Attachment C. Agreement to participate – semi-structured interview

Purpose

You are invited to take part in a doctoral student research activity. The purpose of this study is to understand factors promoting and inhibiting multi-sectoral collaboration for strengthening public health capacities in Ethiopia. This study seeks to understand the perspectives of individuals working for different organizations and programs supporting Global Health Security Agenda implementation, for zoonotic disease and public health emergency preparedness related activities. The research will explore opinions on the roles and responsibilities of partners in achieving GHSA goals. The study will also identify common themes in the advantages and challenges experienced in collaborating with partners across sectors. I am requesting your participation in a semi-structured interview to provide your perspective on these issues.

Procedures

If you accept to participate in this study you will be asked to answer some questions on collaboration to carry out activities under GHSA, and your experience so far as part of this effort. There will also be a short questionnaire at the end. This interview will last approximately one hour.

Feel free to speak openly; no one's comments will be used against them in any way. Any report that will be written as a result of this interview will not use any individuals' names. If you agree, I will be recording this session so that I can capture all your comments.

Risks/discomforts

We do not think that being part of this project will create any risk for you. We will be asking you questions about how different sectors and organizations participate in GHSA-related activities, and your thoughts on what helps foster collaboration, and what can be improved. You do not have to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable, or that you would prefer not to answer for any reason. You do not need to provide sensitive personal information or information that might be harmful or embarrassing to you or someone else. Also you can stop the discussion anytime. Responses will be completely anonymous, and your name will not appear anywhere in the final paper for this research. We may include names of organizations in our analysis.

The digital recording and transcript of the interview will be stored on a password-protected computer. The recording will be destroyed when the aggregated analysis is over. Only the researcher will have access to this information, and will not be allowed to share it with anyone else.

Benefits

There are no direct benefits to you from participating in this project. However, we hope the findings will be of interest to you and to others involved in GHSA implementation in Ethiopia, and interested in strengthening national public health systems and capacities. The results of the overall project will be shared with you and appropriate partners. There will be no compensation for participating in this study.

Voluntary participation

You do not have to agree to participate in this project, and you may change your mind at any time.

Permission to proceed

Is it okay to proceed with the interview, and is it all right if I turn on the recorder?

Opening script:
Thank you for meeting with me today.

The goal of this research project is to understand factors promoting and inhibiting multi-sectoral collaboration for strengthening public health capacities in Ethiopia under Global Health Security Agenda. While we have been reviewing formal documents and organization records on GHSA-related activities and collaborations, we also want to understand the perspective of individuals who are involved with carrying out these activities. This information will help us understand the broader situation, and identify any common themes for how collaboration across sectors occurs in Ethiopia for GHSA implementation.

You are invited to participate in this interview today because [*include reasoning – listed as a leader or coordinator of activities; recommended by others as a good candidate for the interview; other*]. We think your opinion and perspective regarding this issue are essential. The questions I am going to ask don't have right or wrong answers. We can skip any question you prefer not to answer or end the interview any time. I assure you that this conversation is completely confidential and the contents of this interview will only be used for the purpose of this project. I expect that it will take around 60 minutes to complete the interview. In addition, I would like to ask your permission to record the interview.

If you have any additional questions, I am happy to answer them.

Can we start the interview?

Information about the participant
Can you please confirm your title and the organization you work for?

How long have you been involved with GHSA implementation activities?

Topic 1: Participant role and responsibilities
Please describe your role in your organization.

Please describe the role of your organization in GHSA implementation.

Please describe your specific role in GHSA implementation.
If role is specific to one technical area (ZD or PHEP): Thank you. For the rest of the interview, I would like to ask you some questions specific to your role in GHSA implementation for [*ZD/PHEP].*

If participant has roles with both technical areas (ZD and PHEP): Thank you. For the rest of the interview, I would like to ask you some questions specific to your role in GHSA implementation for ZD. If your time permits, I would like to also ask you to discuss responses to these questions for your role related to GHSA implementation for PHEP.
If participant does not have time for second technical area: Can you please recommend another colleague in your office who can speak about PHEP, and will be willing to meet with me?

If role covers broad GHSA implementation, and encompasses both technical areas (ZD or PHEP) or all technical areas: Thank you. For the rest of the interview, I would like to ask you some questions specific to your role in GHSA implementation.

- Please describe any resources or processes that are important for your role.
  - If relevant, can you please describe any staff or partners you rely on to successfully carry out your responsibilities?
  - If relevant, can you please describe any authorities, approvals or policies that have to be in place in order to successfully carry out your responsibilities?
- Are there any GHSA activities or tasks you perform that fall outside of your role?
  - *If yes:* Can you please describe those tasks, and why you have taken them on?
  - *If yes:* How do you feel about carrying out those tasks?
    - Probe: do you think they need to be someone else's responsibility? If so, whose?

If information gathered during doc review:
I have gathered the following information related to the role and responsibilities of your organization. Can you please let me know what is accurate, and what is incorrect?
[*If applicable, show organizational charts, memoranda with important phrases or terms of agreement highlighted, or other summarized documentation.*]
- *If incorrect:* please elaborate on what the correct role/responsibility is.

Topic 2: Collaboration
If you had to estimate, roughly how many organizations do you collaborate with on GHSA-related activities?
- *If >5:* can you please name the top 5 partners?
- *If >3 and < 5:* can you please name the top 3 partners?
- *If 3 or less: collect names of all partners*.

For each partner named:
Can you please describe how you collaborate with [partner name] on GHSA-related activities?

I would like to ask you a little bit more about what defines a collaboration. Can you tell me what some important characteristics are of a strong collaboration?

What do the following terms mean to you, in terms of collaboration:
Provide the following definitions, on a separate sheet:
- Governance
  - Structures and rules put in place by partners to preserve the collective nature in decision-making, participant behavior, and division of resources required for collaboration.
- Administration
  - Structures in place to implement and manage collaborative processes needed to achieve the purpose of collaboration (often in the form of joint goals and objectives).
- Mutuality
  - Extent to which organizations experience interdependence, based on either shared or complementary interests, and contribute to meeting one another's interests without negatively impacting their own.
- Norms (of reciprocity and trust)
  - Belief that collaborators will demonstrate honesty and honor agreed upon commitments and not take advantage of vulnerabilities that may be exposed during the collaboration process.
- Autonomy

o Ability of organizations to meet the collective needs and interests of the collaboration without sacrificing their own interests.

Can you please comment on governance as it relates to collaboration with the partners you have described for GHSA activities? Governance means…[*refer to definition on sheet*]
- o Do you think this is a positive aspect of the collaboration?
- o What are some things that help governance for the collaboration?
- o What are some barriers to effective governance for the collaboration?
- o Can it be improved? If so, how?

Can you please comment on administration as it relates to collaboration with the partners you have described for GHSA activities? Administration means…[*refer to definition on sheet*]
- o Do you think this is a positive aspect of the collaboration?
- o What are some things that help administration for the collaboration?
- o What are some barriers to effective administration for the collaboration?
- o Can it be improved? If so, how?

Can you please comment on mutuality as it relates to collaboration with the partners you have described for GHSA activities? Mutuality means…[*refer to definition on sheet*]
- o Do you think this is a positive aspect of the collaboration?
- o What are some things that help mutuality for the collaboration?
- o What are some barriers to effective mutuality for the collaboration?
- o Can it be improved? If so, how?

Can you please comment on norms as it relates to collaboration with the partners you have described for GHSA activities? Norms means…[*refer to definition on sheet*]
- o Do you think this is a positive aspect of the collaboration?
- o What are some things that help norms for the collaboration?
- o What are some barriers to effective norms for the collaboration?
- o Can it be improved? If so, how?

Can you please comment on autonomy as it relates to collaboration with the partners you have described for GHSA activities? Autonomy means…[*refer to definition on sheet*]
- o Do you think this is a positive aspect of the collaboration?
- o What are some things that help autonomy for the collaboration?
- o What are some barriers to effective autonomy for the collaboration?
- o Can it be improved? If so, how?

Now that we have discussed the following themes – governance, administration, mutuality, norms and autonomy – are there other areas we have not discussed that are important for a strong collaboration?
- *If yes:* What are they?

Overall, can you please describe how you think the collaboration is going so far?
- What are its strengths?
- Weaknesses/opportunities for improvement?

Overall, can you describe your satisfaction with the collaboration?

How do you think collaboration is affecting achievement of GHSA goals for [*ZD/PHEP/GHSA*]?
- According to documentation, GHSA implementation is [*on track/delayed/ahead of schedule – elaborate with concise summaries from documentation, as appropriate*]. Can you please let me know your thoughts on this description?

- o Please describe anything you would like to add to this characterization of GHSA progress. Is there anything you would like to clarify?
- How do you think GHSA implementation would be progressing without collaboration with partners?
  - o How do you think timeframes for completing activities would change, if at all?
  - o How do you think resources for completing activities would change, if at all?

What are your top 1-2 recommendations for the collaboration?

Wrap-Up
We are almost done – just a few background questions. How long have you worked for this organization?

Can you please let me know your educational background?

That is the end of our interview today. Thank you so much for your time. Do you have any questions for me? [*Answer any questions.*] If you have any additional thoughts or questions, feel free to contact me. [*Stop recording*]

Snowball Sampling
- Can you suggest names of other individuals, from your organization or from partners you work with, that I should interview about their experiences with GHSA and collaboration?
  - o *[If yes]* Would it be okay if we used your name when we contact these people to say that you recommended them to us?
  - o *[Collect names and email addresses of recommended individuals.]*