Case study on the use of call-based surveys during the COVID-19 crisis

Humanity & Inclusion (HI) and Terre des hommes (Tdh) in Jordan

Operational contexts

**Humanity & Inclusion (HI)** is an independent and impartial aid organization working alongside people with disabilities and vulnerable populations in situations of poverty and exclusion, conflict and disaster, to respond to their essential needs, improve their living conditions and promote respect for their dignity and fundamental rights.

**In Jordan**, HI provides rehabilitation services to people with disabilities or injuries and training to the local staff in Jordan. HI has also set up several permanent and mobile “disability and vulnerability” centers to ensure that the most vulnerable people receive the help they need, and works with organizations of people with disabilities, helping them to obtain greater recognition of their rights, with a focus on better economic inclusion.

**Terre des hommes (Tdh)** is the leading Swiss organization for children’s aid. Through their health, protection and emergency relief programs, the independent and impartial aid organisation provides assistance to children and their families in around 40 countries each year.

**In Jordan**, Tdh provides help to disadvantaged children through psychosocial activities. The most vulnerable cases, often exposed to labor exploitation and gender-based violence, are followed up on with individualized support. Also, Tdh works with the juvenile police to ensure that they address girls and boys in contact with the law in a way that is appropriate and respects their rights. In detention centers for minors, Tdh is active to offer them vocational training and to develop the skills of officials who supervise the young people.

**Case study**

**Humanity & Inclusion (HI):** As little data was available on the impact of the COVID-19 related lockdown on the needs of persons with disabilities, HI conducted a needs assessment in April 2020 to determine the consequences it had on their beneficiaries and the ongoing HI projects in Jordan. The survey was conducted via phone with 942 households, including 524 households having adults with disabilities and 418 households having children with disabilities. HI used purposive sampling to select the respondents from the currently active HI beneficiary dataset. Kobo Toolbox was used for their first data collection and SurveyCTO in order to collect the data anew in a second round once time could be spent on a more quality-oriented approach.

**Terre des hommes (Tdh):** In the same way, little data was available on the impact of the COVID-19 related lockdown on child protection and juvenile detention. Tdh therefore conducted a rapid needs assessment in April 2020 on the question. Four different tools were used in order to collect the data via phone: a) Household Survey using MDC; b) Case Manager Briefings; c) Key Informant Interviews with A2J Actors; d) COVID-19 Context Briefings. The Household Survey employed purposive and geographical sampling methodology using a currently active Tdh beneficiary database.

Call-based surveys can also be implemented in a regular situation. In-person data collection is necessary in the beginning. Once trust is built with beneficiaries, call-based surveys can be implemented instead, bringing a whole range of advantages.

**HI Jordan**

When the lockdown was put in place, we were afraid to lose contact with some of our most exposed beneficiaries. Call-based surveys allowed us to stay aware of their situation and their evolving needs.

**Tdh Jordan**
Opportunities

- Higher accessibility and collaboration of field teams.
- Development of new types of training materials and methodologies for data collectors – adapted for remote settings (i.e. e-learning material.s, etc.).
- Higher accessibility of key beneficiaries, as it is possible to contact them again if not available and this as much as needed (limited possibility during in-person survey).
- Higher response rate of vulnerable beneficiaries, as remote surveys provide feeling of safety and non-intrusion.
- Real-time follow-up of database quality on the server by survey manager; as the data manager was not in the field with teams such as during a in-person survey, he/she had the possibility to check the quality of data in real-time as data was sent to the server.
- Time and cost-saving compared to in-person survey.
- Logistically lighter compared to in-person survey.

Hurdles

- Additional challenges during training of data collectors: provide training remotely, with adequate logistics (good internet connection, computers).
- Necessary adaptation of length of the questionnaire to remote settings to avoid beneficiary fatigue.
- Necessary adjustment of working hours of data collectors for best timing of remote survey: most adequate timing to reach beneficiaries was in the evening.
- Lack of access to beneficiaries with no working phone number available to contact them.
- Difficult to balance data quality, cost and speed of data collection.
- Sensitive data had to be excluded of the remote data collection for data protection reasons (not possible to remotely directly interview the targeted beneficiary).
- Disability of beneficiary can affect quality of provided data.
- Limitation of data triangulation due to absence of observation.

Recommendations

- Check that there is no off-the-shelf survey already built by another entity or your headquarters that has been tried-and-tested before creating one from scratch.
- Use channels (persons) that are already known to the beneficiary to collect the data, when having to collect sensitive information during a call-based survey. This will allow the beneficiary to feel more comfortable and provide better quality of data.
- Split the group in smaller groups to ensure efficient training and close follow-up of all participants, when having a significant amount of data collectors to train remotely. Also, make sure they have adequate logistics during the online training (good internet connection, screen big enough to properly display content of the training, etc.)
- Shorten the questionnaire and focus on the most important aspects to avoid data quality issues during a remote survey.
- Coordinate with colleagues and other humanitarian actors in order to avoid over-solicitation of beneficiaries, aim to work on information gaps and avoid duplication of data.
- Reach out to available internal support and guidance (headquarters, regional offices, hotlines, etc.) for mobile data collection and analysis.
- Consider using phone surveys methodologies in other contexts, if adapted to your project and context, as it comprises a certain amount of advantages.