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# Background of this tool

This guide has been designed to support community leaders in monitoring and supporting care group quality. The tool provides templates for structuring dialogues with Care Group leaders, developing and using a monitoring tool, and suggestions for dissemination of the monitoring plan.

This guide was developed based on feedback from community leaders in Kuluunda, Mwanza, Msakambewa, and Chakhaza Traditional Authorities (TA) as well as caregivers (“household beneficiaries”), cluster leaders, and care group promoters of care groups supported by Akule ndi Thanzi program. It is reflective of the challenges and opportunities to support behavior change they described and prioritized in TA-level workshops. These challenges and opportunities included: community leaders and key influencers are generally supportive of and encourage participation in care groups; care groups are seen nearly exclusively as project platforms with little to no community ownership; community leaders want to be engaged in activities in their communities, including care groups; and some community leaders want to support quality of care groups, especially through regular monitoring and input efforts. This guide seeks to support community leaders and communities in supporting care groups as a community resource, contributing to monitoring and adaptations for quality implementation, and noting successful monitoring and adaptation efforts. In a series of structured engagements, care group stakeholders will be further engaged to continue the co-creation and refinement process of this guide to ensure it is useful and responsive to participant needs.

# Step 1: Facilitating Community Leaders Monitoring Session

The village leader or group of leaders may propose to **routinely invite Care Groups to attend the Village Development Committee (VDC) meeting** as a way of getting feedback from Care Groups. All Care Group leaders (Promoters) from different care groups but under the said VDC (or in the same GVH if that is the case that the VDC is at GVH level) may attend the meeting and give feedback.

Occasionally, the **community leaders may also choose to visit the Care Groups** or the beneficiary households as part of on-going monitoring program for Care Groups according to the schedule they may see fitting.

Prior to engaging community leaders and inviting care groups to attend the VDC committee, it may be useful to provide VDC members and community leaders with an orientation to the goals of care groups so they can be fully informed about the importance of monitoring.

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| **Suggestion:** You may consider designated specific individuals to be responsible for care group monitoring and reporting back to the VDC, rather than having a VDC member visit care groups for monitoring.  |

Below is an illustrative high-level agenda for the monitoring session where Community leaders invite Care Group leaders to the VDC meeting for feedback.

|  |
| --- |
| *Illustrative high-level agenda:*1. Welcome and Introduction
2. Sharing the agenda of the monitoring session
3. Obtaining feedback from the VDC members about Care Groups
4. Inviting feedback from Care Group leaders

- Reflections on the VDC’s feedback about Care Groups1. Community leaders plan actionable goals based on feedback from Care Group leaders
2. Any other VDC meeting agenda items other than Care Groups
3. Thank you and close
 |

#### Before the session

The community leaders should discuss routinely **(monthly)** inviting Care Group leaders (e.g. promoters and chairs of cluster leaders) to one of their VDC meetings. Community leaders should send invitations to the Care Group Leaders to ask if the proposed date will work for them. The community leaders may also share the key issues they want to get feedback about from the Care Group leaders.

Community leaders may choose to find a time to meet with the cluster leaders and household beneficiaries to discuss or observe the points noted in the monitoring form prior to the meeting with the Care Group Leaders.

The following is an illustrative monitoring form that can and should be adapted as needed.

#### Monitoring by community leaders

**Community Leaders Care Group Monitoring Form**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Care Group cluster leaders met as a group** ⬜ YES ⬜ NO ⬜ UNSURE | **Care Groups (cluster leaders) meet beneficiary households** ⬜ YES ⬜ NO ⬜ UNSURE |
| **Care group cluster leaders feel supported**  ⬜ YES ⬜ NO ⬜ UNSURE | **Care group beneficiary households have clean environments** ⬜ YES ⬜ NO ⬜ UNSURE |
| **Care Groups share in the community** ⬜ YES ⬜ NO ⬜ UNSURE | **Care Groups update village chiefs** ⬜ YES ⬜ NO ⬜ UNSURE |

 As the village leader discusses each criteria from the monitoring form with cluster leaders and promoters, they can tick off boxes in the form. To complement this discussion, community leaders may also decide to observe a few beneficiary households. The community leaders can discuss the results with the cluster leaders and promoters at the end. It is especially important that community leaders encourage the cluster leaders on their good work for the community!

 **How often should data be collected?**

The frequency of data collection should be determined by the community leader’s interest and capacity to collect and use the data for decision-making. Community leaders might consider starting with monthly data collection (i.e., completing the form once per month) and then using the monitoring tool to guide which care group-related topics, if any, are brought to individual meetings, community meetings, Village Development Committee meetings, Area Development Committee meetings, etc.

#### During the session

During the VDC meeting where Care Group Leaders are also invited, they may wish to do the following:

1. Seek feedback from Care Group Leaders on:
	1. Whether cluster leaders are meeting as usual
	2. Whether beneficiary households are being visited
	3. What challenges Care Group leaders are facing
	4. Whether there are observable changes in the HHBs behaviors
	5. If they feel supported by community leaders and the community, etc.
2. Discuss whether the care group shared information at a community meeting, event, or another public platform for which they requested village leader approval.
3. Ask the cluster leader(s) and promoters if opportunities to share met the needs of the care group.
4. Discuss the community leader’s thoughts on whether the care group sharing positively supported the community.
5. If applicable, discuss ways that care groups and community leaders can work together to improve what, when, and how care groups share with the community.

#### Facilitation Guide

The guide below is an illustrative template for a community leaders monitoring session with Care Group Leaders that may be adapted to fit their context.

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| --- | --- |
|  **Activity** | **Activity Leader** |
| 1. **Welcome and introduction (5 minutes)**: Welcome members and the Care Group Leaders, and introduce the session as usual.
 | **Facilitator** |
| 1. **Sharing the agenda of the meeting (5 minutes):** The facilitator shares the purpose of the meeting and the agenda items, including discussion about Care Groups – reflection and monitoring through a warm and friendly discussion with the Care Group Leaders/Promoters.
 | **Facilitator** |
| 1. **Feedback from Care Group Leaders/Promoters (15 minutes)**: Each Care Group Leader may share their feedback about their Care Groups. To increase participation, each Care Group Leader can form a small group with 3 – 4 VDC members and share their feedback and discuss.

Some of the things they may want to get feedback on include:* Are Cluster Leaders meeting as intended?
* Do they feel supported in their work by community members and leaders?
* What challenges are they facing and how can VDC support to address these challenges?

After 5 minutes, each group member should share their ideas with others in their group. After everyone has shared, the group should discuss the way forward based on the feedback.1. Where necessary, after this section, the Care Group Leaders may be excused so that the VDC members may continue with other agendas not related to Care Groups
 | **Small groups** |

**(Continued on next page)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **Activity Leader** |
| 1. **Feedback from VDC members about Care Groups (10 minutes):** Every VDC member may visit household beneficiaries (two or more) or attend a Care Group session in their community. The goal is to understand what’s happening or observe/hear anything from the Cluster Leaders or HHBs that may be useful to discuss at the VDC meeting. Let the VDC members share their feedback during this time.

Some of the things the VDC members may want to share include:* Are Cluster Leaders meeting as intended?
* Are HHBs being visited and benefiting from the current project (receiving counseling, support, etc.)?
* Etc.
 | **Facilitator** |
| 1. **Thank you and Closing**. The VDC members may continue and finish their session as they usually do and encourage one another to continue visiting some HHBs or attend a Care Group session for at least 10 minutes in their villages as part of on-going monitoring
 | **Facilitator** |

|  |
| --- |
| **Suggestions for VDC handover*:***At times VDC leadership changes. Here are some suggestions for sustaining VDC’s role in monitoring care groups when there’s a change in VDC membership.1. The village heads may wish to be present and share with the new VDC committee about Care Groups monitoring.1. The out-going VDC members may be present to share minutes and share some insights to the new VDC members about Care Group monitoring.
2. Where necessary, the CGPs may be invited to participate at such handover meeting between the out-going VDC members and the newly VDC elected members
 |

# Step 2: Dissemination

Dissemination is an important step for any innovative initiative. Community leaders may determine that sharing this approach (or their adaptation of the approach) on local radios would be useful to generate support and awareness of their initiative. This may provide an opportunity for others outside of their community to suggest improvements or adaptations, and/or to expand the uptake of similar monitoring approaches across the traditional area or other locality.

Community leaders may choose to approach dissemination in many ways. Dissemination efforts could include:

* Testimonials from cluster leaders and village chiefs to share the benefits of care groups.
* Summary of the effort’s community chiefs are taking to support.
* Cluster leaders and village chiefs sharing the benefits of care groups and their efforts to support communities to engage in care groups on community and religious radios.
	+ They can also mention monitoring if useful

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November 2023

