

## FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE



Thanks for coming. Many of you may know each other, but let's go around the room anyway and introduce ourselves. I'm Palesa Etsane **(or however you wish to introduce yourself)** and I'm here as part of an MRC study. This is \_\_\_\_\_ who will be taking notes.

As was mentioned when you agreed to come, what you say will be recorded. This is to make sure that we don't miss anything you say, because it is important. I also want to assure you that information you give will be kept confidential, know one other than us present here will know who said what.

## A. ACTIVITIES

- Let's talk about what your day is like as a mother of at least one young child, who also has chores to do. What are some of the chores you have to do during the day?
- Who watches your child/children during the day while you do all of this?
- For those of you who watch your own children, what are the hardest tasks to do while trying to watch your young child at the same time? Are there any tasks that are pretty easy to do while watching your child at the same time?
- When you are using your stove and taking care of your children at the same time, is there anything in particular that you watch out for? Are there specific things you do to make it easier to do both of these at the same time?
- Do you have anyone at home during the day who helps with the chores? Who?
- How often does s/he help with chores?
- Does s/he help with watching the children? How often?

## B. STOVE BURNING

Suppose I am about to get married (**Or, suppose I'm your daughter or new daughter-in-law who needs to set up her new household – pick most culturally relevant**). I come to you as an experienced mother for advice. I ask: please can you tell me what type of stove you prefer?

- Why should I choose that stove? What about it makes it good?
- Is it better for certain types of things? (heating water, cooking, etc, than others)?
- What about it makes it better than other types? (**Probe: time, benefits**)
- How would the answers change, if at all, if it were wintertime?
- What fuel should I use in that stove for the things its best for? You said that \_\_\_\_\_ (name of stove) was best for \_\_\_\_\_ (activity or food cooked).  
What fuel should I use in the stove for \_\_\_\_\_ (activity)
- What makes it better than other fuels for \_\_\_\_\_(the activity)?
- Are there any concerns with that stove? If so, what are they? (**Probe: time, cost, dangers**)
- Are there any concerns with those types of fuels? What would they be?
- Suppose I can't have that kind of stove. What is the next best stove? Why isn't it as good as the first kind? Why is it better than other kinds? What kind of fuel/s do I need to use in it?

**[Make sure that coal stoves, braziers and paraffin stoves have been discussed]**

### C. FUELS

- Now I want to know which fuel (out of wood, paraffin, cow dung and mielie cobs) you think is best? What would you say?
- What about the fuel makes it better than others? What use/s is it best for?
- Why might people not use the best fuel? (**Probes: time, cost, benefits, dangers**)
- Would your answers change, if it were wintertime? What would you say in winter?

### D. BURNING ACTIVITIES

Perhaps some of your friends and neighbors mentioned that researchers came to their homes to observe how they use fuels and stoves during the winter. Our colleagues conducted this research and had some questions about what they saw that we'd like to ask you to explain to us.

- We noticed that many people heated and cooked inside of the house. For what reasons do you think they (heat??) cook inside? How likely are people to cook outside during winter? During the rest of the year?
- We noticed that people often used combinations of fuels **for the same activity**- such as wood and animal dung. Have you observed this or have you ever done this? Is there a reason that people use certain combinations? How often do people use combinations rather than just one fuel?
- During winter, how often do you start a fire?
- We noticed that some fires were left burning for what we thought were long periods of time. What do you think a long period of time is and do you ever leave fires burning a long time? (What is the reason you or someone else might do this?) (**probe: to heat the house, easier than starting it again, reduces amount of smoke at start, etc.**) How would this differ in the winter from the rest of the year?
- We noticed that some people leave the windows open when they cook and some leave them closed. Have you ever noticed this? When you are burning in the morning, do you usually start with the window open or closed?

- And at lunch-time and in the evening?
- When burning, what makes you feel that it's time to open the window? What makes you feel that it's time to close the window?
- We also noticed that in the winter many people opened the windows briefly in the morning, closed them for most of the rest of the day and then opened them more in the afternoon. Have you noticed this? What is the reason that people or you yourselves might do this?
- Similarly, we noticed that many people had their doors closed during heating/cooking. Does this seem normal to you? If yes, is there a reason for doing this?
- In particular we noticed that some people opened windows when the room was smoky and then closed them when the smoke had gone. How smoky does it have to get before you would open a window? What about the smoke makes people want to open a window?

#### **E. Knowledge of the link between IAP and respiratory health/Potential interventions**

- What could happen to children if they were exposed to smoke/bad air?
- How do they compare to other health problems that happen to children around here?
- In your opinion, which of the fuels we already discussed would be most dangerous to children? What about that fuel causes you to think that?
- Which fuel would be the next most likely? Why?
- Is there any difference in the amount of smoke/bad air and what you are using the stove for?
- You have said that smoke is dangerous (or whatever they say). Have you ever heard that air from a stove be harmful even before it gets smoky or when it isn't smoky at all? (If yes: How common do you think this opinion is?)
- What are the different things that a *mother* with young children *does* to reduce the amount of bad air/smoke that her children breathes during the winter months?
- **Get a list of things that can be done. For each one on the list, ask the following questions:**

- How easy is it to do this? What makes it difficult?
- What would a mother need to make it easier to do? What can be done to help a mother do that?

**When the above questions are completed for each element of the list, check the following list and ask the same questions about each of the things that have not already been mentioned:**

**Moving children further from fire (if so to where?)**

**Opening doors/windows more/for longer time**

**Changing fuels? To what?**

**Changing stoves? To which?**

**Fixing stoves/chimneys?**

**Someone else to look after the children while \_\_\_\_\_ heats/cooks**

**When all these have been asked, ask:**

- Are there any other ideas you think might the amount of bad air/smoke that children receives during the winter months?

**End by having them group together all the ideas produced into 3 groups - which would be easiest, which would be hardest and which would be in-between.**

**Thank the participants for their help and participation.**