FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

Due to the iterative nature of qualitative research, focus groups will be open-ended and iterative, limiting the extent to which the content and direction of discussions can be fully anticipated. This document will act as a guide to the themes and questions that will be explored with participants in each focus group. Topic guides may be updated as new themes and findings emerge throughout the evaluation period, with structured observation findings also feeding into this process.

Demographic information

Initial documentation for each participant to collect:
Name
Age
Gender
Role
Site (Village)

Theme 1: COVID Perceptions

- What do you know about COVID-19 ('coronavirus') disease? (open-ended question)
    - Prompts around causes of the disease, signs/symptoms, population groups most affected
    - Do you see yourselves as 'at risk' from COVID?
- What are the ways in which we can stop COVID from spreading through our communities and prevent people catching the disease?
    - Prompts – things we can do individually, things we can do as family/household, wider community actions
    - Consider coverage of distancing, mask wearing, handwashing, cough etiquette, when meeting people (not handshaking), large gatherings, staying outdoors/ventilation, vaccination and shielding of elderly
- Do you think people within your family and community are taking these steps?
    - Prompts – which steps are they/not taking? Why /not?
- How effective do you think these precautions are in protecting from COVID?
    - prompt - discussion re shielding in context of other steps
- Has there been a change in this over the past 9 months since the first COVID cases in Malawi?
    - Further questions – what sorts of changes? What prompted these? (prompt re. role of 'Kuteteza' initiative, if not raised already)

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07-Jul-2021
(COMREC)
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Theme 2: Kuteteza initiative

- What do you understand to be the main aim(s) of the Kuteteza project?
    - Prompt words/phrases – Preventing COVID spread, high risk individuals, community awareness, community empowerment, risk reduction

For staff involved in implementation only:

- How useful was the initial training session?
    - Prompt - Was there anything that, looking back, you think could have been done better? Was there anything that could have been made clearer? Any content which should've been added? Any excessive (redundant) content?
- How confident did you feel in your role in the project?
    - Prompt – Could anything have been done differently to support you in your role? Any changes to the project to make it easier for you?

- How well did you think the implementation of the project went in the village?
    - Prompts:
        - *for staff only,* any comments on enumeration phase?
        - How did planning discussions with elderly and their families go?
        - How could planning have been improved?
        - Any comments on distribution of resources (positive/negative)
        - Challenges in implementation of shielding (incorporating living arrangements, food/fuel provision, medications, caring responsibilities, other aspects)
        - Experiences of those not directly involved in shielding (eg. awareness, information-sharing)
        - Any suggestions for improvement – 'how would you have done things differently?'
    - *For village residents, ensure input from both elderly residents themselves and their families, as well as others not directly involved in shielding*

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