

Community Focus Group Discussions – Example Questions

[Delivery practices and location]

1. Tell me about the customs and traditions in your community for pregnant women, women giving birth, and the few days after delivery.
 - Who is usually present during labor? What does this person do for the mother while she is in labor?
 - Who is usually present at the delivery? What does this person do for the mother during the delivery?
 - Is there a different person to tend to the newborn than the person tending to the mother? Who is that person (s)?
 - What are the common things you do for the mother and the baby immediately after birth? In the following week?
 - What are the common things you do for the baby immediately after birth?
 - How long should a woman stay at (identified facility) after having a baby?
2. Where do most pregnant women in your community deliver their babies?
3. In your opinion, why do pregnant women who deliver at home do so instead of using a health facility?
 - Probe for issues related to:
 - Access (distance, transport, cost)
 - Permission or support from family members
 - Household responsibilities
 - Perceptions of health facility and quality of care
 - Perception of pregnant woman's health risk
 - Myths or misconceptions about home or facility delivery
4. In your opinion, why do pregnant women who deliver at a facility decide to do so?
 - Probe for issues related to:
 - Access (distance, transport, cost)
 - Permission or support from family members
 - Household responsibilities
 - Perceptions of health facility and quality of care
 - Perception of pregnant woman's health risk
 - Myths or misconceptions about home or facility delivery
5. In your opinion, where is the **best place** for pregnant women in your community to give birth? Why?
 - What are the advantages of delivering at this place (identified location)?
 - What are the disadvantages of delivering at this place (identified location)?

[Awareness/perceived need/opinions/current usage of Maternity waiting homes]

6. In your opinion, how could pregnant women in your community benefit from using a maternity waiting home. Who would use the shelter most? Please explain.
- Probe for:
 - Need based on health reasons
 - Need based on geography
 - Need based on socioeconomic factors
 - Need based on gravida
 - Previous experience with birth in the facility
7. In your opinion, what are the reasons pregnant women might use or not use a maternity waiting home? (PROBE FOR: social, cultural, economic structural factors. Your questions should explore the following types of reasons:
- Probe for:
 - Social/cultural reasons
 - Financial implications
 - Perceptions of health and personal safety
 - Permission/support from family
 - Encouragement or discouragement from peers

[Prior to getting to maternity waiting home]

8. What kind of **support from families or to families** would pregnant women need to obtain before using the maternity waiting home?
- Probe for:
 - Whose support/permission would be needed
 - Help with childcare/housekeeping during the absence
 - Help with transport
 - Help with costs
 - Person to accompany

[Acceptability/services/staff]

9. Which persons should be allowed to stay with pregnant women in the maternity waiting home?
- Probe for:
 - Children, including number and age
 - Other family members
 - Traditional birth attendants
 - Other support persons
10. What would be the essential things (elements) that would make a maternity waiting home good for pregnant women and their families?
- Probe for:
 - Aspects of the structure

- Amenities, furnishings, supplies
- Issues related to food/cooking
- Types of staff on hand to assist women
- Other factors

11. Why might a pregnant woman in your community who is high-risk or who lives far from the facility choose not to stay in the maternity waiting home before delivery?

- What things make it hard for a woman to use the maternity waiting home?
- What things make it easy for a woman to use the maternity waiting home?

[Management/functioning/maintenance of existing maternity waiting home what's happening currently?]

12. Who is responsible for the day-to-day management of the maternity waiting home in your community?

13. What are the types of activities this (person/group) does?

- Can you tell me how you think this is working?

14. How do women, families, and community members contribute to maintenance/upkeep of maternity waiting home?

- Can you describe some of the activities?

15. Who provides the resources (e.g. food, money, etc.) to keep the maternity waiting home open?

- What resources does the community contribute to the running or operation of the maternity waiting home in your area?

16. What has been the greatest challenge associated with keeping a maternity waiting home open?

- What can be done to overcome these challenges?

[Ideas for the future]

17. What would you do to improve the support in your community for maternity waiting homes?

- Community: "What can the community do to support the maternity waiting homes?"
- Management: "How could the maternity waiting homes could be better managed?"
- Coordination: "How could health facilities better work with maternity waiting homes? "