



CHAPTER

5

Qualitative and community-level data in CFSVAs

This chapter is not intended to provide a general background on qualitative data. Instead, it focuses only on how to better use qualitative approaches in the context of a CFSVA. (General guidance on qualitative methods can be found in the EFSA Guidance Sheets numbers 10 and 11, available from WFP OMXF). Neither does it aim to provide a comprehensive list of topics/issues that can be explored with communities. Rather, it concentrates mainly on those topics that:

- are particularly relevant for food security analysis;
- fit well in the household Food and Nutrition Security Conceptual Framework of the CFSVAs; and
- can be studied better at the community level rather than the household level.

Qualitative techniques are used in a number of ways during a CFSVA, including in developing the household survey, collecting some types of community-level data, interpreting quantitative findings, and evaluating intervention options.

5.1 TYPES OF COMMUNITY-LEVEL DATA IN CFSVAs

Three instruments are typically used in CFSVAs to collect community-level data: focus groups discussions (FGDs), community discussions, and key informant interviews. Other techniques, such as observations and transect walks, are often used in EFSAs, but these are less structured and require a different kind of training.

This section provides a broad description of focus groups, community discussions, and key informant interviews. The specific role of these tools in the context of CFSVAs is also explained. Since focus groups and community discussions are qualitative tools, this section includes a general introduction to qualitative methods.

Box 5.1: Qualitative methods

Qualitative methods are typically used to collect in-depth information on the perceptions, judgments, and opinions of individuals. These methods undergo a continuous process of revision as an understanding of local perceptions develops.

The fundamental difference between qualitative and quantitative techniques is in the type of information they provide. While quantitative information is uniform and comparable, providing statistical breadth, it does not provide the level of contextual detail that enables an understanding of meanings, processes, and reasons. Qualitative information should therefore not be considered simply as an isolated supplement to be inserted into an assessment after quantitative data has been collected and analysed, but rather as an essential complement within the analysis, providing the interpretive data necessary to make sense of the descriptive data produced in the quantitative analysis. The use of this kind of mixed-methods approach allows for triangulation of qualitative and quantitative information regarding food security and vulnerability, and the associated programming constraints and opportunities (TANGO 2002). When applying qualitative methods, the researcher becomes the instrument of data collection. Thus, results may vary greatly depending upon the researcher involved. Hypotheses and additional follow-up questions are generated during data collection and analysis, and measurement tends to be subjective. Therefore, by their very nature, the methods are often not objectively verifiable. Because qualitative methods involve direct communication with target populations, they typically employ a participatory approach, and rely on open-ended techniques. Interviewers and facilitators must be well trained to collect data with flexibility and respect.

• **Focus group discussions**

Focus group discussions are a form of group interview. They differ from other group interviews in that both the selection of participants and the discussion are determined by a particular topic. FGDs are typically guided by a specific outline that is structured to be flexible enough to allow themes relevant to the community to emerge. Participatory techniques (e.g. mapping, listing, ranking) are frequently used during focus groups to ensure that all participants are involved in the conversation.

In the context of CFSVAs, FGDs are used to elicit information on themes related to food security. They involve a small number of community members (i.e., six to eight participants) selected according to criteria consistent with the CFSVA's theme.

For CFSVAs, focus groups are preferable to observation and open-ended interviews. FGDs are not as informal or as unstructured as simple observation (although for the latter, simple guides can be prepared that indicate what to look at and how to record it in a systematic way). Instead, they allow the team to record a large amount of relevant information within a limited period and are conducted according to a prearranged topical outline.

• **Key informant interviews**

Key informant interviews are typically conducted using a prepared list of questions designed to elicit information from one or more individuals chosen for their in-depth knowledge of a specific issue concerning the community. Key informants often include traditional community leaders (chiefs, religious leaders, etc.), health workers, teachers, business people (in the case of market analysis), and local government representatives. Most of the key informant questionnaires used in CFSVAs use open-ended questions (i.e. questions to which informants cannot respond with a simple yes or no) and are used to gather data relevant to food security on which key informants will have particular knowledge (infrastructure, institutional relationships, agricultural trends, etc.).

• **Community discussions**

A community group discussion involves a mixed group that includes men, women, and young people from all subgroups within the community: village, camp, urban neighbourhood (EFSA Handbook 2005). It is essential that a diverse array of individuals be represented in the discussion. Community discussions differ from focus groups in that the goal of a community discussion is to get answers on a subject related to the whole community and for which the CFSVA team would like an opinion that reflects that of the community. Such meetings are therefore open to all members of the community.

• **Moderating team**

Focus groups and community discussions require the presence of one facilitator (or moderator) and one assistant, who together constitute the moderating team; it is essential to have both for a successful interview. The facilitator is in charge of conducting the discussion with the group/community. Ideally, she/he should also be involved in the data analysis. The assistant should be responsible for taking the notes during the meeting.

5.2 ROLE OF COMMUNITY-LEVEL DATA IN CFSVAs: AN OVERVIEW

The Food and Nutrition Security Conceptual Framework adopted by CFSVAs considers food availability, food access, and food utilization as core determinants of food security and links them to households' asset endowments; livelihood strategies; and political, institutional, and economic environment.

The themes to be investigated in community-level data collection should be selected based on the need to delve into an issue of relevance that is insufficiently covered by the household-level data. Community-level data collection is also used to gather data that would be repetitive among interviewed households belonging to the same community/village. The theme should also fit in the conceptual framework used by CFSVAs as described earlier in these guidelines. Table 5.1 gives an overview of the role of key informant interviews, community discussions, and focus group discussions in the CFSVAs.

Table 5.1: The role of community-level data in a CFSVA

Key informant interview	Focus group discussion	Community discussion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrastructure (roads, health centres, schools, etc.) Market information, especially through a trader's checklist on supply, demand, reach, prices, etc. Migration; other coping strategies of households in the community Agriculture and livestock Community priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk analysis (e.g. identification of shocks and responses, role of external factors, risk management strategies and weight of coping strategies for the CSI) Livelihood analysis (e.g. identification of inputs and constraints for the main livelihood activities, identification of assets relevant to the wealth index) Any other theme of interest for the CFSVA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coping strategies and capacity of the community and households to face a shock (social network, main external support received, ongoing projects, use of remittances, etc.) Seasonality Can be applied to all underlying causes of food insecurity to explain which households and communities are affected

If sufficient time and human resources are available, focus groups and community discussions can be used both before and after the assessment (see Box 5.2).

Box 5.2: Focus groups and community discussions: pre- and post-survey functions

Pre-survey: Before the CFSVA household questionnaire is designed, focus groups and community discussions can be used to get an overview of the situation. This will help determine what topics to include in the survey, how questions can be asked to elicit relevant information, and which alternatives to include in the pre-coded boxes. The qualitative interviews can lead to the formulation of hypotheses to be tested in the quantitative interviews (e.g. "after a shock that has brought about a food shortage, villagers are more likely to send young female family members to the city to earn money than they are under normal circumstances"; the quantitative analysis can help determine to what extent and under which conditions this statement is true).

Post-survey: Sometimes the findings of a quantitative survey raise new questions that cannot be answered by quantitative data alone, or there may not be resources or time to run a new quantitative data collection to explore these issues. In this case, qualitative data collection, for example, can be undertaken to explore the reasons behind the surprising results (e.g. increased school attendance after school feeding programmes are stopped), to get more information on a group of positive or negative deviants, or to get more detailed knowledge on what lies behind some of the pre-categorized answers.

5.3 MAIN CHALLENGES

This section draws attention to challenges that frequently arise while collecting qualitative data through focus group discussions and group interviews at the community level.

• *Lack of expertise*

Qualitative data collection requires interviewers with excellent skills and a very good understanding of the ultimate objectives of the research (see section 5.4.1, “Selection of the facilitators”). In the context of CFSVAs, it may be difficult to procure the services of people with the necessary expertise.

• *Subjective relationship*

One of the main risks of collecting data at the community level concerns the subjective relationship between the moderating team and the participants. Each brings a set of assumptions about the other. Accordingly, care must be taken to recognize (and minimize) the degree to which a facilitator’s belief system or biases could influence the conversation. Conversely, team members should be sensitive to the possible preconceptions held by participants, and acknowledge those preconceptions as part of their data collection. Participants’ preconceptions/behaviours may have serious effects on the collecting of community-level data:

- Facilitators may be asked to provide money (or food) in exchange for information, or for the right to talk to some members of the community (e.g. women, elderly); and
- Input from the community may be biased by their expectation of receiving food or other assistance in return for their participation.

• *Time*

In the context of CFSVAs, lack of time can be the greatest constraint to the collection of community-level data, especially for FGDs and community discussions. Such data is difficult to collect and analyse quickly, and CFSVAs seldom allow researchers the optimum timeframe for either.

• *Flexibility*

Data collection seldom occurs exactly according to plan. Potential participants may be absent; and participants may exhibit difficult and unexpected behaviour during the discussion (e.g. total misunderstanding of the topic, disagreements during the conversation). Facilitators should be able to recognize when the data collection is completely biased by these elements and decide when and how to adapt their approach to such elements.

5.4 SELECTING AND TRAINING THE MODERATING TEAMS

This section reviews several practical issues related to the collection of community-level data. In particular, it provides guidance for the selection and training of facilitators for FGDs and community discussions. It also draws attention to challenges related to data collection.

5.4.1 Selection of the facilitators

• *Who?*

Despite the effort to be impartial, the facilitator cannot be entirely neutral. She/he is a member of an ethnic group, a gender, and an age category. Any of these elements can inhibit openness within the group or influence responses and results.

For large-scale analyses such as CFSVAs, identifying skilled facilitators and assistants for focus groups and community interviews can be extremely difficult. As a general rule, facilitators should have previous experience with qualitative data collection, strong interview skills, and an understanding of group dynamics. In the context of CFSVAs, they should also be familiar with key concepts related to food security (e.g. wealth, food consumption, health, hygiene, shocks, and coping strategies) and have a good knowledge of the Food and Nutrition Security Conceptual Framework adopted by the CFSVAs.

To a certain extent, skills in qualitative data collection can be enhanced through training. However, training will yield good results only if the facilitators have some experience with qualitative data collection methods. If skilled enumerators cannot be found, it may be preferable not to include FGDs and community discussions in the CFSVAs. Box 5.3 provides a detailed list of the characteristics of good facilitators and assistants.

Box 5.3: Key characteristics of good facilitators and assistants

A good facilitator should have:

- Previous experience in qualitative data collection;
- Previous experience in collecting data related to food security and vulnerability;
- Strong interview skills;
- An understanding of group dynamics;
- Interest in the subject and participants' views (curiosity);
- The ability to understand and elaborate on participants' opinions;
- Familiarity with key concepts related to food security;
- Familiarity with the household Food and Nutrition Security Conceptual Framework of the CFSVA; and
- Knowledge of the local language and an ability to accurately translate into the language of the study (if this is not possible, the utilization of focus groups and community discussions becomes tedious and questionable).

A good assistant should have:

- The ability to understand and elaborate on participants' opinions;
- Familiarity with key concepts related to food security;
- Familiarity with the Food and Nutrition Security Conceptual Framework of the CFSVA;
- Knowledge of the local language and an ability to accurately translate into the language of the study; and
- Sufficient self-discipline to refrain from participating in the discussion and yet remain objective and open-minded; the assistant is expected to talk only if invited by the moderator.

- **Working with partners**

Partners may have more robust experience in collecting data at the community level. It is advisable to contact them and to be aware of their capabilities. If they can bring an added value to the collection of community-level data, it is advisable to involve them in data collection.

- **Gender implications**

Team composition should also be appropriate for the cultural values and norms of the population. This often requires that teams be composed equally of men and women. It may also require attention to age, ethnicity, or other social divisions. Multidisciplinary and gender-balanced teams not only strengthen the diagnostic process and encourage cross-fertilization of ideas, but they also facilitate the inter-organizational sharing and learning that enhance problem analysis and future programming (TANGO 2002). Capacity in gender analysis skills is an additional important consideration. Where team members cannot be found who satisfy the optimal composition appropriate to a population, attention should be paid to the potential effects of this on the data.

- **Number of teams**

Given the degree of subjectivity and variability in qualitative data collection, it is advisable to use no more than four teams (four facilitators and four assistants) for each CFSVA. Limiting the number of qualitative research teams increases the efficiency of the training and helps maintain consistency in data collection and participant selection. In some cases, limiting qualitative data collection to two teams of four people can lead to improved results.

5.4.2 Training facilitators

The process of collecting community-level data differs from that of collecting household-level data. Facilitators rely not on a set of predetermined questions to be asked in sequence, but rather on a checklist of topics to guide the interview and a set of techniques (i.e. participatory tools) to delve deeper into chosen topics, pursuing relevant material as it emerges during the process.

Facilitators must be trained to solicit topical data while remaining open to new and unforeseen information that may be relevant to the subject in question. The most effective training in qualitative data collection is that conducted concurrently with quantitative training. Ideally, the core parts of the qualitative training should be undertaken directly after the quantitative data collection training. This will allow the facilitators of the FGDs, key informant interviews, and community discussions to be fully aware of the scope and objectives of the CFSVA, including the specific role of community-level data. Box 5.4 provides a brief list of topics that should be included in training for community-level data collection as part of a CFSVA.

Box 5.4: Training topics for qualitative data collection in CFSVAs

1. Introduction to CFSVAs

Participants should receive a general introduction to key concepts related to food security and the Food and Nutrition Security Conceptual Framework adopted by the CFSVAs. Familiarity with such concepts is crucial for collecting community-level data (especially through focus groups and community discussions), as the facilitators cannot use a precise list of close-ended questions.

2. Community-level data in the CFSVAs: Overview and role

Participants should receive a general overview of the tools that will be used to collect community-level data and the role of facilitators. They should also be made aware of the main objective of this information in the context of the CFSVA, and of which kind of information will be extracted using these tools.

Team members should understand that community-level data has an important role in the CFSVAs and that collecting this type of data is not an optional activity, to be conducted only if time permits. If the team does not perceive the real value of such a difficult and time-consuming component of the research, the quality and usefulness of the data collected will inevitably suffer.

3. Tools: Participants, questions, and participatory techniques

At this stage of the training, facilitators and assistants should:

- Know who is supposed to participate in the discussions (e.g. focus groups, community discussions, or key-informant interviews);
- Be familiar with the outline of questions and understand the purpose of each question;
- Know how to use participatory techniques (if they are to be used); and
- Know how to facilitate appropriate responses from the participants (e.g. answers that are pertinent to the topic).

4. Reporting and analysing

Facilitators and their assistants should know how to summarize the information during and after the discussion. In particular they should be trained in identifying the central issues emerging from the discussion and report them in a systematic and standard way. If standard blank templates are to be used in community data collection, facilitators and assistants should be trained in how to complete them.

5. Organization of the discussions/focus groups

Both focus groups and community discussions require some preliminary activities (described in section 9.5.5). Facilitators and assistants should be trained in such steps. It is advisable to train facilitators in organizational issues. Some organizational issues are related strictly to the type of participants involved in the discussions.

6. Field test

A sufficient amount of time should be dedicated to practicing the use of the tools, either among team members or with a randomly selected audience. Field tests are essential for identifying the most skilled facilitators, revising the outline of questions, amending the participatory techniques, and sharing good practices.

After each test, facilitators and assistants should provide feedback to all participants. In this way, trainees improve their skills and continue to develop them once in the field. To enable consistent improvement, feedback should be provided not only during training, but also during actual facilitation in the field.

5.5 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS DURING A CFSVA

This section describes the necessary steps in properly organizing and facilitating focus groups. It includes the following topics:

- Role of FGDs/identification of themes
- Development of questions/techniques
- Field test
- Selection of communities
- Selection of participants
- Taking notes and making summaries
- Analysing
- Reporting

5.5.1 Role of focus group discussion/identification of themes

The process of conducting a FGD starts by establishing the themes and specific issues of interest. Within the context of food security and vulnerability analyses, qualitative data methods are typically used to capture the variations in livelihood strategies that determine exposure to risk.

• *Livelihood analysis*

Focus group discussions can be used to understand the link between assets contributing to livelihood activities and major sources of household income, as well as to identify constraints to the existing income-generating activities.

If focus groups are used as a pre-survey tool (see Box 5.2), they can be useful in identifying the relevant assets and housing characteristics for the computation of the wealth index. (An example of wealth ranking is included in Annex 3: Examples of Participatory Tools for Risk Analysis.)

• *Risk analysis (shocks, responses, external factors)*

Focus groups can be used to identify the major shocks faced by households in the community (or by specific groups), the effects of the shocks on household livelihood strategies, and household responses and external actors assisting the communities. This type of discussion offers valuable input for programme recommendations. In particular, it can be used to identify a community's needs, and gaps in the community's formal and informal safety nets.

Focus groups can be used to compare the current situation with the past; determine if the community is experiencing a period of stress/emergency; and, if so, characterize the magnitude and nature of that stress.

As recommended in section 4.2.4.2, Coping Strategies Index Module, focus groups can be used to contextualize the coping strategies included in the Coping Strategy Index and modify/update the weights.

It is also possible to focus the discussion on other themes, such as specific shocks and food utilization. However, the discussion should always consider the consequences on food security. Annex 1 ("Example of Topical Outline for Use in Qualitative Assessments") gives more precise guidance on the potential themes to study.

5.5.2 Development of questions/tools

The purpose of qualitative tools in a CFSVA is to explore and understand the context specificities related to food security. Once the main themes have been identified, specific questions and techniques should be developed. These should take into account the themes under discussion as well as the audience, time constraints, and cultural context. Box 5.5 includes some general recommendations on how to formulate and ask effective questions. In general, participatory techniques are tools of communication that encourage the expression of community perspectives. During a CFSVA, participatory tools can be used to bring together the knowledge of the vulnerable groups of the community in a more effective way.

Several participatory tools have been tested for their usefulness in assessments, food assistance management and distribution. WFP's Guide on Participatory Techniques and Tools, and OMXF guidance materials offer a comprehensive overview of such tools.⁷⁰ The identification of the most suitable tools depends upon the issues under study. Table 5.2 gives an example of the tools used for FGDs on livelihood, risks, and shocks. The suggested examples are found in Annexes 2 and 3. They should not be seen as prescriptive, given that every CFSVA should assess the tool that is most appropriate to its particular communities and objectives.

Box 5.5: General recommendations on questions

- Undertake a comprehensive situation analysis, a review of secondary data, and dialogue with the country office and partners while preparing the questions.
- Questions should be clear; if they do not work during the training or the pilot testing, they should be revised or eliminated.
- Questions should be asked in a conversational manner. The wording should be direct, straightforward, comfortable, and simple.
- The wording should be neutral and the questions should be translated into the local language. Translation should be done by several bilingual members of the team or outsiders to ensure it is faithful to the original meaning.
- Focus group questions should be developed to cover a period of between 60 and 120 minutes.

For risk analysis, the table suggests that the identification of the major shocks is the first issue to address. Yet some countries may want to focus on a specific (well-known) shock and explore its consequences and responses. Table 5.3 offers ideas for issues that can be explored for FGDs related to HIV/AIDS.⁷¹ It highlights the variety of sub-topics that emerge and the importance of identifying the most appropriate participatory techniques and participants for each.

70. Technical Guidance Sheets Nos. 10 and 11 are available at www.wfp.org/food-security. Participatory qualitative techniques selected for EFSA's, for example, include transect walk, seasonal calendar, time line, proportional piling, pair-wise ranking, Venn diagrams, community maps, wealth (or well-being) ranking, ranking and scoring, and a rapid visual assessment of crop/livestock conditions. See *Emergency Food Security Assessment Handbook* (chap. 11). These participatory techniques may also be incorporated into a CFSVA.

71. See also the VAM thematic guidelines, *HIV/AIDS Analysis: Integrating HIV and AIDS into Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis*, and *Food Assistance Programming in the Context of HIV*.

Table 5.2: Examples of themes and participatory tools for a CFSVA

Themes and issues under study	Participatory tools	Examples
Livelihood analysis		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify major sources of income (livelihood activities) 	Boxes for identification of income source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annex 2, step 1
	Livelihood ranking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annex 2, step 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the assets contributing to livelihoods, and the constraints to the existing livelihood activities 	Boxes for livelihood inputs and constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annex 2, step 3
Risk analysis		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the major shocks faced by the households 	Boxes for identification of shocks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annex 3, step 1
	Shocks ranking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annex 3, step 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the effects of the shocks on the household livelihood strategies 	Risk Matrix for the identification of affected groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annex 3, step 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the responses to different shocks and assess their efficiency in reducing, mitigating, or coping with the shocks 	Risk Matrix for the identification of community response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annex 3, step 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify external actors helping vulnerable households avoid being adversely affected by shocks 	Institutional analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annex 3, step 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify elements of community notions of wealth to enable ranking of individual households 	Wealth ranking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annex 3, step 6

Table 5.3: Topics/issues related to HIV/AIDS addressed during a focus group discussion

TOPIC	Objective(s)	Suggested technique(s)*	Recommended participants (where appropriate)
Impact and response	Identify HIV/AIDS impact on households and response (e.g. impact on livelihood assets and strategies, food security, roles).	Problem tree	People living with at least one chronically ill adult member
		Problem and solution technique	
		Story with a gap	
Support	Identify institutions, formal and informal groups, and places that play a role in HIV/AIDS prevention and care. Understand their importance and interrelation.	Checklist	Key informants (e.g. health personnel)
	Measure community's awareness of the HIV/AIDS-related services in the community.	Problem and solution technique	Perceptions held by all the community's members are important. In this case, it is not appropriate to focus only on the affected households or key informants.
	Identify factors that prevent people affected by chronic illness from seeking care (i.e. using existing services).	Force field analysis	People living with at least one chronically ill adult member

*A detailed description of these techniques can be found in UNAIDS, 2004, *Techniques and Practices for Local Responses to HIV/AIDS*, Amsterdam: KIT Publishers.

Questions and participatory tools are most effective when they elicit the information the researcher wants to collect, while remaining simple enough to be understood by the participants. In order to ensure this is the case, considerable attention should be paid to developing effective questions and tools. It is also important that the facilitators are aware of good practices and follow some basic rules. Box 5.6 provides a brief description of principles that should be followed not only while conducting FGDs, but throughout the implementation of CFSVAs.

Box 5.6: General principles for conducting focus group discussions

- **Location:** Interviews should be conducted in a relatively private place, where participants feel comfortable speaking.
- **Introduction:** Facilitators should open the session with a traditional greeting and other local meeting conventions (e.g. a prayer), explain who they are and whom they work for, the purpose of the data collection, what will be done with the information, and who will have access to it. Facilitators should then explain that they do not make decisions about assistance or interventions (if that is the case).
- **Flexibility:** Facilitators should begin the discussion in general and concrete terms. They should be flexible, while making sure that all topics get covered (following an outline). Granting participants space and time while guiding the conversation in the right direction is a difficult skill. Although facilitators should not appear rushed, clear time limits should be set for each session; one hour is recommended for CFSVAs.
- **Participation:** Facilitators should be constantly aware of their own biases and the ways in which they may be perceived by participating communities. The tone of interviews should be informal, not interrogatory. Although care should be taken to ensure that all participants in a group context contribute to the discussion, the interviewer should respect sensitive issues and the right of participants not to respond. Interviewers should avoid implicit and explicit value judgments while conducting interviews.
- **Timing:** Fieldwork should be sensitive to time issues: the schedule of the study (e.g. the need to have data before a certain date); the time of the day the team arrives in the community (e.g. key informants may be busy, women or men may be working in the field); and the season of the year (e.g. unavailability of a certain group of the population due to seasonal migration or work in the field). It is important that each team knows how to handle various problems that may be experienced during the fieldwork. For example, the team will have to be aware of security concerns, as discussions could happen after dark.
- **Reviews:** During data collection it is advisable to conduct periodic random reviews of data collection forms.

5.5.3 Field testing

Field testing is used mainly to assess:

- The appropriateness of the questions to the local context, and the wording of key concepts in the local language;
- The effectiveness of the participatory techniques in stimulating the conversation and coming up with rankings;
- The ability of the teams to moderate the focus groups, take notes, and summarize the answers into a standard template; and
- The time needed to conduct interviews and the amount of information that can be realistically covered in a given period.

After the field test, facilitators' feedback should be used to modify questions, participatory techniques, and standard templates. The experience should also be used to improve facilitators' ability to conduct discussions.

5.5.4 Selection of communities

Since focus groups require time to be organized and conducted, it is not possible (nor is it necessary) to conduct them in every community visited during a CFSVA. Focus groups collect data from a group of individuals within a subset of communities. This section discusses the methodology for selecting communities and participants for the focus groups.

The selection of the communities entails the following steps:

- 1) Establish the number of communities where focus groups will be conducted.
- 2) Select from the list of sampled communities those where focus groups will be conducted.
- 3) Determine practical rules for replacing communities, if necessary.

• ***Establish the number of communities where focus groups will be conducted***

The number of communities where focus groups are to be conducted must be established before the data collection starts. Usually only one focus group is conducted in each village/community, although two are necessary when participants are divided by gender. In general, the total number of focus groups depends upon:

- the number of areas of estimation (AoEs);
- the number of skilled facilitators (human resources); and
- the time allocated for data collection (i.e. the time the teams can spend in the village).

There is no strict rule regarding the total number of FGDs to conduct. Ideally FGDs should be stopped when the facilitators/researchers believe that any "new" information garnered from additional focus groups would not be enough to justify the organizational effort additional FGDs would require. However, this strategy is applicable only if data collection and analysis (at least preliminary analysis) are conducted concurrently.

As a general rule, CFSVA teams should undertake a **minimum of three FGDs in each AoE** and to increase the number according to the size and heterogeneity of the AoE. **It is not advisable to conduct more than five focus groups** in an AoE (even in the larger areas). Indeed, if the AoE being surveyed shares the same socio-economic and/or livelihood patterns (which is the purpose of stratification of the sampling frame), increasing the number of FGDs will probably not bring additional information.

• ***Select from the list of sampled communities those where focus groups will be conducted***

Within each AoE, communities for the focus groups can be sampled randomly (e.g. simple random sampling or systematic sampling) or through purposive sampling.

Random sampling avoids introducing a systematic bias in the data collection. It ensures that within each AoE all the villages/communities have the same probability of being selected.

Purposive sampling can be done by asking the key informants to identify villages that are typical of the livelihood zone. Villages most affected by recent/current problems should be avoided, unless they reflect the typical condition of the livelihood zone or present great interest for the theme(s) under study.

Ideally, focus groups should be undertaken in all the areas within an AoE. However, if the purpose is to explore a theme or issue relevant only in some areas of the country, it is better to concentrate the focus groups on those areas.

- ***Determine practical rules for replacing communities***

If, for any reason, it is not possible to organize FGD in a selected village, the team is expected to replace it with another village/community. A simple replacing strategy is to pick up a village from the same region (or AoE) that the missed village belongs to. By doing so, the geographic distribution of the FGD across the country will not be affected, nor will the total number of FGDs be different.

5.5.5 Selection of participants

As a general rule, the number of participants in an FGD should be between 6 and 10. The higher the number of participants, the more difficult it is to facilitate the discussion. Defining and contacting participants for the FGDs requires the following actions:

- 1) Decide whether the theme under study concerns all the people living in the village or only a specific group.
- 2) Decide whether the theme or the context requires separate focus groups for men and women.
- 3) Establish a strategy for contacting the participants and forming the groups.

- ***Does the theme under study regard all the people in the community?***

If there is a good reason to think that the theme under study regards the whole community, there is no need to select a specific group/category. However, some shocks (e.g. chronic illness, orphanhood, drought) may concern a specific group within the community (e.g. households living with chronic illness, orphaned children, farmers). In such a case, the profile of the most appropriate participants for the theme under study should be clearly defined during the preliminary steps of the survey design.

- ***Does the theme or the context require separate focus groups for men and women?***

Undertaking separate focus groups for men and women duplicates the effort. Gender-separated groups are particularly appropriate if there is a good reason to believe that perception of the problem is different for men and women or where communication between the two groups on certain issues may be difficult or inappropriate. In many situations, regardless of the subject under study, men tend to dominate the discussion. It is therefore essential to consider the added value of separating men and women. If the facilitator finds him/herself in this situation, it is still possible to separate men and women even after an FGD has begun.

- ***How should the participants be contacted and the groups formed?***

Care should be taken to ensure that interviews are conducted with the full permission and understanding of the participants. For community discussions, participants can be identified, selected, and gathered in two ways:

1. *Through the leader of the community, especially if she/he is informed in advance of the upcoming data collection:* Community leaders should be informed in advance of the visit and should know that the survey includes a discussion with a small group of people living in the community. If possible, before the enumerators arrive at a village they should select a group of people and identify a location (and appropriate time of day) for the interviews. Community leaders can be extremely helpful in setting up the discussion. However, they can also introduce a bias while selecting participants. This “interference” can lead to the dominance of a certain group/category in the discussion.

2. *By visiting and approaching people at the place where they usually meet:* This strategy can be very effective for some groups, such as households living with chronic illness and orphans and people working at the market. If the focus groups require the participation of a specific group, and community leaders are expected to help in the selection process, it is important to explain clearly to them which characteristics the participants must have.

Box 5.7 provides some examples for contacting households living with HIV/AIDS.

Box 5.7: Contacting households living with HIV/AIDS for focus groups

Facilitators can contact households living with HIV/AIDS through:

Health centres: Participants can be found either at a generic health centre providing services related to HIV/AIDS (e.g. centre providing tuberculosis treatment, antiretroviral treatment, a prevention of mother-to-child transmission programme, a milk bank, assistance to people living with AIDS, family planning and/or HIV/AIDS prevention programme, home-based care service for chronically ill people). Health personnel can help identify participants.

Community leaders or key informants: Participants can be identified through a community leader or during the key informant interviews (especially if health personnel are involved in the interview).

5.5.6 Taking notes and making summaries

Taking notes

Participatory tools generate a great deal of information. Listening and remembering a conversation is crucial. There are several ways to remember the content of a conversation:

- **Take notes during the discussion:** This should be done by the assistant moderator or process documenter. The facilitator can also take notes on what he/she considers the “key message” or items that require follow-up or more in-depth questioning or that are not clear.
- **Use recording devices:** This technique is widely used in the private sector. Recording has the advantage of making the transcription of results more precise. However, sometimes recorders should not be used in the field because of noise or cultural sensitivity to them.
- **Use flip charts or other tools:** Flip charts and other paper supports are often used to summarize ideas, enhance conversation, and write key messages to which the participants can refer. During the CFSVAs, in certain contexts, this technique may be limited due to the level of education/literacy of the audience.

Making summaries

Summarizing answers is an important preliminary step to do before doing the “actual” analysis. Once the FGD is over, facilitator and moderator should write down all important messages as soon as possible (while they are still “fresh”). Annexes 2 and 3 propose using a standard table to summarize the ideas discussed during the conversation. The more similar the structure of the summaries, the easier it will be to consolidate them into a report.

5.5.7 Analysis: Consolidation of summaries and linking with the quantitative data

At this stage, the analyst is expected to pull together the summaries from the focus groups and produce a global picture. In CFSVAs, the analyst (or the person responsible for writing the report) may be a different person from the focus group facilitator. She/he may not be familiar with the language of the discussion. It is therefore crucial to have the facilitators and the analyst sit down together for a proper translation of the summaries. If the note taker and facilitator took notes and summarized the results following a standard template, the analysis can proceed with the following steps:

1. Consolidate focus group responses: Pull into one table the summaries of the focus groups. Read all the tables and recode the answers: give the same label to similar answers. For instance, if one focus group reported “food vendor” and another reported “vegetable vendor,” recode; if judged similar in the local context, these answers can use the same label (e.g. “food vendor” for both).

2. Arrange the rows for each table separately so that all the responses of one focus group are in the same row: Do this for all the tables (focus groups). At the end, all the tables should be transformed into rows and the final qualitative data table should have as many rows as the number of focus groups.

a) **Pull together all the lines** (see Table 5.4)

b) **Examine the results:** The approach is similar to one commonly used in the analysis of data from a household questionnaire. It is crucial to report:

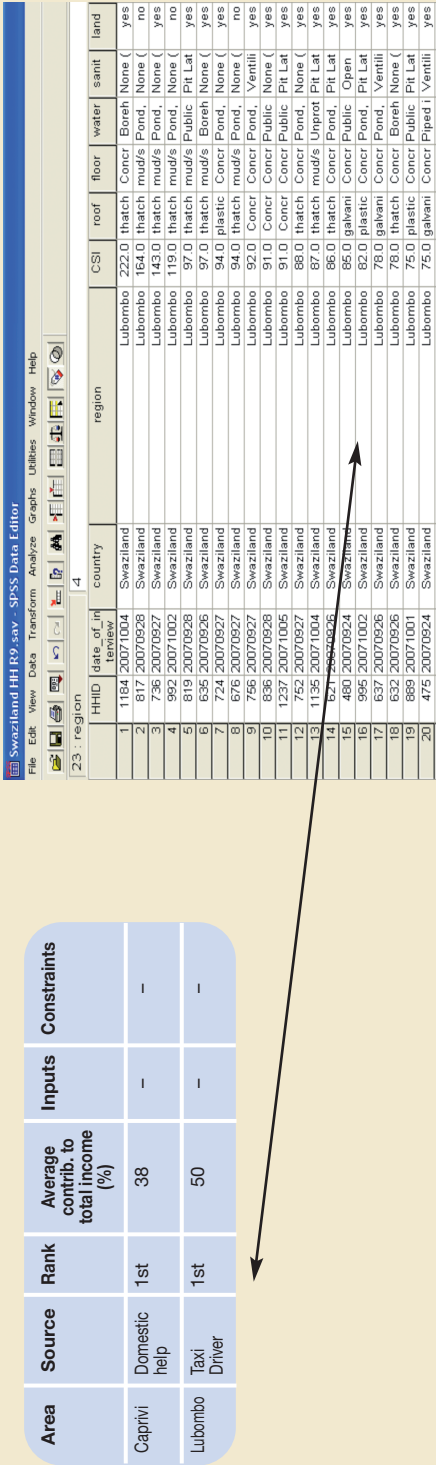
- The sources of livelihood in order of importance (use “Source” and “Contribution to total income” columns);
- For the most important sources, report the more recurrent inputs and constraints (use “Inputs” and “Constraints” columns); and
- Identify differences across the country (use “Village and “Area” columns).

c) **Link with the quantitative information:** Most of the time, results from the FGDs are reported at the community/village level. This is evident in Table 5.4, where each line reports the results of one village. The community-level information can be easily aggregated at a higher level (e.g. region, livelihood zone) as required. In the household data set, each household is linked to a region or livelihood zone of residence. It is therefore easy to link the two data sets. Community-level information can be used to contextualize and enrich the household-level data. Figure 5.1 visualizes the action of linking the two sets of information.

Table 5.4: Example of summary matrix of qualitative data from multiple focus group discussions

Village	Area	Source	Rank	Average contrib. to total income (%)	Inputs	Constraints	Source	Rank	Average contrib. to total income (%)	Inputs	Constraints
Machi	Caprivi	Domestic help	1st	38	-	-	Taxi driver	2st	19	Saving for car rental	Expensive official license
Chipa	Lubombo										
Kiwi	Lubombo										
Ghyia	Caprivi										

Figure 5.1 Linking community-level and household-level data



5.5.8 Reporting

Findings from the focus groups on the theme under study (e.g. livelihoods or shocks) are particularly valuable if they are disaggregated by specific characteristics of the villages (e.g. geographic location) or participants (e.g. livelihood strategies, gender). Ideally, results from the FGDs should be incorporated in the main CFSVA reports and used to triangulate findings from the quantitative data and/or provide a better insight into the problem under study. The report should clearly state when results are from the focus groups, to ensure transparency with results.

It is difficult to suggest a procedure for incorporating these findings. As a general rule, the person in charge of the CFSVA report should be aware of the issues addressed during the FGDs and should use the results from the FGDs to enrich the analysis from the household survey.

The report “Risk, Vulnerability, and Livelihoods in Monrovia: An Analysis of Qualitative Data from 10 Urban Settlements” provides a good example of how to summarize findings from FGDs. It not only outlines key risk factors, outcomes, and responses, but also offers insights into local contexts and in-depth information on how livelihoods contribute to reducing vulnerability and food insecurity. Box 5.8 summarizes the methodology used, clearly stating that the answers from the focus groups are stratified according to the main livelihood activity of the village/community where the discussion took place.

Box 5.8: Linking livelihoods and risk management: Approach adopted in Monrovia, 2003

“The primary livelihood strategy – as reported in men’s and women’s focus groups — then served as the basis for re-clustering the sample for analysis purposes. [...] The following typologies were generated:

- **Petty trade-base:** Findings from women’s focus groups in this typology indicate that their petty trade activities require few specialized skills and a small amount of financial investment... An important component of women’s petty trade activities is informal credit. Men’s focus groups also identified unskilled, labour-based activities as forming the basis of their petty trade.
- **Fishing-based livelihoods:** Both men and women rely on fishing-based activities as the primary source of livelihood. Violent storms and heavy rains, therefore, place seasonal constraints on this type of livelihood activity for communities. Gender roles are defined rather traditionally, with men doing the actual fishing and women handling the responsibility of cleaning, drying and selling the catch... Petty trade supplements fishing in terms of income sources and also serves as the primary source of income for those who cannot engage in fishing activities.
- **Urban agriculture and gardening-based livelihoods:** men’s and women’s focus groups identified economic and natural risks as the main problems affecting their food and livelihood security. Natural risks are related to flooding, pest infestations and soil being waterlogged as a result of heavy rainfall... Vegetables and greens cultivated through gardening are for household consumption as opposed to sales. Both men and women engage in gardening, whereas men are in the majority in respect to urban agriculture.”

(Source: WFP VAM, 2003, “Risk, Vulnerability and Livelihoods in Monrovia: An Analysis of Qualitative Data from 10 Urban Settlements.”)

5.6 COLLECTING DATA THROUGH KEY INFORMANTS

Key informant interviews and community discussions are sometimes confused in CFSVAs. Key informant discussions are usually used to gather, from “experts,” more in-depth information about a certain topic. The level of conversation and the information gathered are therefore different from that obtained in an FGD or community discussion. Examples of key informant interviews, the limitations of the approach, and the information key informants can provide are all detailed in this section.

5.6.1 Sampling

For CFSVAs, key informant interviews will typically be conducted in each randomly selected village for the household interview. Key informants are interviewed in each village where quantitative data is gathered. The sampling of communities follows the standard procedures used in CFSVA (see Chapter 4 on sampling). Therefore, no additional sampling procedures are needed.

Each village should be geo-referenced using GPS. Each team visiting the village/community/camp should be equipped with a GPS unit and should know how to use it. The same applies for household data collection.

5.6.2 Design of questionnaire and selection of participants for key informant interviews

Key informant questionnaires for CFSVAs can be short and focused primarily on previously identified priority information. Their length is determined by the information already available (secondary data), the objective of the survey, and the time and resources available for each team collecting the data. A sample topic outline is provided in Annex 1.

5.6.2.1 Main sections

The questionnaires touch upon topics related to the community and/or to the households in the community. Wherever possible, questions should be open-ended. The inclusion of topics depends on information needs identified according to the Food and Nutrition Security Conceptual Framework and available existing information. Examples of themes commonly used in community questionnaires include:

Community information. Most of the key informant questionnaires used in CFSVAs start with collecting information on the current population. For example, in the Ghana CFSVA, information was gathered on ethnicity and religion in the community and on the number of female-headed households in each village. This information can be used to triangulate information on female-headed households and other demographic information collected at the household and focus group level.

Temporary and seasonal migration patterns. Community questionnaires could be used to gather information on seasonal migration and on movements within the community. This information could be used to compare migration patterns at the household level and could also give an indication of the community labour market (which can be useful in an analysis of livelihoods at both household and focus groups

levels). In the Rwanda and Nepal CFSVAs, key informants were asked about the age of the migrants and the type of work the migrants sought.

Community infrastructure. In this section, questions on health and education infrastructure may be grouped, but the topics can also be treated as stand-alone sections. The objective of this section is to collect data on community access to education, health, transport, and market infrastructure. Such information is useful when compared to results from the household survey (especially data on education and health), and risk analysis (data on institutions and the services they provide in the event of a shock).

Education and health. The community questionnaires often include questions for school and health officials on infrastructure, access to health and education, school attendance, main diseases, and costs of services. The data can be combined in the same manner as described in the previous paragraph. The collected information is useful for school feeding and HIV/AIDS programmes, and for partners involved in CFSVAs, such as UNICEF and WHO.

Agriculture and livestock. Depending on the context and the partners involved (especially FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture), this section can be split into two parts. The household survey usually collects data on crops and harvest and on ownership of livestock. The questions asked depend on the available information and the data gathered at the household level, but predominantly involve community assets. This data can facilitate the creation of a seasonal calendar, as was done in the Sudan CFSVA. In that case, key informants (agriculture extension officers) were asked to draw a calendar, by month, for a typical year and for the year preceding the survey.

Market information. In addition to traders, interviews that give information on prices, availability of products, and market reviews are important. The community questionnaire is a good tool for looking at market access and the selling and buying habits of each community. In Mauritania, the community questionnaire pointed out the selling and credit practices in markets. In Uganda, the community questionnaire pointed out the available products and the frequency with which they are on the market. It also highlighted the main problems in the marketing of certain products.

Community priorities and food assistance. Interviewing key informants and community members allows for a broader picture of the challenges and constraints affecting the members of a village/community. This section of the questionnaire should focus on assistance received by the community (typically over the past year or last six months) and what the community sees as their priority. This information can help the authors of the CFSVA put together relevant recommendations. Open-ended questions are used to determine community priorities, which are often divided into two groups: immediate and long term. One has to be careful with this section, as the answers are often biased and should ideally be triangulated with other information, such as observation or focus groups on risk analysis.

5.6.2.2 The interview and the choice of key informant

The interview

During a CFSVA the villages visited for the household survey are all targeted for key informant interviews. Ideally, the arrival of survey teams in the village is advertised and should accommodate the schedule of key informants (e.g. midday for teachers might be the best time, and high season for malaria might not be an easy time for health officials).

The inclusion of many open-ended questions makes the interview longer. The selected questions should focus on obtaining priority information. The closed-ended questions serve as introduction and transition questions, providing the open-ended questions with a brief background, so they do not appear to come out of nowhere.

Key informants may very well be important members of the community, and one might have to respect certain rules before being able to get information from them. They may also portray their community in a particularly biased way. The use of multiple key informants is therefore strongly suggested, to obtain different opinions on the same subject.

The choice of key informant

One might feel that the questions asked, while within the informant's field of knowledge, are too "difficult" for him/her to answer. It is important to remember that ideas that might be alien to the facilitator are often the very basis of how rural households survive. When talking to key informants, particularly at the village level, one is actually talking to experts. Key informants should be chosen on the basis of their knowledge about an issue or set of issues relevant to the CFSVA. It is self-defeating to ask key informants about issues they do not have first-hand information on. If key informants are uncomfortable answering a question, or do not know an answer, take them at their word.

5.6.3 Analysis and analysis tools

The data collected through key informants at the community level is of two types: quantitative and qualitative. Methods for analysing both quantitative and qualitative data are discussed here.

Quantitative data

The community data as currently gathered in CFSVAs is mostly quantitative. As a result, the analysis follows the same principles as that of household survey data. Data entry is done mostly using MS Access and SPSS. Frequencies of responses are then run, and the data can be considered representative for a certain part of the territory (villages have usually been selected through a stratified random sample, and the number of observations is much lower than for households; however, there is no design effect; see Chapter 4 on sampling). This also allows linkage between the village- and household-level data sets. It is interesting to see the degree to which data collected at the community level reinforces, completes, and contextualizes data collected at the household level.

Qualitative data

The data gathered in response to the open-ended questions and the discussions generated should be carefully recorded following a particular format; at the

questionnaire's design stage, sufficient space should be allowed for the recording of such data. Depending on how a question is phrased and on the information obtained, the interviewer should be aware of the basic qualitative data collection; a special session on this topic should be included in CFSVA training. The discussions and summaries could follow the guidance presented in section 5.5.7, on focus groups.

5.7 DESIGN OF QUESTIONNAIRE AND SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS FOR COMMUNITY DISCUSSIONS

Although called a discussion, a community group interview is often more of an information-sharing event designed to build a baseline understanding of a particular village in a particular region. These discussions ideally involve around 10 participants and are held as an entry point into a community. They can be used to identify potential participants for focus groups.

One has to remember that community discussions regroup all members of the community, not only members considered key informants. Key informants, however, can be part of the community discussions.

5.7.1 Questionnaires

As most of the questions for community discussions are open-ended, there is no need for a formal questionnaire (as is the case for key informant interviews). For focus groups, the facilitating team for the discussion will need a checklist of the themes and questions they want to ask. These could be divided into different sections, with some close-ended question starting the discussion. For example, one section could be as in Box 5.9.

Box 5.9: Example of health section of a focus group discussion questionnaire

HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND SCHOOL FEEDING

What are the main diseases in this village?

Specify, for example:

- Fever
- Respiratory infections
- Diabetes
- Diarrhoea
- Pneumonia

Have there been changes during the past six months compared to other years (at this period of the year)? Yes/No

If yes, what is different, and why?

Are there more children not attending school this year compared to last year? Yes/No

If more are not attending, why?

Do children in this village receive food at school or to take home? Yes/No

If yes, does it make a difference in the decision of families to keep their children at school? Yes/No

If no, or partially, what else would be needed to keep children at school?

Summary Table – Health, Education, and School Feeding

Main diseases	Actions when sick	Most affected by disease	Reasons for not attending school	If more not attending, why?

Additional information:

As is the case for focus groups, a summary table can be used to report the main information to be used in the analysis. Nonetheless, it also requires detailed notes by the note taker. The checklist should therefore include enough space for the note taker and the facilitator to include all comments they need to add.

All the topics described in section 5.6 for the key informant questionnaire can be explored during community discussions – once again, depending on needs, available information, and the data to be gathered through the household, key informant, and other qualitative tools used in the CFSVA. The topics included must follow the analysis plan identified for the CFSVA and the Food and Nutrition Security Conceptual Framework described in Figure 1.1, section 1.3

Seasonality

It is important to study the seasonality of the underlying causes of food security. Box 5.10 gives an example of a seasonal calendar that can be used for CFSVA. Community discussions are often considered the best tool for developing a reliable seasonal calendar.

Box 5.10: Example of a seasonal calendar

Using a large sheet of paper, prepare an empty table using the model here. Write down the months, starting with January or with the month of the main crop harvest (whichever is easier for people to refer to as the starting point for yearly events).

Fill in the rows as follows:

- months of highest/lowest food prices in shop or market
- months of highest/lowest family income
- months of highest/lowest family food stocks (wheat, potatoes)
- months of sale of own food production (wheat, potatoes, etc.)
- months of sale of cash crop production (cotton, horticulture, etc.)
- months of highest/lowest sale of animals or animal products
- months of highest/lowest possibilities to find wage labour in agriculture
- months of highest/lowest possibilities to find wage labour outside agriculture

Summary Table: Seasonal Calendar

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Food prices (high/low)												
Family income (high/low)												
Family wheat stocks (high/low)												
Family potato stocks (high/low)												
Sale own food production (high/low)												
Sale cash crops (high/low)												
Sale animals/products (high/low)												
Wage labour in agriculture (high/low)												
Wage labour in other sectors (high/low)												
Migration out of the village (high/low)												

5.7.2 The discussion

The community discussion differs from the key informant interviews in that it tries to bring together members of the community, including key informants, to discuss relevant issues. The main differences are the terms *interview* and *discussion* and the choice and number of participants.

For a community group discussion, the facilitating team will try to bring together a group that represents the community, by gathering members from all age and social groups. Ideally, the discussion group should not exceed 10 to 12 participants, but is often larger. The rules and challenges of facilitating such discussions are the same as for focus groups; keep in mind that the bigger the group, the harder it will be to get everyone to participate.

In order to collect as much relevant information as possible, the team will have to consider facilitation techniques, such as a rough community mapping that identifies basic landmarks and socio-economic indications. Each of these participatory approaches may lead to interesting discussions regarding the vulnerability of individual households and market access.

Other techniques may include a timeline of shocks over the past five years and a seasonal calendar showing when people tend to migrate, when the harvest takes place, and when prices are higher (Box 5.10). This information is then combined with the rest of the collected qualitative data (focus groups, key informants, household data, etc.) in preparation for analysis.

5.7.3 Analysis of community discussion data

As discussed in section 5.5 (on FGDs), the information gathered through the community discussion is qualitative. Therefore, the techniques that apply to focus groups apply also to analysing community discussions. The main difference lies in the data gathered: while the community discussions provide information on topics of general interest to the community, the focus group provides information on a particular theme.

As a consequence, the community information can be linked to the information gathered through key informants, either to confirm data or to obtain greater detail on themes such as times of migration, which migrations are considered normal, and which are considered coping strategies. The information collected can also be cross-tabulated with much of the information from the household questionnaires. Examples include common livelihood strategies, strategies that have proven most effective, social networks in place at difficult times, and the reasons why children are not sent to school.

5.8 CROSSCUTTING THEMES

5.8.1 Gender and community-level data

Key informants

Because key informants offer inherently subjective information, it is important to interview a diverse mix of informants and compare the findings among them. From a gender perspective, ensure that both female and male key informants are interviewed. In addition to the information gained from these interviews, separately discussing key issues with community leaders reduces their opportunity to dominate discussions with community members.

Focus group discussions

Although subgroups may be defined using a number of criteria (wealth groups, livelihoods, age groups, etc.), holding separate discussions with men and women within each group defined by one or more criteria provides an opportunity for different voices and perspectives to be heard.

Questions that can be incorporated into FGDs or interviews with key informants to ensure that a gender perspective is incorporated should address the following areas and how they pertain to both men and women:

- **Assets and land ownership:** access and control of men and women, inheritance practices, etc.;
- **Access to markets, credit, services:** who buys, sells, borrows; level of interest rates, extension access, etc.;
- **Activity profiles/division of labour:** productive and reproductive activities, and related time allocation;
- **Livelihoods/employment:** major economic activities, wage labour opportunities, earnings, reproductive work activities, security constraints, and access to water;
- **Risk and coping strategies:** different types of security problems and coping mechanisms;
- **Intra-household decision-making processes and resource allocations:** extent of political and social participation in the communities;
- **Education:** various reasons for not attending;
- **Food consumption, nutrition, and health:** cultural dietary restrictions, food utilization/intra-household allocation of food; and
- **Migration/displacement:** reasons for migration, impact of refugees/immigrants on host community, consequences of migration on women's position within the community (i.e. what happens when the men leave).

5.8.2 HIV/AIDS community-level data

In countries with high prevalence of HIV/AIDS, it can be useful to collect community-level data related to the epidemic. Within the context of a CFSVA, interviews with key informants can be used to identify issues related to access and (formal/informal) support for people living with HIV/AIDS; focus groups can be used to enhance the understanding of household responses to HIV/AIDS.

Table 5.5 outlines HIV/AIDS-related issues relevant to food security and vulnerability analysis that can be studied through a qualitative approach. For each specific objective, the table identifies an appropriate technique and a proper group of respondents.⁷² It is not possible to prescribe a universal rule regarding who should participate in a focus group discussion on HIV/AIDS. Much depends on the context and the specific purpose of the exercise. However, some issues can be better explored by involving specific groups of people, such as health personnel or people living with a chronically ill adult member. Table 5.5 links some specific objectives to a recommended group of participants, considered to be the best informants.

Table 5.5: HIV/AIDS topics/objectives that can be addressed with communities

TOPIC	Objective(s)	Suggested technique(s)	Recommended participants (where appropriate)
Impact and response	Identify the impact of HIV/AIDS on the households as well as household responses (e.g. consequence on livelihood assets and strategies, impact on food security, and changes in roles within the household).	Problem tree Problem and solution technique Story with a gap	People living with at least one chronically ill adult member
Support	Identify institutions, formal and informal groups, and places that play a role in HIV/AIDS mitigation, prevention, and care.	Checklist	Key informants (e.g. health personnel)
	Measure community awareness of the HIV/AIDS-related services present in the community. Determine their importance and interrelation.	Pie chart	Community members
	Identify factors that prevent people affected by chronic illness from seeking care.	Force field analysis	People living with at least one chronically ill adult member

Source: VAM/WFP, 2008, "Integrating HIV/AIDS in Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis."

If data collection requires the participation of people living with a chronically ill household member, it is crucial to adopt a quick and easy strategy for identifying and contacting these people.

- Participants can be more easily found at a generic health centre that provides services related to HIV/AIDS (e.g. TB treatment, anti-retroviral (ARV) treatment, a prevention of mother-to-child transmission programme, a milk bank, assistance to people living with AIDS, family planning, an HIV/AIDS prevention programme, and home-based care service for chronically ill people). Health personnel can help identify participants.
- Alternatively, participants can be identified through the community leader or during the key informant interviews, especially if doctors or health personnel are involved in the interview.

72. The suggested techniques are selected from the toolkit "Techniques and Practices for Local Responses to HIV/AIDS," developed by UNAIDS and the Royal Dutch Tropical Institute, which presents practices distilled from local responses worldwide (<http://www.kit.nl>).

5.9 KEY REFERENCES: USING QUALITATIVE DATA TECHNIQUES IN A CFSVA

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