## Exercise:Information Needs Assessments – Exploring Questions and Data Collection Methods

**Objectives**

1. To identify important questions that an information needs assessment can answer
2. To explore the kinds of questions that can be answered with existing data versus the gaps in knowledge that require new data to be collected
3. To select appropriate methods for collecting data on information needs

**Overview**

This activity allows participants to analyze the current knowledge sharing and management situation that their key audience is facing, discuss what they already know about the situation versus what they do not know, and specify appropriate methods to collect new information required to design effective knowledge management activities to improve the situation.

**Time**

Total: 75 minutes

Introduce exercises and break up into small groups (10 minutes). Work in groups (45 minutes), then reconvene to report out and discuss (20 minutes).

**Activity Steps**

1. Select two to three knowledge management-related questions that are most relevant to your global health program from the list of illustrative questions in the table below **(column 1)**
2. Identify and list what you already know **(column 2)** and what you do not know yet **(column 3)** about these questions.
3. Review the information you identified in Step 2 (i.e., what you know and don’t know), discuss whether or not there are currently notable gaps, and specify if new/additional information should be collected before designing knowledge management activities **(column 4)**.
4. If additional information is needed, propose appropriate data collection methods (e.g., desk review, key information interview, etc.) **(column 5).**

Report out: Provide each group five minutes to share the issues they discussed and then explore together what other types of information gaps the groups may have missed and whether the selected data collection methods seem to be the most appropriate for the particular situation at hand.

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| **1) Knowledge management questions about key audience**  | **2) What we already know**  | **3) What we do not know yet** | **4) Additional data and information to collect if needed** | **5) Data collection methods** |
| What information do health professionals want?  |  |  |  |  |
| What sources of information do they use?  |  |  |  |  |
| How do they store, transfer, and share information?  |  |  |  |  |
| What communication systems (formal/informal) are used to exchange information among different levels of the health system? |  |  |  |  |
| What are the barriers to accessing, sharing, and using health information? |  |  |  |  |
| What is the role of professional networks and associations in knowledge exchange for health? |  |  |  |  |
| Which communication channels and formats are preferred? |  |  |  |  |