



Guide to Social Network Mapping

Developed by
The Tékponon Jikuagou Project: Addressing Unmet Need for
Family Planning through Social Networks in Benin



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Guide to Social Network Mapping

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WHAT IS COMMUNITY SOCIAL MAPPING? WHY ADD SOCIAL MAPPING TO YOUR PROJECT TOOLKIT?

The Tékponon Jikuagou (TJ) project responds to low rates of family planning uptake and increasing unmet need for family planning in Benin (DHS 2012), which exist despite multiple efforts to increase information and access to family planning. TJ seeks to address the concept of unmet need among women who want to limit or space their births but who are not using contraception by addressing social norms and barriers which influence non-use despite access to services.

The project uses social network analysis to identify the most influential and connected networks in a community and to assess the influence of men's and women's networks on fertility beliefs, attitudes, desires, intentions and behaviors relating to family planning. Interventions then work with key actors in individuals' social networks, as well as the network structures themselves to promote reflection on existing social norms, allowing people to recognize for themselves how norms and attitudes may negatively influence reproductive health and family planning. It also capitalizes on these networks to diffuse reflection on and consideration of different social norms and attitudes as they relate to family planning and fertility.

In this context, TJ developed a set of participatory learning exercises, collectively named the Social Network Mapping Guide, which facilitates discussions with communities to learn about groups and formal and informal leaders in a village and to gain a general understanding of how a community is socially organized. The tool helps outsiders to understand which groups and individuals are most socially connected and respected – those influencing social networks and the spread of ideas and attitudes – to help make decisions about which groups and people with whom TJ could work. A core part of exercises in the tool involves an innovative variation of community mapping, which focuses on learning about community social dynamics and organization.

CONDUCTING A COMMUNITY SOCIAL MAPPING EXERCISE

OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

The Social Network Mapping Guide is a set of exercises that are facilitated with community groups by project field agents to identify, list and select social groups and influential persons in communities to help the TJ team make the best decisions possible in terms of selecting at least three socially-influential groups (women, men, mixed groups) and five to ten socially-influential persons with whom to engage in project activities. Community social mapping is conducted in each village and involves meeting with community leaders to introduce the project and exercises, followed by several exercises to guide discussions and analysis with several groups in each village (that represent different viewpoints in each village). After the first meeting with village authorities, the exercises take several hours each day to conduct over a period of two days.

Note: You do not have to complete the exercises in two consecutive days; this schedule is flexible depending on the Facilitator and the participants' schedule. For example, you can spread out the exercises over a week as long as the time spent is equivalent to 16 hours of work, at most.

PART I: INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMUNITY

Objective: Obtain the permission of administrative and local village authorities to begin discussions with the groups.

Approximate duration: 1 hour

STEP 1: Introduce yourself to the important village authorities (village leader, the sub-prefect, the mayor, etc.).

STEP 2: Explain the objective and strategies of TJ in putting the emphasis on community participation through the volunteer groups and influential persons.

STEP 3: Talk about communication strategies for social mobilization (examples: town criers, village leader's advisors, religious leaders, and community groups).



STEP 4: Ask the village leader's permission to meet with community representatives with whom to meet and discuss. Propose working with 8-10 people who can offer different perspectives, including men, women, youth (18 years and older), adults and elders. ("We would like to invite two men, two women, one to two older women, and one to two older men to participate for several hours in a discussion.") Explain that you would like also to work also with pre-established

groups in the village for these discussions. If possible, invite the groups cited and a health worker as well.

Note: Within the TJ project, there was a concern to ensure that socially marginalized group perspectives were represented. CARE and Plan worked to identify these marginalized groups, if they were not mentioned during the meeting with the village leader.

STEP 5: Set up a meeting with the community representatives and representatives of groups invited by your organization to complete Part II.

STEP 6: Record the questions and responses before thanking participants for their time and effort given.

The facilitator should create a summary of the discussion. See the example in Part I of the “Reporting Tools” document. Don’t forget to note 1) the date of the meeting, 2) the name of the region, 3) the name of the village, 4) the name of the project facilitator, and 5) a brief description of the participants including the number of women, number of men, age group, and important characteristics of the people (example: leaders, head of the group, advisor, etc.). Further, the discussion reporter should write a summary of interesting points from the meeting and carefully list the names of influential persons who were cited in the discussion. (See the reporting template.)

PART II: LEARNING ABOUT INFLUENTIAL GROUPS - IDENTIFICATION, DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF VILLAGE GROUPS

Objective: Identify active groups with potential to maximize social networks with whom to start TJ activities within the community.

Approximate duration: 1-2 hours

Materials: A grid for each group (See the example in Part II of the “Reporting Tools” document.)

Participants: Community representatives identified in Part I, 8-10 new people from community groups invited by your organization

Definition of a group: A relatively structured organization constituted by a grouping of persons with the same interests, aspirations or ideology.
<http://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais>.

This includes formal groups, non-formal groups, and informal groups. The most important thing is that they are groups that gather regularly (regardless of the frequency of meetings).

STEP 1: Introduce yourself and the project, even if everyone knows about it already. Explain to the group that it will be very interesting to hear their ideas on existing groups within the community and to more fully understand how these groups are organized. This activity will help the project work better within the community. Be very clear that activities will be undertaken on a volunteer basis, and there will not be any financial motivation for groups or for Influential Persons.

STEP 2: Ask the participants to list active, existing groups women’s, men’s and mixed groups within the community, for example: village associations, community work groups, agricultural cooperatives, women’s groups, savings groups, microcredit groups, etc.

Note: If you feel this exercise would work better in small groups, ask the participants to divide into two or three groups to complete the activity.

STEP 3: Explain to the group that you will use a grid to describe and compare the listed groups. Show the grid. Write the names of the different groups in the top row.

Example of a grid (Use the empty grid in Part II of the “Reporting Tools” document to complete this activity.)

N°	Group Name	Goal/ Activities	Type of Group (Women, Men, Mixed)	Age Group of Members	Size of Group	Frequency of Meetings	Connec- tivity	Influence
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
Etc								

STEP 4: After listing all of the groups, explain the following activity to complete the grids. For each group, ask the participants to mark with an X or to put a certain number of stones in the appropriate box to describe the group, e.g., age range, size, meeting frequency, connectivity, and level of influence of each group.

Note: List the groups by type (women, men, mixed). In order to fill the influence and connectivity columns with X’s, you should compare women’s groups among themselves, men’s groups among themselves, and mixed groups among themselves.

The Facilitator with the support of one participant should guide them in using the legend:

Example of a rating system to describe group characteristics

Category	Low Rating	Middle Rating	High Rating
3-Age of group members	X (young) = majority are 18-25 years old	XX (adult) = majority are 26-50 years old	XXX (old) = majority are over 50 years old
4-Size	X = 2-10 people	XX = 11-30 people	XXX = more than 30 people
5-Meeting frequency	X = less than one activity per month	XX = one activity per month	XXX = more than one activity per month
6- Connectivity (membership of group members in other groups)	X = 0 members	XX = 1-10 members	XXX = 11 members and more

7- Level of influence in the general community (Influence: to be well known by the majority of the community, who involves many people in his/her activities, who can mobilize many people)	X= Not too influential with other groups	XX= Influential with other groups	XXX= Very influential with other groups
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STEP 5: Thank everyone for their participation. Ask if they have any questions. Explain that you will facilitate further discussions the following day with the people and groups mentioned in Part II, and further invitees (if necessary).

At the end of the meeting, make sure that you have collected the information and labeled the grid with 1) the date of the meeting, 2) the name of the region, 3) the name of the village, 4) the name of the project facilitator, and 5) a brief description of the participants (example: leaders, head of the group, advisor, etc.). Further, the discussion reporter should write a summary of interesting points from the meeting and carefully list the names of influential persons who were cited in the discussion. (See the reporting template.)

PART III: UNDERSTANDING THE COMMUNITY’S SOCIAL DYNAMICS AND SOCIALLY INFLUENTIAL PERSONS VIA MAPPING

Objective: Explore how the community organizes itself socially with the help of a community map.

Approximate duration: 1-2 hours

Materials: Flip chart paper and markers, earthen surfaces and colored powder, Post-Its, pebbles, bits of crayons or colored pencil, stickers

Participants: People invited by the facilitators: community representatives from Part II and the persons listed in Part II. The day before, invite these 10-12 people who represent the perspectives of men, women, older women, older men, and marginalized groups (defined by situation).

Note: This activity can be done just after identification of groups (Part II).

STEP 1: Introduce yourself and present the project. Explain how the project aims to understand the organization of the community in terms of social structures.

STEP 2: Ask the group to divide into two groups (by sex) to develop a map, using the materials provided, in 10-15 minutes. Maps might include the following elements:

- Main roads
- Neighborhoods
- Public places
- Main marketplaces
- Health centers

STEP 3: After groups have completed the maps, take each map one by one and encourage the participants to discuss them, asking the following questions for each map:

- Where are the places the most influential groups meet? Write the identification number of the group, from the grid, in the designated places on the map.
- How is this community organized socially?
- Where are the more developed neighborhoods?
- Are there neighborhoods where people are more 'modern' or more 'traditional'? Where are they?
- What other differences exist between neighborhoods?
- Discuss the borders between these social differences – are they visible and non-visible? Are they flexible? How?

Next ask the women participants the following questions. Then ask the men the same questions. Note the names of people mentioned.

- Which people (men, women, elders, religious leaders, formal and informal leaders, etc.) can influence – through their words and actions – community members' thoughts and the discussion about the well-being of a family?
- Who are the people whose words and actions influence the way that people discuss birth spacing and family planning use?

Continue by asking the following questions of the whole group:

- Are there community health workers in this village?
- Do they work in family planning?

STEP 4: Thank everyone for their participation and ask them if they liked or didn't like the activity. Ask and respond to supplementary questions about the exercise.

At the end of the meeting, make sure that you have collected the information and labeled the map with 1) the date of the meeting, 2) the name of the region, 3) the name of the village, 4) the name of the project facilitator, and 5) a brief description of the participants (number of women, number of men, age group, and important characteristics of the people).

Note: Take a photo of the maps, especially if you did them on the ground. Further, the discussion reporter should write a summary of interesting points from the meeting and carefully list the names of influential persons who were cited in the discussion, and their sex.

SELECTING GROUPS AND INFLUENTIAL PERSONS WITH WHOM TO ENGAGE IN TJ ACTIVITIES

Overview: Once discussions with community members are completed, the project team needs to meet to identify which groups and people they will approach later to start TJ activities. Part I in this section guides the team in analyzing groups with great social diffusion and networking potential. Part II lays out the first meeting with selected groups, designed to validate the group characteristics and influence, and to identify one group member (Catalyzer) to be trained to use TJ reflective dialogue materials within the group. Part III lays out the process of selecting five to ten Influential Persons and organizing a first meeting with them, designed to validate their leadership roles and assess favorability of their attitudes toward child spacing and use of family planning.

Purpose: Use the listing activity to plan meetings with potential groups and Influential Persons with whom TJ will work.

Objectives:

- Choose influential groups that can be involved in project interventions.
- Understand how the group works, the attitudes and aptitudes of the members regarding family planning.
- Confirm the degree of influence and connectivity of the group within the community.
- Identify Influential Persons who will be involved in project interventions

Materials: None

Participants: Selected groups and individuals who seemingly have social diffusion potential - connectivity and influence - in their community.

Note: It is possible to select certain groups and Influential Persons with whom your organization already works if they were identified by the community in Part II and satisfy the selection criteria.

PART I: SELECTING GROUPS WITH WHOM THE PROJECT WOULD LIKE TO ENGAGE.

The community grid provides a comparative listing of different groups that exist in the village. To choose the most interesting groups with whom to work, apply the following order of criteria:

1. Influence → 2. Connectivity → 3. Meeting frequency → 4. Size of the group → 5. Age group

Compare groups of women amongst themselves, groups of men amongst themselves, and mixed groups among themselves.

Figure 1. Example of a village analysis of influential groups. In this case, the *Mugnou ton* (adult group), and *Dougou koro benkad* (youth group) are most influential and would be selected

Part II: Group Selection		Group Leader's First and Last Name: _____					
		Date: _____					
Department:							
Health zone:							
Commune:							
Village:							
Number of participants:							
Men:							
Women:							
	Goal/activities	Men, Women, Mixed	Members' age group	Group Size	Meeting frequency	Level of connectedness (between group members and other groups)	Level of influence in the general community
	Selection Procedure						
			5	4	3	2	1
MUGNOU TON		F	XX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
DANAYA	agriculture	F	XX	XX	XXX	XX	XXX
BENGADI KODALABOUGOU	agriculture	F	XX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
SABOU GNOUMA	agriculture	F	XX	XXX	XX	XXX	XXX
WASSOLO KIN	agriculture	F	XX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XX
DOUGOU KORO BENKADI	agriculture	F	X	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
MEDINE 1	agriculture	F	XX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XX
MEDINE 2	agriculture	F	XX	XXX	XXX	XXX	X
CHAUFFEUR MOUSSO TON	agriculture	F	XX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XX
KOTOGNOKOTALA	agriculture	F	XX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XX
	agriculture						
Legend:							
3-Members' age group	4-Group size	5-Meeting frequency		6-Level of Connectedness		7- Level of influence in the general community	
X (young)= Majority 18-25 years old	X= 2-10 people	X= Less than 1 activity per month		X= 0 members		X= Not very influential in other groups	
XX (adult)= Majority 26-50 years old	XX= 11-30 people	XX= 1 activity per month		XX= 1-10 members		XX= Influential in other groups	
XXX (old)= Majority 50+ years old	XXX= more than 30 people	XXX= more than 1 activity per month		XXX= 11+ members		XXX= Very influential in other groups	

STEP 1: IDENTIFY MOST INFLUENTIAL GROUPS

With the help of the selection grid, separate the most influential groups (with 3X). Among those groups, select the best connected.

STEP 2: IDENTIFY GROUPS THAT MEET FREQUENTLY

Next, amongst these groups, select those who meet most frequently. Amongst those groups, choose the ones with the most members.

Note: Be careful when selecting very large groups to ensure that there is an environment for open exchange and discussion on TJ within the group. For example, certain folkloric groups only meet for performances and don't have a good framework for critical discussion.

STEP 3: MAKE FINAL SELECTIONS

Finally, select a group in the age group that interests you most. Note the chosen groups in the grid in the "Reporting Tools" document"

In the case that you don't have the desired number of "very influential



groups” (those with 3Xs), you may start the same procedure with the 2X group of “influential groups”. In the case that two groups seem to have the same level of influence, meet with each of the two groups in order to discern which is more influential (who can mobilize other people most effectively regarding health and leadership issues). In all cases, the Facilitator should use his/her observations and knowledge of the community to make an objective choice.

You should choose at least three groups, and you may increase this number depending on the size of the village. Be sure to choose at least one of each kind of group – women, men and mixed.

Note: It is important to refer to the drawing of the community map to avoid, to the extent possible, the concentration of selected groups in a single area of the village. It is also important to think about how the meeting location of the group may facilitate diffusion.

PART II: MEETING THE GROUP LEADER AND GROUP MEMBERS TO SEEK THEIR ENGAGEMENT IN TJ ACTIVITIES AND TO IDENTIFY THE GROUP CATALYZER TO BE TRAINED TO USE TJ REFLECTIVE DIALOGUE MATERIALS.

Make sure to meet with the selected groups of women, men, youths, and with mixed groups (if mixed groups are influential) in their meeting places.

STEP 1: INTRODUCTIONS

Contact the president of each selected group in order to explain to him/her the purpose of the project and its expectations relating to the group. At the end of the discussion, set a time to meet with the members of the group.

STEP 2: DISCUSSION WITH MEMBERS OF THE GROUP

Begin by introducing yourself and talking about the project (the objectives, the expectations, etc.). Ask the group members to comment on the group activities, the objective, the size of the group, its community representative, meeting frequency, and the meeting place. Be very clear that activities will be undertaken on a volunteer basis, and there will not be any financial motivation for groups or for Influential Persons.

Note: Consider recording the keywords mentioned in group members’ responses.

Ask the following questions:

- Does your group do activities to improve the health of mothers and their children in your community? If yes, what types of activities? If not, do you think you could?
- Is there a health worker (relais, nurse’s aide, etc.) in your group?
- Who are the members of your group who have the capacity to mobilize other group members and the community at large on this subject?
- In your community, who are the people whose words and actions can positively influence the way in which people discuss birth spacing and family planning use?

Note: Among the names cited, ask the group to select a Catalyzer who can lead discussion (use the selection criteria for Catalyzers).

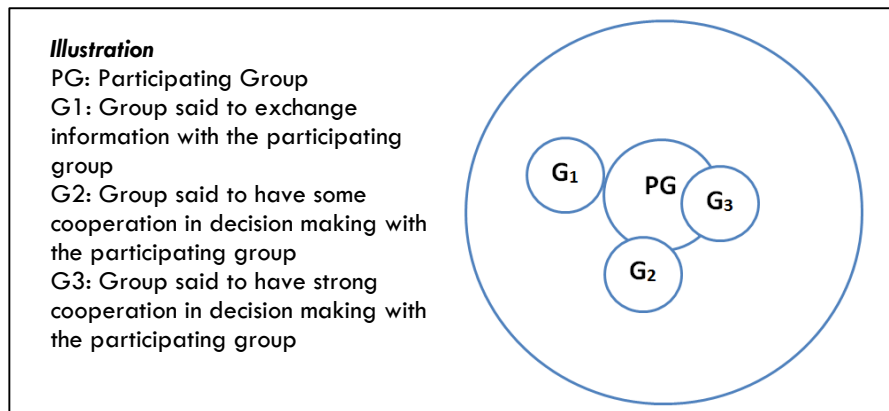
STEP 3: DETERMINE RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER GROUPS

Procedure: Construct a Venn Diagram to establish relationships between groups. Ask participants to cite the groups, associations, and institutions with whom they have a relationship.

Draw a large circle on flip chart paper or on the ground, and use a small circle in the middle of the larger one to represent the group that is present.

Finally, give the participating group other small circles that represent other groups in the community, and ask them to place them within the large circle using the following criteria:

- If there is information exchange between the groups, have them touch edges.
- If there is some cooperation in decision making between the two groups, slightly superimpose the circles.
- If there is strong cooperation in decision making, completely superimpose the two circles.



Ask for further examples of the type of information shared, decisions made, and who influences who between groups.

Also ask how they think they could get the majority of the community informed and mobilized on the importance of family planning.

Note: Before thanking the group for their participation, ask the participants if they would be interested in working with the TJ project on a volunteer basis, and if they have any questions.

STEP 4: USE YOUR SKILLS OF OBSERVATION!

Facilitators should also observe each group that they meet. What additional information do these observations provide that gives clues to a group's influence and appropriateness for the project to engage them? The guide, below, should be completed after each group meeting.

Facilitator's Observation Guide – Meeting with Groups

During the meeting, to what degree were you able to rally the members of the group around the topic?	
How did the discussion go within the group? (Varied points of view? Respect amongst those with varying points of view? Etc.)	
What did you observe about social cohesion within the group? Were there differences or opposition between members of the group during the discussion?	
Did the people mentioned within the group seem like informal leaders? Did you notice any other informal leaders?	
What did the dynamic of the group seem like in regard to the project's objectives?	

PART III: IDENTIFYING AND SELECTING INFLUENTIAL PERSONS TO ENGAGE IN TJ ACTIVITIES

As with the groups, a selection process is needed to identify at least five Influential Persons with whom to engage in TJ projects. To do this, cross check the names mentioned during the village mapping with those mentioned during the group meetings. Then choose the people whose names were also noted as having a favorable attitude toward family planning. Note the chosen people in the grid in the “Reporting Tools” document and go meet with them.

PART IV: MEETING WITH A COMMUNITY'S INFLUENTIAL PERSONS

STEP 1: Host the first meeting with the pre-selected Influential Persons. Begin by introducing yourself and talking about the project (the objectives, the expectations, etc.). Be very clear that activities will be undertaken on a volunteer basis, and there will not be any financial motivation for groups or for Influential Persons. Ask the Influential Persons about their interactions with other members of the community. Then ask the following questions:

- In your community, do you take any actions to improve the health of mothers and their children? If yes, what types of actions?
- Do you think you could convince the majority of the community of the importance of birth spacing and family planning use? If yes, how? If no, why not?
- Do you have advice to help our project succeed in your community?

Note: Before thanking the Influential Person for his/her participation, ask the participant if he/she would be interested in working with the project and if he/she has any questions.

STEP 2: Use your skills of observation!

Facilitators should also use this meeting to gain information through observation. What additional information do your observations provide that gives clues to each Influential Person's capacity to collaborate with the project team and help achieve the project's goals. The guide, below, should be completed after the meeting with Influential Person.

Facilitator’s Observation Guide – Meeting with an Influential Person

What is this influential person’s perception of family planning?	
To what degree did he/she seem motivated to work with this project?	
During your visit, what were the indicators of influence that you noticed? <i>(For example: many requests or questions during the interview, presence of other important members of the community near him/her, etc.)</i>	
Other important observations?	

PART V: VALIDATING YOUR CHOICES WITH PROJECT STAFF AND WITH THE COMMUNITY

The information-gathering phase is now complete. In the village, the team now has a good idea of groups and Influential Persons with whom it will engage in TJ activities. One final step is important before making final decisions: talk with other project staff and people in the community about the groups and individuals with whom TJ wants to work and gauge their reaction. If it is favorable, the team has made good choices.