# Guidance to Develop Community Assessment Tools

**COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE**

The following topics and questions should be reviewed and adapted and next explored in a community assessment for CMAM:

**Topic One: Understanding Community Knowledge, Beliefs and Practices in Relation to Childhood Acute Malnutrition and Ill Health**

**1. Defining acute malnutrition**

* What are the different terms used to describe acute malnutrition locally?
* Is there a perceived difference between acute malnutrition and general illness?

**2. Signs of acute malnutrition**

* What signs are locally associated with acute malnutrition?

**3. Causes of acute malnutrition**

* What are the locally-perceived causes of acute malnutrition?

***Note:*** *There may be many perceived causes of malnutrition. Probe for awareness about the different causes of malnutrition including food, health and care, and cultural beliefs and practices in the community.*

**4. Treatment of acute malnutrition**

***Note:*** *In some areas treatment for acute malnutrition will be available through the national health system. Where this is the case, indicate which services are available and how far away these services are (distance and/or time required to travel there).*

* How has the community traditionally dealt with acute malnutrition?
* Are home remedies with herbs used? If so, which herbs are used?
* Are traditional healers used? If so, which traditional healing practices are carried out?
* Has the use of home remedies or traditional healers changed in recent years? Was there an increase or decrease in their use? Why?
* Where conventional treatment is available through the health facilities, how does the community perceive these services? Is it happy to use the services? Do caregivers continue to use traditional healers while attending conventional treatment?

**5. Treatment of sick children**

* How does the community generally deal with a child who is sick?
  + Are home remedies used? If so, which home remedies?
  + Which services do caregivers take the children to for treatment: Ministry of Health, NGO or private clinic, or traditional healers? Are traditional treatments sought and administered before children are taken to a health facility?
* What are the key factors that influence the decision on where to take a child for treatment?

**6. Infant and young child feeding (IYCF)**

* Do most mothers breastfeed their babies under 6 months of age?
* At what age do mothers start to give additional liquids to infants (in addition to breastmilk)?
* At what age do mothers start to give complementary soft foods? What do they give?
* How many times per day would a mother feed a 12 month old infant? What is it fed?

**Topic Two: Understanding Community Systems, Structures and Organisation**

**1. Community organisation**

* Explore the existence and level of activity of the various community groups in the district, and particularly those which focus on health and women. This includes groups created by communities themselves and groups with external support from a nongovernmental organization (NGO) and/or the government.
* Investigate if and how these various groups link together/coordinate activities.

**2. Community outreach workers**

* Explore the various health and nutrition community outreach workers and volunteer networks **currently active** in the area - the respective roles and responsibilities - which facilities these outreach workers and volunteers are attached to and the geographical coverage of the various cadres/networks within the area. (Includes nutrition educators, primary health acre cadres, vaccinators, community midwives, health extension workers, volunteers supported by any other agencies).
* Investigate commitment from unpaid volunteers in terms of hours worked per week / month

**3. Formal and informal communication in the district**

* Explore the usual methods of disseminating information to the community in the district, including the official methods (e.g., community meetings, through local leaders, local radio) and more informal methods (e.g., groups getting together on market day).
* Explore the perceived relative effectiveness of the various channels.

**4. Options for supporting community participation and outreach activity for CMAM**

* Explore perceptions of the key individuals and groups to involve in community participation and outreach activities.
* Gather suggestions on the most appropriate groups and networks to carry out outreach activity for CMAM.

**COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT TOOLS**

**1. Geographic community map**

Plot the presence of NGOs, community-based organizations (CBOs), community health committees and community volunteer networks on a geographic representation of the catchment area. Add geographic and demographic information and community structures (e.g., road, river, canyon, marketplace, mosque, health facility, water source). Represent the information on a hand drawn map on, for example, a flip chart.

**2. Matrix of community actors and their initiatives, target population and coverage**

List NGOs, CBOs, community committees and community volunteer networks by community and/or assessment area. List the various community actors with their initiatives and/or activities, target population and coverage.

**3. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis for community participation and outreach for CMAM**

Conduct a SWOT analysis. Plot into a matrix the identified strengths and weaknesses of the current situation and the identified opportunities and threats for future community participation and outreach strategies and activities for CMAM.

**4. Matrix of key perceptions and practices on health and nutrition**

List key perceptions and practices impacting health and nutritional status and implications for community participation and outreach strategies and activities for CMAM. Identify potential ways to appropriately address the identified key issues.

**5. Matrix of potential community outreach workers for CMAM**

List community outreach workers, including various extension workers and volunteers, with potential for involvement in community outreach for CMAM. Identify strengths and weaknesses of involving these actors in community outreach for CMAM.

**6. Matrix of community actors selected for community participation and outreach for CMAM**

List the various community actors that are identified to be used for community participation and outreach activities and coordination/supervision. Outline their respective responsibilities and specific functions at start up and during the implementation phase.