

Mobilizing Communities for Health and Social Change: Training of Trainers

Guide: Organize the Community for Action

2019



Table of Contents

Acronyms	ii
Acknowledgements.....	1
Note to Facilitator	2
Preparing for the Community Orientation Meeting	3
Conducting the Community Orientation Meeting.....	4
Activity: Introductions and Opening Remarks	4
Activity: Mini-Drama and Question and Answer Session	4
Activity: Introduce WDC.....	5
Tips for a Successful Meeting	6
Assembling a Community Core Group or WDC	7
Orienting WDC and Office Bearers on their Roles and Responsibilities	9
Evaluation and Closure	12

Acronyms

LGSMT	Local government social mobilization team
MNCH+N	Maternal, newborn, and child health plus nutrition
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VDC	Village development committee
WDC	Ward development committee

Acknowledgements

Breakthrough ACTION—funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and based at Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs—would like to acknowledge the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Health, the National Primary Health Care Development Agency, and the State Ministries of Health and State Primary Health Care Development Agencies in Bauchi, Ebonyi, Federal Capital Territory, Kebbi, and Sokoto for their support during program implementation and partner organizations for their various contributions and support towards the development of this toolkit.

Special thanks go to the Breakthrough ACTION community capacity strengthening team members for authoring this toolkit:

- Telesphore Kabore, Lead Advisor Community Health, Breakthrough ACTION, Save the Children US
- Lenette Golding, Lead Advisor Behavior Change and Community Health, Breakthrough ACTION, Save the Children US
- Ayan Shankar Seal, Head of Health and Nutrition, Save the Children Nigeria
- Amina Bala, Senior Community Health Advisor, Breakthrough ACTION-Nigeria, Save the Children Nigeria
- Gideon Poki, Community Capacity Team Lead, Breakthrough ACTION-Nigeria, Save the Children Nigeria
- Aliyu Dan’asaabe, Community Capacity Officer, Breakthrough ACTION-Nigeria, Save the Children Nigeria
- Usman Usman Sabo, Capacity and Sustainability Advisor, Breakthrough ACTION-Nigeria, Johns Hopkins Center for Communications Program
- Gloria Adoyi, Senior Maternal, Newborn, Child, and Adolescent Health Advisor, Breakthrough ACTION-Nigeria, Save the Children Nigeria

This facilitation guide is based on Save the Children’s (2003) *How to Mobilize Communities for Health and Social Change* field guide and years of experience applying the community action cycle. This guide is tailored for the Nigerian context and is part of a toolkit composed of five materials adapted for community mobilizers in the federal republic of Nigeria, namely, members of the local government area social mobilization team.

This guide is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of Breakthrough ACTION and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

Note to Facilitator

This tool serves as a guide to the facilitation of the Organize the Community for Action phase of the community action cycle. During this process, you will orient the community on the mobilization goal and other key program information; start building relationships, trust, and credibility; and impart a sense of ownership to the community. Use this phase to invite community participation in the mobilization process and develop a core group of community members, if one does not already exist, by doing the following:

- Identify and prepare for the community orientation meeting.
- Conduct the community orientation meeting.
- Assemble or identify a community core group, or ward development committee (WDC).
- Orient the WDC on its roles and responsibilities.

Before the orientation meeting, the following preparation is required for efficient utilization of the facilitation guide:

- Create the meeting schedule.
- Translate tools, questions, and meeting programs in local languages, then write out the agenda and other information on flipcharts a day in advance.
- Ensure the meeting venue has seating arranged in a U shape for maximum interaction among participants.
- Plan a series of funny stories as ice breakers and energizers.

During the meeting, reach consensus on how meetings will be conducted. Together with the group, develop meeting norms that are flexible and considerate of members' availability. In addition to consulting this guide for facilitation support and reminders, use your imagination and creativity to adapt and do things more effectively.

Preparing for the Community Orientation Meeting

Before the community orientation meeting day, use the preliminary information gathered during the Prepare to Mobilize phase of the community action cycle to work with the local government social mobilization team (LGSMT), which is in charge of conducting the community mobilization. Together, complete the following tasks:

- Identify key traditional and community leaders, major stakeholders, and gatekeepers from the WDCs, VDCs, facility management committee, health facility staff, and other influential organizations to participate in the orientation meeting.
- Ensure a diverse group of participants. If the meeting is organized at the ward level, include the village and community members, with help from the LGSMT and community leaders.
- Clarify the meeting agenda and agree on a regular meeting date among all local authorities (e.g., WDCs; VDCs; extension workers; traditional, community, and religious leaders).
- Inform all participants about the meeting. Send invitations about one week before and a reminder two days before the meeting.
- Write problem scenarios for the health condition mini-drama activity (e.g., create a scenario around MNCH+N and related practices relevant to the community).
- Prepare actors for the mini-drama activity. Ensure they have ample time to rehearse. Observe the drama before the meeting.
- Prepare to facilitate the meeting (e.g., review this guide and other program documents, anticipate community members' questions and concerns).
- Prepare the venue (e.g., gather supplies such as stationery, binders, and camera; ensure budget for refreshment expenses or payments as needed; create forms to check attendance; prepare branding and promotional materials) and procure any other items needed for the meeting. Arrange seating in a U shape so that everyone can face each other.
- Plan how to arrive at the venue (e.g., where to park vehicles).
- Define roles each LGSMT and program member will play during the orientation.
- Arrange for refreshments (e.g., drinks, snacks) and transportation considerations during the meeting. For example, will you offer refunds for participants traveling more than 3 kilometers? If yes, how sustainable is that and what expectations will it create among participants?

Conducting the Community Orientation Meeting

Duration: 2 hours.

Methodology: Mini-drama, questions and answer session.

Materials: Flipcharts, markers.

Preparation:

- Send invitations.
- Ask mini-drama volunteers to prepare and rehearse the mini-drama script and write down their lines as needed.
- Arrange seating in U shape.
- Invite community head to give opening remarks.
- Translate materials as needed
- Assign someone to discreetly count meeting attendants (by sex) and note pertinent observations and analyses made.

Activity: Introductions and Opening Remarks

After meeting preparations are done, the LGSMT facilitates the community orientation meeting.

An LGSMT member, who is nominated by the team (i.e., LGSMT chair or representative from the State Primary Health Care Development Agency) and supported by the community engagement and health promotion subcommittee members, acts as lead facilitator for the meeting.

Ensure participants sit in a semi-circle so that they can see or face each other.

Call the meeting to order and welcome everyone. Thank them for making time to attend. Introduce yourself (e.g., include name, surname, home village, work location, role in community mobilization program) and invite other community leaders (e.g., ward head) and teams (e.g., intervention) to do so, either individually or as a group.

Ask the community head to officially welcome members to the meeting and give opening remarks.

Introduce the meeting objectives and orient participants to the community mobilization program.

Activity: Mini-Drama and Question and Answer Session

Announce the mini-drama performance and ask the performers to act out the prepared scenario. At the end of the first scene, summarize the plot and announce the second scene. At the end of the mini-drama (10 minutes maximum), lead a discussion using the questionnaire provided in the technical note below. Link the issues discussed in the mini-drama to realities in the community. If needed, rephrase the questions to generate 2–3 different opinions for each.

Technical Note: Use these questions to facilitate discussion after the mini-drama performance. Different questions may be asked depending on the scenario and what you want people to learn.

- Now that we have all seen the drama, who can tell me what took place in the first scene? What was the problem? What do you remember of what you have just seen?
- What is wrong with the characters? Who is arguing? Why are they arguing?
- Have you experienced anything like that in your village or community?
- What happens in the second scene?
- What is the name of the woman who came with her husband?
- How did the couple feel?
- What did the woman do? What did her husband do?
- Do you think your community members would agree to visit the other village to learn from them?
- If you were part of the tour visit to improve the MNCH+N situation in your community or village, what questions would you want to ask?

Activity: Introduce WDC

After the question-and-answer session, summarize the discussion and explain the program. Use simple language, and ensure all key concepts are translated into the local language as needed. LGSMT members and program staff should take time to respond to questions so that everyone understands. Inform participants that the program will invest its time and skills to help them use existing community structures, and everyone is invited to participate in the process.

Introduce the WDC, a group that serves as the hub of community mobilization activities at the community level and orients the community on their roles. About 60% of WDC members should be those most affected by the issue, and the remaining 40% should be VDC members. Explain that further details will be explained once they officially partner with the program.

Reach consensus on potential WDC members and how they should be selected (think about the selection process. Give participants time to ask questions, make comments, and add criteria if necessary. Be clear that WDC membership is voluntary work and there will be no payment.

During the meeting, discreetly count the meeting attendants (by sex) and note pertinent observations and analyses made.

Give community leaders time to consult with each other and decide if they are interested in partnering with the program. If they are, they will need to inform the LGSMT so that they can move together to the next phases.

Bring the meeting to order and thank all members for coming and participating. Assure them that this process can benefit their children, their families, and the nation as a whole.

Ask the participants to accept the intervention or initiative by making few commitment remarks.

If the VDC chairperson opened the meeting, a representative from the local government area health authority, local government area, or ward may say a few remarks and formally close the meeting.

After the meeting, evaluate how effectively it was conducted. In the few days after the meeting, visit or contact stakeholders to gather feedback and answer any additional questions.

Tips for a Successful Meeting

- Be on time. Ensure the meeting time is clearly communicated in advance.
- At the start of the meeting, indicate the estimated duration and ask for consent from community leaders and participants to continue if it exceeds that time.
- Speak in the local language. Be sure the LGSMT understands the dialect and common terminology used for key issues related to the program. It is important to learn and use these terms and be able to articulate the key program goal and other key elements in the local language.
- Wear simple and appropriate clothing. Clothing identifies the team and thus should not be offensive or distracting.
- Avoid wearing sunglasses when speaking with community members to demonstrate eye contact.
- Invite community leaders to open the meeting and guide discussions. It might be helpful to hold a caucus with the community leader beforehand to brief them on meeting objectives and scope.
- Treat people with respect, regardless of age, sex, health, or economic status.
- Do not make promise that cannot be kept. Do not build false hopes. It is better to explain rather than to make false promises.
- Towards the end of the meeting, be sure to ask participants if they have any questions and respond to each honestly. Do not create unrealistic expectations about the program. Stay within the program scope and mandate.
- Avoid using cell phones (e.g., calling, text messaging, accessing the internet) during the meeting.
- Be sober for the meeting, and do not smoke during the meeting.
- Park all vehicles at a respectable distance from the meeting venue.
- Thank everyone for their time and participation.

Assembling a Community Core Group or WDC

Objective: Elect or select WDC members.

Time needed: 2 hours.

Materials required: Flipchart, markers.

Venue: Village meeting location or another neutral or convenient place.

Preparation:

- The LGSMT should negotiate a date and time for the meeting in consultation with the group village head and other stakeholders in the community.
- The village head should facilitate identification of a convenient venue (e.g., church, school, or other community structure) for the orientation meeting and communication with WDC members. The group village head also should attend the orientation meeting.
- The LGSMT should hold a planning meeting prior to the orientation meeting to develop an agenda, solicit resources, and share responsibilities during the meeting. Invite participants to the VDC meeting at least a week in advance to elect the WDC.
- Involve diverse individuals and groups, including representatives from the LGSMT, program, district, partner NGOs, community-based organizations, VDCs, and local and traditional leadership. Subcontracted NGO staff at the VDC level is by default part of the WDC.
- If WDCs already exist, reach consensus with the community about whether to use these groups, include some of their members, or form completely new structures.
- Prepare meeting objectives.
- Write WDC roles and responsibilities on a flipchart and organize the venue and seating arrangements.
- Choose in advance who will lead the session, and allow time to rehearse.

The steps of the WDC team member selection/election meeting are as follows:

- **Step 1:** Ask the selected LGSMT member to call the meeting to order and welcome everyone.
- **Step 2:** Ask participants (e.g., local government area team, ward community engagement focal person) to introduce themselves.
- **Step 3:** Ask the ward head to officially welcome everyone and give opening remarks. The opening remarks should highlight the meeting's importance and encourage people to take it seriously and participate freely and openly.
- **Step 4:** The ward head hands over facilitation to the team and its lead facilitator, nominated by LGSMT leadership.
- **Step 5:** Introduce the meeting objectives (i.e., selecting or electing a WDC) and brainstorm with the VDC on the expected WDC roles. Write responses on a flipchart.
- **Step 6:** Reach consensus on WDC membership criteria. Use the principles below as guidance and brainstorm additional criteria as needed:

- Most (about 60%) of members should be from the community, particularly those who are vulnerable, marginalized, most affected, and most interested. The rest are from the development committees.
 - The community members should identify the marginalized.
 - Avoid members who are already influential in other structures (e.g., chairpersons of VDCs and facility management committees).
 - Avoid having members of other community structures or committees (e.g., VDCs and WDCs) as chairs of the WDC. The chairperson should not hold influential positions in other sectors of society.
- **Step 7:** Reach consensus on the mode of selecting and electing the WDC (e.g., secret ballot, open voting, self-selection, grouping by village) to ensure equal distribution of all villages at meetings.
 - **Step 8:** Facilitate the chosen WDC member selection or election process.
 - **Step 9:** After WDC membership is completed, explore with the VDC if they are happy with the process and its outcome. Ask if they believe members will be committed to work on community mobilization around health issues in their area.
 - **Step 10:** Inform chosen participants about the WDC orientation. Where appropriate, negotiate a date for the orientation and ask them to keep the date free.
 - **Step 11:** Ask participants if they have any questions and answer what you can. Thank participants for their time and close the meeting.

Orienting WDC and Office Bearers on their Roles and Responsibilities

Objectives: Orient participants on their roles and responsibilities, and define bylaws.

Time needed: 2 hours.

Materials required: Flipchart, markers.

Preparation:

- The LGSMT should negotiate a date and time for the orientation meeting.
- Arrange the orientation meeting in consultation with the WDC head and other community stakeholders.
- The WDC head should facilitate the identification of a convenient venue (e.g., church, school, other community structure) for the orientation meeting and help with communication with WDC members.
- Invite ward head to give opening remarks at the orientation meeting.
- The LGSMT should hold a planning meeting prior to the orientation meeting to develop a meeting agenda, solicit and obtain resources, and assign meeting responsibilities.

The WDC is an important structure for implementing the community mobilization process, especially for exploring community health issues and developing an action plan. The effectiveness of the WDC in mobilizing members of their communities to tackle health issues largely depends on capacity and support from LGSMTs. The LGSMT team should take a leading role in capacity building of the WDCs, with support from local NGO sub-grantees.

The steps for orienting WDC members and office bearers on their roles and responsibilities are as follows:

- **Step 1:** The LGSMT chairperson or representative calls the meeting to order and welcomes all participants.
- **Step 2:** The chairperson invites the ward head to give opening remarks.
- **Step 3:** The chairperson introduces other LGSMT members and asks WDC members to introduce themselves (e.g., names, village, committee or community they represent).
- **Step 4:** Ask participants to share expectations for the meeting. List each expectation on a flipchart for everyone to see. Read each aloud.
- **Step 5:** Review the agenda, clarifying any questions. Assure participants they will not be there for the whole day. Ask if they have any questions, comments, or adjustments to the agenda.
- **Step 6:** Describe the orientation meeting objectives, which should be written on a flipchart and posted for everyone to see.
- **Step 7:** Explain the program initiatives and introduce the roles and responsibilities of WDC members. Include as appropriate the initiatives to support service delivery integration and its

components (e.g., program goals, stakeholders, implementation structures at the district and community levels). Explain that they were selected by the VDC to participate as WDC members.

- **Step 8:** Divide participants into two groups. Ask each group to discuss what they perceive their roles to be. Write responses on a flipchart.
- **Step 9:** Ask each group to present its list in plenary.
- **Step 10:** Guide discussion on the actual WDC roles (see **Table 1**) in relation to their lists.

Table 1

Roles of WDC Office Bearers

ROLE	KEY RESPONSIBILITIES
Chairperson	Manage day-to-day running of group. Manage disciplinary action. Help with conflict resolution regarding core program issues. Liaison with partners. Chair meetings to review progress and activities. Assign responsibilities.
Vice chairperson	Support chairperson. Serve as chair or member in ad-hoc committees.
Treasurer	Maintain records of WDC financial donations, disbursements, and expenditures. Manage banking and withdrawals (with second signature).
Vice treasurer (optional)	Support treasurer.
Secretary	Record and maintain meeting minutes, resolutions, and group activities. Call for meetings on behalf of chairperson.
Vice secretary	Support secretary. Help with record-keeping responsibilities as needed.
Representative of local government or traditional authority: may be extension worker (ex-officio)	Act as focal point for communication between group and local decision makers.
Committee members	Support chair, secretary, and treasurer in all WDC activities. Supervise community activities on behalf of the WDC as needed.

- **Step 11:** If needed, add roles stipulated in the community mobilization strategy document:
 - Explore health-related problems in the community (ward and village catchment areas) and develop action plans.
 - Act as a catalyst for community responses to health-related issues and facilitate awareness-raising activities.
 - Identify community health volunteers and their tasks in community mobilization.

- Develop internal bylaws.
 - Help link community initiatives with the health facility and other social services.
 - Ensure community ownership of initiatives.
 - Ensure minimum required numbers of community health volunteers, village discussion facilitators, as so on, and provide them support.
 - Develop management systems and structures appropriate to their own capacity.
 - Build on traditional community coping strategies and avoid becoming overly dependent on external resources.
 - Gather and document information and data on health prevention, promotion, and care activities within the community.
 - Meet regularly to monitor and document progress and make necessary adjustments.
 - Participate in training and capacity building activities.
- **Step 12:** Ask participants for any questions or areas of clarification and summarize the discussion on WDC roles and responsibilities, then discuss the bylaws.
 - **Step 13:** Reach consensus on a WDC code of conduct and norms (e.g., how many times per month to meet and for how long, absenteeism rules, membership fees, member replacement procedures).
 - **Step 14:** Discuss areas that need norms and bylaws and then define specific norms. Use the following example norms and codes of conduct, adapted from Save the Children’s (2009) draft “CASP – Mobilizing Communities for Education, Health and Social Change” in Nigeria:
 - We will be transparent and open about what we do and why we do it.
 - We will be clear about what we can/cannot do, and avoid raising expectations
 - We will do what we say, and we will keep all the promises that we make.
 - We will respect confidentiality relating to HIV and AIDS and any sensitive information.
 - We will make sure that all community members are involved in our activities, including people who are often stigmatized or discriminated against.
 - We demonstrate respect for everyone at all times.
 - We will actively seek to involve children fully by creating space for them to participate and demonstrating respect for and interest in their views.
 - We will be accountable to community members at all times.
 - We will strive to challenge harmful attitudes, behaviors or ideas
 - **Step 15:** Divide participants into two groups to discuss roles and responsibilities of WDC duty bearers (chairperson, secretary, treasurer). Ask them to write their list on a flipchart and then present it in plenary.
 - **Step 16:** Summarize the proposed roles, responsibilities, and code of conduct.
 - **Step 17:** At the end of the orientation, ask if there are questions or comments. Thank everyone for their participation and contributions. Remind participants that they will be invited to another meeting to continue with the process.
 - **Step 18:** Thank the group village head for attending and invite them to give closing remarks.

Evaluation and Closure

Objective: To share appreciation of the session.

Duration: 10 minutes.

Methodology: Plenary discussion.

Materials: Flipchart, markers.

Preparation: Invite a leader to offer a closing prayer and remarks.

The steps for evaluation and closure are as follows:

- **Step 1:** Inform participants the meeting has ended, and ask them to evaluate the workshop. This evaluation will be used to help improve the next meeting.
- **Step 2:** Explain how the evaluation will be done, either in writing or through verbal questions and answers. Give a sample question for evaluation and discuss it.
- **Step 3:** Conduct the evaluation, then remind participants about the date for the next meeting.
- **Step 4:** Thank everyone for their time, and remind them of the next phase, Explore Health Issues and Set Priorities.
- **Step 5:** Invite the notified leader to say a word or a prayer to close the session and thank everyone for coming.