

Community Dialogue

Community dialogue is a forum that draws participants from as many segments of the community as possible to exchange information, share personal stories and experiences, share perspectives honestly, clarify viewpoints and jointly develop solutions to identified community health concerns/issues. These discussions can be organized by community leaders, health care providers, etc.

Key Outcomes of Community Dialogue

- Increase in number of people accessing SRH/FP services at community and facility level
- Increased knowledge about SRH/FP services, including various contraceptive methods available and where they can be accessed within the target community



Steps

1

Engage stakeholders

Engage with local community gatekeepers within the health facility for buy-in and effective community-led dialogue preparation.

2

Select dates

Plan with the Community Health Assistants (CHAs)/Community Health Extension Workers (CHEWs)/Community Health Based Services Coordinator (CHBSC) on dates for the community dialogue, and involve the local administrative units and community gatekeepers. Include a sign language interpreter, depending upon the community in which the dialogue will be held.

3

Hold a planning meeting

During the planning meeting, identify common issues preventing community members such as women, men, young people, and the physically challenged from accessing SRH services e.g. myths about contraceptives, lack of male engagement, and poor health seeking behavior.

4

Mobilize target audience

Mobilize the target audience using community health workers and public announcements, (this could be parents, community gatekeepers, first time mothers, husbands, boda boda riders among others) based on the need and problem identified. Be strategic about who is invited to take part in the dialogue.

5

Engage participants

Engage participants in a discussion, using the [facilitator's guide](#), to enable participants to share opinions, experiences, views, and values in an interactive and participatory way. Identify a facilitator/chairperson and a notetaker who should be respected community members.

6

Conduct an accessible dialogue

Conduct the dialogue in a language, preferably the local dialect that is easily understood by all participants. The sessions should facilitate an ease of expression without fear of judgment and intimidation for views on FP or contraceptive services and information.

7

Seek joint resolutions

Identify solutions where there is a commitment or resolution by the participants to embrace SRH/FP. It may also bring about additional information, issues, and ideas that the community may wish to act on.

8

Develop an action plan

Develop a SMART action plan together in accordance with cultural practices and traditional values. The process is most effective when the participants are actively involved in the resolution that may eventually lead to increased support and acceptance of contraceptive services.

9

Communicate appreciation and follow-up

After successfully conducting a dialogue session and the evaluation, express appreciation to all participants for their time, contribution and resolve. This should be done regardless of the dialogue outcome. Agree on a date for a follow-up meeting.

Useful Tips

- Use networks and collaborate with existing groups to engage any specialized groups comfortable in speaking on their behalf.
- Include multiple perspectives on the issues. For example, the perspective from a government official, religious or traditional leader, community member, parent, service provider, men, women, and youth that may vary yet are helpful to having rich conversations.
- It is suggested to have a moderator with people management skills to be able to guide the flow of the dialogue. If you have an individual who is outspoken, you might pull them aside or suggest to continue the conversation after the meeting.
- An ideal community dialogue should have at least 30 members.

For more information, refer to <https://tciurbanhealth.org/courses/east-africa-demand-generation/lessons/community-dialogue/>