**Small Group Discussion Notes**

**Logistics and Planning**

1. *Why is this important?*

* Knowing what to plan and track to keep things well organized, consistency, being clear about expectations and roles
* May be high turnover, make sure it’s clear to all involved
* Budgeting- may be asked to provide training off site
* When dealing with multiple researchers in multiple areas, can conduct in own context but needs to be designed based on common goal
* When patterning with other partners, focus on timeframe and budgeting
* Selection of data collectors can make a difference if they are already familiar with process vs having to training staff

1. *What should you be careful about? What are the challenges?*

* Planning phases that may be outside of scope. Bringing in something new involves new training and understanding to gat all understand the scope
* Clarity on what is going to happen, especially when client doesn’t know what they want, transcribe that clarity to local context
* Understanding that it’s not to go take place the way that it was envisioned. Flexibility to make changes is important.
* Access to participants in the field may vary
* Local capacity of the researcher may be a factor
* Understanding the local context and cultural norms
* Realistic expectations to turn around items
* Managing the expectations of the stakeholders
* Staying on top of items (mailed surveys, how to collect data)
* Having a standard directive but also allowing the local context to come through
* Clarity on role as a partner (RACI chart)

1. *What are best practices from experience?*

* Identify any risks that may be associated with the project to mitigate those risks to the stakeholders
* Having a clear agreed upon evaluation plan, including roles and tasks
* RACI chart
* Skype calls with locations
* Working together with local partners and home base to transcribe data and understand context to draft evaluation plan and interpret results (can speak the same language, but may be from different class, SES, etc)
* Keeping stakeholders engage through results
* Thinking ahead of translation needs and interpretation of key findings
* Thinking ahead logistics of longitudinal data collection

**Use of Technology**

1. *Why is this important?*

* No other way
  + Paper – logistical nightmare
* Saves time with data entry, handwriting
* Communication
* Skip logic and routing questions in surveys
* Need back-up plans 🡪 “technology is wonderful until it is not”
  + Become dependent on the benefits of technology, panic when it’s not available/not working
* Qualitative: online focus groups, mix of audio/written/polls
  + Allow more ways for people to participate
  + Build off of what others say
  + Imbedded log of comments
* Ease of analysis – no transcription

1. *What should you be careful about? What are the challenges?*

* Learning curve!
* Making it as easy as possible for participants – for example, do they need to download Flash to participate?
* Buy-in from stakeholders and decision makers, resistance to change
* Bandwidth! (streaming video, web cameras)
  + Theoretically improves ability to collect data from rural areas, but bandwidth may limit ease of use
  + Bad connections, logistics
* Subset of individuals would join, many who cannot be reached/will not participate no matter what
* More challenging to build stronger relationships, transfer interpersonal skills when communicating through technology (limited small talk or communication with body language, for example)
* Survey platforms and formatting between computers, phones, scrolling

1. *What are best practices from experience?*

* Multiple methods, mixed to improve turnout
* Engagement – as with in-person focus groups, begin with an easy warm-up/round robin to get people used to the platform
* Use the raised-hand icon with online focus groups to keep track of who is speaking in what order
* Limit your time commitment! 1.5 hour max per session or 2 sessions per week to avoid fatigue
* Know your audience – for example, don’t do an online focus group with senior citizens
* Make responses as easy as possible (texting, call feedback)
* Technology that we have used for data collection
  + Online surveys
  + Adobe Connect
  + CoverItLive
  + Google Voice (texting and voice messages)

**Ensuring Strong Ethical Practice and High Quality Data**

*Note: sorry these are so brief! We did not get the note taker’s notes from this group*

1. *What should you be careful about? What are the challenges?*

* Having people on the ground engaged, “bought in”
* Asking the right questions of field staff in order to troubleshoot issues
* How to get attention to quality when enumerators are paid for numbers completed
* Program staff presence may influence responses
* Sometimes it is not feasible to know all the local conditions and considerations, or you can’t change an instrument or administration practice because of funder or other constraints

1. *What are best practices from experience?*

* Explain why attention to quality and ethical procedures is important to data collectors
* Send advance introductory letter explaining who you are and why you are doing this, note that others will be doing this too and explain how they will be able to use information
* Be transparent about limitations when reporting
* Think about who is collecting data and the local context, politics, power dynamics, etc.
* Consider peer review groups when you cannot be present to check the quality of work