Briefing Note: Participatory mapping

The participatory mapping exercise will ideally last between around 45 minutes to 1 hour. The purpose of the mapping exercise is for the researcher to get an understanding of:

1) **The village and surrounding area**, including the different types of water sources that are used and when they are used, roads, houses, and major buildings like churches or mosques, agricultural land and grazing areas, hills, forests, cemeteries, etc.
2) **Groups or organisations that exist in the community**, such as work groups, cooperatives, development committees, agricultural worker associations, woman's organisations, saving and loan associations, religious associations, parent's groups, and youth clubs.

Procedure

Step 1: Assemble a group of volunteers, ideally of between 6-12 participants. Describe the purpose of the mapping exercise to the group. Mention that you would like to record the conversation during the exercise and ask permission to do so. Also mention how you will be taking notes – explain that both note taking and audio recording are being used only to ensure you do not miss anything during the exercise.

Step 2: Ask for a volunteer to draw the map. Start with major features like main roads. Ensure that the scale of the map is large enough that more distant water sources like rivers can be included if relevant. Ask the community to give advice to the map drawer on what to draw. Initially, **make sure that all the water sources the community uses are captured**. List the types of water sources to assist with this process (boreholes, shallow dug wells, public tap stands, rivers, lakes, etc.). Use a blue marker pen for the different water sources.

Fairly early on, ask the different participants to draw their own homes on the map as a way of encouraging them to engage with the process. Continue with the exercise, guiding the map drawer and other participants where necessary to locate other features of the village, including farm land, forests, graveyards, religious buildings, etc.

Step3: During the exercise, **the researcher should be asking questions** about what they are discovering on the map as it is being constructed (What? Who? How?), as well as about the different comments and issues raised by participants. A key issue is to **ask about the history of the main water point** (see appropriate briefing note), as well as identifying all main water sources used by the community, when they are used, by who, and for what.

Step 4: Once the map has been drawn and you feel you have asked enough questions about the features on the map, move you attention to what **groups or organisations exist in the community**. The intention here is only to get a general idea of what groups may exists and a rough idea of their function. If you like, you can turn the map over and ask the participants to

draw and label a circle for each of the groups they identify and lines between these groups to show how they relate to one another. Refer to Point 2, above, for a list of the sorts of groups we are interested in identifying.

Step 5: At the end of the exercise, thank the participants for their time and the useful information they have shared with you. Make sure you take a photograph of the map and then carry the map with you during the transect walk so that you can refer to it along the route. As soon as you have time to yourself, write up the field notes, capturing any insights or reflections you have about the process.