

South Sudan – Coping Strategies Research

Focus Group Discussion Tool

Moderator name		Assistant moderator name	
Date		Location	
Number of participants		Start time:	End time:

FGD participant details:

County	Primary Livelihood Source	Gender	Age
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			

Introduction (5 minutes)

Facilitator's welcome, introduction and instructions to participants

Welcome and thank you for agreeing to take part in this Focus Group Discussion. My name is _____. I am part of the REACH Assessment Team.

The information you provide today will inform more effective food security analysis by humanitarian organisations working in South Sudan. Please note that this interview does not have any impact on whether you or your household will receive humanitarian assistance in the future.

You have been asked to participate because your point of view is important, and we want to hear your opinions. In particular, we'd like to ask you about the food security situation in your community, and what people do when they don't have enough food or enough money to buy food. Please note that everything you tell us will be anonymised, and it will not be attributed to you.

Your participation in this discussion is entirely voluntary, and anyone who does not want to participate can leave now or at any time during the discussion. You can decide whether you want to answer questions or not once the discussion starts. If you choose not to take part or to skip any questions, it will have no negative impacts whatsoever on your ability to access services from any agency. Please feel free to ask me any questions now, or at any point during the discussion. **Do you consent to participate in this discussion?**

This discussion will take no more than one hour and thirty minutes.

Group agreements

Before we begin, it is important that we create a safe environment for this discussion where people feel free to speak openly. Therefore, it will be good if we can make certain agreements among the group. What should we include in these agreements?

Start by suggesting one and wait for people to come up with other agreements. If any of the below agreements are not mentioned by the participants, suggest to also include those.

- The most important rule is that only **one person speaks at a time**. There may be a temptation to jump in when someone is talking but please wait until they have finished.
- There are no right or wrong answers.
- You do not have to speak in any particular order.
- When you do have something to say, please do so. There are many of you in the group and it is important that we hear from all of you.
- You do not have to agree with the views of other people in the group.
- All participants must be respectful towards one another.
- Everyone must respect the confidentiality of the discussion and not repeat what is discussed here, or attribute it to participants.
- Does anyone have any questions? (answers)

Please can everyone confirm that you agree with these community agreements? OK, let's begin.

During this conversation, we want you describe **what people in your community do**, rather than what only you and your household do.

Questions

Compile list of coping strategies

1. **Can you think of one year when the harvest was not interrupted by a large shock (such as flooding or conflict), and most households had access to livestock? During this period, how did people in your community respond when they did not have enough food or enough money to buy food?**

At all times, emphasise that we want to understand the strategies that people use when they don't have enough food or money to buy food.

a) In general:

- *What strategy did you use first (and why)?*

b) For each strategy:

- **Probe for *specific detail*:**
 - *Send household members to eat with another household: Which household members? To which households? For how long? Under what conditions?*
 - *Sell animals: Which animals and why? Where and to whom do people sell animals? What do people use the income for?*
 - *Sell household assets: Which assets and why? Where and to whom do people sell assets? What do people use the income for?*
 - *Migrate to another village or cattle camp: Which household members? To which location and why? Which factors shape this decision (e.g., perception of access, distance, security...)?*
- **Why did people use this strategy?**
 - *Probe for the impact of:*
 - Demographic factors
 - *Gender of household head*
 - *Household income (poorest versus better-off households)*
 - *Livelihood source*
 - *Availability of resources*
 - External factors
 - *(In)security*
 - *Climate events*
 - *Cultural practices*
 - *Social connections/ identity*
 - *Market access & functionality*
- **What are the challenges and risks associated with this strategy, and what might be the wider impact of using this response (e.g., betrothing a daughter may incur social impacts, including a sense of disgrace)?**
 - *Probe for:*
 - *Impact on ability to deal with future shocks and/ or stressors.*
 - *Impact on ability to engage in livelihood activities in future.*
 - *Impact on household resources.*
 - *Reversibility.*
- **How often could people use this strategy?**
 - *Is this something that people (can) do:*
 - *Continuously (e.g., rationing)?*
 - *Once-only event (e.g., distress migration)?*
 - *Sequentially (e.g., animal sales)?*
 - *When, if ever, is it not possible to use this strategy?*
 - *How has this strategy (and people's ability to use it) changed over time?*
 - *Will it be possible for people to use this strategy in the future?*

2. During [atypical shock A], how did people in your community respond when they did not have enough food or enough money to buy food (were there any strategies they used that were not discussed under Question 1)?

3. Are there any strategies that people used before, but which are no longer possible? If yes, why?

Compare list of coping strategies with the LCSl

Repeat the following for each strategy that is included in LCSl, but was not reported in Questions 1 or 2.

1. [Strategy A] was not reported; why is this?

a) Probe for the impact of:

- **Weather** (e.g., consecutive years of flooding likely restricted people's access to farm land, reducing their ability to harvest immature crops; flooding might also restrict people's movement to another village or cattle camp).
- **Price shocks** (e.g., recurrently high market prices likely reduced people's ability to purchase seeds, meaning they could not consume these in replacement of food).
- **Security** (e.g., people might be reluctant to migrate to another village or cattle camp owing to perceptions of insecurity along the main routes; people who have experienced multiple years of cattle raiding likely won't have any animals to sell).
- **Social change and norms** (e.g., begging might be uncommon because a large proportion of the community are deprived and therefore unable to share resources; begging might be considered taboo and therefore people avoid this).

Strategy	Severity	Reported
Send household members to eat with another household	STRESS	
Sold more animals than usual		
Borrowed money or purchased food on credit		
Sold household assets/ goods		
Sold productive assets/ means of transport	CRISIS	
Harvested immature crops		
Sold or ate seeds intended for planting		
Sold/ slaughtered last cow or goat	EMERGENCY	
Travelled to another village or cattle camp		
Begged other community members for food		

Conclusion (1 minute)

- Thank you for participating in our conversation and for sharing your opinions with us. This has been a very helpful discussion and your perspective is very important for us to understand.
- I would like to remind you that any comments featuring in this report will be anonymous.
- Please let us know if you have any questions for us or any feedback.