Participatory Poverty Grading Tool Manual

MARIE STOPES INTERNATIONAL

PROVIDING CHOICES IN REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE

1 a project manager's guide to conducting participatory research

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1 introduction

Introduction

The participatory poverty grading tool is a simple tool, developed through participatory techniques.

The tool consists of a range of measures, or indicators, developed with community members which can be used by programme teams, community workers or other team members to assess the poverty levels of households in the community in which they work. The participatory method used to develop the tool ensures that the grading of households to a particular poverty level is fair and appropriate to the community being studied.

Once the poorest households have been identified and recorded on a social map, information and services can be targeted at the most marginalised members within the community. The tool can also be used to make comparisons between communities.

This tool was developed and pre-tested to help deliver sexual and reproductive health (SRH) programmes, though it is applicable to all interventions aimed at the poor, such as providing access to clean water and good sanitation, improving nutrition or income generation.

The *Participatory poverty grading tool manual* consists of three *guides*:

Part 1: a project manager's guide to conducting participatory research, which describes how to plan, design and implement a poverty mapping project.

Part 2: a trainer's guide to training fieldworkers, which describes how to train fieldworkers in the data collection techniques required to develop the participatory poverty grading tool and how to undertake a social mapping exercise. It is designed to be used by those who will deliver the training sessions.

Part 3: a trainee's guide to fieldwork, which is a resource to be used by the trainee fieldworkers who will gather the data required to form the participatory poverty grading tool and undertake the social mapping exercise.

It is anticipated that the project manager will oversee the participatory poverty mapping project.

The *manual* has been written so that it is relevant to either a programme manager fulfilling the role of project manager, or to an experienced trainer brought in to fulfil this role instead. If you are a programme manager acting in the role of project manager then you may also wish to undertake the role of trainer as well. Alternatively, you may wish to bring in an experienced trainer (or trainers) to fulfil this role instead.

how to use this guide objectives

1

How to use this *guide*

This *guide* forms the first part of the *Participatory poverty grading tool manual*. It describes in detail the participatory methods used to develop the poverty grading tool and how the tool can then be used to map poverty within the community being studied. It is designed to be used by those involved in planning and designing projects and programmes which target information and services at the poor in order to improve, in this case, their SRH status.

Although as the project manager previous experience of conducting qualitative research would be an advantage, it is not necessary, as this *guide* explains the poverty mapping research process step by step. If you do not have this type of experience then it is preferable that you have an understanding of pro-poor strategies. However, if you are also undertaking the role of trainer then you should have qualitative research experience.

Before starting a poverty mapping project we recommend that you read through this *guide* first and then also familiarise yourself thoroughly with the other two *guides* which make up this *manual.*

Objectives

Your objectives as project manager will be to:

- draft a strategy for the delivery of information and services targeted at the poorest households within a chosen community
- oversee the training of fieldworkers who will moderate the community focus groups that will generate the data required to develop the poverty indicators
- establish the indicators that will be used to describe poverty in the community being studied
- use this information to develop a participatory poverty grading tool
- produce a social map of the community, detailing the levels of poverty within that community and the utilisation of existing services (in this case, SRH services) by household
- implement the strategy for improving the SRH status of the poorest members within the chosen community.

1 poverty in context

Poverty in context

Since the Marie Stopes International Partnership has successfully developed participatory poverty grading tools in order to improve people's SRH status, poverty is analysed in this section in terms of its link with SRH. Poverty could, however, be linked with a range of other interventions such as providing access to clean water and good sanitation, improving nutrition or income generation.

What is poverty?

'Poverty is hunger. Poverty is lack of shelter. Poverty is being sick and not being able to see a doctor. Poverty is not being able to go to school and not knowing how to read. Poverty is not having a job, is fear for the future, living one day at a time. Poverty is losing a child to illness brought about by unclean water. Poverty is powerlessness, lack of representation and freedom. Poverty has many faces, changing from place to place and across time, and has been described in many ways.'

World Bank. http://web.worldbank.org

What is sexual and reproductive health?

SRH is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, in all matters relating to sexual health and the reproductive system. Men and women should be able to enjoy a satisfying and safe sex life, have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so. A good standard of SRH requires informed choice and access to safe, effective, affordable and acceptable healthcare services.

The link between poverty and sexual and reproductive health

Poor SRH can lead to poverty. Poverty can lead to poor SRH.

The achievement of the internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 is critical to the reduction of world poverty. The MDGs, which were agreed by world leaders at the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000, are a set of goals and targets for reducing poverty, social injustice and ill health.

In the *State of world population: people, poverty and possibilities* (2002), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) highlighted the key role that SRH plays in the achievement of the MDGs. However, the two MDGs relating directly to SRH: reducing child mortality and improving maternal mortality, are the two goals least likely to be met by 2015. The table below shows the disparity between SRH in developed and developing regions.

The disparity between SRH in the developed world and that in the developing world demonstrates the need for significant investment in SRH in the latter. Without increased investment, the SRH status of developing world nations, whether measured by infant mortality, maternal health or HIV transmission, will become worse, resulting in increased levels of poverty.

Traditional means of assessing poverty

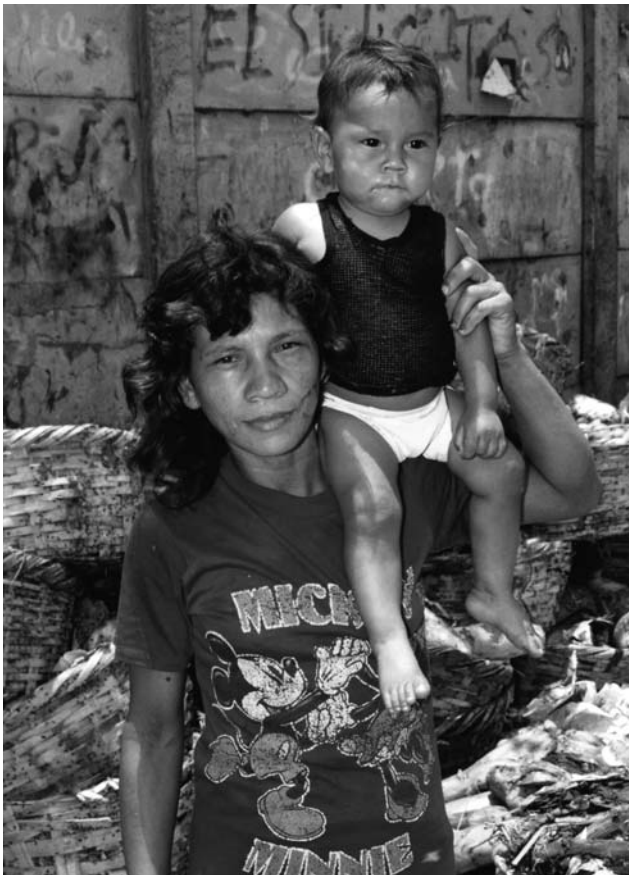
'To know what helps to alleviate poverty, what works and what does not, what changes over time, poverty has to be defined, measured, and studied and even lived. As poverty has many dimensions, it has to be looked at through a variety of indicators, levels of income and consumption, social indicators, and now increasingly indicators of vulnerability to risks and of socio/political access.'

World Bank. http://web.worldbank.org

Worldwide sexual and reproductive health	Developing regions	Developed regions
% population growth rate (2000 – 2005)	1.5	0.2
% births with skilled attendants	58*	99*
Infant mortality per 1,000 live births	61	8
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 births)	440*	21*

*Source: *State of world population.* 2002. UNFPA.
Source: *State of world population.* 2004. UNFPA.

Many techniques for measuring poverty look at poverty levels from a national perspective. Whether a household is above or below a national poverty line does not always give sufficient insight into that household's particular situation within a community. Other techniques, such as assets indices, may assess poverty from an external perspective, where the (lack of) ownership of 'high value' items, for example, a refrigerator, television or motorcycle, is deemed to be a measure of poverty. Deciding which items are deemed 'high value' usually rests with someone external to the community being assessed. The participatory approach outlined in this *manual* is able to address this.



The importance of identifying the poorest

Identifying the poorest members of a community is important in order to ensure this group is not excluded from any development activity, whether this is raising awareness of HIV/AIDS, or providing access to family planning methods, safe water or immunisations for children.

The poorest households encounter barriers to accessing SRH services to a far greater extent than less poor households. These barriers can include distance from services, lack of funds, insufficient knowledge or awareness or time. For example, the poorest people are more likely to:

- live further away from services, resulting in more time (and possibly lost earnings) and money required to travel to services
- have less money to pay for transport and for services
- be less able to read information raising awareness of, and promoting, services
- be less able to take time away from work and have more domestic duties than wealthier people
- be less educated, thereby having a poorer understanding of the importance of preventative measures, such as vaccinations and family planning, to maintain good health.

Knowing which households within a community are the poorest is essential in order to ensure that those households are not marginalised.

1 targeting information and services at the poorest

Targeting information and services at the poorest

The poor can be reached with information and services, for example, by locating centres or mini-centres within poor communities, such as in slums or refugee camps. While this ensures that the poor are reached, and that there is a greater likelihood of the poorest having access, specifically identifying and targeting the poorest households is key to ensuring equitable uptake of services and information within a poor community.

Identifying the poorest as a particular target group (in the same way as women, adolescents or refugees may be a target group) also allows them to be involved with the development of services and materials specific to them. The poorest may have different needs for services and information, education and communication materials and with this tool, groups of the poorest people in a community can be brought together in order to help develop those services and materials in a participatory way.

Once the poorest households have been identified, services and information can be aimed specifically at them. Targeted initiatives may include centres offering subsidised services to the poorest families and community volunteers investing more of their time in raising awareness of SRH among these households.

Knowing how to grade a household's poverty level (the participatory poverty grading tool), along with a means of locating the poorest households (social mapping), will assist targeting of the poorest members of society. Monitoring can then take place to ensure that the numbers of poor clients exercising their right to healthcare increases over time.

The importance of participation

Using a participatory technique, which involves the community, is important for several reasons. The reality of living in poverty can only be described by a poor person. If a community itself defines who is poor and who is not poor then this definition will be more accurate and fair. The process of the participatory research will also enable the participants to understand the importance of health and link good health with the opportunity to escape poverty. Members of the community will also be better able to understand the objectives of Marie Stopes International's work in SRH (or those of another organisation conducting a poverty mapping project) and hopefully engage further with the development of community health awareness initiatives and services. In Bangladesh, for example, the project generated a lot of interest and enthusiasm and now community groups within the study area meet regularly to discuss their health needs. Feedback from these groups then helps Marie Stopes Clinic Society to identify the most appropriate ways in which to help meet those needs and enable those communities to improve their health status.

Conducting the research

The development of the participatory poverty grading tool uses an adaptation of a traditional qualitative research technique, namely: the focus group. Qualitative research does not attempt to give a view of a large physical or subject area, which can then be compared objectively with other data. Instead, it concentrates on the details; on the actual experiences and opinions of communities in order to give a detailed view of that community. Qualitative research also helps to explore people's motivations, desires and needs.

The process used to develop a poverty grading tool can be replicated in any setting. However, the results of the research and the final tool developed will only be relevant to the specific area in which the research was conducted.

The examples used throughout this *manual* are derived from the participatory poverty grading tools developed in Bangladesh and in Yemen. These examples are included to illustrate various points in the process of developing such a tool. However, they are not meant to be copied, as the local community in which you are working may differ greatly from those in the slums of Dhaka in Bangladesh, or in the poor districts of Sana'a in Yemen. While the techniques remain the same wherever they are applied, some adaptation to accommodate local culture will be required. For example, in some cultures it may not be appropriate to conduct mixed focus groups, only separate groups of men and women.

The materials for fieldwork and other tasks featured in this *manual* are intended solely as a guide rather than as fixed in format. It is essential to ensure that any materials developed during the project are appropriate, easy to understand and easy to use.

Developing poverty indicators

The participatory research technique outlined in this *manual* asks focus groups made up of community members to express their views on which indicators best describe poverty, and which levels of indicators best describe each level of poverty. These indicators are then aggregated into a poverty grading tool which is then field tested. One indicator (living space) from the poverty grading tool developed in Bangladesh is shown opposite:

Very poor	share one room with another family
Poor	one small room for whole family
Middle	two small rooms or one large room
Rich	two or more rooms with additional space

The participatory poverty grading tool works on a scoring system, with points allocated to each level of an indicator. By adding together the points scored for all of the indicators in the tool, a household can be given an overall poverty grade, such as very poor, poor, middle or rich that applies only to that particular community.

Social mapping

Social mapping is a technique that is used following the development of the poverty grading tool. A group made up of people recruited from the community meet to draw a map of the study area which shows the locations of houses and landmarks. The group drawing the map is moderated by a fieldworker.

Once the map has been drawn the moderator uses the poverty grading tool to assess and grade each household's poverty level. S/he also gathers information about each household's use of health services. The social mapping participants then transfer those grades onto the map along with information on health services used.

To check the map's accuracy, you should then select a random sample of mapped households and those households should be re-assessed and their grades verified.

The final map can then be used by programmes to target SRH information and services to the poorest within that community. Other sectors, for example, the education sector, may also be keen to use the information gathered about poverty levels within the community to help develop education related projects.

Project overview: Designing the participatory research project step by step

In order to achieve the objectives outlined earlier, you, as project manager, must ensure the following steps are completed:

Step 1: Developing a pro-poor strategy

Developing a strategy for how the completed social map will be used to improve the SRH status of the poorest members of the community.

Step 2: Planning and design

Determining the scope of the project, including identifying the community (or communities) that will be involved, and the team who will carry out the research.

Step 3: Fieldworker training

Training the fieldworkers in the skills and techniques (focus groups, field testing and social mapping) required for the implementation of the research process.

Step 4: Focus groups

Working with the focus groups, the findings from which will be used to form the participatory poverty grading tool.

Step 5: Developing the participatory poverty grading tool

Analysing the results from the focus groups to develop a common set of indicators and scores, which describe each of the household poverty levels.

Step 6: Field testing the participatory poverty grading tool

Testing the tool within the community to check it can accurately grade a household at a certain poverty level.

Step 7: Social mapping

Working with a group of community members to draw a social map of the study area. Each household's poverty grade can then be assessed using the poverty grading tool and that grade recorded on the map along with information about health services used.

Step 8: Checking the accuracy of the social map

Verifying the accuracy of the social map so that it can be used by the programme to target information and services at the poorest within the community.

Step 9: Monitoring and evaluation

Assessing the outputs of the project and the lessons learnt.

Step 10: Reporting

Documenting the outputs of the project.

Step 11: Reaching the poorest: developing information and implementing targeted services

Using the results of the poverty mapping project to implement information and services that aim to improve the SRH status of the poorest members of the community.

1 step 1: developing a pro-poor strategy

Step 1: Developing a pro-poor strategy

Before developing the participatory poverty grading tool and completing the social mapping exercise, it is important that you formulate a strategy that details the information, services or activities that you intend to target at the poorest.

You may wish to use the outcomes of the research to help the poorest members of the community access existing activities and services. Alternatively, you may want to use the results to develop and launch new initiatives aimed specifically at the poorest.

Whatever you decide to do, do not embark on developing a poverty grading tool without a very clear idea of how it will ultimately be used to benefit the people at which it is aimed.

Case study: how the participatory poverty grading tool was used in Bangladesh

To ensure that SRH services are accessible to all, subsidised treatment funds can be made available to the poorest. Using the poverty grading tool Marie Stopes Clinic Society team members were able to map several areas within the slums of Dhaka and identify the poorest households within those areas.

A family health card scheme was then introduced, with the card being given to families identified as 'very poor'. The health card enables all members of the family listed on the card to receive free services in nearby SRH centres through a subsidised treatment fund. Initial feedback from Bangladesh is positive: the communities have supported the introduction of the new scheme and all the families who were given the health card began accessing the available services.

The poverty grading tool can also be used to assess the impact of strategies aimed at reaching the poorest by monitoring increased awareness amongst the poorest households or the proportion of these households accessing services.

Step 2: Planning and design

Before beginning the planning and design stage, you should have read and be familiar with all three of the *guides* which make up this *manual.* The next step is to think about the full scope of the project, including the people that you will need to recruit; the budget necessary and the number of levels of poverty likely to be measurable.

In Bangladesh, four levels of poverty were decided upon (very poor, poor, middle and rich) whereas in Yemen three levels were used (poor, middle and rich). The number of levels of poverty in your community will depend on a number of factors, including how wide the differences are between richer and poorer households and how well people know their neighbours, etc. We recommend using a minimum of three levels of poverty, with four being preferable. The sample discussion guide on page 27 in *Part 2: a trainer's guide to training fieldworkers* has been developed with four poverty levels in mind. If, however, during the data collection/analysis stages you and your teams find that four levels are not appropriate, then it may be possible to use three instead.

You will also need to think of the timescale involved. As a general guide, the time between planning and designing the project, the training sessions, tool development, and the social mapping exercise should be kept to a minimum in order to ensure that the final social map is consistent and accurate and can be used to effectively target information and services at the poorest within the community.

Target group for the study and location of the study area

In order to determine your target group and the location of the study area you need to ask yourself a series of questions: which community (or communities) do you want to know about and then reach? Is this a community you are currently working with or one that you would like to work with in the future? Do you think that the community you have identified will participate and be responsive to the research? Is there anyone you need to talk to in that particular community before undertaking the research? Are there any other issues you need to consider?

Once you have identified the community you wish to study, you must ensure that the boundaries of the area (or areas) to be mapped are set at the outset of the project. This is important so that you can determine the population from which focus group members must be drawn. In some locations, these boundaries will be geographic and formed, for instance, by roads or rivers. In other locations, it may be the local population that is more important and which forms the boundaries. For example, in Yemen, two communities participated – the local population and a refugee population. The boundaries for this study were formed by the areas in which these two communities lived. Your project may require more than one area to be mapped. Also, if there are large variations in the "wealth" of different areas, then a single participatory poverty grading tool may not be sufficient and you may need to develop a separate tool for each area.

However, bear in mind that the more areas or communities studied, the more complicated the research will be and the more time the project will take.

Number, composition and location of focus groups

The number and size of the area you wish to map will determine the number of focus groups required. We recommend, however, that you hold *at least* two focus group discussions in each area to be mapped. If the number of groups that you decide upon fails to yield the type or quality of information you require to develop the poverty grading tool, then you may need to hold further groups. However, the general rule is, that once focus groups cease to provide any new information then there is no longer a need to conduct additional groups.

The ideal number of participants for a focus group is eight, however, between six and 10 people is a suitable number for a group.

In some countries it may not be appropriate to hold mixed (male and female) focus groups and in such cultures you should arrange an equal number of single sex focus groups. It should also be noted that men and women may describe poverty in different ways. You may find, for instance, that men focus more on financial ways to describe poverty, while women may focus more on social household features. The composition of the focus groups is explained in detail on page 10 in *Part 2: a trainer's guide to training fieldworkers*.

1 step 3: fieldworker training

As it is important to use the knowledge your trainee fieldworkers have of the local area and its inhabitants, we recommend that the trainees should agree on the composition and final number of focus groups that should be held. However, as project manager, you will need to brief your trainer in advance about the recommended number (for example, between four and eight focus groups) and type of groups which you think will give sufficient detail about the local population, whilst remaining within the available budget. It is then the trainer's responsibility to ensure that the trainees agree the composition and the total number of groups within this range.

If you are not familiar with the study area it is a good idea to go and have a good look around it before the project begins. Ask those in the team who know the area if any permission should be sought from local officials or leaders before holding the focus groups and ask for suggestions of locations where the groups could be held.

Step 3: Fieldworker training

Recruiting a trainer

If you do not intend to undertake the roles of both project manager and trainer yourself, you will need to recruit an experienced trainer. If the area being studied is large and there will be numerous focus groups being held, then you may want to consider recruiting more than one trainer.

The trainer should have qualitative research experience and it is also preferable that s/he has an understanding of the need to measure poverty.

Once you have successfully recruited your trainer you will need to provide her/him with the all of the materials s/he will need, such as copies of all three *guides* that make up the *Participatory poverty grading tool manual*. Before s/he begins preparing for the training sessions ensure that you spend time briefing her/him fully on the project's objectives and the steps involved in order to achieve those objectives. This is important as the trainer will need to explain these to the trainees who in turn will need to explain them to the research participants.

You will also need to clarify with the trainer the boundaries of the community (or communities) to be studied; provide her/him with any background information on the community being studied; clarify whether more than one participatory poverty grading tool will need to be developed and outline the timescale for the project. Before the training commences the trainer should discuss with you the proposed training schedule which should be agreed before the first training session takes place. It may be useful to keep a record of what was agreed along with notes of any other issues discussed.

Selecting the fieldworkers

Just as the number and size of the areas you wish to map will determine the number of focus groups required, so in turn will this determine the number of fieldworkers that must be trained to lead those focus groups. If you think you will need to conduct men and women-only focus groups then you will need both male and female fieldworkers accordingly to lead those groups. In addition, you may find that in order to lead focus groups in the language or dialect spoken by the participants, you need to recruit fieldworkers with those particular language skills. Ensure that those you select meet these criteria; that they will be available for the focus group work and social mapping fieldwork; and that they have the ability to learn the skills and techniques required. Each focus group will usually require two fieldworkers – one to act as moderator (to guide the discussion) and one to act as note taker.

Any team members asked to participate in the research must be fully trained and supported. It might help them if you and the trainer explain that they will learn a new set of skills. If you have some team members in your programme already trained in focus group research who could become part of your fieldworking team, they should also undergo the training as styles and techniques vary and it is important that all of your fieldworkers follow the same procedures. One of the by-products of the research is that you will have built capacity within the team in terms of qualitative research experience which may be useful for the future.

Be aware that in some cultures it may not always be appropriate to have a fieldworker leading a focus group held in their own community as some community members may be reluctant to talk in front of someone they already know. In other cultures, this may in fact facilitate discussion and so would not be a problem. If it is not appropriate to have the local fieldworker leading the focus group, then they can still be involved in the recruitment of focus group participants and the organising of the venue.

Part 2: a trainer's guide to training fieldworkers, details the skills and techniques team members need in order to conduct the fieldwork required for the development of the participatory poverty grading tool. Please refer to this *guide* for further information about this area.

Training sessions

The fieldworker training should take place over a number of sessions with an opportunity for the trainees to practise their skills before leading the focus groups and undertaking the social mapping exercise. If the scale of your project means that more than 12 fieldworkers need to be trained then the trainer will need to run more than one series of training sessions. As part of the monitoring and evaluation process you should observe a number of the sessions and the practise groups. You may also want to be involved in the first session to help introduce the project to the trainees.

Training materials required

The following materials are necessary to conduct the training of fieldworkers:

- *Part 2: a trainer's guide to training fieldworkers.* You should provide the trainer with a copy of this *guide*. If more than one trainer is involved in the project then you will need to provide each trainer with their own copy. Details of how to obtain copies can be found on the inside front cover of this *guide*
- *Part 3: a trainee's guide to fieldwork*. Each trainee fieldworker should be provided with her/his own copy at the beginning of the first training session. It is your responsibility to provide the trainer with the requisite number of copies. Details of how to obtain copies can be found on the inside front cover of this *guide*
- examples of exercises: these can be found in *Part 2: a trainer's guide to training fieldworkers*. The trainer should adapt these and develop them for use as handouts during the training sessions. Each trainee should be given a copy of each handout
- additional materials: a copy of any additional materials that have been prepared, such as the project timetable, training schedule etc should be given to each trainee
- pens and paper for each trainee
- audio cassette recorders, including tapes and batteries, for use in the focus groups
- flipcharts, with paper and coloured marker pens and pencils, will be needed for the social mapping exercise.

You will need to clarify with the trainer whether you will supply the items listed in the final three bullet points above or whether s/he will need to supply these.

For further information about training fieldworkers, please see *Part 2: a trainer's guide to training fieldworkers.*

Step 4: Focus groups

As project manager, you will oversee the process of recruiting focus group participants. Once the participants have been recruited you will need to draw up a timetable for the focus groups to take place and ensure that they do take place. You may also be required to conduct groups yourself. As part of this process you will need to assess whether enough groups have been conducted to gather sufficient information from the community.

Each focus group is conducted using a **discussion guide** which is a list of subjects or questions that need to be covered during the group in order to meet the objectives of the research. The trainer will work with the trainees to develop the guide, which you, as project manager, may refine further as necessary. The discussion guide should be field tested in the practise group and with the first focus group made up of community members. If necessary, it should then be refined after each of these two stages.

Once each group has taken place, the moderator and note taker from each group will give you a short debrief of how the session went. They will then give you a more detailed debrief later (ideally this should take place the next day). During this, they will provide you with the output from the group, both in a written format and possibly also on audio cassette (if a recording of the group was made). You should make back-up copies of this information in case the originals become lost or damaged. To maintain confidentiality, store the data in a locked cupboard to ensure that no one outside the project has access to it.

In the debrief, it is important that both you and the fieldworkers evaluate how each focus group went as part of the on-going monitoring process. If you have any concerns that the groups are not being conducted in the way that they should be then you should suggest changes to the format before any further groups take place. It is important that you and the fieldworkers also evaluate the groups to ensure that they have produced enough data. The evaluation of the data is covered in Step 9: Monitoring and evaluation.

For further information about focus groups, please see *Part 2: a trainer's guide to training fieldworkers*, page 9.

1 step 5: developing the participatory poverty grading tool

Step 5: Developing the participatory poverty grading tool

Analysis of the information gathered from individual focus groups

The results from each focus group should be collated for analysis and compared. In order to compare the results you will need to combine the information gathered into common themes, such as housing. We recommend that you write everything down so that it is clear and comparisons can be easily made. You may also need to listen to any audio tape recordings made during the groups.

The example below is taken from the tool developed in Bangladesh where four levels of poverty were decided upon.

The focus groups should also provide information on the use of health services in the community. Although this information may not form part of the final participatory poverty grading tool, you should also collate it in the same way to provide information for centre teams to use.

Common themes emerging from one focus group in the Bangladesh poverty mapping project

Indicators	Level			
	Very Poor	Poor	Middle	Rich
Housing Space	One small room for whole family Share room with other families	One small room for whole family	Two small rooms	Two or more rooms with additional space (veranda)
Structure	Bamboo fence Bamboo thatched roof with polythene support Muddy floor	Bamboo fence Bamboo/tin roof Kutcha floor with bamboo platform	Strong bamboo/tin fence Mud/brick floor	Tin/brick fence Brick floor

Potential indicators suggested by different focus groups in the Bangladesh poverty mapping project

Focus Group	Very Poor	Poor	Middle	Rich
Group A (Women - District 1)	Can't manage a meal every day No rich food eaten	Can't have sufficient food Occasionally eat quality food	Three insufficient meals a day One quality meal per week	Have sufficient food Can have rich food whenever want
Group B (Men – District 1)	Can't have sufficient food Meal depends on earnings Can't afford rich meal	Can have meal but not sufficient Occasionally have rich food	Have necessary food Can have rich food once a week	Have sufficient food Can have rich food every day
Group C (Men – District 2)	Always have half a meal Do not eat if no work	Two meals per day	Three meals per day One quality meal per week	Three meals per day Two quality meals per week
Common indicator - **Average meals per day**	One meal	Two inadequate	Two adequate or three inadequate	Three adequate
Common indicator - **Frequency of quality food**	Occasionally	Once per month	Once per week	Two or three per week

Analysis of the information gathered from all of the focus groups to form common indicators

Once you have collated the results from each focus group you will need to analyse them. The easiest way to do this is to create a table similar to the example above, showing all of the indicators of the same type. Inserting the results into this type of table will enable you to analyse the indicators suggested by each focus group and decide upon an indicator that summarises and reflects the views held by the majority of the focus group participants about a particular theme. These are known as 'common indicators'.

The example above shows a number of potential indicators suggested by different focus groups for grading poverty according to the food eaten by households and the two common indicators that were decided upon as a result. In this community, food was described in terms of volume (number of meals) and quality.

The common indicators you develop for each level of poverty must not overlap. For example, if a set of common indicators were developed based on the number of meals eaten per day, you would need to ensure that each possible answer could fall into only one level of poverty, in this case, very poor, poor, middle or rich. These terms are of course relative.

When describing common indicators it is important to minimise the subjectivity of the indicator. In the table above, it is not clear how the focus groups defined a '*quality*' meal. However, there may be a standard definition of a quality meal that is commonly used in this community, such as a meal that contains meat, poultry or fish, for example. It is important that you brief the trainer to instruct the trainees that they need to investigate in depth any subjective measures mentioned by the focus groups.

If only one focus group suggests an indicator, while the other groups do not, it should not become a common indicator. Use your judgement to develop indicators based on the most frequently made suggestions.

The types of common indicators that arose in the focus groups in Bangladesh are listed in the table on page 14. You may find that some of these also emerge in your focus groups, along with others that are not on this list.

1 developing the participatory poverty grading tool

Common indicators that arose in the Bangladesh poverty mapping project

Indicators	Level			
	Very Poor	Poor	Middle	Rich
Housing:				
Space	One small room for the whole family Share room with other families	One small room for the whole family	Two small rooms	Two or more rooms with additional space (veranda)
Structure	Bamboo fence Bamboo thatched roof with polythene support Muddy floor	Bamboo fence Bamboo/tin roof Kutcha floor with bamboo platform	Strong bamboo/tin fence Mud/brick floor	Tin/brick fence Brick floor
Rental Status	Rented house Rent up to Taka 500 Share rented house	Rented house Rent Taka 500-800	Develop structure on occupied or rented land Rent out rooms Rent Taka 801-1200	Own house Rent out rooms Rent Taka 1201-2500 (in case of rented house)
Utilities:				
Water source	Collect water from neighbours/road-side tap/tube-well One water point for more than 50 families Natural sources (well, pond, river)	Collect water from road-side tap/tube-well One water point for 20-30 families Natural source	Shared tap water for five to 10 families	Separate tap/tube–well for individual families
Latrine	Open latrine Hanging latrine with sack fence Share with more than 20 families	Open latrine Hanging latrine with sack fence Share with more than 10 families	Latrine with ring slab Share with more than one family	Ring slab/sanitary latrine for individual family
Electricity	No electricity	No electricity Hire one bulb on rent	Available electric facility with side connection	Full electric facility
Cooking facilities	No separate cooking space Use waste materials as cooking fuel Clay oven Share earthen oven	No separate cooking space Fire wood/kerosene Clay oven	Separate cooking space Stove, electric heater Share gas oven	Separate kitchen space Gas oven Heater Rent out gas oven
Assets:				
Household assets	No furniture Earthen utensils	Bedstead Ulna Earthen/aluminium utensils	Black and white TV Fan Rickshaw Van, Two-in-one	Separate kitchen space Gas oven, heater Rent out gas oven
Food:				
Number of meals per day	Average one meal each day	Two meals per day	Three meals per day	Three full meals per day
Quantity of food	Always half meal No work, no food	Inadequate meal	Adequate Face crisis	Adequate

...chart continued

Improved meal	Occasionally	One per month	One per week	Two to three times per week
Employment:				
Profession	Beggar Daily labour (irregular) Rickshaw puller (irregular) Maid servant	Rickshaw puller Hawker/garments worker Small trader Daily labour	Trader Service holder Baby taxi/taxi driver Shopkeeper Factory worker	Business Driver (public/private) Rickshaw/taxi owner Small factory owner
Job security:	Most irregular	Semi-regular	Regular	Permanent
Income source	Single earner and only source	Single/double earner	Multiple earner	Double earner Multiple sources
Income amount	No fixed income Up to Taka 1200 per month	Taka 1201-2000 per month	Taka 2001-4000 per month	Taka 4000+ per month
Education:				
Child education	Not enrolled	Few enrolled in non-formal school	Enrolled in primary school (low-cost)	Enrolled in standard school
Healthcare:				
Source of treatment	No access Quack/traditional healer	Homeopath, MSCS Gov/NGO health services	MSCS Private doctor Pharmacy	Private clinic Medical college Qualified doctor
Credit:				
Source of credit	No access to credit	Personal credit Money lender Micro-credit e.g. from NGOs	Micro-credit from NGO Local credit union/ society	NGO credit Bank
Use of credit	Not applicable	Consumption and treatment	Small business	Money lending Trade/business

Some of the indicators shown above were also found in the poverty mapping project conducted in Yemen, while some were completely different, reflecting socio-economic and cultural differences between communities in different countries. Indicators exclusive to Yemen included: ownership of livestock, activities undertaken in free time, marriage and dowry. Your groups are likely to suggest using indicators that do not appear on this list or that you may not have thought of yourself. Remember, it is the suggestions that your groups provide that will help to make the poverty grading tool relevant to their community.

Selecting key indicators

Once you have developed your list of common indicators, you will need to choose a number of these to be used to form the participatory poverty grading tool. The common indicators you choose are known as 'key indicators'. Key indicators are those that form the poverty grading tool, and will be used to assess the poverty level of an individual household. If too few are chosen then this reduces the reliability of the tool and reduces the contribution of the community's views. If too many are chosen, then the tool becomes difficult to use. In Bangladesh eight key indicators were eventually chosen; we recommend that you select between seven and 10 key indicators.

1 developing the participatory poverty grading tool

Key indicators should be:

- **easy to measure:** you should avoid key indicators that are too subjective or that require very detailed questioning of household members
- **relevant to every household:** each key indicator should be relevant to every household. In Bangladesh, for example, 'children's education' was initially chosen as a key indicator. During field testing, however, many households were found to have no children of school age, so scored no points. This gave those households a lower overall score and so distorted their poverty level. As a result of this finding, the tool was refined before the social mapping part of the research began
- **comparable between households:** care should be taken when developing indicators based on monetary amounts, for example, income and rent. In Bangladesh, for example, if one household had an income of Taka 1,000 per month and another household had an income of Taka 2,000 per month, it would not necessarily mean that the second household was richer, as there may be 10 members in the second household and only two in the first. A better indicator would be monthly income per household member
- **sensitive to community members:** it is important to take into account whether or not asking a household for information on a certain subject will cause offence or a refusal to answer. For example, in some cultures it may not be acceptable to ask about credit.

Using the key indicators to form the participatory poverty grading tool

Once you have selected the key indicators and the levels of those indicators which best describe each level of poverty you will need to enter them in a table. The example below is from the tool developed in Bangladesh. It is useful to always list the key indicators from least to most sensitive. For example, household income can be a sensitive issue, so placing it last can make collecting the information easier. Your final tool should look something like this although remember that you will be using indicators suggested by your focus group participants, so the headings in your own tool are likely to be different to those shown below.

The participatory poverty grading tool developed in Bangladesh

Indicator Level of indicator for poverty grade	Points	Means of verification
Living space		
Share one room with other family	1	Observation and question
One small room for whole family	2	
Two small rooms or one large room	3	
Two or more rooms with additional space	4	
House structure		
Bamboo fence, bamboo thatched roof, polythene/kutcha floor or bamboo platform	1	Observation
Bamboo fence, tin roof, kutcha floor or bamboo platform	2	
Tin fence, tin roof, brick floor	3	
Brick wall, tin or brick roof, brick floor	4	
Rental status		
Share rent, up to Taka 500	1	Question
Rent Taka 501 to 800	2	
Rent Taka 801 to 1200, rent out room/space	3	
Rent Taka 1201 to 2500, or own structure on rented/occupied land, rent out space	4	
Cooking facilities		
No separate cooking space, waste materials used for fuel	1	Observation
No separate cooking space, wood, kerosene used for fuel or electric heater	2	
Separate cooking space, stove, earthen oven, electric heater or gas oven used	3	
Separate cooking space, gas oven used, rent out gas oven	4	

...chart continued

Average number of meals per day		
One meal	1	Question
Two inadequate	2	
Two adequate or three inadequate	3	
Three adequate	4	
Frequency of quality food		
Occasionally	1	Question
Once per month	2	
Once per week	3	
Two or three per week	4	
Type of work		
Beggar, daily labour, irregular rickshaw puller	1	Question
Regular rickshaw puller, garment or factory worker, small trader	2	
Motorised taxi driver, shop keeper/owner, tailor	3	
Businessman, driver (taxi/bus/truck/car), owner (rickshaw/taxi/small factory)	4	
Monthly income (average per household member)		
Up to Taka 300	1	Question
Taka 301 to 500	2	
Taka 501 to 1,000	3	
Over Taka 1,000	4	

The scoring system

Now you need to allot points to each level of each indicator. In the Bangladesh project, for example, each indicator (of which there were eight in total) was divided into four levels:

Very poor = 1 point

Poor = 2 points

Medium = 3 points

Rich = 4 points

and as can be seen in the example above the point attributed to each level of indicator was then entered on the participatory poverty grading tool. You also need to decide how your fieldworkers will assess which level a household falls into for each indicator; will it be by asking the householder a question or by observation or by a mixture of the two?

If, as in Bangladesh, there were eight indicators and a household had the lowest level (very poor) of each indicator then it would score a total of 8 points (8 x 1). If it had the 'poor' level of each indicator, it would score a total of 16 points (8 x 2). However, a household will rarely have the same level for all indicators and is more likely to have a mixture of levels.

By adding together the points scored for all of the indicators a household can be given an overall poverty grade, such as very poor, poor or rich. Remember that the grading tool applies only to that particular community.

Poverty grade bands

In Bangladesh, the bands for each poverty grade were:

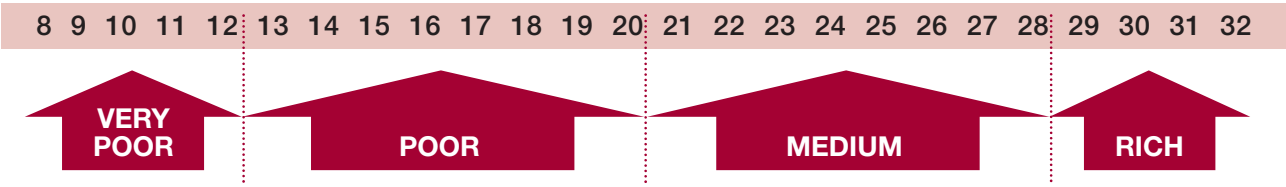
Very poor = 8-12

Poor = 13-20

Medium = 21-28

Rich = 29-32

As illustrated below.



1 developing the participatory poverty grading tool

The range of these bands was calculated as follows. There were eight indicators and four levels of indicator which meant that the minimum a household could score was 8 (8 x 1) and the maximum it could score was 32 (8 x 4).

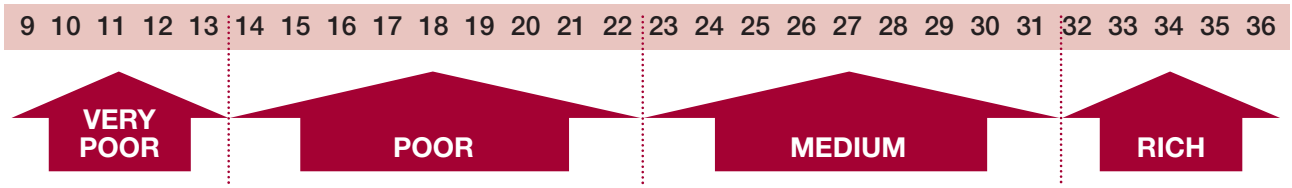
The very poor grade ranged from the minimum score (8) up to 12. The cut-off point (12) between the very poor and poor bands was determined by the score that a household would achieve if it scored the lowest possible score for half of all of the indicators (4 x 1 = 4) and the next highest score (2) for the remaining 4 indicators (4 x 2 = 8) giving a total score of 12. Any household that scored between 8 and 12 would fall into the very poor poverty grade.

Similarly, the cut-off point between the poor band and the medium band was determined in the same way. If a household scored the second lowest possible score for half the indicators (4 x 2 = 8) and then the next highest score (3) for the remaining for indicators (4 x 3 = 12) the total score would be 20. Any household that scored between 13 and 20 would fall into the poor poverty grade.

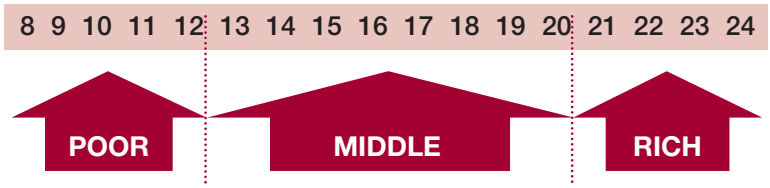
The cut-off point between the medium and rich band was therefore (4 x 3 = 12) plus (4 x 4 = 16) = 28. Any household that scored between 21 and 28 would fall into the medium poverty grade.

A household that scored between 29 and 32 would fall into the rich poverty grade.

These bands will differ according to the number of key indicators and poverty levels decided upon. For example, if there are nine key indicators and four levels of poverty, then the lowest score will be 9 (9 x 1) and the highest 36 (9 x 4), as illustrated below:



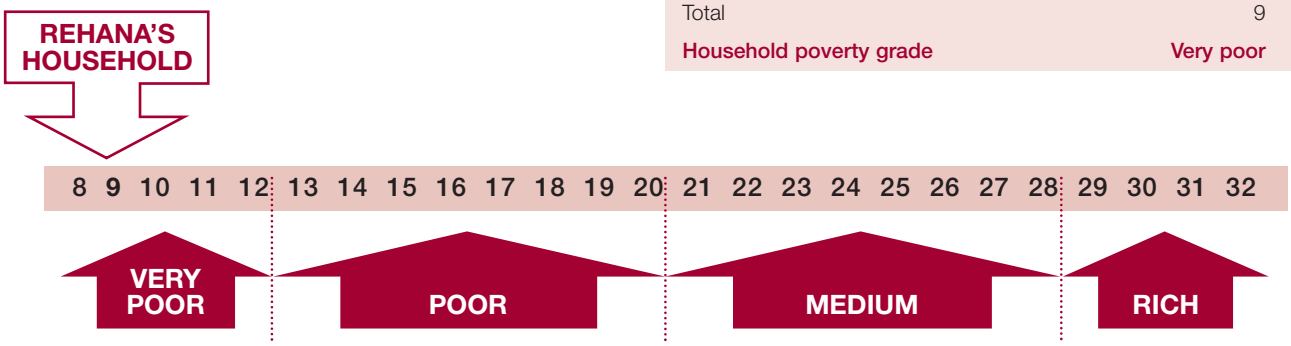
If there are three levels of poverty and eight indicators the poverty bands would be as follows:



The example below shows how a household can be graded:

Rehana is 35 and a housewife. She is married with four children. Her husband is a waste paper collector. Her nine year old son goes to a non government organisation-funded school. She and her children share a room with another family. The room they share is a basic bamboo structure about 2.5m x 3m. There is no furniture. She has been a client of the Marie Stopes Clinic Society mini-centre for four years.

Indicator	Score
Living space - share one room with another family	1
House structure - bamboo fence, bamboo thatched roof	1
Rental status - share rent, up to Taka 500	1
Cooking facilities - no separate cooking space, waste materials used for fuel	1
Average meals per day - two inadequate	2
Frequency of quality food - occasionally	1
Type of work - beggar, daily labour, hawker, irregular rickshaw puller	1
Monthly income (average/household member) - up to Taka 300	1
Total	9
Household poverty grade	**Very poor**



1 step 6: field testing the participatory poverty grading tool

Step 6: Field testing the participatory poverty grading tool

Once the participatory poverty grading tool has been developed, it is important that you field test it in order to identify any indicators that may in fact be unsuitable. Testing the tool will also show how long it takes to assess each household and allocate a poverty grade. It will also reveal the willingness of household members to volunteer the information required. In each case, you can then refine your indicators if necessary before the social mapping exercise begins.

We recommend that you field test the tool in each location where focus groups were held. To do this, select ten houses at random in each area and attempt to collect the information required. As well as grading the level of poverty, encourage the fieldworkers carrying out the field testing to note the willingness of each household to participate. A form such as the one on the next page should be developed in order to capture the information about each household. In addition, the number of households which refused to participate and the number of households unavailable at the time should also be recorded.

Each fieldworker should have 10 forms (one per household visited). It is important that the fieldworker fill in the form, rather than a member of the household surveyed.

Once the field testing is complete, you will need to analyse the forms, and conduct a debriefing session with the fieldworkers who carried out the field testing to answer the following questions:

- are all of the key indicators applicable to all households?
- which key indicators were households unable to provide information for?
- which key indicators were households unwilling to provide information for?
- what is the average length of time required to grade a household?
- what percentage of households were unavailable?
- what day is best to collect information?
- what time of day is best to collect information?
- what percentage of households refused to participate at all?
- what other issues/problems did you, as a fieldworker, face when using the tool?

After analysing this information you may need to refine the poverty grading tool before producing a final version.

Participatory poverty grading tool - field testing form

Community: _____ Interviewer: _____ Date: _____

House address: _____ Time taken to complete (mins): _____

Person spoken to: _____ Age: _____ Sex: _____ Role in household: _____

Indicator Level of indicator for poverty grade	Description & comments	Knew information	Wanted to give information	Score
Living space 1. Share one room with other family 2. One small room for whole family 3. Two small rooms or one large room 4. Two or more rooms with additional space				
House structure 1. Bamboo fence, bamboo thatched roof, polythene/kutcha floor or bamboo platform 2. Bamboo fence, tin roof, kutcha floor or bamboo platform 3. Tin fence, tin roof, brick floor 4. Brick wall, tin or brick roof, brick floor				
Rental status 1. Shared rent, up to Taka 500 2. Rent Taka 501 to 800 3. Rent Taka 801 to 1200, rent out room/space 4. Rent Taka 1201 to 2500, or own structure on rented/occupied land, rent out space				
Cooking facilities 1. No separate cooking space, waste materials used for fuel 2. No separate cooking space, wood, kerosene used for fuel or electric heater 3. Separate cooking space, stove, earthen oven, electric heater or gas oven used 4. Separate cooking space, gas oven used, rent out gas oven				
Average meals per day 1. One 2. Two inadequate 3. Two adequate or three inadequate 4. Three adequate				
Frequency of quality food 1. Occasionally 2. Once per month 3. Once per week 4. Two to three times per week				
Type of work 1. Beggar, daily labour, irregular rickshaw puller 2. Regular rickshaw puller, garment or factory worker, small trader 3. Motorised taxi driver, shop keeper/owner, tailor 4. Businessman, driver (taxi, bus, truck, car), owner (rickshaw, taxi, small factory)				
Monthly income (average/household member) 1. Up to Taka 300 2. Taka 301 to 500 3. Taka 501 to 1,000 4. Over Taka 1,000				

Total score: _____ Poverty grade: _____

Step 7: Social mapping

The next stage is for a social map of the area being studied to be drawn.

A social map is a map of a residential area drawn by members of the community living in that area. Using the expertise of people living in the community helps to ensure that the locations of all of the houses in the area as well as other features such as roads, water supply, schools, playgrounds, places of worship, shops, factories, clinics etc will all feature on the map.

As project manager, you will oversee the process of recruiting the participants for the social mapping exercise. Ideally, a different group of people should be recruited for this part of the project in order to ensure participation from as many community members as possible. However, if this proves difficult, participants who took part in the focus groups may need to be re-approached and asked if they would like to take part in this part of the research as well.

The social mapping group should be led by a fieldworker who acts as a moderator. The moderator should co-ordinate the drafting of the map, according to the timetable you have drawn up. This exercise should take approximately three days: one day for the map to be drawn; one day to conduct the poverty grading and to enter the data on the map and a further day for checking the accuracy and finalising the map. As with the focus groups, you may be involved with the social mapping exercise.

If the area being studied is large then it might be necessary to divide it into zones and to draw several maps. One group may be able to draw several maps or several groups may be required. If there are several groups each should be led by a separate moderator. If a number of maps are being drawn and a large number of houses being graded you may need to increase the amount of time allocated for this exercise.

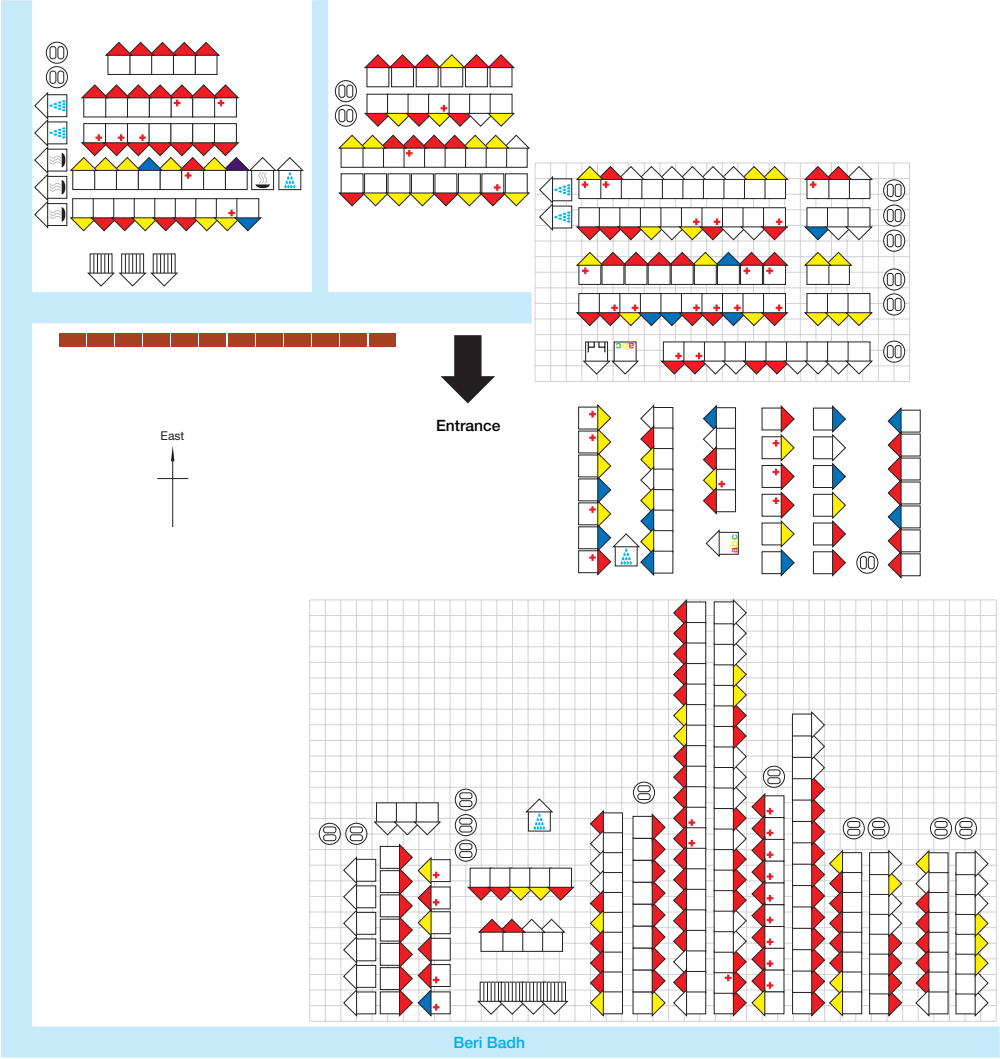
Once the map has been drawn, the moderator should go from house to house assessing the poverty level of each household on the map using the participatory poverty grading tool (one copy of the tool will be needed per household). Information about each household's use of health services should also be recorded. Once the moderator has surveyed all of the households s/he should transfer a summary of all of this information onto a Household Assessment Form, an example of which is shown below. You will need to develop your own Household Assessment Form but remember that you will be using the indicators suggested by your focus group participants, so the column headings in your own form are likely to be different to those shown.

Participatory poverty grading tool - household assessement form

Community: _____ Interviewer: _____ Date: _____

No.	Address	Housing			Cooking facilities	Food		Job		Total score	Poverty grade
		Living space	House structure	Rental status		Average number of meals per day	Frequency of quality food	Type of work	Monthly income (average per household member)		

Social map: Nur Hossein area, Shikder slum, Dhaka, Bangladesh



1 social mapping

The social mapping participants should then be brought together again for a second time and using the information contained on the completed Household Assessment Form enter onto the map the poverty grade for each household. A colour code should be used to show different poverty levels. Similarly, symbols can be used to show the use of SRH services. Households with unknown poverty levels should also be identified.

If the social mapping participants feel with their local knowledge that the grade allocated to any of the households may be inaccurate then they should raise their concerns with the moderator who will in turn alert you. These particular households can then be included in the sample to be checked for accuracy – for more information about this stage, please see Step 8: Checking the accuracy of the social map on page 25. Any additional, relevant information collected during the focus group discussions should also be included on the social map wherever possible. This might include locations of health or other services available to the community. It is important that the moderator then cross-checks the completed map with the poverty grading Household Assessment Forms to make sure that the grades recorded on the map match those recorded on the Forms.

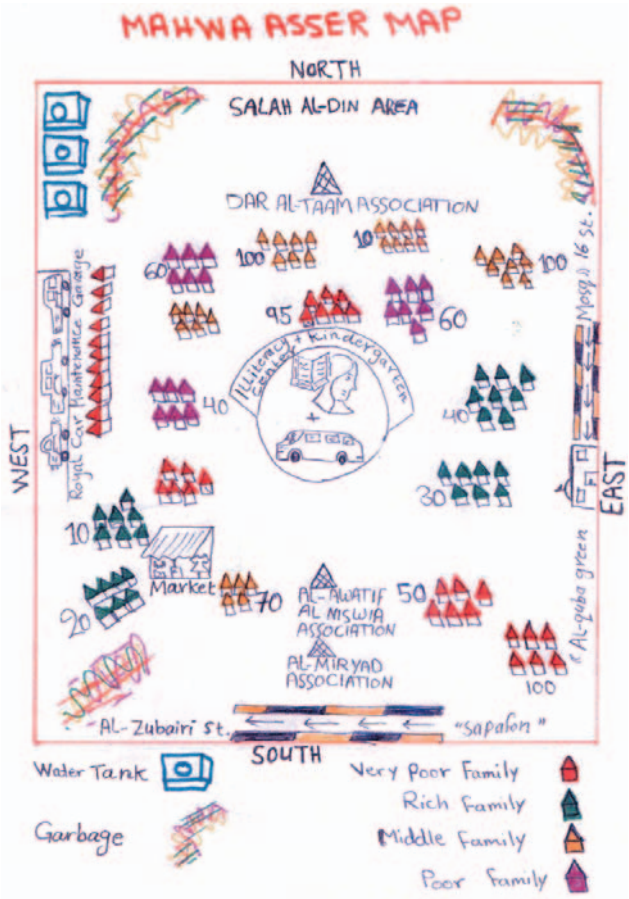
An example of a social map drawn by a community in Bangladesh is shown on page 23. Although originally drawn by hand, it has been refined for inclusion in this *manual*.

If the map is originally drawn by hand and then later re-drawn on a computer it is important to keep the original just in case reference needs to be made to it in the future. It is also important to keep safe any other information gathered during this exercise.

Although the social mapping exercise aims to map poverty very precisely by assessing each household, the more general approach used in Yemen, as shown above, can also give useful results. Pockets of poverty can be identified within communities, uptake of services monitored and new services targeted accordingly.

For further information on social mapping, please see *Part 2: a trainer's guide to training fieldworkers,* page 31.

A hand-drawn social map from Yemen, indicating pockets of poverty



Step 8: Checking the accuracy of the social map

To ensure the participatory poverty grading tool has been used consistently across the community surveyed, you will need to check the accuracy of the social map. This is particularly important if the social mapping participants have provided a very detailed map, as they did in Bangladesh, rather than a more general map, as they did in Yemen.

To do this, you will need to select a sample of mapped households, for example, 10% of all those surveyed or 15 households per map, whichever is the minimum. This sample should be a stratified random sample which means you should select a random sample of households from each poverty level. This sample of households should be re-visited to re-assess each household's poverty grade using the participatory poverty grading tool. The grade identified for each of these households should then be compared with their poverty grade recorded on the completed map. In a small scale project, you may undertake this task yourself. In a larger project, your fieldworkers would undertake this role, checking their co-fieldworkers' grading of households.

As well as checking the accuracy of the mapping of houses, landmarks etc, this is also an opportunity for your teams to re-visit any households which were unavailable when the survey took place.

If the grades in the random sample are very different to those recorded on the completed map, you may need to consider repeating the social mapping exercise. You may find for instance, that in the time between first grading a household and checking the accuracy of the grade shown on the social map, that a house has had a new roof added, or other structural work completed. This could give the house a higher score than when it was first surveyed. Keeping the time between training sessions, tool development and social mapping to a minimum will help to ensure that the final map is consistent and accurate. The time between first grading a household and then checking that grade should be no more than two weeks.

When analysing the completed map it may be helpful to also use it to compile data regarding:

- the number of households in the community
- the total number (and percentage) of households at different levels of poverty
- the total number (and percentage) of households whose poverty level remains unknown
- the total number (and percentage) of households using a health service provider
- the total number (and percentage) of households at each poverty level using a health service provider.

For further information about checking the accuracy of the social map, please see *Part 2: a trainer's guide to training fieldworkers,* page 35.

For further information about how to use the checked and completed social map, please see *Step 11: Reaching the poorest: developing information and implementing targeted services,* page 29.

Step 9: Monitoring and evaluation

Although this *manual* has been developed for use in any country, you will need to adapt elements of it to fit your particular setting. You will also need to monitor the poverty mapping project you design on an on-going basis in order to ensure that any further slight adjustments required can be made as, and when, needed. This on-going process will ensure that the outputs of the research you undertake are as informative as possible.

During the project you should monitor and evaluate:

- the training
- the trainees/fieldworkers' skills and their ability to lead focus groups
- the discussion guide
- the development of the indicators
- the participatory poverty grading tool
- the trainees/fieldworkers' skills and their ability to undertake the social mapping exercise
- the project overall.

Evaluating the training

While *Part 2: a trainer's guide to training fieldworkers* provides a framework for delivering the training sessions, you may need to adapt some of the information and exercises to suit your project environment. Before the training begins, ask yourself the following questions:

- which sections do you think the trainees will find most difficult?
- what extra topics or exercises do you think you could add into the training sessions? Are there any exercises that you think will not work in practise?
- what sort of questions do you think the trainees may ask during the training session?

As the training takes place you should observe a number of the sessions. This will not only give you the opportunity to evaluate the skills and abilities that the trainees are acquiring (please see below for further details) but also to evaluate the trainer. At the end of the training, ask yourself the following questions:

- how did the training go overall?
- will the trainees now be able to conduct the focus groups and the social mapping exercise successfully?
- how could the training be improved in the future?

The trainer should also be monitoring the training on an on-going basis to assess whether the training methods used need to be adapted at all or whether the trainees are having any difficulties in learning the new skills. They should keep you informed of any key difficulties or issues identified as this may have implications for any future poverty mapping projects undertaken.

You should also develop a simple feedback form which you can use at the end of the training to gather feedback from the trainees about their understanding of the objectives of the project and the skills and techniques needed to conduct the focus groups and the social mapping exercise.

Evaluating the trainees/fieldworkers' skills and their ability to lead focus groups

To evaluate the trainees' skills and their ability to lead focus groups the trainer should arrange a practise session which you can observe.

You should develop a simple form you can use during this session to help you identify any areas that may require adjustment or further training for the trainees. Evaluation forms have not been included in this *guide*, as they need to be tailored to the country in which they will be used.

Your form could include questions such as:

- were the focus group participants made to feel comfortable and relaxed and were they able to express their attitudes and opinions freely?
- were all of the participants involved in the discussion and did the group interact as a whole, or did side conversations take place?
- was the moderator non-judgemental? Did s/he use a non-leading style of questioning?
- was the moderator able to adapt to the requirements of the group?
- did any of the participants make the moderator's role more difficult? If so, was their handling of these participants successful?
- overall, was the group managed successfully?
- was the discussion guide used effectively and were all of the areas covered? Did the moderator keep the discussion focussed?
- did the discussion guide successfully aid the flow of the discussion or do adjustments need to be made?

- did the note taker seem to have any difficulties writing the notes and/or recording the discussion?
- was the right information gathered? Was enough information gathered?
- were there any practical aspects, for example, the equipment, set up of the room, day/timing of the session or the provision of refreshments that need to be adjusted or changed?
- were there any cultural issues that arose that need to be addressed for next time?

You and the trainer should use the information gathered to give feedback to the trainees, helping them to improve their skills and to fill in any gaps in understanding before their training is complete. If you feel that more training is required before the community focus groups take place then you should ask the trainer to arrange further practise sessions.

You should also monitor and evaluate a number of the actual focus groups led by trained fieldworkers. You should act as a neutral observer and assess the abilities of the moderators and note takers. Ask yourself the same questions you asked during the practise session (please see opposite and above).

You will then need to feed your comments back to the fieldworkers to help them improve and develop their skills further. This will help to ensure that the information gathered by the moderators is of a good standard and that the note takers are fulfilling their role properly. It will also highlight which fieldworkers are suitable to conduct focus groups on poverty or other subjects in the future. However, as a focus group discussion can demand a great deal of concentration and energy from moderators and note takers, this debriefing should ideally take place the day after the focus group has been held.

If, after observing some of the focus groups, you feel that some fieldworkers require further training then you should ask the trainer to arrange further practise sessions for those particular fieldworkers. These practise sessions should take place as soon as possible and before those fieldworkers hold further focus groups. You may also find that in reality some people are more suited to the role of note taker than to the role of moderator. If this is the case, then those fieldworkers should take the role that they are most suited to in any future groups.

Evaluating the discussion guide

The discussion guide should be field tested in the practise group and with the first focus group made up of community members. You will need to evaluate how well the guide works during the field testing and you, with input from the trainer, may need to make refinements to it before the majority of the focus groups are held. Questions that are useful to ask when evaluating the guide include:

- did the discussion guide yield productive responses?
- were the participants willing to answer all of the questions and if not, which questions were they unwilling to answer? For example, in some cultures it may not be appropriate to ask about income or in others, about the number of children.

Evaluating the data obtained from the focus groups

Once each focus group has taken place the moderator and note taker from each group will debrief you and you will need to provide a format for this feedback.

These debriefs will enable you to evaluate all aspects of the focus groups – from the recruitment of participants through to whether the focus group discussions have produced enough data to allow a sufficiently broad range of indicators, covering a range of common themes, to be developed. During these debriefs it may be useful to ask the fieldworkers the following types of questions:

- were there any difficulties in recruiting participants for the focus group discussions?
- did the participants form a diverse mix of the local community?
- were any particular groups, such as working/not working or younger/older, under or over represented?
- was the day and time of day selected for the focus group discussions appropriate?
- would a different daily or seasonal timing be recommended for future projects? May the responses possibly have been different at a different time of year?
- were the incentives used appropriate and effective?
- did the incentives affect which type of participant agreed to take part?
- how would the moderator describe the group's interaction?
- how did the note taker find taking the notes? Were there any particular difficulties?

When reading the transcript ask yourself:

- were the questions asked clear and unambiguous?
- did the note taker record information about the context of the discussion, such as silences, laughter and non verbal gestures?
- if the group's discussion was recorded on audio tape, was the recording clear and were there any difficulties in transcribing the data?

You should also use these debriefs to evaluate the success generally of the group discussions; identify any recurring issues raised during the groups, and capture any lessons learnt by the fieldworkers which could be of use in any future activities or projects.

Evaluating the participatory poverty grading tool

The tool should be field tested and evaluated before being used to grade large numbers of households. You may find that after field testing the tool it needs to be refined. For further information about this area, please see Step 6: Field testing the participatory poverty grading tool, page 20.

Evaluating the trainees/fieldworkers' skills and their ability to undertake the social mapping exercise

To evaluate the trainees' skills and their ability to undertake the social mapping exercise the trainer should arrange a practise session which you can observe. You should develop a simple form you can use during this session to help you identify any areas that may require improvement and further training.

This form could include questions such as:

- did the participants experience any difficulties in drawing the social map?
- was the map drawn accurate? Did it show enough detail? Were there houses/landmarks added/missing?
- was the moderator able to supply additional information when required?

You and the trainer should use the information gathered to give feedback to your trainees, helping them to improve their skills and to fill in any gaps in understanding before their training is complete. If you feel that more training is required before the social mapping exercise commences then you should ask the trainer to arrange further practise sessions.

Once the fieldworkers have been trained you should also monitor and evaluate their ability to undertake a real social mapping exercise. In order to do this, you will need to accompany one or more of your fieldworkers as they moderate a social mapping group. As well as the questions listed earlier, you could also ask yourself the following:

- were there any difficulties in recruiting the social mapping participants?
- did the moderator explain the exercise correctly and well?
- did the participants understand how to create the map?
- what proportion of households were unwilling to participate or were unavailable?
- was the poverty grade for each household entered correctly on to the social map?
- how accurate were the poverty grades when they were checked?

You will then need to feed your comments back to the fieldworkers to help them improve and develop their skills further.

Evaluating the project overall

As well as monitoring and evaluating all of the different elements which make up the project you should also evaluate the project overall. As part of this, it may be useful to ask yourself questions such as:

- did the project meet the expectations and objectives?
- what was the cost of the project in financial (budget) and human resources terms?
- were there any unforeseen barriers to, or problems with, the project?
- what could be done better 'next time'?
- were there any unforeseen benefits or implications of the project?
- how will the project outcomes and results be taken forward?
- can the project outcomes and results be used for any other purposes?
- were there were any issues (support, technical, financial or other) that arose that need to be taken into consideration in the future?

step 10: reporting
step 11: reaching the poorest: developing information and implementing targeted services

1

Step 10: Reporting

A poverty mapping project will have a number of outputs that you should document in a final report. Your report should contain an evaluation of the process undertaken and the results obtained. It should also record any lessons learnt in order to inform the development of any future projects undertaken. Your report could contain:

- the project's methodology: the community (or communities) chosen, the dates and locations of the focus groups, details of the social mapping exercise and the number of participants
- the results of the research: the focus group results (the poverty indicators identified and the findings about the use of health services); the results of the field testing of the participatory poverty grading tool; the social mapping findings; the results from checking the accuracy of the social map
- copies of all materials (formats and tools) that were developed including: the project plan; the discussion guide; invitations; recruitment sheets; the participatory poverty grading tool (field test and final version) and the social map
- monitoring and evaluation issues: the effectiveness of the training – focus group moderation and the social mapping exercise; the ease of use of the tool; the ease of implementing the project generally and any issues that arose; any future needs
- details of any other projects that will involve the use of the participatory poverty grading tool.

When compiling this report, you should also include an overall evaluation of the project.

When the report has been written you should circulate the results to the team involved in the research as well as to key others.

Step 11: Reaching the poorest: developing information and implementing targeted services

The results of your poverty mapping project can now be used to develop specific information and implement services that will improve the SRH or general health status of the poorest members of the community.

Your social map will provide information on the poverty structure of the community which you are studying. The proportion of households from each poverty level accessing health services can also be identified to highlight how access varies according to poverty.

The social map can now be used to identify pockets of poverty where health information and awareness activities can be focussed. It can also be used to identify households to be approached in order to help raise awareness of services. In addition, activities and services can be located in these pockets of poverty, and their locations recommended as possible sites for permanent activities such as mini-centres.

Information should be developed and services implemented according to the strategy developed in *Step 1: Planning and design.*

Notes

Notes

1 glossary

Glossary

Analyse: to examine in a systematic manner.

Ethics: a set of moral principles or code of conduct aimed at protecting people, which in this instance are the research participants, the community members.

Fieldworker: a person who works on the project, in the community in which the project is carried out. S/he may be a **moderator**, or a **note taker**.

Common indicator: a feature which is mentioned by all or the majority in the **focus group discussions** as varying among households according to wealth.

Discussion guide: a number of subjects for discussion during a **focus group discussion**, usually in question format.

Focus group discussion: a discussion led by a **moderator** on a particular topic, in this project among people of a similar background or with similar experiences.

Key indicator: developed from **common indicators** and must be measurable, relevant to every household, comparable and suitable. Between seven and 10 key indicators are used to develop the participatory poverty grading tool.

Moderator: a person who guides the focus group discussion, and the social mapping exercise.

Note taker: a person who records verbal and non verbal responses during the focus group discussion.

Research participant: a member of the community who takes part in the project, either in a focus group discussion or in the social mapping exercise.

Social map: a map of an area, produced by the residents of that area featuring houses, landmarks, roads, water supply, schools, playgrounds, places of worship, shops, factories, clinics etc and any other features of importance to the residents. In this particular project the completed map will show each household's poverty level and the health services available.

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