

# Glossary

## Essential terms related to assessment

## **Affected Groups**

are groups of people requiring (immediate) assistance during a period of emergency (ie, requiring basic survival needs such as food, water, shelter, sanitation and immediate medical assistance).

## **Assessment fatigue**

may occur when an area has been assessed many times by different agencies. The people are frustrated because they are expected to answer the same questions repeatedly, often with no obvious result. Under such circumstances, an assessment is unlikely to produce useful information (IFRC, 2008).

## **Assessment**

is a process of gaining an understanding of a situation in order to identify the problems, their sources and consequences (IFRC, 2008)

## **Capacity**

is defined as *“the resources of individuals, households, communities, institutions and nations to resist the impact of a hazard.”* (IFRC, 2008)

## **Continual assessment**

involves regularly updating information on the situation and seeking relevant feedback from beneficiaries in order to facilitate decision-making on long-term activities (IFRC, 2008)

## **Coping strategies**

are those chosen by people as a way of living through difficult times.

## **Focus groups**

Small groups of individuals brought together to discuss a topic of importance to them and to the investigation, under the guidance of one or more moderators who introduce and guide the discussion and record it in some way.

## **Initial assessment**

is considered the first of the top ten priorities in the response to the acute phase of an emergency involving population displacement (MSF, 1997). It should cover, as objectively as possible, the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the situation. Because the collection of reliable data requires time, particularly quantified data that has to be compiled by surveys, the initial assessment may be undertaken in two steps, a first rapid assessment for immediate action (initial exploratory mission) and in-depth assessment.

## **Initial exploratory mission**

(first rapid assessment) should result in a rapid decision on whether or not to intervene and the type and the size of intervention needed. The information collected should indicate the severity of the situation, as well as the need and feasibility of relief intervention. These data are obtained by fast, simple methods: direct observation, interviews with affected population, agencies present in the area, the Ministry of Health (MoH) and local authorities, health data from medical facilities, and, if required, a rapid estimation of the population size by mapping. (MSF, 1997)

## **Method**

refers to any systematic quantitative or qualitative way to collect and analyse data.

## **Monitoring**

is continuous observation of the project/programme's progress. (IFRC, 2008)

## **Qualitative observation**

Systematic watching of behaviours, actions, conversations, and other features of interest in naturally occurring settings

## **Rapid health assessment (RHA)**

refers to collection and analysis of information concerning the demography, mortality, morbidity, nutritional status and immunisation of the concerned population, as well as food, water and basic living conditions. (MSF/Epicentre, 2006)

## **Sample**

is a subset of a frame where elements are selected based on a randomised process with a known probability of selection.

## **Sampling frame**

refers to the list of all areas and population from which a sample is drawn for the assessment is described as the sampling frame. The sampling frame must be defined at the start of the assessment planning process.

## **Sampling unit**

is the element or set of elements considered for selection in stage of sampling. A sampling unit is one of the units into which an aggregate is divided for the purpose of sampling, each unit being regarded as individual and indivisible when the selection is made. The definition of unit may be made on some natural basis (eg, household, persons, units of product, tickets, etc) or upon some arbitrary basis (eg, areas defined by grid co-ordinates on a map, a community, a site, etc).

## **Semi-structured interview**

is an interview with an open-ended approach in which the interviewer uses a list of guiding questions (or topics) to orient the interview.

## **Stratification**

consists of dividing the population into subsets (called strata) within each of which an independent sample is selected. The division of a population into parts is known as strata, especially for the purpose of drawing a sample, an assigned proportion of the sample then being selected from each stratum.

## **Triangulation**

Use of different research methods in combination.

## **Unstructured interview**

is an interview with an open-ended approach used to explore issues or topics in details without using pre-set questions.

## **Vulnerability**

is defined as the conditions determined by physical, social, social, economic, environmental and political factors or processes which increase the susceptibility of a community to the impact of shocks/hazards. (IFRC, 2008)