

# COMMUNITY CLUSTER APPROACH: ITS ADDED VALUE IN SURVEYS CONDUCTED AT RURAL COMMUNITY LEVEL

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## Introduction

A longitudinal study is being implemented in Sierra Leone comparing the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of four different supplementary foods in a supplementary feeding program (SFP) for treatment of Moderate Acute Malnutrition in children age 6 to 59 months. The study is implemented by Tufts University in partnership with the Sierra Leone Ministry of Health and Sanitation, Washington University in St. Louis, Project Peanut Butter, and Caritas Bo.

## Objective

Describe the advantages of using a community cluster approach in organizing a community-based survey.



## Methodology

Twenty eight Peripheral Health Units were organized into four geographic clusters, and research teams for each cluster live in the community. Community structures were assessed to evaluate security and availability of basic social services. Team selection was based on a review of the strength and weakness of individual team members to ensure the formation of a balanced team in each cluster with a leverage on potential for effective logistical support and level of community engagement. Research Assistants are trained in community engagement strategies and managing community curiosity while using tablets during interviews in rural communities. Household surveys are managed by Caritas Bo using tablet-based electronic data collection and qualitative interviews.

## Key Achievements

1. Managing community curiosity: the cluster approach provided an advantage of managing community curiosity which is attracted by the use of high technology devices (e.g. smart phones and tablets) in rural communities
2. Increased community trust: the use of cluster approach in staff deployment increased community trust and community engagement in supporting the research team to access caregivers in hard to reach communities
3. Reduced operational cost
4. Improved coordination, timely delivery of field logistics and supplies
5. Increased efficiency in data collection



Community support to access caregivers hard to reach areas.



Caritas Bo FAQR III Field research team.

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