

## **Community Baseline Assessment**

The community should be defined geographically. The project should register children from an area that has clear boundaries. The boundary may be a path, road, river, fence, ocean, lake, factory wall, or some combination of physical features. In other words, the community is a place with a clear, physical boundary. One should be able to determine if people live within the defined community. It should be possible to draw a map of the community. It should be possible to place it physically on a map of the country.

We also want to make sure that the children participating in the project live within the defined community. Especially with very young children, it is important that the project be located in the neighborhood, within walking distance for the caregiver.

### **Community Baseline Contents:**

The Community Baseline Assessment accomplishes two tasks: 1) It establishes conditions in the community as the project begins, enabling better understanding of the conditions affecting children and informing the selection of appropriate program activities; and 2) It provides information that can educate donors and help them understand why their involvement is important.

In addition to providing information for the Community Description Form, the baseline should provide the following information:

- The infant mortality rate
- The percentage of children under 6 years of age who show at least two clinical signs of malnutrition
- The percentage of the population that attended church during the past month
- The percentage of women who are single mothers
- The average age of women giving birth for the first time
- The percentage of mothers who are able to read a newspaper
- The percentage of mothers who are able to write their names
- The percentage of the primary school-aged population not attending school
- The percentage of the population under six years of age that are without adult supervision for at least one hour during waking hours

In addition to the information requested above, the community baseline should provide the following photographs:

- Where the unsupervised children gather in the community
- Children at work
- Primary schools
- Churches
- The kind of work mothers do for money
- Kinds of housing

Greener, January, 2003

- Examples of health threats in community
- Health clinics
- Water sources, wells, stand pipes
- Shops where children might purchase items
- Evidence of non-Christian religious activity

Photographs should relate to the life of children, their activities, their opportunities, and their dangers. The purpose of the photographs is to partially document the community conditions. The photographs will also help donors understand why the community was chose for a project.

### **3.3.2 Community Baseline Method**

The community baseline should follow sound research principles. One of the most important of these is careful sampling of the households. The baseline should involve persons who are going to work in the project as well as staff. The project partner should assist research in the community by informing community leaders of the purpose and getting necessary support. The baseline provides an opportunity for those who may work in the project to learn more about the community and build relationships.