full range of viable solutions before reaching a conclusion. At this stage, you are still not ready to select the best solution. You simply want to reduce redundancy, and eliminate any possibilities that do not address the causes you identified earlier. Force field analysis is a good tool for preliminary screening of this solution field.

Generate potential solutions

Brainstorm: To come up with many different ideas in a group and write them down to choose which ideas fit the situation best.

Creative problem solving has the benefit of generating a list of possible solutions that you can choose from to solve a particular problem. The best approach to finding a solution that will be best for a community is to sit down with the whole community and brainstorm ideas of how to solve the problem they have. Including all members from the community will give you many different ideas of how to solve their particular problems. In addition to that new innovations and technologies are communicated to the community through training for adoption.

Ex: use of hybrid seed and in vitro plantlets to solve a problem of low productivity and resistance to diseases.

Relate solutions to root causes

When you have set up a list of possible solutions, look at the problems that you and the community identified again and try to identify the root causes of those problems.

When you have identified the root causes, get the community involved in choosing the best possible solution that will address the root causes of the problem.

Merge similar solutions

Group ideas that are related or similar in the list of solutions you generated with the community. Perhaps you could look at the list of root causes to the problems and group all possible solutions that would address a specific problem's root cause. This helps organize the possible solutions in a way that makes it easier to decide which solution is the best fit.

Complete Activity 3.2 in your workbook.

Session 3.3: Participatory selection of an appropriate solution

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:
1. Determine if a solution is feasible; and
2. Evaluate if a solution is acceptable.

Introduction

Evaluate each potential solution for its strengths and weaknesses. Selecting a solution involves looking for the most effective solution by applying two general criteria. An effective solution is technically feasible and is acceptable to those who will have to implement it.

Determining solution feasibility

When you have decided on a solution, you must consider if it can be practically implemented.

Ask yourself the following questions to test the feasibility of the chosen solution:
1. Can it be implemented in a reasonable time?
2. Can it be done within cost limits?
3. Will it work reliably?
4. Will it use staff and equipment efficiently?
5. Is it flexible enough to adapt to changing conditions?

Time and money are finite resources and this makes it important to plan the tasks in the action plan so that they are implemented efficiently.

Evaluating solution acceptability

You have chosen a solution to a problem and you have seen that it is feasible. Now you need to consider whether this solution is acceptable to the community and to the donor organization that might be funding the project. To evaluate the chosen solution's acceptability, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Do the implementers support the solution?
2. Do the implementers perceive it as worth their time and energy?
3. Are the risks manageable?
4. Will the solution benefit the persons affected by the problem?
5. Will it benefit the organization?

If you answer yes to all these questions, you know you have found the best possible solution to the given problem and implementing this solution should not be problematic.

Complete Activity 3.3 in your workbook.

Session 3.4: Participatory implementation

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

1. Discuss why participatory implementation of a solution is important; and
2. List the steps of implementing a solution.

Introduction

Choosing a solution does not immediately solve a problem. Putting a solution into action may prove as difficult as deciding on one. The implementation stage requires action planning.

Importance of participatory implementation

The community will be affected by the plan you choose to implement to solve a problem and the hope is that this effect will result in a positive change to their situation. Participatory implementation means getting the community involved in making the changes and putting the plan that was agreed upon into action.

This is an important step in making sure that the changes that need to happen are actually carried out so that the problem is solved. It also gives the community the means to solve similar problems on their own if they encounter them in the future.

Steps to consider for implementation

For a plan to be successfully carried out there needs to be enough time allocated for each step. There needs to be people who have the skills and capability to do the work and there needs to be a clear goal in place. The goal will be a date that tasks should be completed by. This is important for monitoring and evaluating progress. You must track the progress of the plan to see if a certain part of the plan needs to be revised if it was practically not possible.

Participatory implementation includes involving everyone in the community in solving a problem in a practical way. While you are planning an action plan, ask yourself the following questions:

1. What must be done?
2. Who will do it?
3. When will it be started?
4. When will key milestones be completed?
5. How will the necessary actions be carried out?
6. Why are these actions a solution?

This way the allocated tasks can be tailored to the situation and the community for implementation to be successful.

Complete Activity 3.4 in your workbook.

Session 3.5: Participatory monitoring and evaluation

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

1. Monitor and evaluate an action plan; and
2. List the steps needed for effective monitoring and evaluation.

Introduction

Evaluation is the monitoring that any community project needs to ensure that milestones are met, costs are contained, and work is completed. Effective communities plan additional feedback mechanisms to detect the need for **midcourse corrections** and to ensure that the problem is solved without creating new problems.

Midcourse corrections: Changes made to a plan when it is already in action so that the best results are obtained when all the steps are completed.

Data collection

Monitoring and evaluating a project depends on regular data collection. This data will indicate if the plan is being implemented on time and if the expected changes are happening. Comparing data collected throughout implementation to data collected in the initial assessment will give information on whether progress is happening or if some things need to be revised and improved. Data collection methods used for monitoring will be much the same as those used for the initial livelihood asset assessments and vulnerability rankings.

Progress reports

The purpose of monitoring and evaluation is to track progress. The results of the analysis of data collected during the implementation phase of a project can be interpreted and organized into a progress report. This report should be distributed to the community and the donor organizations so that they know whether targets are met effectively.

Progress reports also serve as a confirmation that the time, energy and funding poured into the project are generating results and are worth it.

Reflection on the process

Progress reports are useful to evaluate if the process is happening at the right rate. If for some reason activities are running behind target, you can focus attention on these activities to see how they can be improved. Monitoring and evaluation is a cyclical process and constant review of the plan and progress serves to streamline the process to be most efficient in the given circumstances. It is a necessary part of implementation because sometimes things look better on paper, but practically a situation looks quite different. It is also a necessary part of the process to make sure that implementing a chosen solution will not cause other problems down the line.

Complete Activity 3.5 in your workbook.

Concluding remarks

To effectively solve a problem you need to define the problem and identify its root cause. Getting the community involved in finding a solution to their problem will give you a range of ideas that could be acceptable to the community that you can choose from. Once this list of possible solutions has been created, you need to test each option for feasibility and acceptability, and choose the best solution based on these criteria. Always relate the solution to the root causes of a problem to ensure that problem will be fixed permanently without resulting in other problems.

Complete the summative assessment in your workbook.

Study unit 4: Leadership development

Study unit outcomes

After completing this study unit, you should be able to:

1. Describe effective leadership that involves using consistent talent development and management programmes at community level; and
2. Identify, attract and mentor community leadership talent.

Study unit overview

Community-level leadership development is used to increase the effectiveness of extension workers in their local communities by cultivating their leadership skills. In this study unit, you will learn about the various leadership styles, how to develop your communication skills and how to lead and motivate your community co-workers. You will also learn about the benefits of mentoring and how to effectively manage your time. Finally, you will learn about participatory goal setting and accountability as well as how to use teamwork effectively.

Introduction

To be a leader means you need to be aware of different leadership and communication styles and know how to motivate others to achieve their goals. This study unit will introduce you to all of these concepts for leadership development.

Session 4.1: Leadership styles

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

- Describe different leadership styles; and
- Discuss the importance of strong leadership.

Introduction

A leadership style encompasses how a person provides direction, implements a plan, or motivates others. To achieve their goals, effective leaders often switch styles to suit the situation.

Leadership styles

There are different ways to lead people depending on your personality and the situation you find yourself in. Different situations call for different types of leadership. Table 1 shows a few different leadership styles that you can use in your work.

Table 1: Different leadership styles

Leadership style	Description
Participative	Seeks to involve other people.
Transactional	Works through **hierarchical structures** and a reward or punishment system.
Transformational	Leads through inspiration by sharing energy and enthusiasm with their team.
Servant	Leader serves others rather then expecting to be served.

Leadership style	Description
Situational	Changes leadership style according to situational factors, and can combine any of the other leadership styles to meet the requirements of the situation.

Hierarchical structures: Different levels of management within an organization or team, where one level of management reports to the level above it.

Benefits of strong leadership

A leader is responsible for driving change by organizing how the people they lead set about moving toward a specific goal. The leader will carry the responsibility of making the decisions needed to move a project forward. Strong leadership means there will be no doubt about what needs to be done and who is responsible for each task and activity during implementation. A strong leader will listen to the needs of the people they lead and make decisions accordingly to help address these needs. It creates confidence in the community if they know that the leader is able and willing to listen to their concerns, able to find the right solutions to address their concerns and has the power and capability to drive the implementation of these solutions.

You may find yourself in a leadership role when planning livelihood assets assessments in your extension work. You will be responsible for planning the assessment, for delegating tasks to your field team and making sure that all the necessary data is collected correctly and completely.

A community usually has one leader, or a group of leaders, who have the decision making power. This could be successful farmers or elders, or a combination of these groups. They are the people you will need to empower to lead their community in implementing the proposed and accepted solutions.

Complete Activity 4.1 in your workbook.

Session 4.2: Communication skills

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

- Describe different communication styles;
- Apply appropriate communication styles according to the situation;
- Discuss the characteristics of effective communication; and
- Interpret verbal and non-verbal communication as a tool for gathering information.

Introduction

The ability to communicate a vision and purpose to communities will help you as the extensionist gain support and accomplish goals. Extension agents build trust by listening, understanding, and providing feedback.

Communication styles

There are different ways of getting your message across to someone and this is referred to as communication style. When you are working with others, you will need to be aware of how they communicate so that you can adapt your communication style to prevent misunderstandings. Table 2 shows a few different communication styles that you should be aware of.

Table 2: Different communication styles

Communication style	Description
Direct	Speaks decisively, states positions strongly and gets to the point.

Communication style	Description
Spirited	Readily expresses opinions, focuses on the big picture and can be persuasive.
Systematic	Focuses on specific details, uses precise language and emphasizes facts instead of emotions.
Considerate	Listens well and uses close, personal, supportive language.

When you are reporting quantitative data results, your communication style will most likely be direct and systematic. When you are meeting with a community to assess their needs, you should adopt a considerate communication style to gain their trust and confidence in your ability to help them find a solution.

Characteristics of effective communication

Figure 1 below illustrates the various characteristics of effective communication.

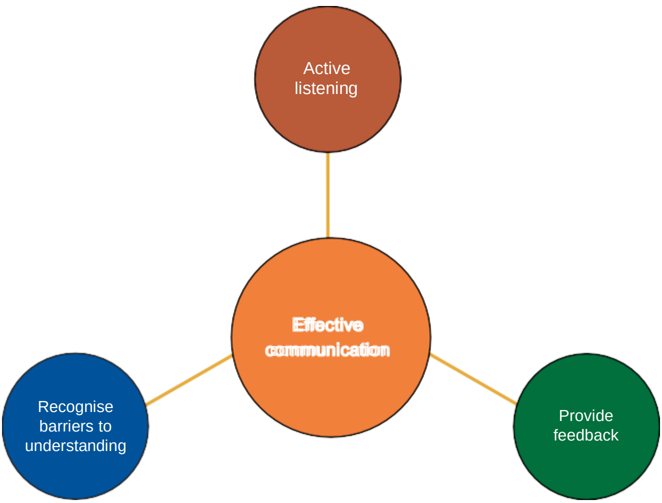

Figure 1: Characteristics of effective communication

For communication to be effective you will need to be an active listener, provide feedback and recognize possible barriers to understanding. Active listening means you hear what you are being told and you remember the information. You may repeat the information back to the person to let them know that you have heard and understood what they have said. Feedback ensures that everyone knows what is happening so there is no room for miscommunication. Communication barriers can result from language differences or even differences in education levels. Make sure you adjust how you communicate to make sure the information is correctly understood.

Communication is not only verbal. When you interact with someone face-to-face, there are many non-verbal communication methods in play. Most of these are automatic, so you might not be aware of them, and include facial expressions, gestures, silence, eye contact, and use of space. How close someone stands to you can give you an idea of how comfortable they are around you. Where they stand or sit in relation to you can give you this same information. It can also let you know, when working with a group, how people fit into their society. Eye contact can tell you if someone is comfortable talking to you or not. Be aware though that there are different rules about when eye contact is appropriate or not depending on the cultural norms in place in an area.

Complete Activity 4.2 in your workbook.

Session 4.3: Leading and motivating community co-workers

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

- Identify common motivators for volunteers;
- Manage challenges that come from leading friends or colleagues; and
- Identify the characteristics of a successful leader.

Introduction

Motivated and enthusiastic community co-workers are essential to successful farming. Knowing how to inspire community members will help encourage participation in sustainable community initiatives.

Common motivators of volunteers

Motivation is important when trying to empower and uplift a community. Motivation is the desire to achieve something. To motivate someone means that you encourage them to invest their time and effort into achieving a goal. When people are motivated they will participate wholeheartedly in making a difference to their situation.

Some ways to keep volunteers in a community motivated are service, fellowship, networking and recognition. By staying connected to other volunteers, they can exchange ideas and talk about the challenges they face in their situation. By sharing this information they can get ideas about which approach they can take to overcome their challenges. Recognizing their efforts will make them feel appreciated and valued. This will encourage them to continue with their work and boost their performance.

Challenges when leading friends or colleagues

Volunteers in a community will find themselves leading friends or colleagues at times. Friendships and working relationships are interpersonal relationships where each person usually has equal decision making power, and decisions are reached through compromise and mutual agreement. The role of a leader is to take charge of a situation and make decisions based on their own best judgement. Part of the decision making process is to overrule suggestions made by friends or colleagues if they do not serve the purpose of achieving the goal. This is where conflict may arise because the dynamics of the interpersonal relationship have changed.

A strong leader will always work in the best interest of the community as a whole and not make decisions based on personal gain. This means they are usually able to deflect conflict by being diplomatic in their decision making. They will be able to set good boundaries with friends and colleagues so that personal relationships will not be affected by any leadership decisions they have to make.

Characteristics of successful leaders

A successful leader is a good motivator of the people they are leading because they are skilled at providing a vision and inspiration. They are good at gaining people's trust and building solid relationships, which stands them in good stead when it comes to managing possible conflicts. A successful leader will lead by example, in other words, they will never expect anyone to do anything that they are not prepared to do themselves. This inspires confidence in their abilities and people will be willing to do the tasks they are assigned.

Complete Activity 4.3 in your workbook.

Session 4.4: Mentoring

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

1. Discuss the purpose and application of mentoring;
2. Define the relationship between the mentor and mentee; and
3. Recognize the importance of sharing experiences and expertise.

Introduction

In a community mentoring process, an experienced person guides another person in the development of ideas and learning. It's a good way for both the **mentor** and the **mentee** to enhance their skill sets, build relationships and advance professionally.

Mentor: A person who has experience and expertise in a certain field who advises the mentee.
Mentee: A person who lacks skills and experience in a certain field and needs to be advised and supported by a mentor.

The purpose and application of mentorship

Mentorship supports an inexperienced person in order to enhance their skill set and allow them to advance professionally. The person may have theoretical knowledge, or at least some skills for one part of a farming operation, for example, but lacks the practical experience to be able to run things successfully on their own.

Mentorship is useful in training a person to manage a community project under the supervision of a more experienced person.

In the case of improving food security in a community, the extensionist takes the role of mentor to train and support members of the community to adopt different farming practices to improve food yields. These influential community members can then use this new knowledge to teach others how to implement the new systems to the point where they can independently improve their food security without the constant guidance of the extensionist.

Mentorship can be useful in empowering youth to be more proactive and participatory in improving the situations in a community. It will give them the skills they need to contribute positively to their community. Mentorship can also be a useful support system for the women in a community as it can empower them to find and gain access to opportunities where they can actively participate in making changes in their community for the better.

The mentorship relationship

The relationship between the mentor and the mentee is a unique one. The mentor is there in an advisory capacity and should aim to let the mentee carry out tasks and make decisions independently, but be available for guidance when it is required. The mentor has experience and expertise that they make available for the mentee to draw on when they need to. It is up to the mentee to take a proactive stance in practicing independent decision making to the point where they will be confident enough to do the work on their own when the mentorship relationship ends.

Sharing experiences and expertise

Mentorship is a way of sharing experiences and expertise. It is important for improving retention and recruitment, building morale, accelerating leadership development, encouraging teamwork, and increasing community knowledge.

When the community is empowered to be responsible for their own development and to be confident in making decisions that will benefit the community as a whole, they will be motivated to actively improve their situation in a sustainable way. Building a community to take ownership of managing their livelihood means the extensionist can visit the community in an advisory capacity to serve their needs, rather than spending a lot of time planning and telling the community how to solve their problems. Once the community is equipped to identify their own needs, they can then independently go about solving their challenges in a way that improves their situation.

In a work setting, mentorship can fast track the professional development of young, inexperienced extensionists when the more experienced extensionists share their knowledge in a mentoring capacity.

Complete Activity 4.4 in your workbook.

Session 4.5: Time management

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:
1. Discuss the benefits of effective time management; and
2. Apply time management techniques.

Introduction

Time management involves applying a set of principles, practices, and tools in order to use time wisely with the aim of improving quality of life. To be active, succeed professionally, and participate in community activities, extensionists must manage their time effectively.

Characteristics of effective time management

Time management refers to the way in which you plan and organize your time. On a larger scale, time management refers to how you organize and plan the time allocated for each task that must be completed for a plan to be implemented for effective intervention.

Characteristics of time management are:
1. Prioritizing tasks;
2. Setting targets;
3. Setting boundaries; and
4. Identifying current time management habits.

If you review your current time management habits, do they allow you to efficiently complete all your tasks in a reasonable amount of time? Are you allocating enough time for meetings and stakeholder engagements? Are you setting boundaries where you schedule set times for attending to telephone calls and written communication? Are there any tasks that you put off doing because you lack the motivation to start them?

Prioritizing tasks means that you make a list of all the things that need to be completed. You set target deadlines for each task, taking into account the realistic amount of time you will need to get things done. The more urgent the task, the higher its priority. The deadlines must be realistic and achievable, and are intended to help you manage your time better.

Benefits of effective time management

Managing your time effectively allows you to complete all the tasks that you need to in a way that will not put pressure on you or cause stress. When you have planned your time effectively, you will find that you are more efficient and productive in your work. When implementing a plan in a community, you will use the allocated deadlines of each activity to monitor and evaluate progress. The benefit of effective time management in this context is that the results of the action plan will appear in a reasonable time frame and funding will not be wasted on tasks that should have been completed but are running behind schedule. Seeing results in the estimated time frame will also motivate the community to continue making the changes that you agreed on. Time allocation should take into account the time needed for the members in the community to attend to their daily or routine tasks in addition to any new activities that are implemented.

Time management strategies

During your work, you will be interrupted. While you cannot eliminate these interruptions, you can limit the amount of time you spend on these interruptions and how much time you will spend on the activities that make you more productive. Below are ten time management tips you can use to help you:

1. Use a schedule and record all of the things you spend your time on for one week. This will help you understand how much you can get done in a day and what your time is being spent on.

2. Make an appointment with yourself and create time blocks for high-priority tasks. Schedule when these appointments will begin and end and stick to these appointments.
3. Plan to spend at least half of your time on the tasks that produce the most of your results.
4. Plan time for interruptions or to be pulled away from what you are doing.
5. Take the first 30 minutes of your day to plan your day and do not start work until you have completed your time plan.
6. Take five minutes before each task to decide what result you want and five minutes after you have completed the task to see if your desired result was achieved. If it was not, ask yourself what was missing and how you put that into the next task.
7. Put up a "Do Not Disturb" sign when you absolutely must get work done.
8. Schedule a time to answer telephone calls or emails, unless it is crucial for you to give immediate responses.
9. Block out distractions like social media, unless they are important to your work.
10. Remember that it may not always be possible to get everything done and that it is likely that 20% of your tasks will produce 80% of your results.

Complete Activity 4.5 in your workbook.

Session 4.6: Participatory goal setting and accountability

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

1. Discuss the benefits of participatory goal setting;
2. Identify the characteristics of effective goals;
3. Develop an action plan to achieve a goal; and
4. Explain leader accountability.

Introduction

Participatory goal setting ensures that time, effort, and resources are being used strategically to accomplish what is important to community members. The people who will be affected by the goals should help determine them. Accountability makes sure that everyone in the community is working toward the same goals.

Benefits of setting goals

Goals give direction. To know what you want to achieve, you need to know what you expect to achieve. It is important to set a clear goal that everyone agrees on so that everyone knows exactly what they need to do to achieve this common goal.

Characteristics of effective goals

An effective goal is one that will bring about the change that is needed. It should be achievable given the available resources and one which everyone is equally committed to achieving. Table 3 shows the different goal types and their characteristics. The characteristics of an effective goal will change according to what a situation requires.

Table 3: Characteristics of different goal types

Goal type	Goal characteristic
Shared	A goal set by a group of people who are committed to achieving it.
Measurable	A goal that provides a tangible point to pursue.
Challenging	A goal that is ambitious enough to go beyond what the community has accomplished in the past.
Achievable	A goal that can be accomplished with the available resources.
Time-specific	A goal that has a deadline or timeline.

Developing an action plan

In order to develop an action plan, you need to approach it in a systematic way. Start by conducting different surveys to generate a contextual analysis of the area you are serving. Use surveys to generate a livelihood assets assessment of the community.

Engage the key stakeholders of the community, as well as the community as a whole, to find out what their needs are. Identify the problems that need solutions together and then look deeper to identify the root cause of each problem. Get the community members to actively participate in coming up with possible solutions and write down all the ideas. Set goals based on what they hope to achieve when implementing a solution.

Look at what and how many resources are available in the community and use this information to evaluate all possible solutions for feasibility. Use the contextual analysis to evaluate all possible solutions for acceptability then give feedback to the community and include them in choosing the best solutions for their situation.

List steps of what needs to happen for the action plan to be implemented and then prioritize tasks in order of urgency. Allocate time and set deadlines for each task to be completed. Delegate tasks to people who are skilled and capable of doing the work and provide training and mentorship where necessary. Before starting with the first steps of the plan, make sure to check all the proposed changes against all the data you have collected to prevent other problems from forming as a result of the changes.

Monitor and evaluate the progress of the activities on a regular basis. If something is not happening according to the allocated time schedule, evaluate what the reasons for this might be and revise the plan.

Importance of accountability in leadership

Accountability in leadership means that leaders will always take responsibility for their decisions and the consequences of those decisions. A leader needs to be open and honest about their actions at all times and be willing to give feedback to any interested or affected party that asks for it.

Accountability is an important attribute in leadership because it builds a community's trust in their leader when they are willing to openly report how they are spending resources and why they make particular decisions. If something should fail, an accountable leader will take responsibility for finding a solution to fix the problem. Accountability is also a powerful motivator for a leader to act in the best interests of the community and not for their own gain, because they will have to explain their actions later. It makes sure that the leader will drive the change in the direction that will benefit their community.

Complete Activity 4.6 in your workbook.

Session 4.7: Teamwork

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

1. List different types of teams;
2. Discuss the stages of team development; and
3. Apply team-building strategies.

Introduction

To accomplish most tasks in community mobilization, people must work in teams. When individuals work well together, they can do more than they could alone.

Types of teams

It is useful to be aware that there are different types of teams so that you can understand how these teams might approach working together. The different types of teams are:

1. The pseudo team is one where group members have been assigned to work with each other but they have no commitment to a common goal;
2. A traditional team is one where members of a group agree to work together but see little benefit in doing so; and
3. A high-performing team is a group of individuals forming an effective team that exceeds all reasonable expectations.

In an ideal situation, you will want all teams to be high-performing teams, but because people are all individuals with different beliefs and value systems, this will not always be possible. Being aware of the challenges that team work presents can help manage any conflicts in such a way that people will work together well enough to achieve their goal.

Stages of team development

When working with others, there is always a process of adjustment and trust building that must happen until a group of individuals can work effectively as a team. Figure 2 shows the different stages of team development from when strangers first meet to when they become a true team.

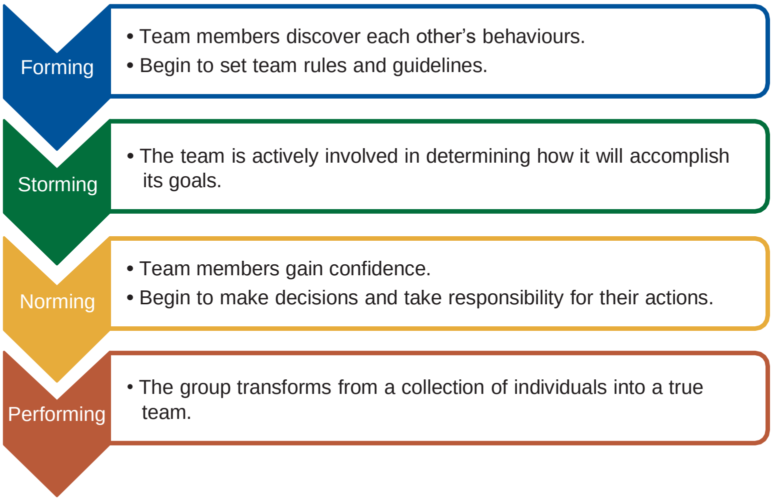

Figure 2: Stages of team development

Team-building strategies

To effectively build a team and promote good working relationships there are a few strategies that you can use. You can help group members develop familiarity and positive communication with one another by providing structured activities that promote interaction of members in a group.

It is useful to actively involve all team members in the planning and decision making processes in order to have effective meetings.

When people work together, there may be times when conflict arises. Engaging in constructive communication rather than destructive criticism can be an effective method of conflict intervention.

Complete Activity 4.7 in your workbook.

Concluding remarks

In this module, you have learned how to develop your leadership skills and that a successful leader understands the different leadership styles and knows when to apply a certain style to fit the situation. You now know that a good leader has good communication skills and understands that effective communication includes both verbal and non-verbal communication aspects. Good leaders are able to manage their time effectively and are able to motivate and inspire community co-workers. They understand the value and purpose of participatory goal setting and mentorship and are able to build teams effectively.

Complete the summative assessment in your workbook.

Study unit 5: Farmer needs assessment

Study unit outcomes

After completing this study unit, you should be able to:

1. Plan farmer needs assessments in a strategic, mission-driven manner;
2. Know the key steps when carrying out farmer needs assessment;
3. Know how to utilize results from the data collected in the farmer needs assessment.

Study unit overview

Needs assessment is a process driven by the question, "What do clients need and how can those needs be met?" (Patton, 1982). A need is defined as a gap between "what currently is" and "what should be" (Altschuld & Watkins, 2014). Needs assessment is a process to identify what people need where they live, work or play. The purpose is to use the information gained to make plans to meet those needs. What are the needs of people you serve?

Introduction

Needs assessment is a term with abundant meanings, often very different meanings! Patton (1982) posited that needs assessment was used in many cases to mean surveying clients about what they wanted, "thereby making wants equivalent to needs." Sometimes, needs assessment is used to describe the entire situation in a community, county or state. "Community situational analysis" is a broad term that refers to the process of analyzing the internal and external factors (including trends, capabilities, environment economy, etc.) that affect a community. The term "situational analysis" is applicable to all of the techniques and activities in this module.

We believe that an effective community needs

assessment would not only identify the needs of the community, but also underutilized resources, as in, “We need to utilize our lake and abundant natural beauty to promote tourism which will produce substantial economic benefits.” Therefore, we have chosen to use the term “needs assessment” as a synonym for situational analyses in this module, and the term “assets” may be used in place of needs.

Needs assessments are important for a number of reasons. Our world faces unlimited needs, but limited resources. Needs assessments help to identify areas that will do the most good for the most people over time. We live in a complex society, and it is not always clear which initiatives should be conducted or emphasized by public service organizations. Needs assessments clarify the work of public

service agencies and promote effective program planning by engaging advisory leaders, elected officials, volunteers and other stakeholders in learning and talking about important community issues. Needs assessments are a democratic principle! Needs change over time, and a periodic assessment is necessary to understand changing needs and new situations that people face in daily life.

An effective needs assessment allows you to construct a more objective picture of needs than you would receive from observation or public discussion. The checklist will help you pinpoint when needs assessments are a good idea. Because needs assessments take time, energy, money and other resources, it is critical to decide if a needs assessment is warranted for your program (see Table 4).

Table 4

Reasons to conduct a needs assessment	Reasons Not to Conduct a Needs Assessment
Your project or program is brand new.	The audience or community would view the assessment as "redundant or wasteful"
You are brand new to the community or your job	The issue is urgent and requires quick action.
You want to learn more about what the audience or community needs related to a specific condition.	A recent needs assessment has already been conducted, and the results are still timely
You need to document needs for grant applications and other funding proposals.	
You need additional information and perspectives to communicate with donors, advisory groups, elected officials and other stakeholders	
You want to focus the evaluation of a given program on how well it meets the needs of is intended audience	

Session 5.1: Organization

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

1. How should a needs assessment be organized;
2. The phases of organizing a needs assessment.

Introduction

To organize your assessment, think about what you need to accomplish. Key action steps and considerations are outlined below using three key phases: exploration, data gathering and utilization. These phases may also be referred to as Pre Assessment, Assessment and Post Assessment.

The three phases of a needs assessment

Phase one: Exploration

First, determine the purpose of the needs assessment. What are the potential uses of the assessment information and who are the potential users of the assessment information? Identify the parameters for the assessment. Are you looking at one town or county or a specific audience? If you believe town mayors will be the users of the assessment information, for example, a county-wide assessment would not be valuable to them unless you break out data by town.

Second, identify all of the existing information available that fits your parameters. More data are available today from secondary sources than ever before (Borden, 2004), and you may be quite surprised at the treasure trove of information available from multiple agencies and organizations.

Third, determine if other data still need to be collected. Identify the methods to collect this information.

Phase two: Assessment

Collect, analyze and synthesize all of the data. Implement your needs assessment plan. Let's say you find from the National Agricultural Statistics Service the production of cattle, hay and soybeans has been declining steadily in your county for the past five years. The rate of decline is much higher for your county than for other counties in the state. It could be helpful to determine some of the major causes or issues that have produced the declining numbers. Is it because of the weather? Is it related to land use? Is it because producers are transitioning to other enterprises? Farmers and retailers of farm equipment might be good sources of information, and they may be able to describe how and why the county's agricultural output is changing.

Phase three: Utilization

Use the data to set program priorities, develop an action plan to address the needs or issues, evaluate the needs assessment, and communicate the results. A needs assessment process is not completed until the results are shared and utilized.

Complete Activity 5.1 in your workbook.

Session 5.2: Exploration

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:
1. Know how to review document;
2. Identify different approaches of data collection.

Introduction

Reviewing existing data should be a part of any needs assessment that you conduct. Document review is the foundation for your needs assessment. These data are important for several reasons.

1. Reliable data sources provide detailed information from a large sample size that would be difficult and unrealistic for you to collect on your own.
2. Many topics are sensitive and may be difficult for people to discuss such as homelessness, bankruptcy and food insecurity.
3. Data sources can provide information over several years or decades, allowing you the opportunity to identify trends.

Questions to ask when thinking about data:

1. What information do I need? What topics do I need information about?
2. Will I be able to access county level data?
3. How current do the data need to be? What's my cut-off date?

The document review is often a helpful starting point for a comprehensive needs assessment. It can help you to identify what is known and pinpoint what you still want to know. Document reviews tend to be helpful especially when used with individual and/or group methods. This process provides a sense of both what is happening and why it may be happening.

Complete Activity 5.2 in your workbook.

Session 5.3: Assessment

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

1. What is a needs assessment; and
2. Know key informants when conducting an assessment.

Introduction

A needs assessment is essentially an investigation, and information is provided by individuals or a group of respondents.

Key informant

A key informant is an individual who provides important perspectives and firsthand knowledge of a situation. An assessment of the health status of the community would be accentuated greatly by seeking the opinions of nursing home administrators, dementia caregivers, doctors and coordinated school health directors, just to name a few examples of key informants.

Key informants are often very helpful to add color or additional information to a needs assessment. They tend to be knowledgeable and may provide distinct information. They can help you understand why something is happening or understand the history of community attributes. It is not recommended to use key informants solely for an entire needs assessment because it could place too much importance on the opinions of a handful of individuals.

Personal Interviews

Personal interviews are useful in conducting needs assessments and provide the added benefit of getting to know people.

Preparation is extremely important because interviews can be challenging if you ask about highly personal topics. Interviews mainly provide qualitative data, such as perceptions, values, opinions and information from personal observation (Witkin & Altschuld, 1995) in contrast to quantitative data (quantities, amounts, percentages, proportions, facts, etc.).

Conducting the Interview

Prepare your questions in advance and practice them so that you are well-prepared. When conducting an interview, you should be dressed in either business attire or in similar attire as the interviewee. If you do not understand an answer, be honest and ask the interviewee to clarify for you. Start a personal interview by making small talk to make the person feel comfortable (Vilela, 2014).

Interview Protocol

When conducting the interview, ask few questions and resist the temptation to offer advice (Creswell, 1998). An interview procedure is recommended. A written procedure helps you to stay on task and on time.

Here is an example interview procedure:

Step 1: If recording, test equipment in the office the day before the interview. Purchase any needed supplies (i.e., batteries for the recorder).

Step 2: Travel to the interview site.

Step 3: Engage in small talk to put the interviewee at ease.

Step4: Inform the interviewee of the purpose of the interview

Step 5: Assure the interviewee that the interview is confidential.

Step 6: If recording, get the interviewee's verbal permission to tape record.

Step 7: Ask if the interviewee is ready for you to begin recording.

Step 8: Record the following information either verbally or in your notes:

- Date
- Time
- Location
- Participant pseudonym
- Interviewer's name

Step 9: Conduct the interview (using the protocol)

Step 10: Watch the time and do not go over time

Step 11: Thank the interviewee for participating

Step 12: Return to the office to review notes and reflect on the interview. Reflecting is important because it can provide a context for the interview. What was the mood of the person being interviewed? Were they engaged or distracted? Did they have an agenda separate from the topic of interest? What were the key findings from the interview?

Step 13: If recorded, transcribe the recording and reflect some more.

Timing and Length

Timing is important for all interviews and should be considered before contacting potential interviewees. Is there a certain day of the week or time of day that the person is likely available? If you are interviewing fast-food managers about food safety training needs of their employees, the lunch hour is the worst possible time to call on them for an interview. The afternoon, say 2 p.m., might be much better.

When you contact the interviewee to invite them to participate in an interview, it's important to know how long the interview will last. Practicing questions in advance and thinking through possible answers can help you gain a sense of how long the interview will take. A useful step is to interview friends, family or coworkers to help determine the approximate length of the interview, to help build confidence in the questions and the interview process, and to identify any questions that are unclear. To be considerate of people's time and attention spans, ideally the interview should not last more than 30 minutes.

Focus Groups

Focus groups are planned discussions to capture perceptions from a select group of people. Focus groups have multiple uses including needs assessment, program development, evaluation and marketing (Krueger & Casey, 2009; Martens, 2010). Focus groups are useful when you want to understand experiences, viewpoints and/or impressions. Focus groups can provide depth and breadth of information while helping to build relationships with clients (Martens, 2010). The ideal size of a focus group is seven to 10 people (Kreuger, 1988; Krueger & Casey, 2009; Smithson, 2008). The focus group moderator is critically important because the group discussion is many times reflective of his/her skills and values.

Why Focus Groups?

Focus groups have many characteristics that make them well-suited for Extension work including the needs assessment process. First, focus groups tend to lend themselves to open-ended questions. These questions are helpful for thinking about complex problems and programs. The information gained from focus groups can help address problems at the program design stage.

Focus groups are useful when:
- You need visual aids
- You ask sensitive questions
- You need a group to develop ideas
- Interaction and "building on ideas" will provide useful information
- One person shares and it triggers a memory for someone else.

- Time to collect information is limited
- People get along

Participant Selection

- Consider seven to 10 people for a single session. Consider those who would be comfortable with one another, but do not necessarily know one another. Consider diversity in gender, race/ethnicity, residence and other areas to offer rich perspectives.
- Plan two to three focus group sessions with different people. This provides you with a greater cross-section of your clients and allows you to see patterns across the groups.
- Consider selecting participants who have a similar association to the topic being discussed. As an illustration, if you are assessing infant and child nutrition, select participants who are all parents. Another group might be all elected officials.

Analyze your data

One disadvantage of focus groups is that the data can be challenging to analyze as compared to questionnaires (Martens, 2010). In general terms, you can analyze your data by doing these two tasks:

1. Identify common responses within each focus group; these are referred to as common themes.
2. Compare and contrast themes across the different focus groups.

Complete Activity 5.3 in your workbook.

Session 5.4: Utilization

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

1. The difference between quantitative and qualitative data; and
2. How to interpret data.

Introduction

Needs assessment should be a multitiered approach — one source of information is not going to provide a comprehensive understanding of an issue or your county. When looking at data from different sources, it is important to make sure you have different types of information — both quantitative (hard numbers and percentages) and qualitative (open-ended comments, focus group and other group discussion). For each method, there is an appropriate way to interpret data.

Quantitative data

For quantitative data, it is important to start with a description. If you conducted a survey, answer the following questions:

1. How many people received the survey?
2. Was this a specific group of people (for example, TNCEP coalition members, agriculture producers or teachers) or was the survey sent to a sample from the community?
3. How many people responded?
4. Describe the respondents by gender, race/ethnicity, age, location.

Now look at the actual findings. Calculate the findings for each question either as a percentage or mean based upon the question. Look for similarities and differences. Think about your expectations. Do the findings agree with or contradict what you thought would happen? Do the findings agree with the information that you found during the document review?

Qualitative data

For qualitative data, again start with a description. Answer the following questions:

1. How many people were invited to participate (specifically for the focus group or advisory committee meetings)?
2. How many people attended?
3. How many people actively participated in the process? (This number would represent the amount of people who spoke or contributed during the process, if known. Sometimes the group is large but only a few participants talk.)
4. If applicable, describe the respondents by gender, race/ethnicity, age, location.

Now look at the actual findings. Sort and compile data into response categories and subcategories. Look for trends and patterns in the data. Coding is one technique to organize the data. Start out with codes that you would expect to find based on the participants. For example, if you conducted a focus group with parents of young children, "day care" could be one code that you would expect to find. You will create other codes as you read through the data. Look for ideas and words that are mentioned frequently. Using the example of young parents, you might find that "money" or "finances" come up frequently, or concerns about "picky eaters" or "potty-training." As you examine the statements associated with different codes, look at the context. Did different people mention these ideas? How many times did participants include specific words? Individual responses often provoke different ideas, but it is important to look for issues and ideas that are mentioned several times by different people.

Putting the Findings Together

Once you have looked at the findings separately by method, it is time to put the results together. Now look for similarities and differences. What were the major findings from each method? Are these findings similar or were there differences?

It is possible some findings contradict other findings. For example, a document review could identify bankruptcy as a major issue for your county. However, you conducted several focus groups, and focus group members did not feel bankruptcy was important. They did not see a need for programming for this issue. Your Advisory Committee also felt that overall resource management specifically relating to spending food dollars wisely was more important. It is important to keep in mind that some issues are sensitive and might not emerge from focus groups or open listening sessions. People might react more positively to programs that deal with issues from a broader standpoint rather than bankruptcy class. The sections on setting priorities provide tips for dealing with needs assessments that include contradictory findings.

Because needs assessments take time and resources, it is important to share results with others in the community. Key stakeholders who have an interest in community issues should be informed through meetings and reports. Reports are helpful because you can articulate the needs in the community as well as demonstrate ways Extension can help meet those needs. Newsletters and media reports can reach a broader audience and can help you promote Extension because you can explain your involvement with the community as well as inform the community about programs to address those needs.

Tailor the report to the specific audience. For example, reports to stakeholders and consumers need to be short and contain charts and other graphics summarizing findings. Reports to a specific funder might need to be more detailed.

Numbers and statements work together well. Numbers tell what is going on, but statements can illustrate those numbers.

Complete Activity 5.4 in your workbook.

Concluding remarks

Needs assessment is important because it helps an organization determine the gaps that are preventing it from reaching its desired goals. In A Guide to Performing a Needs Assessment and a Gap Analysis, these gaps can exist in either knowledge, practices, or skills.

There are different approaches that can be used when planning for a farmer needs assessment. You will need to always adapt your assessment with the intended results.

A good needs assessment combines discussion and field observation to identify the actual problems facing farmers, the "true cause" of those problems and possible solutions based on discussion with farmers, researchers and extension workers. Recommendations are discussed and developed with farmers based on the farmers' resources and circumstances.

Complete the summative assessment in your workbook.

Complete the post-assessment in your workbook.

Glossary

Definitions

Word	Definition
Acute	An event that happens in the short term or immediately.
Agro-ecological zones	Geographical areas with similar climatic conditions that determine their ability to support agriculture.
Bias	When you collect data, you will expect to get a certain result from the information. Bias refers to the difference between the actual results that were generated from the data analysis and the results you expected to get.
Brainstorm	To come up with many different ideas in a group and write them down to choose which ideas fit the situation best.
Chronic	An event that happens more slowly over a longer period of time.
Culture	A collection of customs and habits adopted and evolved by a group of people to help them conduct their life.
Cultural norms	What is considered acceptable behavior determined by the culture.
Data	Facts and statistics collected together for reference or analysis.
Discriminatory access	This is when certain members in a community are prevented from accessing resources or opportunities based on their gender or age.

Word	Definition
Dignity	The state of being worthy of respect.
Diversity	A variety of different cultures or traditions within a group.
Domestication	Growing and developing wild food plants to turn them into the cultivated crops we know today. Taming wild animals over time to keep them as livestock.
Dynamic process	A process that is constantly changing.
Ethnic	As in an ethnic group, it refers to a smaller group of people within a larger population that shares the same language, cultural traditions or religion.
Ethnographic studies	Systematic studies of people and cultures.
Family ties	Relationships through birth or marriage that cause people to have loyalty to their family and extended family.
Food security	Having reliable access to affordable, nutritious food in sufficient quantity.
Gender	Masculine or feminine attributes assigned to men and women in different societies.
Gender roles	Tasks and responsibilities that are assigned to either male or female members of a community based on cultural expectations.
Geographic information systems	A computer system for capturing, storing, checking and displaying data related to positions on the Earth's surface.

Word	Definition
Hierarchical structures	Different levels of management within an organization or team, where one level of management reports to the level above it.
Inclusive local community	A community in which all people are accepted and included in the decision-making processes in the community.
Income bracket	A term used to describe whether a household is wealthy, poor or has enough income to meet their needs.
Land tenure	Who has ownership of land according to the law.
Livelihood assets assessment	An assessment of all resources available to a community, including human capital and other assets such as land, crops, livestock, water sources and infrastructure.
Livelihoods zoning	The process of grouping together geographical areas where people have the same access to food and income and access to the same markets.
Macroeconomic policies	Policies implemented by the government that affects trade of a larger area or a country as a whole. Some policies can also affect global trade.
Mentee	A person who lacks skills and experience in a certain field and needs to be advised and supported by a mentor.
Mentor	A person who has experience and expertise in a certain field who advises the mentee.

Word	Definition
Midcourse corrections	Changes made to a plan when it is already in action so that the best results are obtained when all the steps are completed.
Multicultural society	A society that is made up of different cultural groups living together in the same community or area.
Non-probability sampling	Any sampling method where some units have no chance of being selected or the probability of selection is unknown.
Probability sampling	A sampling method used when every unit has a chance of being selected, the probability of being selected is known and the selection of the sample is made using random methods.
Pseudo	False, not real.
Resilience	The ability to recover from hardship or disaster.
Satellite imagery	Images of the Earth's surface taken by satellites that provide details not otherwise shown on maps.
Societal norms	The way of doing things in a society that is accepted by all members as the correct way of behaving in that context.
Stakeholder mapping	Identifying all stakeholders and which have the most influence in the community.
Statistical efficiency	Making sure that the statistics you generate from your data are a true reflection of the actual situation in the field.

Word	Definition
Watershed maps	Maps of rivers, basins or seas in an area. A farmer need assessment: Farmer Information Needs Assessment (FINA) is one of the five key principles of the revised extension approach. It is the process of finding out the key problems and opportunities which farmers face, and the types of information that they require, in order to provide a responsive extension service. Data: facts and statistics collected together for reference or analysis.

Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS) is about enhancing the performance of advisory services so that they can better serve farm families and rural producers, thus contributing to improved livelihoods in rural areas and the sustainable reduction of hunger and poverty. Rural advisory services help to empower farmers and better integrate them in systems of agricultural innovations.

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