

WHAT IS IT?

The guide provides guidance on qualitative study design, implementation, analysis, and data triangulation in countries with low mass drug administration (MDA) coverage.

It was published by RTI International to provide NTD program managers with resources to help them administer timely qualitative assessments during MDA.

The guide was developed by Elizabeth Fitch, Alison Krentel, Kevin Bardosh, Beth Sutherland, Alyssa Jordan, and Margaret Baker using a human centred design.

You can find the guide on [NTD Toolbox](#), [infoNTD](#), or by [clicking here](#).



HOW TO USE IT

The guide takes the user through 6 steps to help identify a need, collect and analyse data, and formulate next steps. A summary of the six steps is outlined below.*

1. DETERMINE NEED AND SCOPE OF THE ASSESSMENT

A desk review will be conducted using available program data and additional data sources. Questions to address the knowledge gaps revealed from the desk review can then be developed. Based on the questions identified a decision can be made regarding whether a qualitative assessment is the appropriate methodology to answer these questions.

2. CHOOSE THE APPROPRIATE QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The guide lists a variety of qualitative research methods that can be utilised for data collection. For each method listed in the guide there is an accompanying “how-to” document that explains how to conduct the method.



3. PLAN FOR AND CONDUCT DATA COLLECTIONS

Decisions will need to be made around who will be involved in the data collection. For example, reflect on any potential power dynamics between the participants and the data collectors that may impact the authenticity of responses gathered.

You should determine whether ethical approval is required for the study and if the data collection can be integrated with other data collection activities.

4. ANALYSIS

A theme matrix can be used to help organise the themes identified from each method of data collection. The guide has a worksheet and an example to help you structure your own theme matrix starting on page 20.

5. DEVELOP, PRIORITIZE, AND IMPLEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations can be identified by running a *Pause and Reflect* session. This session serves to return to the original questions and review the data to identify the next steps. Refer to page 23 of the guide for more details. The identified recommendations can then be prioritized using a value versus feasibility matrix such as the one displayed on page 25 of the guide.

6. EVALUATE IMPACT

Document the changes that were implemented, assess whether the changes improved the MDA program, and share the results with other programs. Page 27 of the guide outlines various tools that can be used to assess impact such as the coverage evaluation survey, supervisor’s coverage tool, the daily MDA monitoring tool and more.

*Please refer to the full guide for complete steps and instructions.

WHO IS THE GUIDE FOR?

- It was developed for NTD programs and implementing partners that focus on NTDs with an MDA component, such as onchocerciasis, scabies, lymphatic filariasis, & soil-transmitted helminthiasis.
- The content within the guide was developed so that it is user-friendly for those who have limited exposure to qualitative research methods, but it remains relevant to those who have more experience.
- This guide can be used when programs have identified persistent low MDA coverage and when surveys are unable to show the expected reduction in disease prevalence.
- The guide may be less applicable if the desired focus is to explore validity of coverage, assessing quality of the data collection systems or assessing communication/education materials.

STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS

STRENGTHS	LIMITATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collects rich data that is not limited by pre-set questions. • Can help generate new theories or knowledge. • Can better address topics that cannot be answered quantitatively, such as those related to emotion, experience, and/or perceptions, • Flexibility to probe for more detail during data collection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The identification of themes can be influenced by the researcher's own interpretations, which could be subjective. • Qualitative studies typically use small sample sizes and tend to focus on a specific group, region, demographic, etc. which has raised concerns around the generalizability of results. • It can be challenging to ensure anonymity, however there are many ways to enhance anonymity and this should be part of gaining ethics approval.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:



- Check out the iCHORDS Knowledge Exchange Café with Dr, Margaret Baker, Dr. Beth Sutherland and Elizabeth Fitch as they share how rapid qualitative assessment can be used to improve MDA. Click [here](#) to watch the recording.
- Listen to episode 10 of the iCHORDS Last Mile Podcast to learn about using the guide and ways that qualitative research can help us reach the last mile in achieving the WHO 2030 NTD Roadmap targets. Click [here](#) to listen.



We would love to hear from you if you have used the guide. Please share your comments, feedback and experience to info.ichords@gmail.com

References & Resources

1. Baker, M.C., Bardosh, K., Fitch, E., Mbabazi, P.S., Mwingira, U., Direny, A., Dean, L., Sutherland, E.G., & Krentel, A. (2021). Incorporating qualitative research methods into the monitoring and evaluation of neglected tropical disease programmes: a scoping literature review. *International Health*, 13(6), 504-513. doi: 10.1093/inthealth/ihab059.
2. Mwita, K. (2022). Strengths and weaknesses of qualitative research in social science studies. *International journal of research in business and social science*, 11(6), 2147-4478. doi:10.20525/ijrbs.v11i6.1920