

Needs Assessment Guide

Considerations for Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches

	Qualitative Approaches	Quantitative Approaches
When to Use It	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When in-depth understanding of a specific issue is required • To understand behavior, perception, and priorities of affected community/population • To explain the information provided through quantitative data • To emphasize a holistic approach (processes and outcomes) • When the assessor only knows roughly in advance what she or he is looking for <p>Recommended during earlier phases of assessments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To get a broad comprehensive understanding of the situation • To get socio-demographic characteristics of the population • To compare relations and correlations between different issues • When accurate and precise data are required • To produce evidence about the type and size of problems • When the assessor knows clearly, in advance, what she or he is looking for <p>Recommended during the latter phases of the assessment</p>
Objectives and Main Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To explore, understand phenomena • Provides in-depth understanding of specific issues • Detailed and complete information, contextualization, interpretation, and description • Perspectives, opinions, and explanations of affected populations toward events, beliefs, or practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To seek precise measurement, quantify, confirm hypotheses • Provide a general overview • Provides demographic characteristics • Objective and reliable • Apt for generalization • Objectively verifiable • Prediction, causal explanation
Data Format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data can be observed but not measured • Mainly textual (words, pictures, audio, video) and categorical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data which can be counted or measured • Involves amount, measurement or anything of quantity • Mainly numerical and categorical values
Answers the Questions	<p>Answers questions arising during a discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How? • Why? • What do I need to look for in more detail? <p>Questions are generally open-ended</p>	<p>Answers a controlled sequence of questions with predetermined possible answers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What? • How many? <p>Questions are generally close-ended</p>

Perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looks at the whole context from within • Searches for patterns • Lends itself to community participation • Seeks depth of perspective through ongoing analysis (e.g., waves of data) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looks at specific aspect from the outside
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual interviews • Key informant interviews • Semi-structured interviews • Focus group discussions • Observation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick counting estimates • Sampling surveys • Population movement tracking • Registration • Structured interviews
Sampling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-random (purposeful) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Random
Study Design and Instruments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible, the assessor is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fixed, standards control the assessor's bias
Questionnaire Tool Types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checklist with open-ended questions and (mostly) flexible sequence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predetermined questionnaire with sequence and structure
Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses inductive reasoning • Involves systematic and iterative process of searching, categorizing, and integrating data • Describes the meaning of research findings from the perspective of the research participants • Involves developing generalizations from a limited number of specific observations or experiences • Analysis is descriptive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses deductive methods • Descriptive statistics • Inferential statistics
<p>Adapted from "Qualitative and Quantitative Research Techniques for Humanitarian Needs Assessment," Table 2, ACAPS Technical Brief, May 2012.</p>		