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# COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT FOR HEALTH (CSH) PROGRAMME

**FORMATIVE RESEARCH IN ACTION ASSESSMENT**

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## 1.0 Background

To help build the capacity of the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) staff to conduct formative research, the Communications Support for Health (CSH) project implemented Formative Research in Action (FRIA), an activity that targets staff at the provincial level. This initiative used a blended approach that combines in-classroom learning and on-the-job training to increase knowledge and improve formative research skills.

In order to identify the needs for training and support in formative research, CSH conducted a needs assessment with GRZ staff in nine provinces. The needs assessment explored recent formative research activities, previous training of researchers, research outcomes and challenges, and interest in participating in formative research training. Utilising the tested curriculum from the formative research training for Central GRZ staff (*Understanding Formative Research: Methods, Management, and Ethics for Behaviour Change Communications*) as a reference point for key formative research concepts, CSH probed provincial staff on their current knowledge and skills.

The needs assessment revealed that the participating provinces were not using formative research to inform their interventions at the provincial level, and they relied primarily on reviewing quantitative data generated by the Health Management Information System on selected health indicators. Participants expressed interest in learning more about formative research and how it could enhance their programming. Results of the provincial assessment were used to inform the implementation of FRIA.

## 2.0 Description of Formative Research in Action

The first portion of FRIA consisted of the formative research workshop. The objective of this three-and-a-half-day training was to enhance the knowledge and skills of participants conducting formative research to inform the development of strategic behaviour change communication (BCC) strategies and campaigns.

Following the workshop, participants had an opportunity to apply for CSH technical assistance awards in developing and implementing a formative research study within their own province. The technical assistance entailed providing remote and onsite assistance to GRZ provincial staff members as they developed their research plan, conducted fieldwork, analysed results, and presented their findings. Specifically, the technical assistance process consisted of the following nine phases:

- Technical assistance kick-off,
- Development of research protocol and instruments
- Submission of protocol to Zambian Research Ethics Committee,
- Preparation of research logistics,
- Training of research assistants,
- Field data collection,
- Debriefing of data collection,
- Analysis and reporting, and
- Presentation of research results.

In early 2013, CSH selected the North Western province to participate in the initiative, and has provided technical assistance to the province through mid-2014 for its study on maternal nutrition. The province was provided with a technical assistance guide (Appendix A) and a short refresher training on formative research (Appendix B).

### **3.0 Objectives of the Formative Research in Action Assessment**

CSH conducted an assessment of FRIA with the North Western province to determine the usefulness of the initiative in enhancing the province's formative research skills. The assessment focused on the following research questions:

- How effective was the FRIA model of participation in a training followed by receipt of direct technical assistance?
  - How useful was the training in preparing the province to work collaboratively with CSH on its study?
  - How useful was the technical assistance in reinforcing the concepts from the training?
  - What, if any, were the perceived gaps in the model and how it was implemented?
- How effective was the initiative in building the capacity of the province to manage formative research studies and to use the results to inform its BCC efforts?
- What are the plans for the province in applying findings from the formative research to the development of BCC efforts?
- What challenges does the province foresee in conducting future formative research studies?
- What are the lessons learned for implementing similar technical assistance initiatives at the provincial level?

### **4.0 Methods**

CSH conducted a focus group discussion with key members from the North Western province during the dissemination meeting, featuring the findings from the province's maternal nutrition study. A total of five members from the participating research team were interviewed. The assessment was based on a guide (Appendix C) developed around the research questions in section 3.0. The research, monitoring, and evaluation (RME) team from CSH analysed the data using a notes-based analysis.

In addition to analysing the focus group, the RME team documented its lessons learned throughout the process of planning and implementing the initiative.

The findings from the focus group and internal lessons learned have been compiled into this report. Following the completion of the report, CSH will develop a technical assistance guide for GRZ encapsulating the adapted process for FRIA based on the assessment findings.

### **5.0 Limitations of the Assessment**

The assessment only had one limitation. The assessment was conducted by a CSH staff member who was working closely with the team being assessed, and this could have resulted in biased findings. However, all efforts were made to minimise bias and to obtain objective views from the participants.

## 6.0 Focus Group Results

### 6.1 Formative Research in Action Model

The assessment obtained valuable feedback on the FRIA model of starting with a training and following with hands-on technical assistance in implementing a study. Participants felt that the model was most effective because it provided a real opportunity for participants to apply their learning from the training, and it put theory into practice.

*It is a total package, which truly benefits the learner. The practical part helps consolidate the theory component of the learning process. In most cases, we only receive theory without the practical aspect, but with this one (FRIA model), we were also given the opportunity to put what we learnt in practice.*

*To learn and do is the best way to assimilate; normally theory sounds very easy but now going into the practical just shows how difficult it can be to implement the activities of issues learnt in three days and the hiccups that come with the implementation.*

*I feel we have an edge over those who just learnt the theory because the practical brought a novel experience altogether.*

### 6.2 The Usefulness of the Training and the Technical Support

During the assessment, participants were asked to provide feedback about the usefulness of the training and the technical support provided by CSH. Participants expressed a lot of appreciation for the training, saying that it provided a good foundation to help the team to eventually develop a complete and well-thought-out research protocol and conduct all the research processes, such as applying for ethics clearance and all necessary approvals.

*The training is what helped us to come up with the research package (the protocol and all the required tools) that we submitted for ethics clearance, and so I think the training provided a good foundation for us to implement the research. The training provided the guidance on the steps, sections, and processes required to implement a study, starting from the development of the protocol, obtaining IRB, and finally get approval for conducting the research. It really prepared us for the study.*

*I think the training was relevant, but the time was too little to assimilate on the time allocated for covering the modules. As for me, most of the aspects or concept really came to sink in my mind when we came to do the practical thing than during the training.*

### 6.3 Usefulness of Concepts in the Training

CSH obtained feedback about the usefulness of the training's concepts from FRIA participants, who thought that the most useful concepts, particularly when applied to the maternal nutrition study, were the selection of formative research methods and identification of target audiences.

*The training was useful in putting together the research paper. For example, it helped us select the appropriate methodology to use in our research, given the target audience and the type of setting we were working in.*

*It also helped us to clearly define the target audiences. The major component that I feel was very cardinal was the methodology component of the training, which I think forms the basis of the research—Who you include in the study and also do the comparative analysis that people were asking for during the dissemination. Everything starts from there.*

*I appreciated the aspect of how to select target audiences. I think these were some of the key concepts, as they allow you to talk to the right people to help you answer the right questions and obtain the right answers from the right people.*

#### **6.4 Usefulness of Exercises and Group Work**

Participants appreciated the design of the training, which offered theoretical understanding as well as practical work during the training. All the participants appreciated the training structure because it allowed them to consult and clarify doubts with each other. They also reported that the exercises allowed them to understand the dynamics within their team, which made it easy for them to work together when implementing the formative research on maternal nutrition. Participants reported that the experience during the exercises helped to identify the strengths and weakness of each member of their research team, information that was later used when roles were assigned for the maternal nutrition study.

*The exercises provided a time of reflection and an opportunity to clarify the concepts among ourselves during those meetings—in situations where someone missed the concepts and another member of the team grasped it. It also helped with strengthening group dynamics, as people were grouped from the same province who were eventually required to work together later on during the programme. People got to know each other and identify each other's strengths; that helped during the implementation. It was nice that we did the exercises. Further, the training package was a complete package and very helpful. The participant's manual has the notes and the exercises. That provides a practical in-class learning process and also provided a reference document to use while back in the field office (province).*

#### **6.5 Gaps on Topics Covered During the Training**

Participants also identified some gaps in the training module topics. They felt that the training package was insufficient in addressing methods for qualitative analysis and that the training package should have included modules on how to analyse formative research data. As much as the participants understood that the intent of FRIA was to provide them with the basic skills for managing formative research projects, not necessarily the skills for implementing them, they still believed that it was important for them to learn the skills to actually conduct analysis, because they eventually have to analyse the data. Participants believed that if they have to adequately manage formative research, then they must have all the required skills and expertise needed for report development.

*I think the training was missing an important topic on how to analyse and how to use analysis packages. It should have gone a little bit deeper to discuss the analysis process. I think we should embrace technology. We should also discuss other alternatives to software if, for example, there are no resources to buy the software, just like we did where we did not have software but we were still able to conduct analysis and still achieve our goal of developing the report.*

*It would have been good if the training allowed participants to come up with hypothetical topics or even the topics they could have been interested in and developed all the draft protocol and tools during the training. It would have been good too if we developed the actual tools and conducted interviews during the training.*

## **6.6 Effectiveness of the Technical Assistance**

The technical support that CSH provided was perceived to be effective, in that the support team was very responsive to requests from the provincial team. Participants reported that the CSH team provided prompt support upon request from the provincial team; for example, reviewing documents, responding to requests for information, and providing guidance during the entire research process. Participants felt, however, that communication between CSH and the provincial team should not have been through one contact person, because this caused a disruption in the flow of information, especially when the contact person did not circulate the information to the rest of the team. They felt that it would have been better if everyone was copied in all communication, so that any member of the team could respond if the main contact person was not available.

*We were happy that whenever we needed the support from CSH, the support was there in record time. The main barrier really was our availability to attend to the assignments that were given to us in the implementation. We were distracted by the many programmes that we are involved in, and that tended to delay some of the activities.*

*However, the communication in future should have been copied to the entire team, rather than to one person who was expected to relay the communication to the rest of the team. That resulted in delays, especially if the team leader who was the point of contact was having a busy schedule.*

Participants provided additional feedback about the extent to which the technical assistance aligned with the concepts and guidance provided in the training and the training manuals. They reported that the technical assistance actually reinforced and broadened their understanding of the different concepts and processes.

*The technical assistance reinforced and broadened the spectrum of understanding of what we had from the theoretical part.*

## **6.7 Effectiveness of the Technical Assistance in Supporting the Implementation**

The support provided during the implementation of formative research was highly appreciated by the provincial team. Participants reported that the technical assistance helped the team to connect

the various pieces of information received during the training to form a complete picture of the entire formative research process. The provincial team unanimously felt that the technical assistance was effective and adequate in bringing the research undertaking to fruition.

*Let me illustrate by saying; the concept of technical assistance can be likened to a new graduate who does not know how to operate a high technology machine because s/he may not have learnt about it. It is as good as telling the teacher that the example you gave was in whole numbers and now you are giving us fractions; you reach a dead end. So the technical assistance was able to open us up to appreciate and make connections of the pieces that we had learnt during the training.*

*The technical assistance helped to keep us on track; it was like a mentorship programme, there were many new things that kept coming and coming. We were helped to change certain ways of doing certain things like we have previously done in other studies we have been involved in.*

*We always got feedback and useful comments whenever we shared our documents.*

## **6.8 Challenges in the Implementation of the Formative Research in Action**

The team also provided feedback regarding the challenges experienced while participating in FRIA, citing difficulties in developing the research protocol and instruments and in conducting the analysis.

### **6.8.1 Development of Research Protocol and Instruments**

Participants reported that developing the research protocol posed a lot of challenges to the team because it was difficult for them to find literature on their chosen topic, which was maternal nutrition in Zambia.

*The difficulty of finding literature due to the scant information on the topic area that was selected by the team. We wanted to give up at some point because of lack of availability of literature on which to premise the research.*

### **6.8.2 Analysis and Reporting**

With regard to analysis, the provincial team felt that the training package should include a comprehensive module on analysis so that training participants can be empowered with adequate skills to carry research through all the stages, including analysis and report writing. Participants specifically requested that the analysis module include sections on how to identify themes, sub-themes, categories, and how to systematically arrange the data to facilitate data coding and subsequently analyse the data. They felt that it was difficult to assimilate the concepts when the definitions and execution of identifying themes and other variables was conducted in one session, during the analysis workshop.

*One area which I feel was and is still a challenge is the analysis of qualitative research. Considering that the tools that we use were too detailed and too big. I remember receiving recommendations that we should restrict questions to approximately 15. But in this one, we had about 30 questions and administering it to 30 people; that is too much to analyse. Therefore, we need a little bit more assistance. It would also have been more helpful if the concepts of developing the*

*coding dictionary were described a little bit more (during the training). We would need more help in the aspects of describing and developing the coding dictionary, the themes, the categories, sub-themes, how to arrange or prepare the data in a systematic way to allow you to isolate your themes in a systematic and coherent manner. That was a little challenging and where we will need more assistance in future.*

*In future, you need to do a little bit more, in the areas of developing the coding dictionary, what is a theme; how you develop themes and how to separate themes and sub-themes and categories and generally how to sort the data.*

## **6.9 Building of Capacity to Manage Formative Research Studies**

The provincial team was confident about its increased capacity to conduct formative research. Participants reported that since participating in the training and finally implementing and disseminating research results, they were confident that they understood research concepts. They were able to develop a research protocol, seek required approvals to administer the study, conduct the study, and coordinate the dissemination of findings. They felt that they now have adequate capacity to conduct small-scale formative research to help their province to systematically identify solutions to health problems.

*We are now familiar with research language; we are able to conduct research and finally we are able to disseminate findings. We are also able to use research to identify real health problems in our communities and employ appropriate research principles to undertake systematic enquiry and help identify solutions to health problems. We may not be able to conduct full-fledged research due to financial limitations, but we are able to conduct formative research on a small scale.*

The provincial team members also shared how their understanding of how to apply formative research results to BCC efforts has changed since participating in the initiative. They felt that they will now be able to change their approach of prescribing solutions and adopt participatory methods to gather input on the feasibility of behaviour change and inform solutions that are driven by the community themselves, rather than by what GRZ or health providers determine to be the best solutions.

*The understanding now is that we have learnt from the respondents that for them to effectively learn nutrition issues, there is need to understand methods that the local people themselves feel are better ways such as the use of cooking demonstrations rather than the usual way of giving talks.*

## **6.10 Plans for the Future**

Regarding future plans, a challenge is the lack of funding or a mandate for provincial-level offices to design strategies or develop information exchange communication (IEC) and BCC materials, as most of these documents are developed at the national level. However, the province members reported that they are eager to share the findings with the partners and players in nutrition programmes in the province, by seizing opportunities to share the results whenever there are provincial meetings to discuss health matters, and also when conducting regular site visits to health centres in the province.

*The challenge is that there are no funds or indeed the mandate for sub-national level (provincial levels) offices to design strategies and or develop IEC; most of the documents are developed at the national level. However, the other members stated that it may not necessarily be development of hard copy materials, but even just sharing the research findings through wide dissemination in various health centres through the different opportunities and forums as and when the opportunity arises so that health workers can be availed with the information during various trainings they are involved in with the SMAGs (Safe Motherhood Action Groups), health workers, and nutritionists.*

The province members were eager to seize every opportunity to apply their newly acquired skills to conduct formative research on a small scale to find answers to community problems. However, participants were quick to mention that they are likely to face financial challenges in implementing large-scale formative research. They also stated that they are less likely to be allowed time to conduct full-fledged formative research due to a myriad of other competing demands on their time, as they are not hired to provide research expertise as their core responsibilities.

*The big challenges will be the lack of financial resources and the time. The skills and capacity is there, but the time and the financial resources and the lack of support from our supervisors who may not appreciate the time we invest in conducting research rather than our core responsibilities.*

## **6.11 Provincial Recommendations**

The provincial team made the following recommendations for future initiatives that would follow a similar model as FRIA:

- Participants felt that it would be more useful and more impactful if the FRIA initiative was packaged in such a way that it began with training in formative research, then technical assistance in conducting the formative research, and continued to the actual development of a communication strategy. This would have helped the team to translate the lessons learnt from the research into implementing activities in the communities.
- CSH should consider using the North Western provincial team to roll out the FRIA initiative to other provinces so that the initiative can live beyond CSH. The province members felt that they would be able to plan their time and be available to support such an initiative for as long as the rollout was approved by the permanent secretary at the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Community Development Mother and Child Health and the director general at the National HIV/AIDS/STI/TB Council.
- CSH should add the analysis component to the module and also add modules on how to use analysis software, so that participating teams are able to gain wide expertise.
- The province recommended that CSH should roll out the training and extend the training to staff members from new ministries, so that they are also equipped with the skills in conducting formative research.
- The team further recommended that this initiative be adopted as a standard model of training by the different partners who offer training to GRZ staff. The team recommended that, because the training manual is a good resource, it should be shared with a wider

audience so that others who did not take part in the training may be exposed to this knowledge.

- The team members further recommended an increase in the duration of the formative research training because they felt that the material was too much to absorb in three days of training.
- Finally, the team recommended that participating teams should have been asked to come up with a topic prior to the training so that all the exercises could have been done on the topics they were going to investigate. This way, training participants would have been able to develop draft protocols by the end of the training and have better access to technical support during this stage. This could have been easier than choosing topics and developing the protocol and tools without technical support of CSH.

## **7.0 Internal Lessons Learned**

As a part of the assessment, CSH documented successes and challenges through each phase of the technical assistance portion of FRIA, beginning with the call for proposals for participation in the programme.

CSH found that the proposal process presented both opportunities for the application of the training concepts, as well as some notable challenges. In the development of the proposals, provinces were asked to create a basic framework for their research study, and to exhibit that they grasped some of the core lessons from the training. Despite most of the provinces expressing interest, many submitted proposals past the deadline. The provinces reported being involved in many activities and not having the time needed to complete the proposal on time. It also appeared that many of the applicants did not follow or understand the proposal instructions, which requested a basic summary of the proposed study, not a complete research protocol. In an effort to move the programme forward, CSH supported a couple of the provinces in completing their proposals and obtaining the necessary information for their application. This delay in the proposal process significantly delayed the implementation of the programme, and in the end, produced one, rather than two, completed proposals and one participating province.

Similar to the proposal process, the province's competing responsibilities affected the technical assistance kick-off meeting. Although the meeting allowed an opportunity for CSH staff to meet with the provincial research team in person and prepare for the study, several research team members were unable to attend. This incomplete attendance affected the team's ability to come to a consensus on the research methods and approach in a timely manner, because not all of the members had an opportunity to discuss their opinions and obtain guidance from CSH.

The development of the protocol and instruments also presented successes and opportunities. The province utilised its skills from the training and easily selected a topic that was relevant, a priority for the province, and appropriate for participatory research. The research team was also able to draft the protocol and accompanying research instruments; however, the team was delayed in completing these due to other commitments, which in turn delayed data collection. The team was also asked to complete its own research ethics application, with the support and review of CSH, and it was able to do so in a timely fashion.

The research team managed the data collection process very well and developed a data collection plan that was practical, making the process relatively seamless. However, despite CSH recommendations, the province was resistant to holding daily debriefing sessions identifying any issues with the instruments or data collection process. The lack of sufficient sessions made it difficult to identify problems with poor probing and transcriptions early, and instead these problems were only identified at the data analysis stage.

During data analysis and reporting, the research team exhibited skills in qualitative coding and summarising the findings. However, several of the coders were unable to complete their work on time, likely due to being new to qualitative research. This delayed the drafting and finalisation of the report.

## 8.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

- Overall, FRIA was a very positive and effective experience for the North Western province. The model of classroom-based learning, complemented by hands-on technical assistance, provided an opportunity for the province to build its capacity to conduct formative research studies. Opportunities for rolling out this model to other provinces should be explored.
- The formative research training curriculum provided a solid basis for learning the basic concepts needed to manage a formative research study. CSH recommends expanding future trainings to include additional days to allow participants to select a research topic and practise developing a protocol with the guidance of trained researchers. This extra time could also be dedicated to allowing provinces to draft an application for a future technical assistance grant, if applicable, with the support of programme staff to address any confusion with the application instructions and prevent any delays in application submissions.
- The discussion of the curriculum revealed that participants need more specific training in qualitative coding and the use of certain software. The training required to develop codebooks and operate software can be extensive and outside the purview of formative research training. Future efforts should consider developing a supplemental training or referring participants to other existing trainings that offer the needed guidance.
- Hands-on flexible technical assistance was a key component to the success of the initiative. In being responsive to the province's needs, CSH was integral in finalising the research protocol and report and emphasising the importance of the research process (e.g., application for research ethics review). Future technical assistance initiatives should plan to conduct as many in-person meetings as possible, and establish regular meetings or conference calls to ensure that the provinces are moving forward with the development of materials and addressing any challenges as soon as possible.
- The lack of funding or a mandate for provinces to conduct formative research for BCC presents significant challenges. It affects the provinces' ability to respond to requests and fulfill deliverables on time, despite their commitment to the programme. Future programming should take this reality into consideration and determine how best to manage it.

## Appendix A: Technical Assistance Guide

### Communications Support for Health

#### Formative Research in Action: Technical Assistance Guide

To help build the capacity of the Government of the Republic of Zambia staff to conduct formative research, the Communications Support for Health (CSH) project is implementing Formative Research in Action, targeting staff at the provincial level. Formative Research in Action uses a blended approach that combines in-classroom learning and on-the-job training to increase knowledge and improve formative research skills.

This guide outlines the technical assistance process that will facilitate the on-the-job-training. The technical assistance includes both remote and in-person support from CSH research staff and allows the province to take the lead in managing a formative research study with strategic guidance from CSH. In addition to providing personalised technical assistance, CSH will direct the province to sections of the Formative Research Training curriculum, as appropriate, to help guide the formative research process. The provinces also will be able to refer back to the work they produced during the training as a reminder about best practices in formative research.

#### **Phase 1: Technical Assistance Kick-Off**

Purpose: To lay the ground work for the formative research and review key concepts in conducting formative research during an in-person meeting.

- Review the technical assistance process. The research team will explain the process of technical assistance and the support CSH will provide to the province. The team will walk the province through this document, which outlines the phases of technical assistance.
- Review the grant's pre-survey results. The research team will ask any questions about the results.
- Conduct a refresher of Formative Research Training. The research team will conduct a presentation to outline the key concepts from the training and to address any questions on the formative research process in general, and specifically on the province's proposed study.
- Review the revised proposal and timeline. The research team will ask any remaining questions and work with the province to solidify its scope of work. The team also will review the timeline and revise it as needed.
- Review the project budget. The research team will ask any questions about the proposed budget and determine if the project, as proposed, is feasible. If necessary, the team will work with the province to revise the proposed research based on the availability of funds.

- Create a management plan for implementing the research. The research team will work with the province to determine staff roles on the project, depending on the available budget and the project's scope of work. The team also will discuss the role of partner organisations in implementing the research.

By the end of Phase 1, the research team and province should produce the following deliverables:

- Revised proposal
- Revised budget
- Revised timeline
- Management plan

### **Phase 2: Development of Research Protocol and Instruments**

Purpose: To develop a well-defined research protocol and instruments with remote technical assistance.

- Develop and revise the research protocol and instruments. Using the proposal as a starting point, the province will develop a summary of its protocol and research instruments (e.g., participant screener, in-depth interview guide, consent form). Through email and phone discussions, the research team will provide feedback and suggested changes to the protocol and instruments. The province will revise the protocol and instruments and submit them to the research team for final review.

By the end of Phase 2, the research team and province should produce the following deliverables:

- Draft research protocol
- Draft research instruments

### **Phase 3: Submission to Zambian Research Ethics Committee**

Purpose: To request and obtain permission to conduct the proposed formative research study with remote technical assistance.

- Develop, revise, and submit a package for ethics review. The province will draft a package that outlines the study protocol and includes the research instruments. The research team will provide direction on the needed forms and submission process. Through email and phone discussions, the team will provide feedback and suggested changes to the package. The province will revise the package and submit it to the research team for final review. The province will make any additional changes and submit the package to the review board.
- Finalise the package for ethics review. The research team will work with the province to respond to questions and comments from the research ethics committee. The province will revise the package and resubmit it to the committee.

By the end of Phase 3, the research team and province should produce the following deliverables:

- Finalised protocol and instruments
- Approval documentation

#### **Phase 4: Preparation of Research Logistics**

Purpose: To prepare to conduct the data collection from the field with remote technical assistance.

- Create a plan for the logistics for data collection. The research team will work remotely with the province to create a plan or checklist that outlines logistical issues that will need to be addressed before, during, and after the research.
- Identify research assistants. The research team will lead the effort, with input from the province, to identify and hire research assistants. The team will also provide the province with an outline of the selection process and criteria for research assistants as a reference in future studies.

By the end of Phase 4, the research team and province should produce the following deliverables:

- Logistics plan or checklist
- List of contracted research assistants

#### **Phase 5: Training of Research Assistants**

Purpose: To train research assistants in how to properly implement the study's specific protocol and use of instruments with remote and in-person technical assistance.

- Develop the training for the research assistants. The research team, with input from the province, will lead the development of the training for the research assistants. The team will demonstrate to the province how the training was developed and how it can be adapted for future studies.
- Implement the training for the research assistants. The research team will lead the in-person training of the research assistants and will work with the province to ensure that they are prepared to begin data collection.

By the end of Phase 5, the research team and province should produce the following deliverables:

- Training curriculum for research assistants
- Trained research assistants

#### **Phase 6: Field Data Collection**

Purpose: To properly implement the research protocol with remote technical assistance.

- Provide ongoing consultation in data collection. The research team will provide guidance remotely to the province on an as-needed basis throughout the data collection process. The team and province will communicate via phone at intermediate points during the collection process to discuss progress, challenges, and possible solutions in addressing the challenges.

By the end of Phase 6, the research team and province should produce the following deliverables:

- Documentation of any intermediate progress reports and challenges; and
- Qualitative data for analysis in the form of notes, transcripts, and/or recordings.

### **Phase 7: Debriefing of Data Collection**

Purpose: To create a framework for the analysis process during an in-person debriefing meeting.

- Conduct a debriefing of the data collection results. The research team will lead an in-person debriefing meeting with the province and the research assistants. The debriefing will address the fieldwork results, as well as the challenges and emerging themes based on observation. The team will also work with the province to develop an analysis plan based on the skills and resources available to the province. Analysis methods may vary from province to province.

By the end of Phase 7, the research team and province should produce the following deliverables:

- Documentation of the fieldwork results and emerging themes, and
- Analysis plan.

### **Phase 8: Analysis and Reporting**

Purpose: To strategically analyse and report on the research results with remote technical assistance.

- Provide ongoing consultation in the data collection. The research team will provide guidance remotely to the province on an as-needed basis throughout the analysis process. The team will communicate with the province as needed via phone to discuss challenges and possible solutions for the analysis. The team will review report outlines and other portions of the report as needed.
- Develop and finalise the full report. The research team will work with the province to finalise the full report, ensuring that the findings and recommendations are focused on behaviour change communications. The province will submit a completed draft for the research team to provide feedback and recommendations for revision. The province will revise the report as needed.

By the end of Phase 8, the research team and province should produce the following deliverables:

- Documentation of progress and challenges in the analysis process, and

- Final full report.

### **Phase 9: Presentation of Research Results**

Purpose: To share the results from the research and the collaborative efforts of CSH and the province during an in-person presentation.

- Develop and finalise a presentation of the research results. The research team will work with the province to develop a presentation of the research findings and recommendations. The province will draft the presentation, and the research team will provide feedback and recommendations for revisions. The province will revise the presentation as needed.
- Hold an in-person presentation. The research team will plan an in-person presentation of the research results with the province staff, national Government of the Republic of Zambia staff, and CSH senior leadership. The team will host the meeting, and the province will lead the presentation of the research results.

By the end of Phase 9, the research team and province should produce the following deliverables:

- Final presentation of research results, and
- Documentation of questions and comments from the presentation audience.

## Appendix B: Training Refresher

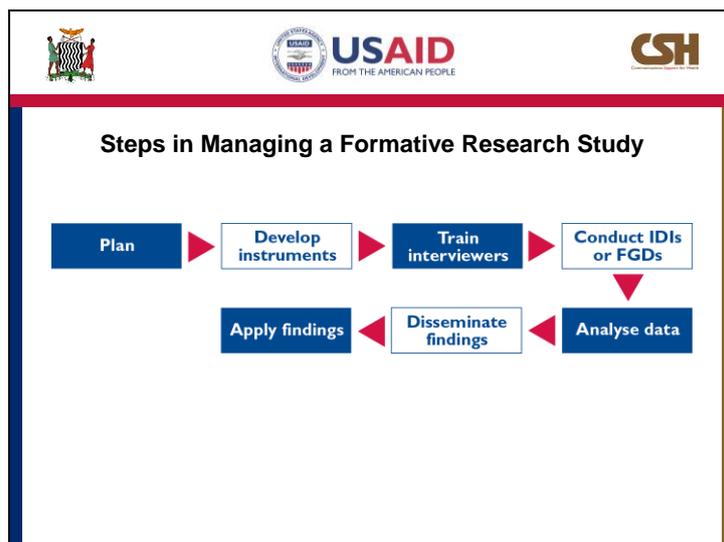
Slide 1



**Understanding Formative Research:**  
Methods, Management, and Ethics for  
Behaviour Change Communications

Training Refresher for Formative Research in Action

Slide 2



## Slide 3



**Create a Research Plan and Protocol**

- Conduct a literature review,
- Identify gaps in existing research,
- Develop research questions and objectives,
- Identify segmentation of target audiences,
- Create a realistic timeline and budget, and
- Develop a management plan for staff and partner organizations.

## Slide 4



**Purpose of Research Questions and Objectives**

- Research questions are those questions that need to be answered to before you can plan your communications initiative or materials. Example research question:
  - What influences pregnant women to attend all of their antenatal care (ANC) visits?
- Research objectives are linked to the research questions and help inform the target audience, data collection method, and topics to be discussed in the interview or focus group guides. Example research objectives:
  - Find out why some pregnant women do not go to all of their ANC visits, and
  - Find out why some pregnant women do go to all of their ANC visits.

## Slide 5



The slide features three logos at the top: the national emblem of the United States of America on the left, the USAID logo in the center (with the tagline 'FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE'), and the CSH logo on the right.

### Purpose of Audience Segmentation

- Helps to ensure that you ask the right people the right questions;
- Identifies the primary audiences—the people whose behaviour you want to change;
- Identifies the secondary audiences—the people who may influence the decisions or behaviours of the primary audiences; and
- Helps to identify important factors for recruitment (e.g., location, specific behaviour, age).

## Slide 6



The slide features three logos at the top: the national emblem of the United States of America on the left, the USAID logo in the center (with the tagline 'FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE'), and the CSH logo on the right.

### Tasks To Include in the Timeline

- Writing the formative research plan,
- Ensuring partner/client review of the plan,
- Developing instruments,
- Refining instruments,
- Preparing institutional review board (IRB) documents,
- Revising IRB documents and gaining approval,
- Recruiting participants,
- Conducting focus groups or interviews,
- Transcribing recordings,
- Analysing the data,
- Writing the report,
- Reviewing the report with partners/clients,
- Finalising the report, and
- Applying the data to the project.

Slide 7



**Costs To Include in the Budget**

- Staff time for planning, implementation, analysis, and reporting;
- Staff transportation and lodging;
- Recruitment;
- Participant transportation, if applicable;
- Participant incentives;
- Refreshments or food for participants, if applicable;
- Recording equipment;
- Transcription of recordings;
- Facility rental, if applicable; and
- Printing costs, if applicable.

Slide 8



**Develop Instruments**

- Recruitment plan and screeners,
- Informed consent forms, and
- Interview or focus group guides.

Get approval from the research ethics committee!

Slide 9



**Characteristics of Recruitment Plan and Screener**

- Plan
  - Explains the criteria for inclusion and exclusion,
  - Gives the exact number of participants per segment,
  - Describes the method for recruitment (e.g., door to door),
  - Explains participant incentives, and
  - Describes participant transportation and day care.
- Screener
  - Provides details on who you're looking for,
  - Is used with every participant, and
  - Can be a simple checklist or questionnaire.

Slide 10



**Characteristics of Informed Consent Forms**

- Must be administered before you conduct the interview or focus group;
- Helps protect the rights and well-being of participants;
- Shows that participants have been informed of the purpose, risks, and benefits of the research; and
- Is commonly document in a written format, but can be documented verbally with audio recording or fingerprint as proof.

Slide 11



The slide header contains three logos: the USAID seal on the left, the USAID logo with the tagline 'FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE' in the center, and the CSH logo on the right.

### Characteristics of Interviews or Focus Group Guides

- Provides a standard set of questions to be used across segments,
- Is written with research goals in mind,
- Includes open-ended rather than closed-ended questions, and
- Includes general and probing questions for more detail.

Slide 12



The slide header contains three logos: the USAID seal on the left, the USAID logo with the tagline 'FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE' in the center, and the CSH logo on the right.

### Train Researchers

- Introduce research goals and objectives,
- Review data collection techniques,
- Review research instruments,
- Practice use of the research instrument, and
- Discuss ethical issues.

Slide 13



**Qualifications of Researchers**

- Moderator or interviewer
  - Previously trained in conducting qualitative research,
  - Fluent in the language in which research is being conducted, and
  - Familiar with the research topic.
- Note taker
  - Fluent in the language in which research is being conducted, and
  - Experienced in developing a system for note taking, including
    - Note taker template,
    - Focus group diagrams,
    - Observation data, and
    - Key topics to record word for word.

Slide 14



**Conduct Interviews or Focus Groups**

- Gain informed consent;
- Explain the purpose of the research;
- Explain the reason for selection of the target audience group, the expected duration of the interview or focus group, the confidentiality agreement, and the use of a note taker or tape recorder;
- Provide an opportunity to ask questions; and
- Proceed with the questions and discussion.

Slide 15



**Assess the Quality of Research Throughout Collection and Analysis**

- Key questions to answer
  - Are the data you're collecting directly related to your research questions?
  - Are appropriate probes being asked?
  - Is recruitment taking place according to your plan?
  - Are participants showing up, or is there trouble with one segment?
  - Are recordings/notes/transcripts clear and helpful?
  - Is the moderator or interviewer open to feedback from the research manager?
  - Is the setting conducive to candid responses? Is it private enough?
  - Were there men in the room when you spoke with women?
  - Were government officials or other authoritative figures in the room?

Slide 16



**Analyse the Data**

- Major findings,
- Unexpected findings,
- Comparison and contrast of audience segments,
- Implications for programming, and
- Recommendations.

Slide 17



**Analysis Starts During Data Collection**

- Meet with the research team during collection multiple times to discuss
  - Emerging themes;
  - Unexpected findings;
  - Differences among segments;
  - Observations of group dynamics, body language, or research setting;
  - Important quotes; and
  - Potential revision of the research tools.

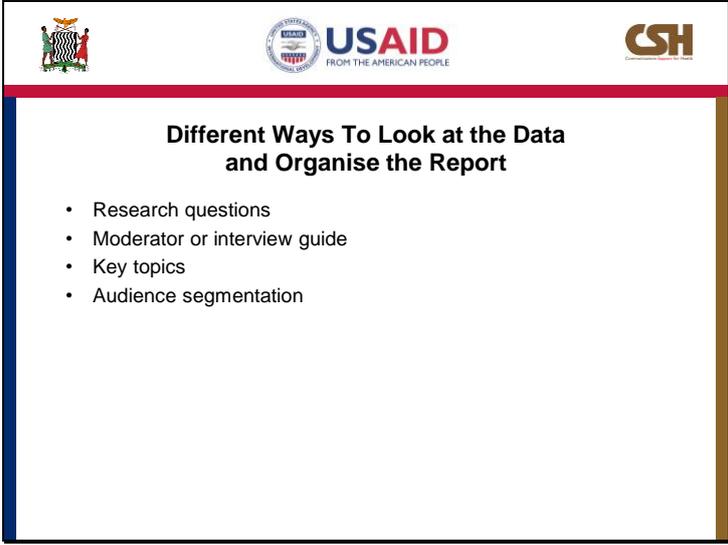
Slide 18



**Steps in Analysis After Data Collection**

- Organise notes, transcripts, and audio and video recordings;
- Review the notes and select transcripts and recordings for more detail; and
- Interpret the organised data to extract findings by segment, research question, and theme.

Slide 19



Slide 19 content: The slide features a header with three logos: the Kenyan coat of arms on the left, the USAID logo (with the tagline 'FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE') in the center, and the CSH logo on the right. Below the logos is a red horizontal line. The main title is 'Different Ways To Look at the Data and Organise the Report'. The content is a bulleted list with four items: 'Research questions', 'Moderator or interview guide', 'Key topics', and 'Audience segmentation'.

**Different Ways To Look at the Data and Organise the Report**

- Research questions
- Moderator or interview guide
- Key topics
- Audience segmentation

Slide 20



Slide 20 content: The slide features a header with three logos: the Kenyan coat of arms on the left, the USAID logo (with the tagline 'FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE') in the center, and the CSH logo on the right. Below the logos is a red horizontal line. The main title is 'Disseminate Findings'. The content is a bulleted list with four items: 'Report and/or presentation for', 'Staff', 'Funding organizations', 'Partners', and 'Participants'.

**Disseminate Findings**

- Report and/or presentation for
  - Staff
  - Funding organizations
  - Partners
  - Participants



The slide header features three logos: the national emblem of the United States of America on the left, the USAID logo in the center (with the text 'USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE'), and the CSH logo on the right.

### Apply Findings

- Discuss the potential applications and implications of the research findings, and
- Create or revise campaign messages, materials, or communication strategies using the research results.

## Appendix C: Assessment Guide

### Formative Research in Action Assessment:

#### Focus Group Guide

Good morning/afternoon. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I will be conducting today's discussion. I'm a contracted research assistant supporting the Communication Support for Health.

Today, we're going to discuss your province's participation in the Formative Research in Action initiative. We hope that this information will help us to better understand whether the initiative and the support provided by CSH was effective in building the capacity of your team to manage formative research studies to inform the development of BCC/IEC efforts.

I am a trained focus group moderator. I want to hear your honest opinions about the topics we will discuss today. There is no right or wrong answer to the questions I'm going to ask. Please just relax and enjoy the discussion.

Please keep in mind that your participation in this discussion is completely voluntary. If for any reason you wish to stop the discussion, you may do so.

I am accompanied by \_\_\_\_\_, who will be responsible for note taking and logistics respectively.

Before we begin, I'd like to review some rules or guidelines for today's discussion. These rules are our guidelines for operating so that we can complete our task in a manner that is respectful and provides you with the opportunity to express your thoughts safely and confidentially.

- You have been invited here to offer your experiences, views and opinions.
- Again, there are no right or wrong answers.
- It's okay to be critical. I want to hear your views and opinions about whether you like or dislike something you see or hear.
- This session will be audio taped. This allows us to capture everything that is being said today, and we will include the information in a report to our client.
- All of your answers will be confidential, so feel free to say exactly what is on your mind. Nothing will be attributed to any particular person in our report.
- You may excuse yourself from the conversation at any time for any reason.
- Lastly, please turn off the ringers on your cell phone.

Do you have any questions at this time?

Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_

## I. Formative Research in Action Model

In the first part of our discussion, we're going to talk about the model CSH used to implement Formative in Action. Specifically, we'll talk about the usefulness of participating in the Formative Research Training prior to receiving one-on-one technical assistance from CSH staff to conduct your study on maternal nutrition.

1. Overall, how effective do you think is the model of a training followed by technical assistance?
2. How useful was the training in preparing your team to carry out the formative research study with the support of CSH technical assistance?
  - a. How useful were the concepts in the training in preparing your team to carry out the study?
  - b. How useful were the exercises and group work in the training in preparing your team to carry out the study?
  - c. Were there any topics or aspects of the training that were missing or not covered sufficiently?
3. How effective was the technical assistance in re-enforcing the curriculum from the training?
  - a. How well did the technical assistance align with the concepts and guidance provided in the training?
  - b. Were there any topics from the training that the technical assistance process didn't address that you think should have been addressed?
4. How effective was the delivery of the technical assistance in supporting the implementation of the study?
  - a. Was the technical assistance provided sufficient for implementing your study? If not, please explain what type of support was needed, but not provided.
  - b. Were there any particular points in the process of Formative Research in Action that were difficult to navigate? Please explain why. **[If needed, remind the participant of the phases of technical assistance:**
    - **Technical assistance kick-off**
    - **Development of research protocol and instruments**
    - **Submission of protocol to Zambian Research Ethics Committee**
    - **Preparation of research logistics**
    - **Training of research assistants**
    - **Field data collection**
    - **Debriefing of data collection**
    - **Analysis and reporting**
    - **Presentation of research results]**

## **II. Building of Capacity to Manage Formative Research Studies**

In the next section, we're going to discuss how the capacity of the province to manage formative research studies has changed since participating in Formative Research in Action.

5. From your perspective, how has the capacity of the province to manage formative research studies changed since participating in the initiative?
  - a. Has it increased or remained the same?
    - i. If it has increased, please explain how it increased the capacity of the province.
    - ii. If it has NOT increased, please explain why you believe capacity has not been built.
6. How has the initiative affected the knowledge and skills related to formative research of the participating staff?
  - a. Has there been an impact on the knowledge and skills of the unit as a whole? Has any knowledge or skills been shared with others not directly participating in the programme?
7. How has the team's understanding of how to apply formative research results to BCC/IEC efforts changed since participating in the initiative?

## **III. Plans for the Future**

Now, we're going to talk about the province's plans for applying the study findings to the development of BCC/IEC materials and strategies, as well as, any future formative research studies.

8. What are the plans for using the study findings for BCC/IEC materials and strategies?
  - a. What types of materials and activities will the study be informing?
  - b. Will the province be developing new materials or informing the revision of existing ones?
  - c. When do you expect the province will be developing and implementing these materials and strategies?
9. What, if any, are the province's plans for future formative research studies?
10. What challenges do you foresee in carrying out future formative research studies?
  - a. How do you think these challenges could be overcome?

## **IV. Recommendations**

In our last section, we're going to discuss recommendations that could be applied to future initiatives that would follow a similar model as Formative Research in Action.

11. Overall, what recommendations do you have for improving the model of offering an in-depth training followed by one-on-one technical assistance?

12. Do you have any suggestions on how to better connect the training curriculum to the delivery of technical assistance?
13. Do you have any suggestions on how to improve the implementation of the technical assistance? Any thoughts on how to address some of the technical assistance issues you mentioned earlier?

**V. False Close**

Please give me one moment, as I leave the room to check to see if my colleagues have any further questions.

**VI. Closing**

**[Ask any additional questions provided by the M&E team.]**

Thank you for talking with me today. We really appreciate your time and input.