

Technical Sheet – How to do a purposive sample

SUBJECT	Purposive sample for KIRA
TARGET	Lead organization of a KIRA assessment/assessment core group
LAST UPDATE	January 2014

Introduction:

The primary data collection during a KIRA should be developed based on the following elements:

- Pre-disaster information (including demography, coping strategies, pre-existing vulnerabilities)
- In-disaster information (what information is already known that gives a general understanding of the impact of the disaster)
- Existing knowledge about the geographic area of impact
- Understanding of likely consequences
- Probable trends/scenarios (how the impact of the disaster is likely to evolve)
- Operational constraints (access, logistics)
- Information gaps (information that is needed and is not available from other sources)

The primary data collection will attempt to fill the information gaps.

The sampling methodology used is a key aspect for understanding the kind of information that can be obtained during this part of the assessment. Using purposive sampling for a KIRA is agreed to give information that is good enough to provide an overview of the situation to inform strategic decisions as well as fast enough to provide the information within a useful time frame.

Definition:

Purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling where the sites that are assessed are defined by the assessment Team and based on the purpose of the assessment.

A site is a geographical location with a specific characteristic where we will conduct a Community Group Discussion (male & female) and a Direct Observation checklist.

If we have one geographical location where we have two pre-defined characteristics (e.g. people living in a collective centre as well as people in a spontaneous settlement), for the purpose of the KIRA we will consider this as two sites and carry out 2 field assessments.

Objective:

The objective of the purposive sample is to focus on particular characteristics of sites in order to make comparisons between them. The kinds of comparisons include:

- How are the needs across all kind of sites similar/different?

- Are the priorities for people displaced different or the same than for those staying in their original place?
- Is it possible to identify what kinds of sites are in most urgent need of assistance?

The purposive sample should also help to identify the possible trends or likely scenarios could be for those categories in the following weeks.

Limitations:

Purposive sampling will not give representative data on the numbers of people affected by a disaster. This means that the primary data collected will not allow us to state a percentage of people with a need for food support, or the number of people without access to sanitation.

What it does do is give is a general qualitative understanding on how the population is affected.

It is very important that the criteria used to define sites for the assessment are very clearly explained. This needs to be clear to all those involved in carrying out the assessment as well as all those who will read the assessment report.

Take care when sharing findings....

Findings need to be very clearly and cautiously worded. For example, there is a very big difference between the two statements below:

“75% of women had no access to safe latrines”

“in 15 out of the 20 sites visited (75% of sites), female community groups found that one of the main priorities for women in the affected area was access to safe latrines”

Advantages:

In the initial days and weeks after a crisis a representative sample of the affected area is often not possible. This is particularly true if information is required to inform the key decisions that need to be made within the first 2-3 weeks of a crisis.

Disaster epidemiologists agree that good quality information from fewer sites, combined with pre-crisis baseline knowledge and data provides a better picture of needs than poor quality data collected from more sites, or data collected from a non-representative household sample (a more detail documentation is available in ACAPS website “Purposive sampling and site selection in Phase 2”).

Using a well defined purposive sampling methodology means that it is not necessary to cover a huge number of sites to get sufficient qualitative information to come up with credible and clear findings and recommendations. With a limited number of sites that are well chosen to cover the differences likely to be present across the affected area, it should be able to identify:

- Characteristics of the sites that are worst affected (by living arrangement, by urban or rural and by geographic specification)
- Priority needs across the affected area.

The information should identify where people with greatest needs are (the kinds of sites or geographically located as well as the sectors in which they have needs).

Criteria to consider in designing the sample:

There are a range of possible criteria that could be used to differentiate between groups of people in an area affected by a disaster. Keeping in mind that these differentiators will be used to compare across groups during the analysis phase, examples of the kind of criteria that could be used are:

- Livelihood or agro-ecological zones
- Geographic characteristics
- Severity of impact
- Administrative units
- Living arrangement
- Ethnic groups

Pre crisis vulnerability (poverty, malnutrition)

In order to determine the most appropriate criteria we need to be clear that:

- The assessment team will be able to practically use those criteria on the field. For example, if we used a livelihood criteria, we should be sure that it is realistic to get an homogeneous community group with this characteristic (all fisherman or all farmers)
- The criteria will cover the entire population affected and no group will be left
- It will be possible to compare those categories during the analysis stage

In Kenya, the assessment team used to select the sites based on the living arrangement after the crisis.

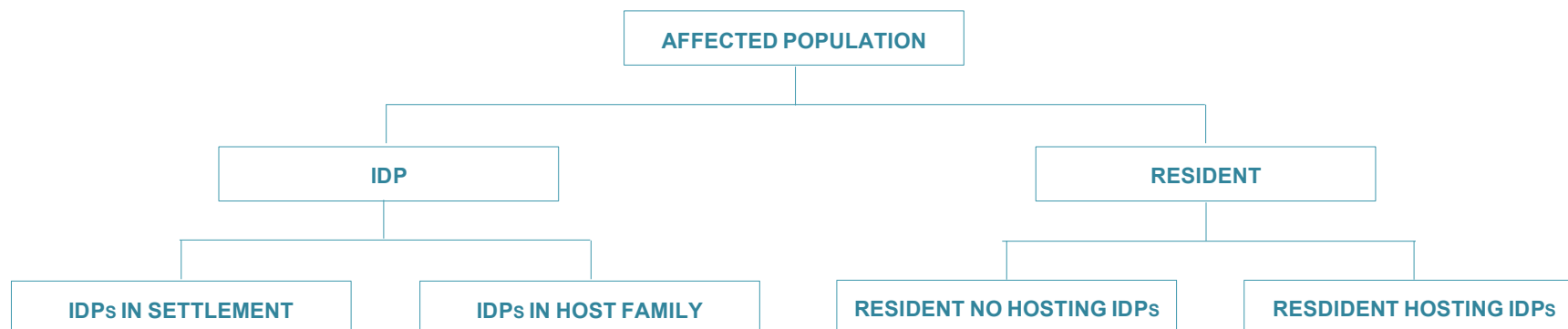
Living arrangement:

- Displaced people living in host families
- Displaced people living in collective centers (e.g schools)
- Displaced people in spontaneous camp
- Displaced people in planned camp
- Resident Population hosting displaced persons
- Resident population not hosting displaced persons

Previous assessments have indicated that using livelihood group or poverty indicators were difficult to implement. This was partially due to the scarcity of detailed pre-crisis information and practically because of the practical challenges of mobilizing homogeneous community groups around these criteria in the limited time frame and with assessment teams made up of differing levels of social research expertise.

The purposive sampling aims to focus on a small number of site and collect enough information to get a good picture of the situation. But to ensure credible primary data collection, a minimum of site per category (IDPs, Residents, ect...) has to be considered. Generally, it is a minimum of 4 - 5 sites per category

The following chart is an example on how to present the sample in order to select the sites to be assessed.



Total Ward	5	5	5	5
Ward 1	1	1	1	1
Ward 2	1	1	1	1
Ward 3	1		1	
Ward 4	1	1	1	1
Ward 5	1			
Ward 6		1	1	1
Ward 7		1		1