

UNIT 4: Take Action



This is a practice-focused programme that offers you many opportunities to apply what you are learning by working directly with selected households in the community. Learning is an interactive process: you learn from people in the community and they learn from you and together you discover new ways of doing things.

Practical activities called *portfolio activities* have been carefully designed to guide you in your work with the households in the community. This section gives you detailed information about the portfolio activities that are linked to Module 5.

4.1 How to approach portfolio activities

PORTFOLIO ACTIVITIES ARE COMPULSORY ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

In this programme the portfolio activities are the main assessment activities and they focus on the practical work you will do with households. You will find easy to follow descriptions and instructions for each portfolio activity and helpful tips to support you. There are about 5 portfolio activities per module. This portfolio icon (include the icon here) in the study guide will alert you when you have to do a portfolio activity. It is important that you understand exactly what you have to do. If you are unsure you can contact your promoter who will assist you.

The 'Triple A' Cycle

The portfolio activities are based on the 'Triple A' approach. This community development approach is used in many community development projects and initiatives. The 'Triple A' has three steps: assessment, analysis, and action. The steps are parts of a cycle as shown in this diagram.



The 'Triple A' Cycle

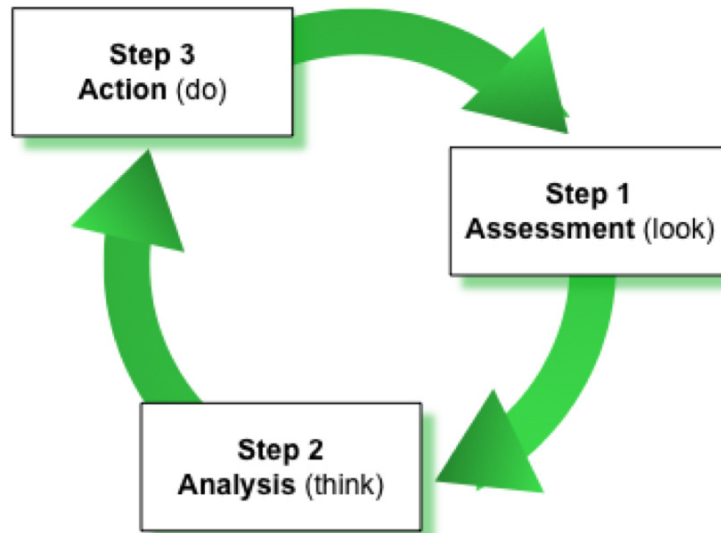


Figure 4.1 The 'Triple A' Cycle

STEP 1: Assessment

This is the look or observation phase. You and the households observe the situation carefully and use a variety of techniques and tools to collect current information on key issues.

STEP 2: Analysis

This is the critical thinking and reflecting phase. You interpret the information, make sense of it, and identify areas of success and areas that need improvement.

STEP 3: Action

This is the informed action phase. You plan workable strategies for action or action plans with households to address identified problems. You support the households to implement the action plans and monitor progress.

The end of step 3 is not the end of the learning and development process as the cycle is ongoing. This systematic approach allows you and the households to increase your understanding of the issues. Households can use this approach to keep refining the actions that have a positive impact on their lives.



KEEP A WELL ORGANIZED PORTFOLIO FILE

For each completed the portfolio activity you have to complete an **evidence sheet**. You file all evidence sheets and any additional items such as, terms of reference, agendas, minutes, plans, interview questions, reports or photographs in your portfolio file. Get used to storing this valuable assessment evidence from the start. At the end of the module, you have to submit your portfolio file for marking and grading.

You can create an interesting portfolio file that you are proud to present as evidence of your learning journey in the programme. Make it easy for a marker or reader to access by including the following:

- Place a coloured cardboard or plastic divider before each module.
- For each module create a creative title page with this information: module number and topic, your full name, your student number, the course code, the full date, the name of your group and name of your promoter.
- Number your pages.
- Include a contents list of the items of evidence, e.g. completed evidence sheet, agenda, minutes, plans, reports, photographs or any item you are required to include.
- At the end of each module, write a short reflection on what you have learned. Keep it short. No more than one page.



Refer to the portfolio section in Tutorial Letter 102 and 301 when you compile your portfolio.

4.2 The portfolio activities for module 2

The main tasks for this module are the five activities shown in the table below. They are compulsory portfolio activities and you must include relevant evidence in your Module 2 Portfolio Evidence Sheets.

Your task	Tools and methods	Portfolio activity
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assess Invite representatives from households to a story sharing session	Story telling as a technique to reveal food security issues in the community	2.1
Organize an introductory meeting with households	Meeting and group discussion to establish contact with households and gather information about food security issues	2.4
Gather baseline data from selected households	Home visit, interview and baseline questionnaire to collect baseline data about households	2.5



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze Consider factors that influence the food security of households 	Group reflections and discussions and personal reflections linked to food security issues	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take action Practice selected planning, facilitation and evaluation activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A PLA tool • A learning session Plan and facilitate a story session and introductory meeting with households Conduct a home visit to gather baseline data about households 	Practice activities to facilitate PLA tools and group activities Story telling, meeting plan and group discussion to establish contact with households and gather information about food security issues Home visit, interview and baseline questionnaire to collect baseline information about households	2.2, 2.3 2.1, 2.4 2.5



Portfolio Activity 2.1: Do this activity in your portfolio sheets

Identify food security issues in a community by reflecting on stories

Aim

Use story-sharing techniques to identify food security issues in a community.

Time

3 hours

Evidence for your portfolio

1. Completed Portfolio 2.1 Evidence Sheet
2. The log entry linked to Portfolio Activity 2.1
3. Copy of one story

What you need

1. Notebook and pen or pencil
2. Flipchart paper and kokis or markers
3. Camera (optional)

What to do

You are expected to visit people in the community and ask them to share their stories of hardship and success relating to food security. Start by talking to neighbours and friends that live close to you. Make a note of the stories you collect. In your student group share the stories you think best reflect the food insecurity challenges in the community.



The activity has three parts:

- Visit people in the community and ask them to share their stories with you.
- Share selected stories in the HFS student group.
- Reflect and analyze selected stories to identify common food security themes.

VISIT PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY

1. Make a list of people you can speak to in the community. Make sure the list reflects a variety of people. You can start by speaking to friends and neighbours. They can suggest the names of people they know who will be willing to speak to you.
2. Introduce yourself to each person. Explain the purpose of the activity and why it is important for them to share their story. (See the benefits of story telling in *Tips and Tools*) You can encourage people to start telling their stories by using opening comments such as:
 - *Tell me about a time when.....*
 - *Tell me how you dealt with the crisis of not having sufficient food for your family.*
 - *Tell me how you worked with others in the community to find a market for surplus vegetables from your food garden.*
 - *Tell me about a time when you felt proud about doing something to make sure you have enough food for everyone in the household.*
3. Make a note of the story immediately after you have heard it. It is very distracting to make notes when people are sharing their story. You can use the story-recording tool in *Tips and Tools*.

SHARE SELECTED STORIES IN THE HFS STUDENT GROUP

4. Each person in the group shares one or more stories gathered from people in the community. The number of stories shared depends on available time.

Note: Be careful about confidentiality. If people have indicated that they do not want their story to be made public, you have to respect their confidence. If you want to use the story you can change names and places.
5. You can follow this sequence of story sharing:
 - (a) The person who is the storyteller starts telling the story.
The storyteller gives enough detail to help the listeners picture the scene. Nobody interrupts the story.
 - (b) When the storyteller has finished telling the story the listeners share what they learned from the story. (Keep this reaction simple and short).
 - (c) Repeat (a) and (b) for each person who shares a story.

REFLECT ON AND ANALYZE STORIES SHARED

6. Look for food security themes and issues that run through the stories. Make a list of



these on flipchart paper. You can divide the paper into a table with two columns. In the first column write down the issues.

7. Think about immediate, underlying and basic causes of food insecurity issues. Write the causes in the column next to the issues.
8. Look at the issues and causes and brainstorm ways to address them. Be practical when you think of the solutions. However, also think big: if you could do whatever you wanted to correct the problem, what would it be?
9. Discuss the effects of the situation. What have you learned from the stories? Do you need to find more information before you can do anything about it? What kind of information do you need?
10. Use the diagram in *Tips and Tools* to help you organize the information you discussed in the group:
 - **What** is happening?
 - **Why** is it happening?
 - **So what?**
 - **Now, what** can we do about it?
11. Select and make a copy of one story that you think is most inspiring or reflects the struggle for food security in the community.

Complete the Portfolio 2.1 Evidence Sheet

1. Answer the questions linked to Portfolio Activity 2.1
2. Complete the Log entry linked to Portfolio Activity 2.1
3. Make a copy of one story





Tips and tools

Background information

Here are some ideas about storytelling and sharing that you may find helpful.

What are the benefits of story telling?

Telling and listening to stories is a simple and familiar process that can evoke powerful feelings and insights.

- Simple stories can illustrate deep truths.
- Story telling and sharing help people to connect with each other.
- Story telling can promote shared understanding about present and future situations.
- The process of telling the story and being listened to can be empowering.
- Stories provide opportunities for many voices to be heard.

How to encourage the sharing of stories

1. Choose a quiet place for a person to tell her or his story. For example people may feel inhibited to tell the story inside their homestead because they may feel that they are exposing the household by sharing information about not coping.
2. Identify a theme for the story telling. For example, food insecurity stories of hardship or success. Introduce the theme and explain how the story telling and sharing session will take place.
3. People feel more comfortable in a mutual sharing situation. Perhaps begin by sharing a story of your own.
4. Allow storytellers time to introduce who they are before they tell their story. Remember it is important to create a non-threatening space for them to feel free to tell their story.
5. Ask the participants to think of a specific incident of hardship or success linked to food insecurity. Encourage them to talk from personal experience and to tell the story in the first person.
6. When you have opened the space, allow people to tell their story without interruption.
7. Listen attentively while the person is telling the story.
8. Try to 'nudge' the storyteller back to the narrative if s/he moves into the analytical mode (Why did it happen?) too soon.

How to move the story forward

Here are practical ways in which you can engage with the storytelling process and move it along.

- Set the scene:**

I'd like to hear you tell your story in your own words. Are you ready to start?

- Begin**

Tell me how it all began.

- When things are too general**

Can you give me an example, so that I can picture it?

- Finding out about feelings and turning points**



Can you remember a particular moment that made a big impression? What did it feel like when you arrived at that insight? What happened as a result of discussing this in the household?

Use indirect questions

A direct question, e.g. 'Were you frightened?' may be too intimidating. Try to show empathy by using an indirect question: 'It sounds that that was quite frightening for you?'

Dig deeper

It sounds like you were in real trouble. So how did you cope?

Catchy title

Titles capture the essence of a story and make it memorable. Involve the storytellers in creating a title for their story. If this were a story in a newspaper what do you think would be a title that gets people to read it?

(Adapted from Story Guide: Building Bridges using Narrative Techniques, 2004)

STORY RECORDING TOOL

As people tell their stories, write down the main points. Here is a tool you might like to use to record the stories.

Title of the story (Be creative)	
Name of storyteller	
Place	
Date	
Background (Where, when, where)	
Homestead (Exact location of story)	
Characters (Who is involved/)	
Challenge (Problem or task that triggered the situation)	
Action (What happened before during and after)	
Result (How did it end? What lesson was learned)	

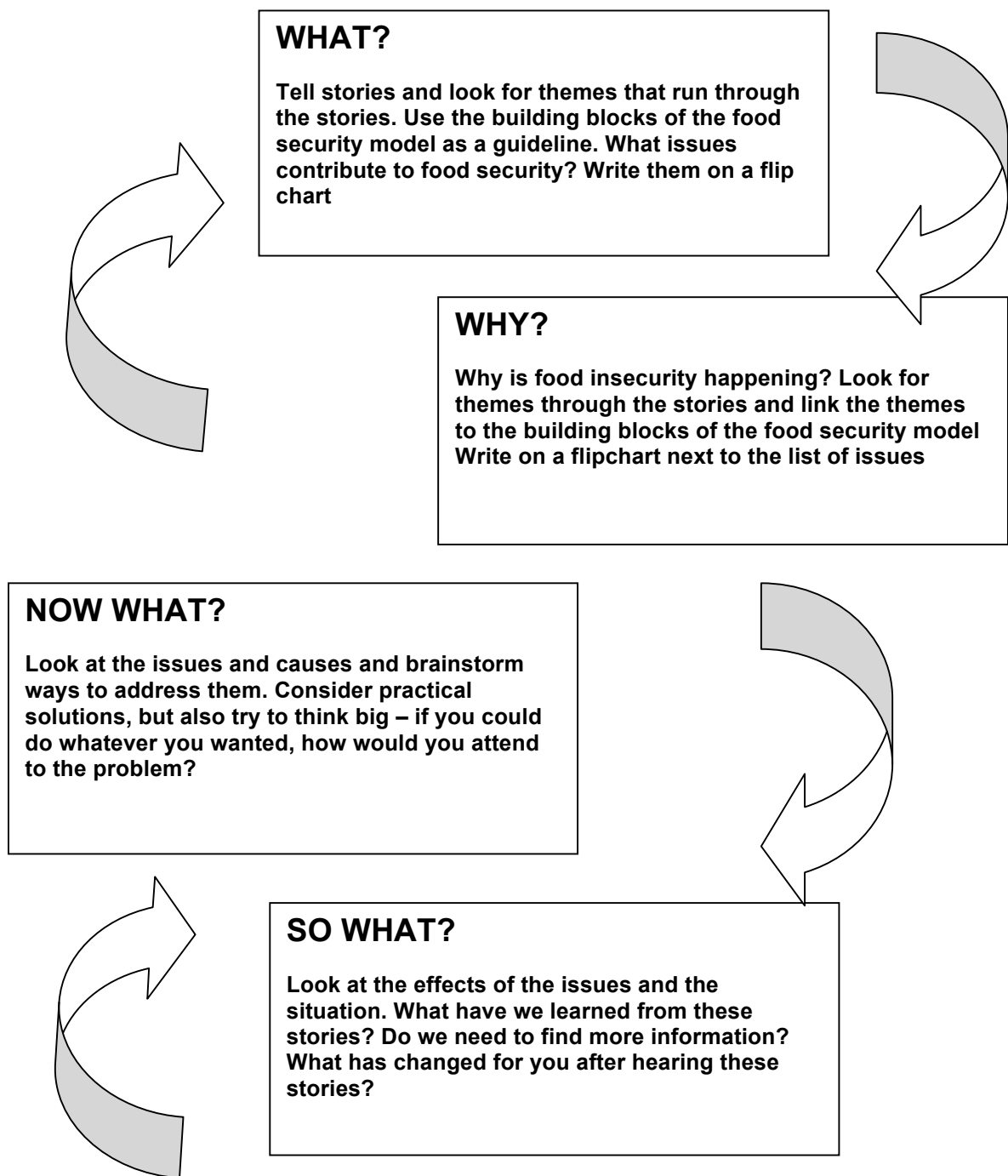
(Adapted from Story Guide: Building Bridges using Narrative Techniques, 2004)



DIAGRAM – Organize information from the reflection on the stories

You can organize the information you discussed in the group by answering these four questions:

- **What** is happening?
- **Why** is it happening?
- **So what?**
- **Now, what** can we do about it?



(Adapted from Labonte and Feather in NSNC/AHPRC Food Security Projects, 2005)





Portfolio Activity 2.2: Do this activity in your portfolio sheets

Plan, facilitate and evaluate a PLA tool

Aim

Give you practice to use a PLA tool with a group of your fellow students.

Encourage critical reflection on your performance.

Time

30 minutes for planning

60 minutes for facilitation

30 minutes for reflection

Evidence for your portfolio

1. Completed Portfolio 2.2 Evidence Sheet
2. The log entry linked to Portfolio Activity 2.2
3. Critical reflection notes

What you need

1. Materials as per tool used (e.g. seasonal calendar, problem tree, transect walk, resource map)
2. Flip chart paper and koki markers
3. Note book, pen and pencil
4. Note taker

What to do

Find out from your promoter how the PLA tool practice session will take place. An option is a workshop during which pairs of students facilitate a tool. In this way it is possible for you get hands-on experience of different tools.

PLAN FACILITATING THE PLA TOOL

1. Identify the PLA tool you want to facilitate. Confirm your choice with the promoter.
2. Clarify the purpose and focus of the PLA tool activity. Remember the participants are your fellow students, so make sure the PLA tool activity links up with their needs and experience.
3. Draw up your plan. The guidelines in the *Practice Guide of Unit 2* give practical ideas of how to use the tool with participants. Check that your plan includes:



- What do you hope to achieve? (purpose of the PLA tool)
 - How will you help the participants to achieve the learning goal? (description of a set of steps. Say what you will do and what the participants will do)
4. Collect tool specific materials, e.g. seeds for counters.

DURING THE LEARNING SESSION

5. Introduce the PLA tool and explain clearly its purpose, what will happen, what you expect from the participants and what support they can expect from you. Allow time for the participants to ask questions to clarify what they don't understand.
6. Keep a check on the participation levels of the participants and deal with emerging difficulties as they arise.
7. The note taker:
 - Makes notes of main points during the activity
 - Observes social and learning interactions
 - Passes on observations of social and learning interactions to the facilitator
 - Helps with time management
 - Makes a record of materials from the group, e.g. action plans, resource maps.

AFTER THE LEARNING SESSION

8. Reflect on the experience and identify:
 - What worked well?
 - What did not work? Examine reasons.
 - What new insights have you gained about using this PLA tool?
 - What new insights have you gained about your performance as a facilitator?
 - How can you improve your skill to facilitate this PLA tool with the households?
9. Write down the main points of the critical review.

Complete the Portfolio 2.2 Evidence Sheet

1. Answer the questions linked to Portfolio Activity 2.2
2. Complete the Log entry linked to Portfolio Activity 2.2
3. Critical reflection notes





Portfolio Activity 2.3: Do this activity in your portfolio sheets

Plan, facilitate and evaluate a learning session

Aim

Give you and your facilitation team (small team of 3 – 4 students) practice to facilitate a learning session.

Encourage critical reflection on the performance of your facilitation team.

Time

1 hour for planning

1 hour for facilitation

30 minutes for reflection

Evidence for your portfolio

1. Completed Portfolio 2.3 Evidence Sheet
2. The log entry linked to Portfolio Activity 2.3
3. Learning session plan

What you need

1. Materials as per tools used (e.g. seasonal calendar, problem tree, transect walk, resource map)
2. Flip chart paper and koki markers
3. Notebook, pen or pencil
4. Note taker

What to do

This is a team planning and facilitation activity. The participants in the learning session are other students in your group.

PLAN THE LEARNING SESSION

1. Clarify the purpose and focus of your learning session. Remember the participants are your fellow students, so make sure the learning session links up with their needs and experience. You could focus on:
 - **Food Security:** What natural resources are available in your area and which do you have access to and use for your livelihood and food?
 - **Nutrition:** Do the foods you eat contribute to your health and well-being?
2. Check that the learning session plan you draw up includes the following information:
 - What do you hope to achieve (purpose of the learning session)?



- What are the main learning messages?
 - What do you expect the participants to know, do and value? (learning goals)
 - What resources do you need?
 - How will you help the participants to achieve the learning goals? (description of learning activities)
 - What sequence do the activities follow? (order of activities)
3. Clarify team roles and responsibilities. (*Check the HFS team roles in the study guide*)
 - Check available date and time and venue with the promoter and students
 - Organize venue and materials

DURING THE LEARNING SESSION

4. Introduce the learning session and explain clearly its purpose, what will happen, what you expect from the participants and what support they can expect from you. Allow time for the participants to ask questions to clarify what they don't understand.
5. Keep a check on the participation levels of the participants and deal with emerging difficulties as they arise.
6. The note taker:
 - Keeps a record of attendance
 - Makes notes of main points during group discussions
 - Observes social and learning interactions
 - Passes on observations of social and learning interactions to the facilitator
 - Helps with time management
 - Makes a record of materials from the group, e.g. action plans, resource maps.

AFTER THE LEARNING SESSION

7. Reflect on the experience and identify:
 - What worked well?
 - What did not work? Examine reasons.
 - What new insights have you gained about learning sessions?
 - What new insights have you gained about your performance as a facilitation team?
 - How can you improve your skill to facilitate learning sessions with the households?
8. Write down the main points of the critical review.



Complete the Portfolio 2.3 Evidence Sheet

1. Answer the questions linked to Portfolio Activity 2.3
2. Complete the Log entry linked to Portfolio Activity 2.3
3. A copy of the learning session plan.



Portfolio Activity 2.4: Do this activity in your portfolio sheets

Organize an introductory meeting with households in the area

Aim

Organize a meeting with household caregivers to:

- establish contact with caregivers and get to know who they are;
- inform the caregivers what the Household Food Security project is trying to achieve, what the benefits are for households, and how households can get involved;
- get a list of caregivers who are interested in participating and who will get a follow-up home visit.

Time

1 hour to prepare the meeting

1 hour 30 minutes for the meeting

Evidence for your portfolio

1. Completed Portfolio 2.4 Evidence Sheet
2. The log entry linked to Portfolio Activity 2.4
3. Agenda for the meeting
4. List showing names and contact details of potential participating caregivers
5. Photographs (optional)

What you need

1. Flip chart paper and koki markers
2. Notebook, pen or pencil
3. Note taker
4. Camera (optional)

What to do

This is a group activity. You are a member of a small group of students. With the support of the promoter you plan and organize the meeting and reflect on it afterwards.



PLAN THE MEETING

1. Clarify what you want to achieve. Make sure everyone is clear as to what the task entails. Identify team roles and responsibilities: Who will lead the group? Who will coordinate the planning activities? Who will keep a record of what is happening? (leader, facilitator, note taker)
2. Prepare a detailed plan of action. Here are some items for the action plan. You can add others
 - Draw up a list of possible caregivers and their contact details
 - Contact identified caregivers to determine their interest and availability
 - Draw up an agenda for the meeting
 - Use suitable ways of inviting the caregivers to the meeting
 - Organize the venue
3. Carry out a pre-meeting check the day before the meeting to ensure that the venue is ready and that everyone knows what to do on the day of the meeting.

DURING THE MEETING

4. Contribute to the meeting according to your assigned role: leader, facilitator, note taker.
5. Create an environment in which people are able to ask questions and raise concerns.
6. Record information about the caregivers, their concerns and aspirations.
7. Thank the caregivers for participating and leave them with a clear idea of what happens next.

AFTER THE MEETING

8. Reflect on the meeting as a group and identify main insights gained.
9. Finalize the list of participating caregivers whom you will visit within the next few weeks.

Complete the Portfolio 2.4 Evidence Sheet

4. Answer the questions linked to Portfolio Activity 2.4
5. Complete the Log entry linked to Portfolio Activity 2.4
6. A copy of the agenda
7. A list showing names and contact details of potential participating caregivers.





Portfolio Activity 2.5: Do this activity in your portfolio sheets

Conduct the first home visit with households

Aim

Establish contact with selected households, get consent to participate, and collect baseline household food security information.

Time

- 1 hour to prepare visits to all households
- 1 hour per household visit

Evidence for your portfolio

1. Completed Portfolio 2.5 Evidence Sheet
2. The log entry linked to Portfolio Activity 2.5
3. Completed baseline questionnaires
4. Photographs (optional)

What you need

1. Copy of questionnaire per household
2. Notebook, pen or pencil
3. Note taker
4. Camera (optional)

What to do

You are expected to visit the households you have selected to work with and to collect baseline information using a base line questionnaire.

The purpose of the visit is to:

- Establish contact and affirm the caregiver's decision to participate in the PLA learning and action process;
- Enable the caregiver to ask questions and raise concerns;
- Provide more information about the learning and action process; the benefits for the households, their time and effort demands; what support they can expect during the process;
- Gather specific information about the households; the composition, the context in which people live, their livelihood and food security assets, opportunities and needs.

PREPARE FOR THE VISIT

1. Contact the caregivers of households on your list and arrange a date and time for the visit that is convenient for them. Get directions on how to get to their home.
2. Make a copy of the baseline questionnaire for each household.



3. Ask a fellow student to accompany you as a notetaker.
4. Be prepared to deal with caregivers who are hesitant or reluctant to participate. The caregivers will want to know how they will benefit? They will argue that they need inputs because they are poor. From the start help them to realize that the approach you are using is a low-input approach. You are interested in assisting the caregivers to be empowered and become self reliant because in the long run this enables them to take actions that will continue to benefit the household.
5. Be clear about the interaction with the caregiver: How will you start? What will you say about the learning and action process? How will you facilitate the semi-structured interview during which you collect baseline information?

DURING THE VISIT

6. Greet and introduce yourself and the notetaker. Explain the purpose of your visit, the benefits, the practical implications of participating, the importance of getting the caregiver's consent to participate fully in the process, why you need to collect baseline information, and what happens after the visit.
7. Create a relaxed atmosphere and encourage the caregiver to share some stories about hardship or success linked to hunger, food insecurity, malnutrition.
8. Ask how the caregiver wants to show that she gives consent to participate in the process. (verbal or written consent)
9. Introduce the baseline information collecting activity. Be prepared to deal with a caregiver who may be suspicious about what you are going to do with the information you collect. Allay her fears and confirm that this information is primarily important to help both of you understand the context of the household in order to take suitable actions later.
10. As you conduct the interview the note taker writes down the details on the baseline questionnaire.
11. Thank the caregiver for her participation and leave her with a clear idea about what happens next.

AFTER THE VISIT

12. Write down a short report on the visit in your home visit log. Include details of who you spoke to, a short description of the homestead, what you observed, food security needs and concerns. You can include a photograph of the caregiver and homestead.



13. Prepare an analysis of the household profiles in your group of households. This gives you a good insight into some general food insecurity trends.

Complete the Portfolio 2.5 Evidence Sheet

8. Answer the questions linked to Portfolio Activity 2.5
9. Complete the Log entry linked to Portfolio Activity 2.5
10. A copy of one completed baseline questionnaire.

SEE TUTORIAL LETTER 103 FOR INFORMATION ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE AND AN EXAMPLE.

