

RHRC CONSORTIUM MONITORING AND EVALUATION TOOLKIT

SITUATION ANALYSIS PROTOCOL

Purpose Situation analysis is an approach that uses several research techniques to help pinpoint problems in the delivery of reproductive health services. A detailed protocol for a situational analysis is not included in this *M&E Tool Kit*. In the section on “Additional Resources” below, we describe some of the situation analysis tools that do exist and where to access them.

Description Situation analysis methodologies integrate a number of approaches to program evaluation with a client-oriented focus on quality of care.

- A systems review identifies critical issues in the components of program operation.
- Observation of a sample of provider-client interactions allows a direct view of actual service delivery.
- Interviews with managers, providers and clients provide insights into the program from different perspectives.

Researchers record data on clinic facilities, equipment, supplies, interview comments and observed client-provider interactions.

All stakeholders should be involved in planning, implementing and analyzing the situation analysis.

Ethical Considerations

Approvals

Before you begin a study, you must obtain certain permissions for ethical, political and logistical reasons. Some groups you may need to obtain permission from include UNHCR, Ministry of Health, civil authorities in your district, community representatives, your own organization and partner organizations. The consent of the individuals interviewed is always required.

Permission should be sought to work with facility staff. It can be helpful to have the written support of the lead organizing agency requesting access to facilities. With prior approval of the top administration, it may be possible to arrange spontaneous visits to observe the facilities on an average day.

Informed Consent

Every respondent has the right to refuse the interview, or to refuse to answer specific questions. The interviewers must respect this right.

Privacy

It is important that an interview with each respondent (staff member, facility client, community member, etc.) be conducted in a manner that is comfortable for her or him, and in which she or he is able to speak openly and honestly.

No other adult man, woman, older child or facility staff member should be present or be able to hear the interview. Small children may be present. If the respondent indicates that she or he is uncomfortable holding the interview at the moment, the interview can be done at another place or at a later time.

Confidentiality

The interviewers may not discuss the respondents' answers with anyone, except a supervisor when clarification is needed. Respondents' names or other identifying information should not appear on the questionnaire; there should be no way to link specific responses to an individual respondent.

Analysis plan

After each assessment activity, the research team should meet to debrief. Quantitative data should be compiled and analyzed. Qualitative experiences should be summarized and patterns of responses noted. Standard scoring systems and rankings should be devised during pre-testing that are then applied to results of actual assessment activities.

Findings from the situation analysis activities are compared to standards for the delivery of quality services to identify deficiencies in the program being studied.

Use of Data

All stakeholders should be involved in program improvement decisions resulting from the situation analysis.

Reproductive health program managers can use the situation analysis methodology to assess quality of care; evaluate the comprehensiveness of reproductive health services; estimate staff training needs; examine the availability of behavior change communication materials; highlight equipment requirements; guide plans for facility renovation; quantify commodity supply levels; and provide data for policy formulation.

A one-time situation analysis can provide a starting point for program improvement in many of the fundamental elements of good service delivery. Periodic situation analyses can allow managers to review the characteristics of a service delivery program over time.

Dissemination

Findings and decisions from the situation analysis should be communicated to the community, other organizations working in the area and local authorities.

Lessons identified in the situation analysis should also be disseminated to the wider audience of reproductive health practitioners through relevant publications and meeting presentations.

Additional Resources

Several situation analysis frameworks have been developed following initial work on delivery of family planning services by the Population Council. Examples include:

The Population Council: *The Situation Analysis Approach to Assessing Family Planning and Reproductive Health: A Handbook*, 1998. Available in English, French and Spanish. Print only, order at <http://www.popcouncil.org/>.

WHO: *A framework to assist countries in the development and strengthening of national and district health plans and programs in reproductive health*, 2002. English only. WHO/RHR/02.2. Download or order at http://www.who.int/reproductive-health/publications/RHR_02_2/RHR_02_02_abstract.en.html.

RHRC Consortium: *Gender-based Violence Tools Manual: For Assessment, Program Design, Monitoring and Evaluation in Conflict-Affected Settings*, 2004. This includes a situation analysis tool for GBV. www.rhrc.org.