COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT TRAINING & SIMULATION
Day 2

The main objective of this document is to briefly outline the methodology for community assessment training and simulation which shall complement training in SQUEAC (Day 1) while leaving adequate space for adaptation by each facilitator.

The training module is designed in a very logical manner, allowing participants to digest information as they move through different sections and apply them immediately in practical exercises and simulations. The aim is to activate their analytical skills, which they will need during the investigation, and to position them as active contributors rather than passive doers.

Activity 1: Human Knot

*Human Knot* is an excellent teambuilding activity aiming to teach new people to work together. The activity will allow the facilitator to observe how different team members react to obstacles, how they communicate and contribute to the solution. It will also disclose natural leaders and team’s reactions to their leadership. All this may be very useful during the initial team composition and the first day challenges. Debrief at the end of the activity will offer an opportunity to exchange ideas on a variety of topics and their link to the SQUEAC investigation.

**Instructions:**

1. This activity is suitable for any group size but a group of 10-16 people is ideal. In case of a bigger number of participants, split the group in two.
2. Ask the group to form a circle (shoulder to shoulder).
3. Ask everyone to lift their right arm and reach across to take the hand of a person standing in front of them.
4. Ask everyone to lift their right arm and reach across to take the hand of another person standing in front of them.
5. Make sure that no one is holding both hands of the same person or hands of the person standing next to them.
6. Perform the test of feasibility: ask one person to squeeze the hand of another person and let the signal travel around. If, at the end of the test, all people felt the squeeze on both of their hands, the circle is complete and the task is feasible.
7. **The aim is to untangle the knot without letting go hands of persons one is holding.** In other words, the group needs to find a way to form an alternative circle where a person to their right will be the person holding their right hand and the person to their left is the person holding their left hand.
8. The activity normally lasts 15-30 min. If you work with more than one group, add an aspect of competition to the activity to motivate groups to move faster.
9. The group should communicate among themselves and perform necessary moves but never let go hands of their partners. If you see them doing it, you can impose punishments (e.g. adding blindfolds).
10. At the end of the activity, debrief with all participants. *How did it go? How did you feel? How did your feelings change with time? What was your strategy? Who came up with the solution? Who was leading the group? How may this activity represent what we’ll be doing in the field? What messages may we want to teach you?*

* The selection of debrief questions depends on your observations. Be perceptive and creative with key messages you want to communicate. This activity may become one of the highlights of the training which the participants will most likely not forget.
Activity 2: Community assessment

This is the first learning section of Day 2 where you should try to squeeze all the theory of qualitative data collection for SQUEAC. Make your presentation as informative and as entertaining as you possibly can. This is a 90 min session which will most probably exhaust your audience. Adult learners are known to pay attention 8-12 minutes at the time so try to use different facilitator tools to captivate their interest and help them remember. Change the rhythm of your presentation every 8 minutes, change the activity every 20-30 minutes and give them a well-deserved break after 90 minutes.

Your presentation should primarily cover the following topics:

i. brief explanation of the “community assessment”
   Ask your audience to define the “community”. How do they understand the term? What does it encompass? Why do we need to study it?
   It is possible that you’ll be working with experienced surveyors who will not hesitate with the definition. However, they may struggle with the description of the community which they are part of. The reason behind this natural phenomenon is our (human) tendency to “discard the obvious” (because everyone knows it/everybody does it so it’s ok) which means that certain cultural/social/religious norms and behaviours are never talked about or questioned. Show your participants the importance to evaluate all aspects and make them think what defines the community where you’ll be working. You don’t need to collect the answers; this is only the beginning of an important brainstorming process, fruits of which you will collect at a later stage.

ii. overview of “areas of interest”
   Following your definition of the community, ask the participants to name areas which the community assessment should attempt to explore. This is an important consciousness raiser which will contribute to the quality of data collection process throughout the investigation. Not only will it help the participants to gather information you’re looking for but they will also be more creative and natural during interviews (not sticking solely to questions on your interviews guides). Actively contributing to the content of this section will help them remember what to ask for while they are in the field.

iii. explanation of “stages” of the community assessment
   Your participants now understand the purpose and content of the community assessment but they are most likely wondering how you’d like to make it happen. Quench their thirst by explaining how the community assessment will be organised and how it will complement the SQUEAC.

iv. overview of “tools and methods” available for the community assessment
   Quench another “how” by presenting a list of available tools and methods for the community assessment. Ask them to define each in their own words and point out important differences. Use this opportunity to map out which of your participants have already led (focus) group discussions and/or semi-structured interviews and ask them to share their experience. How was it organised? What were the challenges? How did they go about them? What would they do differently? What should they never forget? Listen attentively and validate their contributions. This exchange may be one of the most beneficial learning sessions not only for your participants but also for you. Look for context-specific nuances which may have influence your organisation and planning.

v. list of key informants
   Following the training on SQUEAC (Day 1) and the extent of the qualitative data collection, ask your participants to draw a list of key informants which should be interviewed. You may choose to break them into groups (to change the rhythm) but only if you have enough time before the break. Allow not more than five minutes for reflection. Ask one group to present while others comment. There will surely be overlapping answers!!

vi. hints of practical advice
   This is a wrap-up section of your presentation and a chance to set a tone for the community assessment. There is no time to lose so make sure your participants are clear on how to approach communities respectfully. Make a list of key messages and instruct participants to respect them at all times. The investigation should not disturb the targeted community or its relation with the host organisation/health facilities. Make sure that the participants know how to react in tricky situations.
Activity 3: Interview guides

This is a tipping point of your training day and the last bit of the “theoretical” part. Your participants should have a good understanding of the work to be done by this point so start testing them!

1. Explain the **structure** of the interview guide (themes, probes and differentiation by key informants).

2. Pick any three overarching themes and ask the participants to brainstorm on probes. *What questions would they ask the interviewees to learn more about their understanding of the subject?* This is a crucial step in your participants’ understanding of interview guides’ composition, of the depth of the information sought as well as of the need to use their imagination and creativity to collect high quality data.

3. Make a link between this activity and the composition of interview guides. Comment on the necessity to complete each guide to the extent possible, but not necessarily in the same order. Reiterate the importance of adding ad hoc questions, whenever circumstances allow for it.

4. Explain how the collected data will be analysed on a daily basis and used at a later stage.

Activity 4: Dear community I

**Dear community** is a series of simulation exercises with a double purpose and a double objective. Firstly, they will boost your participants’ understanding of the actual content of interview guides and the most efficient manner of working with them, increasing their self-esteem, motivation to contribute and excel. Secondly, they will give you an opportunity to observe your participants and correct eventual mistakes (whenever necessary), decreasing a possibility of setbacks or data inconsistencies.

**Dear community I** is a simulation exercise of a semi-structured group discussion.

1. Assign two participants as surveyors, three groups of two as observers while the rest will play a role of community members.

2. Change location (e.g. use outside premises, if available) to reflect a potential community scenery. If not possible, re-arrange the seating so that community members are seated in the middle, surveyors in front of them, and observers on the sides. Make sure that there are no obstructions of view for any of the participants.

3. Ask the surveyors to commence the group discussion as they would do normally (with all necessary presentations, complimentary questions, etc.) and to start making their way through the interview guide.

4. Ask the community members to respond to questions, adding a little spice to the exercise as they see fit. Invite your "community members" to assume different community roles or personas, asking funny or difficult questions, which would test the work ethic of the two surveyors.

5. Ask the observers to call for a time-out whenever they spot inconsistencies (content, behaviour, etc.). Call for a time-out yourself if inconsistencies are not observed.

6. After cca. 15-20 minutes, start switching roles. Inactive observers will switch roles with active community members, inactive community members with surveyors. Make sure that all participants are equally involved and enjoy themselves!! More they enjoy more they will play, more they’ll get out of it 😊

7. End the simulation exercise after cca. 60 minutes (or as soon as the interview guide is completed).

8. **DEBRIEF EXTENSIVELY!**
Activity 5: Dear community II

**Dear community II** is a simulation of a semi-structured interview. Its aim is to further enhance participants’ learning while collecting usable qualitative data. Participants should work in pairs or groups of four (whatever is more feasible) interviewing key programme staff (supervisors, community mobilisers, etc.) and/or community volunteers (if available).

1. Ask participants to form pairs or groups of four and assign an interviewee for each.
2. Distribute respective interview guides and invite them to start the interview.
3. Oscillate among groups, observing them individually and providing an extra support.
4. End the simulation exercise after cca. 30 minutes (or as soon as the interview guide is completed).
5. **DEBRIEF EXTENSIVELY!**
   What were the main challenges of this exercise? How was it different from the preceding simulation? What did you learn? What is still unclear? etc.

Activity 6: Let the beat build

**Let the beat build** is an innovative teambuilding activity aiming to teach new teams to work together and coordinate their actions. It may be an important skill in the days to come, lowering a possibility of occurrence of certain logistical (or other) frustrations. In this training, it may serve as well serve as an energiser or a good introduction of the last informative session.

**Instructions:**

1. This activity is suitable for any group size. Ask the participants to rearrange their seats in a circle, forming smaller groups of three or four within.
2. Ask each group to create their own beat (with hands, feet, mouth, pens or pencils, etc.). The beat should catchy and easy to reproduce.
3. Ask each group to present their beat, asking other participants to join in.
4. After all groups have presented their beat, ask all groups to reproduce their beat on your signal. The result will most likely be horrible (everyone making the noise at the same time).
5. Ask the participants whether they liked it. Why? Why not?
6. Ask the group to work together and create a nice piece of music with each group’s beat represented. Give them few minutes to figure it out. If you’re lucky, they’ll come back with a marvellous orchestra of sounds, adding tones and rhythms you never dreamed off.
7. **Debrief!** How did it go? How did you feel? Who was leading the group? What was the difference between the first and second part of the exercise? How may this activity represent what we’ll be doing in the field? What messages may we want to teach you?

Activity 7: SQUEAC Logistics

This is the last activity of the day and your participants may be as eager to go home as you are but you need to prepare them for the “real thing”.

i. Review team’s roles and responsibilities vis-à-vis different stages of SQUEAC and Community Assessment.
ii. Explain daily team rotations and the necessity to expose them to different tasks.
iii. Distribute SQUEAC calendars and contact lists.
iv. Review daily routine (morning meetings @ xx, daily restitution @ yy) and make sure they do not limit themselves to the field work only.
v. Open the floor for additional questions, as necessary.

***END OF TRAINING***