Introduction to Needs Assessment

TIME Training
September 1-5, 2014
In this session....

- When and why we do needs assessments
- Types of needs assessments
- Protection and participation principles
- Needs assessment coordination and the role of UNHCR in different contexts
- Assessment planning
- Assessment tools
Significance of Needs Assessments

- Understand problems, sources of those problems and their impact on affected populations

- Evidence-based decision-making & planning process

- Allows us to prioritize aid
Important Things to Establish in a Needs Assessment

1. What are the **causes** of problems?
2. What is the **impact** of the problem? (Including who is most affected?)
3. What are the **community’s coping mechanisms**?
4. What are the **community’s own priorities**?
When should you do a needs assessment?

- Start of an emergency
- Change in an ongoing emergency
- Beginning of the programming cycle or when decisions are being made
Main types of Needs Assessment

- Initial
- Rapid
- In-depth
- Monitoring

*How do we determine what type of assessment to do?*
Protection Principles and Assessments

- Do no harm and protect information sources
- Sensitivity
- Integrity
- Confidentiality and informed consent
- Safeguard recorded information
Participatory Approaches and Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD)

“Refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees must be at the centre of decision-making concerning their protection and well-being.”

UNHCR Tool for Participatory Assessment

Why is participation of affected populations important?
NEEDS ASSESSMENT
COORDINATION
Coordinated Assessments

Uncoordinated
★ Multiple assessments
★ Multiple methodology – datasets not ‘interoperable’
★ Multiple reports

Harmonised
★ Multiple assessments + common key indicators
★ Single methodology – data comparable
★ Single or multiple reports from joint/shared analysis

Joint (common)
★ Single assessment form / data collection process
★ Single methodology and analysis process
★ Single report
Coordinating Needs Assessments

What are some consequences of NOT coordinating needs assessments?

- Over-assessment
- Gaps in coverage
- Wasted resources
- Conflicting statistics and data
- Different interpretations of the situation
Needs Assessment Coordination

Different situations have different needs assessment coordination mechanisms.

In REFUGEE situations

UNHCR’s role is to:

• Coordinate needs assessments among all partners across sectors
• Facilitate dissemination of refugee needs assessment reports
• Provide IM support and guidance to needs assessment activities, including facilitating agreement among the humanitarian community on data standards
Coordinating Needs Assessments

In an IDP situation

UNHCR’s role is to:

• Liaise with OCHA on cross-cluster needs assessment coordination
• Coordinate needs assessments within UNHCR-led clusters
• Facilitate dissemination of needs assessment reports within the cluster
• Share assessment data/reports in operational sectors
Coordinating Needs Assessments

In an IDP situation

OCHA should:

• Coordinate needs assessments among clusters (MIRA)
• Cross-analyze needs assessment data from many sources
• Facilitate dissemination of needs assessment reports
What do you think your role as Information Management Officer is in needs assessment?
COORDINATED NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROCESS
The Coordinated Needs Assessment Process at a Glance

- Evaluation of the operational context
- Decision to undertake a needs assessment
- Assessment Plan and TOR
- Establishment of consensus among inter-agency stakeholders
- Secondary data review
- Primary data collection (if needed)
- Analysis of the results
- Dissemination of the results (reports and data)
Assessment Plan Components

- Objectives
- Prioritized information needs
- Analysis plan
- Assessment team composition
- Budget, resources, timeline
- Information sharing and dissemination plan

Assessment TOR
## Assessment Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General objectives</td>
<td>To obtain data on:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Priority needs</td>
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<td>- Coping mechanisms</td>
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<td>- Host communities’ capacity</td>
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<td>- Risks and threats to population</td>
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<td>Scope, geographical coverage</td>
<td>- Affected areas vs. non-affected areas</td>
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<td>- Administrative units (provinces, departments, districts, etc.)</td>
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<td>- Camp vs. out-of-camp populations</td>
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<td>Targeted groups</td>
<td>- IDPs/refugees in camps/outside of camps</td>
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<td>- Urban IDPs/refugees</td>
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<td>- Stateless persons</td>
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<td>- Host communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clusters/sectors included</td>
<td>- Protection, education, food and nutrition, health, shelter and core relief items (CRI), WASH, livelihoods</td>
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<tr>
<td>Timeframe, Outcomes</td>
<td>- Analysis</td>
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<td>- Reports</td>
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</table>
Prioritized Information Needs

Strategic

- Target population for intervention and/or assessment
- Definition of key priorities
- Intervene or not? If so, where and how?
- Need for further assessment and response
- Activate sectors or clusters
Prioritized Information Needs

**Operational**

- Resources needed
- Types of programmes (shelter, food, WASH, health)
- Specific locations, target populations
- Timeframe for the intervention
Analysis Plan

If you don't know where you are going, you will probably end up somewhere else.
~Lawrence J. Peter

Type of data: Qualitative, Quantitative
Unit of Measurement: Community, Household, Individual, Institution
Analytical outputs: Profile, Scenarios, Sample Report
Units of Measurement

- INDIVIDUAL
- HOUSEHOLD
- COMMUNITY
- INSTITUTION
Data Volume

- Think about the **VOLUME OF DATA** you will get when designing a needs assessment

**DATA VOLUME =**

\[
\text{# of Forms Collected} \times \text{Number/Type of Questions} \times \text{Periodicity (Frequency of data collection)}
\]

- Unit of measurement affects data volume; e.g. normally **HOUSEHOLD** level data produces more data than **COMMUNITY** level data

- High volume of data will usually require a **DATABASE** instead of manual analysis
Assessment Team Composition

- Assessment Coordinator
- Assessment/IM Working Group
- Field Data Collection Team(s)
- Data Processing Team
- Analysis/Reporting Team
Budget

- Resources needed (human, financial, material, logistical, etc.)
- Source of those resources
Information Sharing and Dissemination Plan

- What outputs are to be produced and for whom?
- Who will approve them?
- Who will have access to (which) data?
- Data security/information sharing concerns
COORDINATED NEEDS ASSESSMENT TOOLS
# Needs Assessment in Refugee Emergencies (NARE) Checklist

## WASH - NARE Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Background (pre-influx) Information Collection and Analysis</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This is information on context, pre-existing coping mechanisms and vulnerabilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Rainfall patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hydrological and Geological map</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Identify safe infrastructure availability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Potential water providers and water sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Availability of WASH stockpiling equipment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Second Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post-influx secondary data review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This information can come from other sectors and/or organizations and must be compiled prior to primary data collection. Information not available in the secondary data analysis should be acquired through primary data collection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Assessment of available water sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hygiene practices of community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Identify male and female community members who may be mobilized to participate in locating and designing safe water and sanitation locations and policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Mapping of safe locations for boreholes, water points, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Identify potential site risks (e.g., areas exposed/prone to flooding)</td>
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## Review – Actions Required

These are possible actions that may be informed by the secondary data analysis.

- Emergency (new/rehabilitated) drinking water supplies measures are urgently required if less than 15 litres/per person/day is available (particularly if risk factors are present such as dense population, contaminated water supply, poor hygiene, etc.).
- Emergency “shock” treatment of the drinking water supply is required if the existing system is still functional, but has likely been contaminated (as a result of physical damage to infrastructure, interrupted/intermittent service provision, etc.).
- Household water treatment is recommended if the quality of drinking water is poor and households understand or can be quickly taught how to use home water treatment effectively.
- The need for adequate household water transport and storage facilities should be assessed in all cases.
- Emergency sanitation (particularly excrement disposal) and hygiene promotion measures are required immediately if people are settled in high density areas and exposed to poor sanitary conditions and/or probable diarrhoeal outbreaks.
- Emergency distribution of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) non-food items (NFIs) is required when acute shortage has been objectively observed.

## Community Observation

These questions are intended for direct observation and are not based on interviewing. Findings from direct observation can be cross-analysed with information from other sources for verification purposes.

- Environmental health conditions - look for signs of: a) unsafe hygiene practices (open defecation, medical waste disposal, etc.); b) contamination due to weak or absence of sanitation infrastructure (including for excrement, waste water, solid waste, drainage, and medical waste disposal); and c) disease transmitting vectors (rodents, mosquitoes, etc.).
- Existing WASH services - look for evidences of: a) collapsed or poorly performing services; b) strain on capacity of services (lines, conflicts, etc.); c) access difficulties (distance, security, etc.); and d) vulnerability of services (potential contamination sources, natural hazards, etc.).
- Are refugee women and girls, men and boys seen queuing at unsafe hours for water?
- Is sex-separation for latrines and bathing areas respected?
- How many water wells exist? Are there at such existence or potential site for informal and unofficial settlement?
Multi-Cluster / Sector Initial Rapid Assessment
MIRA Approach

Timing: First 2 weeks of an emergency

Methodology:
- Collection, collation and analysis of secondary data
- Collection of primary data using standardized tool, purposive sampling and key informant interviews (recommended) at community level
- Joint analysis to collectively define severity of crisis and identify strategic priorities for intervention

Outputs and Application:
MIRA Report– 2 weeks
- Informs Strategic Response Plan
Rapid Protection Assessment (RPA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Protection problem</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>Information Requirements for assessment</th>
<th>Indicators and Other data for reporting (in italics)</th>
<th>Disaggregation</th>
<th>Recommended data collection method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life, physical security and integrity</td>
<td>Attacks, combats, bombings</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Are there credible reports of armed operations affecting the population?</td>
<td>% of assessed locations where there are reports of attacks, combats, bombings affecting the population</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>Key informant + observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Who are the perpetrators?</td>
<td>% of assessed locations reporting attacks, combats, bombings by a particular perpetrator/armed group</td>
<td></td>
<td>Key informant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>How many people are estimated affected?</td>
<td>Number of population affected by attacks, combats, bombings</td>
<td></td>
<td>Key informant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Killing of civilians</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Are there credible reports of killings of civilians during armed conflict?</td>
<td>% of assessed locations reporting deliberate killings of civilians during armed conflict</td>
<td></td>
<td>Key informant + observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Who are the perpetrators?</td>
<td>% of assessed locations reporting a particular perpetrator for killings of civilians during armed conflict</td>
<td></td>
<td>Key informant</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What is the estimate number of persons killed?</td>
<td>Estimated number of persons killed per assessed location (over period)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Key informant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exercise