

Module 19

Conducting interviews

Summary

The development of a Water Safety Plan requires information from several stakeholders.

A very useful and rather easy way to collect information about several aspects of a water supply system is by conducting interviews with the relevant stakeholders. The type of stakeholders and the posed questions vary from the water supplier to the consumers. Some basic knowledge and approaches on conducting interviews are presented in this module.

This module provides questionnaires for different stakeholders:

- 19a. Questionnaire for citizens
- 19b. Questionnaire for doctors and health professionals
- 19c. Questionnaire for water supplier and water professionals

Objectives

Pupils supported by an adult are able to conduct interviews with several types of stakeholders. They collect and process useful information from the water supplier, local health authorities and consumers.

Key words and terms

Interviewer, interviewee, preparation of questionnaires;

Preparation/material

Materials	Preparation
Questionnaires available from module 18	Eventual revising and adding more relevant questions, making copies
Village map	
Locations of the interviewees	Using the map for making a selection

Conducting interviews

Introduction

For conducting interviews some understanding of the interviewee is needed. The interviewees may be reluctant and hesitant to communicate with the interviewer and/or to answer the posed questions. Before you start to design your interview questions and process, clearly define which information should be gathered and identify the target groups of respondents. Also, thoughts should be made or the interviewer should be instructed on how to approach the interviewees. This helps you to keep a clear focus on the intent of each question and to obtain reliable information.



Before the start, practical logistics and processing of the gathered information should be discussed and clarified

1. Interviews can be conducted in several ways

- The interview can be conducted in an informal and conversational way: no determined questions are asked.
- A guided interview approach ensures that the required information is collected, yet in a more structured way (the conversational way generally allows a certain degree of freedom in talking).
- With a standardised, open-end interview the same open ended questions are asked to all interviewees, but the interviewees are free to choose how to answer the question.
- With a closed, fixed-response interview all interviewees are asked the same questions and are asked to answer from among the same set of alternatives.

For our purpose to enable non-experts to conduct interviews, questionnaires with standardised questions are prepared; answers can be a combination of free choice and a choice of given answers.

1.1. Interview logistics

Selection of persons to be interviewed

Interviewing the local water supply and health authorities in a small village involves a naturally restricted number of interviewees of 3 - 6 persons. Whereas interviewing citizens, a strategy for a broad variety of samples (interviewees) and locations has to be developed. Considering restricted possibilities, such as the availability of interviewers and interviewees, the number of wished respondents could be minimized. A

minimum of 15 citizens should be interviewed to get an impression on the citizen's experiences living in a small village.

One way is to randomly select the interviewees in a city. The locations should be equally spread out over the community by using a map for identifying the locations of the interviewees. Another possibility is to ask the pupils to interview their parents/relatives and neighbours. The advantage is that more interviews can be conducted. However, the location of the respondents should not be in one area of the village, but spread out over the whole village like in the random approach..

Preparing the questionnaires

The questions of the questionnaires provided in this ring binder should be checked together with the interviewees on their relevance, completeness and comprehension. If pupils are conducting the interviews, they should understand the relevance and the text of the question.

Interviewers should be provided with enough copies of the questionnaires, pens and instructions for doing the interviews.



*Often, interviewees may feel more comfortable at their own places of work or homes.
Make sure that the interviewee is comfortable*

1.2. Preparation of the interview before questioning

1. Choose a setting with some discretion. Avoid loud lights or noises and ensure that the interviewee is comfortable. Often, the interviewee may feel more comfortable at his / her own place of work or home.
2. Introduce yourself and explain the purpose of the interview.
3. Address terms of confidentiality. Noting the respondents name or age is not necessary; results will be handled anonymously. Explain who will get access to their answers; note time and locality
4. Explain the format of the interview you are conducting and its nature.
5. Indicate how long the interview will approximately take.
6. Tell them how to get in touch with you later if they want to.
7. Ask them if they have any questions before you both get started with the interview.
8. Do not count on your memory to recall their answers and note the answers of the respondent straight away.

1.3. Conducting the interview

Obtaining reliable information from the interviewees is not always easy. For conducting an interview, some basic rules should be taken in consideration. For example:

1. Ask one question at a time.
2. Attempt to remain as neutral as possible. That is, do not show strong emotional reactions to the responses.

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3. Encourage responses with occasional nods of the head, etc.
 4. Be careful about your behaviour when taking notes and how it may influence the further course of the interview. (e.g. if you jump to take a note, it may appear as if you are surprised or very pleased about an answer, which may unconsciously influence further answers.)
 5. Be careful with “why” questions; these questions may cause respondents to react defensive, e.g., that they feel they have to justify their response, which may inhibit their responses to this and future questions.
 6. Provide transitions between major topics, e.g., "we have been talking about (some topic) and now I'd like to move on to (another topic)."
 7. Do not lose control of the interview. This can occur when respondents stray to another topic, taking too much time to answer a question reducing the interviewing time; another possibility is that the interviewee may start asking questions of the interviewer.

1.4. After the interview

Make sure that the interviewee is allowed to look at your written notes after the interview in order to clarify any scratches, ensure pages are numbered, search out any notes that do not make senses, etc. Write down any observations made during the interview. For example, if there were any surprises during the interview.

After the responses of all interviewees are collected, the data has to be processed. Pooling similar answers and/or making graphics of the pooled answers can be used as a summary of the findings. Percentages of the positive and negative perceptions or knowledge can be calculated for example.

2. Exercises and activities

- Questionnaire forms can be discussed with the pupils focussing on its relevance for the community and the water supply, and the clearness of the questions.
- Interviews can be practised in class. Pupils act as the interviewer and interviewees, a third person watching an interview practise can act as the observer giving feedback after the interview.

3. Text sources and further reading

Free Management Library (2012). General Guidelines for Conducting Research Interviews. Available from <http://managementhelp.org/businessresearch/interviews.htm#anchor140495>

How to Do a Survey (2012). Available from <http://www.mathsisfun.com/data/survey-conducting.html>

19a. Questionnaire for citizens: Experiences/problems/perception

Interviewer:

Project school

Date:

Family:		Nr. of persons in the household			
Address					
		Yes	No	Other Answer	Remarks
1	Do you have centralized water connection in the house?				
2	Which other water sources do you use?				
3	With which water do you irrigate the garden?				
4	How much water do you need per day for your household?				
5	Is there always enough water available?				
6	Do you think the drinking water quality is good?				
6a	If not, please explain.				
6b	If the quality is not good, what is the reason?				
7	Do you treat/boil water for drinking?				
8	Do you think you get ill from the drinking water?				
10	Do you use bottled water?				
11	How much do you pay monthly for bottled water?				
12	Do you have a water meter?				
13	How much do you pay monthly for the public water supply?				
14	Do you have copper, lead or another type of pipe in your house? If yes, which type?				
15	Do you have complaints on the drinking water supply's quality?				
16	What kind of toilet do you have? (flush toilet or pit latrine)				
17	Is the wastewater of your house/toilet treated?				
18	What are your wishes concerning the drinking water supply?				

19b. Questionnaire for doctors and health professionals: Water quality and water related diseases

Interviewer:

Project school

Date:

Resource person					
Name of village and number of inhabitants					
		Yes	No	Other Answer	Remarks
1	Do you think the drinking water quality in the village is good?				
2	Do you receive or do you have access to the water analyses results?				
2a	If yes, how often do you receive the analyses results?				
3	What is the main concern about the local drinking water quality?				
4	Is there always enough water available?				
5	Are there any water related diseases in the village?				
6	If yes, please mention the diseases				
7	Is there any relation between cases of diarrhoea and water quality in the village?				
8	Is there any relation between cases of diarrhoea and hygiene in the village?				
9	If yes, what is the reason?				
10	Do you advise the citizens to boil the water for consumption?				
11	Do you have any complaints regarding the local drinking water supply?				
12	If yes, please explain.				
13	What are your wishes concerning the drinking water supply?				

19c. Questionnaire for water suppliers and water professionals: Water quality and management

Interviewer:

Project school

Date:

Resource person and his/her function					
Name of village and number of inhabitants					
		Yes	No	Other Answer	Remarks
1	How many households are connected to the water supply network?				
2	How many households are not connected to the water supply network?				
3	Which kinds of water sources are used for the central supply?				
4	Is the raw water treated? If yes, please explain.				
5	How many cubic meters of water are delivered to the households?				
6	How old is the distribution network?				
7	How much water (%) is lost by leakages within the network?				
8	What types of pipes are used for the distribution network?				
9	Do you think the drinking water quality in the village is good?				
9a	If not, what is the main reason?				
10	How often is the water quality analysed?				
11	Are the analyses results made available to the citizens?				
12	Is there any parameter exceeding the limit? If yes which?				
13	Is there always enough water available?				
14	Is or were there any water related diseases in the village?				
15	Do you have enough financial means for operation and maintenance?				
15a	If not, what is the reason?				
16	Do you have enough qualified staff?				
17	What are the main concerns regarding water pollution?				
18	Do you have strategies to protect the water sources?				
18a	If yes, please explain.				
19	Do you advise the citizens to boil the water for consumption?				
20	What are your wishes concerning the drinking water supply?				