

SECTION 1: Overview

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) are one method used in rapid assessment and evaluation for gathering information from partner communities. A “key informant” is someone who can provide detailed information and a unique perspective of a particular issue based on his or her expert knowledge. These in-depth interviews are used to gather qualitative information that can provide an enhanced understanding of the quantitative data gathered for regular program monitoring. Additionally, these in-depth interviews are often rewarding for both the interviewer and the participant. For the participants it is an opportunity for them to discuss their opinions and work with someone who will listen with genuine interest. For the interviewers it can be a rewarding experience to have someone, whom they likely have never met, discuss interesting topics with them and entrust them with information they can then bring to light through the research report.

Purpose

The purpose of conducting KIIs is to collect information from community leaders and experts in a systematic and structured format. An effective KII is designed around clear and specific goals. Informants interact with an enumerator who asks a series of questions designed to yield insight into current programs and/or feedback about a specific topic or issue. The main purpose of the KII for this evaluation is to gain an understanding about the results or outcomes of The Hunger Projects programs.

Key Informant Interviews for Evaluation Purposes

Remember key informants must have first-hand knowledge about the community, its residents, and particularly the outcomes of THP’s programs. Key informants can be a wide range of people, including: community leaders, local business owners, nurses, teachers or other local government workers. These in-depth interviews are useful in evaluation for learning about the perspectives of certain individuals, as opposed to group norms of a community – for which focus groups are more appropriate. For the purposes of this evaluation, the key informant interviews provide an opportunity for researchers to hear from key community members about the changes they are seeing and experiencing in the community – and what conditions and actions are bringing about that change.

Key informant diversity is extremely important. When selecting key informants it is important to choose a diverse set of representatives with different backgrounds and from different groups or sectors. This diversity will provide a broad range of perspectives. If you only interview people of a particular background or sector you may end up with results that are one-sided or biased. Interviewing key informants from a wide range of sectors allows researchers to look at varying perspectives about what is bringing about change at the community level.

What type of “data” do interviews provide? Interview data consists of audio and or video recordings, typed transcripts of those recordings, interviewer notes and observation notes. Typed transcripts are the most utilized form of interview data. During the data analysis phase of the evaluation (after the data collection), transcripts are coded according to participant responses to identify the themes or trends that emerge across various interviews.

Advantages and Disadvantages of KIIs

ADVANTAGES

- Provide information directly from the most knowledgeable people
- Provide flexibility to explore new ideas and issues
- Are inexpensive and fairly simple to conduct

DISADVANTAGES

- May be biased if informants are not carefully selected
- Susceptible to interviewer biases
- May be difficult to prove validity of findings

TIPS for Conducting Interviews:

For enumerators it is important to remember that the person being interviewed should be considered the expert (having valuable knowledge about your research topic) and the interviewer is considered the student. As a researcher, you will engage with participants by posing questions in a neutral manner, listening attentively, and asking follow-up questions that probe for more details based on the interviewee's responses.

Encourage informants to detail the reasons for their conclusions or recommendations. For example, if an informant says, "The water program has really changed things around here," The interviewer can probe for more details, such as "What changes have you noticed?" or "Who seems to have benefitted most?" or "Can you give me some specific examples?"

Maintain a neutral attitude. Interviewers should be sympathetic listeners and avoid giving the impression of having strong views on the subject under discussion. Neutrality is essential because some informants, trying to be polite, will say what they think the interviewer wants to hear.

Minimize translation difficulties. Sometimes it is necessary to use a translator, which can change the dynamics and add difficulties. For example, differences in status between the translator and informant may inhibit the conversation. Often information is lost during translation. Difficulties can be minimized by: using translators who are not known to the informants; briefing translators on the purposes of the study to reduce misunderstandings; and having translators repeat the informant's comments verbatim (word-for-word).

Summarize: Quickly summarize the major comments heard throughout the interview and ask informants if you covered all the major points. Ask them if there is anything else they would like to tell you that you have not asked them.

Take good notes: Even though the interview will be recorded, it is extremely important to take good notes. Notes can be used as back-up if the recording is damaged or lost. Also, notes can capture information like enumerator observations and other contextual information that won't be available in an audio recording. Because note taking can often be a distraction from actively listening to the interviewee, it is recommended that two researchers conduct each interview – one to ask the questions and manage the audio recorder and the other to take notes.

SECTION 2: Informed Consent of Participants

Confidentiality is one of the most critical principals of research ethics. Participants of research projects share valuable and sometimes sensitive information with the researchers. By participating in a key informant interview, participants are demonstrating that they trust the interviewers will protect their identity and that any information shared during the interview will be used only for the purposes of the evaluation. Consent forms for all participants should be completed in advance by all key informants who will be interviewed. Below is a summary of the information in the consent form – enumerators should use to make sure participants clearly understand the information in the consent form.

Interviewer should read the following section to all key informants before the interview begins:

Thank you for agreeing to participate. We are very interested to hear your valuable opinion about how The Hunger Project (THP) can improve programs and better work in partnership with village members to establish a community where every woman, man and child leads a healthy, fulfilling life of self-reliance and dignity.

- *The purpose of this study is to learn what changes have occurred in the community as a result of The Hunger Project programs and activities. We hope to learn things from you that community leaders and The Hunger Project staff can use to improve living conditions and other factors that impact your lives in the areas of health, education, agriculture and food security, and water & sanitation.*
- *Please feel free to be open and honest in your responses. All information you give us is completely confidential, and we will not associate your name with anything you say during the focus group.*
- *We will be recording the interview so that we can make sure to accurately capture your thoughts, opinions, and ideas. No names will be attached to evaluation notes and the audio recordings will be destroyed once they are transcribed.*
- *You may refuse to answer any question or stop the interview at any time.*
- *If you have any questions now or after you have completed the interview, you can ask a study team member like me, or you can call The Hunger Project staff whose names and phone numbers are on the consent form.*

NOTE: After reading or explaining the section above, the enumerator should then distribute the consent forms. There will be two copies. Please allow key informants to keep one copy and the other should be returned to a THP M&E staff member (try to ensure a private location to conduct the interview).

Materials and supplies for Key Informant Interviews

- Consent forms (one copy for participants, one copy for THP staff)
- 1-2 recording devices (iPod Touches and/or video camera if available)
- Notebook and pens for note-taking

SECTION 2: Enumerator Guidelines for Conducting Interviews

1. Introduction

Introduce yourself, the note-takers, and anyone else who will be in the present during the interview.

Review the following:

- What does THP do and why we are conducting this interview.
- Why you were chosen as a “key informant” or local expert.
- What will be done with the information gathered today.

2. Explanation of the process

Explain that interviews are often being used in community development research and that including their voices (as key informants) in the evaluation process is important to THP.

About Key Informant Interviews

- We learn about what changes are happening in the community (both positive and negative)
- There is often not one right answer, we are simply gathering information about your opinions
- For this evaluation we are doing household surveys, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews. Interviews are good tool for evaluations because we can get more in-depth information from local experts like you.

Logistics

- Interviews will last approximately 15-30 minutes.
- We try to hold the interview in a quiet place that allows for some privacy – so you can feel more comfortable sharing your opinions.

3. Gather Key Informant Profile Data

Have the note-taker begin to fill out the demographic sheet by asking a few quick demographic questions of each interviewee (ie. age, gender, profession, education). See the worksheet on page 5.

4. Turn on iTalk Recorder

All key informant interviews should be audio recorded, but be sure to also take notes!

5. Begin Interview

SECTION 3: Key Informant Profile Data

Instructions: Please fill in the chart below with the required demographic information about each key informant. Use the notes section at the bottom of this page to capture any additional information.

Name of Epicenter:	
Date of Interviews:	
Note-taker's Name:	
Interviewer's Name:	

First Name	Last Name	Gender (female, male)	Age (years)	Education Level (completed primary, completed secondary, some university or technical training, completed university)	Profession or Role (chief, agriculture specialist, teacher, nurse, assemblyman, govt. sanitation worker, etc.)	How long have you been living/working in the community? (years)
1)						
2)						
3)						
4)						
5)						
6)						
7)						
8)						
9)						
10)						

SECTION 4: Key Informant Interviews

Community Mobilization & Gender Equality

KEY INFORMANT NAME: _____

1. What has been the most significant change you have seen in the community in the past year? What do you think has contributed to this change?

2. In what ways have you seen people from different communities working together to successfully complete projects?

3. In what ways are women participating in epicenter committees, community-led projects and other decisions made about epicenter activities?

4. Do you think that the community's perceptions about women's participation in leadership roles changed? If yes, in what ways?

5. Is there anything else you would like to tell me that we have not had an opportunity to discuss?

OTHER COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS:

Agriculture and Food Security

KEY INFORMANT NAME: _____

1. What has been the most significant change you have seen in the community in the past year? What do you think has contributed to this change?

2. How have agricultural yields changed over the past year? What are some reasons for these changes?

3. In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges farmers in the area are facing? What are your suggested solutions to those challenges?

4. In what ways have you seen people who have participated in The Hunger Project programs work to improve their agricultural and/or animal husbandry practices?

5. Is there anything else you would like to tell me that we have not had an opportunity to discuss?

OTHER COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS:

Literacy and Education

KEY INFORMANT NAME: _____

1. What has been the most significant change you have seen in the community in the past year? What do you think has contributed to this change?

2. In your opinion, do people in the communities here value education and literacy more than they did previously? If so, what has contributed to that change?

3. In your opinion, what are the biggest barriers that prevent girls and boys from completing primary and secondary school? What changes have been made to improve school enrollment and attendance?

4. Is there anything else you would like to tell me that we have not had an opportunity to discuss?

OTHER COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS:

Health and Nutrition

KEY INFORMANT NAME: _____

1. What has been the most significant change you have seen in the community in the past year? What do you think has contributed to this change?
2. What are the main health problems facing this area? What actions have been taken in the past year to address these problems?
3. In your opinion, do people feel comfortable going to the Epicenter Health Clinic to receive assistance with their health needs? Please explain your answer.
4. What are some of the greatest advances in maternal and child health that you have seen in the community? What has brought about those changes?
5. Is there anything else you would like to tell me that we have not had an opportunity to discuss?

OTHER COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS:

KEY INFORMANT NAME: _____

1. What has been the most significant change you have seen in the community in the past year? What do you think has contributed to this change?

2. In what ways have people in the community been taking action to improve their lives?

3. What types of financial services are available to people in this area? Are these services available to all people (especially women, people with disabilities, people with HIV/AIDS, or other segments of the society which may be discriminated against)?

4. What types of new businesses are being created in the community? What are some of the important factors that help make these businesses become successful?

5. Is there anything else you would like to tell me that we have not had an opportunity to discuss?

OTHER COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS: