

Qualitative Research Workshop

11-18 December, 2012

Health Research and Social Development Forum

A Report

Introduction:

Health Research and Social Development Forum (HERD) organized a 7-day workshop on qualitative research from 11-18 December, 2012. The main purpose of the workshop was to enhance capacity of research organizations in the country to conduct qualitative research. A total of 20 people including the facilitators attended the workshop. The workshop was divided in two half. The first four days were residential and was conducted at Gokarna resort and the last 3 days were conducted at HERD's office at Thapathali.

This workshop was based on 'Qualitative Research Skills Manual' developed by the Research Consortium on Educational Outcomes and Poverty (RECOUP). RECOUP is a research partnership of seven institutions in the UK, Africa and South Asia. It has been funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and led by the University of Cambridge.

Workshop Proceedings:

The research skills manual was adapted to suit the local context and the time frame. The major topics that were covered were introduction to qualitative research, reflexivity in qualitative research, methods including semi-structured interviews, observation, focus group discussions and ethnographic fieldwork, issues around transcribing and translation and proposal development. The workshop employed an intensive participatory methodology where the participants were often divided into groups for discussions and presentations which were later tied together by the facilitators.

Kindly refer to the following table for a snap shot view of the content, methods and discussions of the workshop. The detailed notes of the workshop are also available.

| Topics | Methods | Issues/Discussions/Observation | Facilitators |
|---|---|--|-------------------------|
| Day 1: | | | |
| Introduction to qualitative research | General discussion; powerpoint presentation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative research is about understanding meanings from participants' point of view. • No numbers • Looks for in-depth description • Researcher is the instrument | Nabin Rawal |
| Characteristics of good qualitative researcher | Group discussions on a gender neutral figure; presentation by the group | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good listener/non-judgemental • Good verbal and non verbal communication skills • Culturally sensitive/respectful • Maintain confidentiality/privacy • Quick thinker/patience/decisive • Note-taker | Ian Harper |
| Reflexivity | Group discussions and presentations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New term for the participants • Self awareness of the researcher's position as researcher is the instrument of data collection • Not possible to remove personal bias, so mention of biases is important • Relationships of production and co-production of knowledge needs to be known. • Important to think about our positionality but not to be overly worried | Nabin Rawal/Kapil Dahal |
| Issues in research design | Lecture-powerpoint and discussion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intelligent research questions • Purposive sampling • Strategic selection of case studies • Planning for field work | Roger Jeffery |

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|----------------------------|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generalization/transferability in qualitative research possible | |
| Day 2: | | | |
| Community Scoping | General discussion; group discussions and presentations on what the first five things are that needs to be done in the community; power point presentation on community scoping | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transect walks • Building rapport with influential people in community • Explaining the objectives of research • Collecting secondary information • Informal chatting | Helen Elsey/ Roger Jeffery |
| Deciding interview topics | Collection of interview topics from the large group; use of ranking matrix by the small groups to choose their topic | <p>Three topics selected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do pregnant women think about the size of their baby during pregnancy? • Why do people use private health services rather than government system? • How do people in Kathmandu perceive the smoking ban? | Helen Elsey |
| Ethics | Small group discussion on important ethical issues and an ethical dilemma | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informed consent • Privacy and confidentiality • Permission for recording, photography and videography • Approval from concerned authorities • Proper storage of data • Safety of informants • Ethical issues exist in overall research process from designing the research to disseminating and publishing it. • Discussion along the lines of greater responsibility towards | Ian Harper/Rekha Khatri |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| | | public than the individual informants. | |
| Semi structured Interviews-design | Commenting on video clip of an interview; powerpoint presentation and discussion in the larger group | <p>Comments on the video:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor rapport building • No explanation of research • No consent • Too many questions at a time • Improper body language • No eye contact • No note taking • Uncomfortable respondent • Unprepared • Rude <p>SSI: Introduction, warm up, main body, cool off and closure questions</p> | Rekha Khatri/Roger Jeffery/Sudeepa Khanal/Kapil Dahal |
| Day 3: | | | |
| Semi structured interviews-Practice | One to one interviews; Two to one interviews based on the interview guides that the groups developed yesterday | <p>Participants' reflections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artificial settings • Questions not in sequence • Difficulty in note-taking and interviewing at one time • Easier when note-taker is present • Some participants felt threatened with 2 interviewers. • Instances of leading questions • Note taking and interviewing skills get better with practice | Roger Jeffery/Ian Harper |
| Life histories | General discussion; powerpoint presentation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving an account of how and why a life course takes place • Researcher interested in the life events of a person | Kapil Dahal/Nabin Rawal |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|---------------------------|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes life history bridges the gap between macro and micro level as an individual is embedded in larger socio-cultural milieu. | |
| Triggers | General discussions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anything that can generate a discussion • For e.g. pictures, diaries, songs, play toys, money etc | Roger Jeffery |
| Photography | Discussion and powerpoint presentation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photographs can be used as ice-breaker and trigger • Photo elicitation; auto-photography; researcher photography • Ethical consideration in photography | Ian Harper |
| Vignettes | Discussion; powerpoint presentation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short stories about hypothetical characters • Provides common level to participants • Allows a discussion of sensitive experiences and topics • May not be applicable to all the group | Roger Jeffery |
| Day 4 | | | |
| Focus Groups | Group exercise: conducting FGD on increase in the number of professional women in Nepal and its impact on society | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator of women's group felt comfortable; discussions were easy • Men's group did role play; difficult to manage • Note-takers could not contribute | Helen Elsey |
| Data management and analysis | Discussion; reading different levels of transcripts and | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time consuming transcribing • Difficulty in ascertaining how | Roger Jeffery/Nabin Rawal |

| | | | |
|---|--|---|------------------------|
| | commenting; commenting on Hindi translation of an interview excerpt | <p>much to transcribe: depends on the research project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transcribing as soon as possible • Naming the files appropriately • Ensuring safety of data <p>Analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generating themes: from the guide, data, literature etc • Classifying data according to themes • Builds arguments based on evidence | |
| Day 5 | | | |
| Introduction to Ethnographic fieldwork | General discussions; small group exercises and presentation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant observation: spending long time in field enables trusting relationship • Negotiating access with gate keepers • Important to differentiate our evaluation from observation • Reflexivity important • Ethics in ethnographic fieldwork | Nabin Rawal/Ian Harper |
| Ethnographic fieldwork-practice | Observation in the field; writing notes and sharing the experiences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation: district court, fruit stalls, hoarding boards, temple, traffic, places around hospital | Ian Harper |
| Day 6 | | | |
| Reflection on fieldnotes | Small group sharing and discussion on the fieldnotes followed by larger group discussions on some issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good general description • Different styles of writing • Different observations of the same place • Use of actual words | Roger Jeffery |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|---------------|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assumptions/ judgements • Feelings • Technical words/jargons <p>Details required to separate judgements from observations, to talk about feelings Present and past tense, both can be used in writing field notes.</p> | |
| Research Proposal- Research Questions | Small group discussions and presentation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research topics: TB-HIV co-infection, health and migration, laboratories and new technologies, global fund's impact, urban health seeking behaviour among labourers in brick kiln, health seeking behaviour of dalits and access to information and TB services, sexual violence among young professional women | Ian Harper |
| Day 7 | | | |
| Research Proposal- Methods and Sampling | Small group discussions and presentation | <i>Presentations Available</i> | Roger Jeffery |