

# COMMUNICATION FOR IMMUNIZATION

E-LEARNING RESOURCES

## 05 | C. KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

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**Key informant interviews, also called In-depth interviews** are a research method to gather specific qualitative information, from “informants” who are usually experts and decision-makers, about a topic or a community’s views. Researchers walk through a pre-determined question guide with the informant, to get their views on issues of concern and communication strategies and activities that can be adopted to solve the issues. Analysing a collection of key informant interviews will give insights on concerns and solutions relating to policy, advocacy, resources and implementation of a programme.

There are practical and ethical guidelines for conducting key informant interviews, and considerations for analysing the data.

### 1. Ethical considerations:

- **Facilitators must treat informants with courtesy and respect.**
- **Facilitators must explain the nature of the research**, why it is occurring and what will happen with the results.
- **Informants must be allowed to ask questions** before and during the research.
- **Informants must give consent.** Ideally this should be written consent. (See sample consent form in this resource kit).
- **Informants are volunteers, and must have the option to stop** their participation at any point.
- **Informants should be encouraged to speak openly.**
- **Informant information must be kept confidential, unless they agree otherwise.** When citing them in your report, describe them as opposed to writing their name. For example, “A senior ministry leader said...” “A leader in a women’s association said...”.

- **There must be no consequences for informant, whatever their views** – for example, on their jobs.
- **Be aware of and respect cultural norms** – e.g. sitting at a lower level than a senior religious leader.

### 2. Practical considerations:

- **Interviews can be face-to-face or by phone.** Face-to-face interviews help to establish a rapport, while phone interviews can help to set a professional distance from each informant.
- **One or two researchers should be present** – one to ask questions and record answers; and ideally one to thoroughly record answers by hand and on a recording device for accuracy.
- **Researchers should be good listeners, and remain neutral on issues.**
- **The researchers should be trained and fully versed on the contents of the questionnaire.**
- **Researchers should speak the same language as the informant, or have a trusted translator present.**
- **Have materials ready for the duration of field work** - sufficient copies of the questionnaire, communication materials for pre-testing, pens, pencils, the recording device and batteries.
- **The informants will generally be experts and decision-makers** – such as senior individuals in a Ministry, mayors or other senior community leaders, association and union leaders, NITAG chairs, and academic experts such as anthropologists or epidemiologists.
- **Select key informants from a wide variety of sectors**, who have different perspectives on the issue.
- **Expect to conduct at least 10 interviews.**

- **Informants may have very different views from one another**, depending on which interests they represent.
- **Informants may need an invitation from a very senior person to take part in the interview.**
- **Schedule the interviews well in advance.** The informants will likely be very busy.
- **The interview should take about 30 minutes.**
- **Encourage the informant to be very honest and frank.**
- **Ask open-ended questions as much as possible**, giving the informant a chance to speak in-depth. They include openings such as “What do you think of”, “Why do you believe that”, “What are people saying”, as opposed to “Yes or No” questions such as “Do you think...”
- **Probe** with follow-up questions if you need more information.
- **Ask a closing question such as “do you have more to add”**, which allows key informants to give additional views.
- **Summarize what you have heard**, to ensure you and the informant have the same understanding of the discussion.
- **Schedule follow-up interviews with the key informants after the communication interventions**, as a way to measure whether the intervention has had an impact.

### 3. Analysing and reporting the information:

- **Transcribe all of the interviews into the same software, and use the same coding tools.**
- **Keep clear folders and records.**
- **Remove any identifying data from transcripts that will be shared outside the research group** (names, specific titles).



- **Key informant interviews provide qualitative data, so look for and compile general patterns in the responses.** “Most informants agreed that...”
- **Select quotes for the report from individuals that represent the major views.** For example, “There is a deep distrust of vaccines in the community,” said the leaders of a cultural and business association, or “It’s more important to invest in cervical cancer screening,” said representatives from oncology and women’s reproductive health.
- **Report important insights from key players.** “The Ministry will never pay for those vaccines in the long term,” said a Ministry advisor.
- **If there was no clear pattern, report it.** “There were several different views on the issue. They included...” If there are a set of divergent views, communication activities will need to be prioritised to address them.
- **Report the changes and solutions the informants’ recommend:** For example, a preference to be included earlier in decision-making processes, or improved non-monetary incentives for health workers.
- **Triangulate the information with other data sources** – such as the focus group discussions, to draw a clear picture of the issues and potential solutions.
- **Use the informants’ suggestions to shape the communication plan.**
- **Report the findings, and critically, what you will be doing with them to improve immunization services, back to the key informant.**

