Mobile Phone & Remote Tool Considerations for M&E in a COVID-19 Environment

Wednesday, June 10, 2020

Today's Agenda:

- **Arno Bratz, Mercy Corps** – COVID Context Monitoring, FIAT Style: Lessons Learned from the Mercy Corps DRC DFSA
- **Mehari Belachew, Kimetrica** – Transitioning to Mobile Data Collection: Lessons from L4R RMS Ethiopia
- **Amina Ferati, i-APS** – Monitoring Evaluation During COVID-19: What are M&E teams doing where there are no networks?

Before we begin….

The webinar will last approximately 90 minutes

Use the **Q&A** box throughout the webinar to ask questions to the speakers. Use the **Chat** box to share your experiences and resources.

A recording of today's webinar will be shared with participants

COVID CONTEXT MONITORING, FIAT STYLE

Lessons learned from the Mercy Corps DRC DFSA

ARNO BRATZ
MEL Manager, Mercy Corps, DRC DFSA

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Overview

1. FIAT approach for enhancing context monitoring
2. Framing anticipated changes
3. Identifying information gaps
4. Adapting monitoring strategies
5. Tooling and retooling
6. Initial results

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The FIAT approach for adapting monitoring systems

02 Identify Information Gaps

Identify and prioritize information gaps where monitoring data could help boost resilience capacities or responses to COVID.

04 Tool and Retool

Building on the existing monitoring ecosystem, create or change data collection flows to fill information gaps.

01 Frame Anticipated Changes

Frame the ways in which COVID is expected to affect TOC pathways and outcomes.

03 Adapt monitoring strategies

Adapt monitoring approaches to enable data collection despite changes in the operating context.

05 Analyze, Learn, Adapt

Analyze, learn, adapt implementation and context monitoring.

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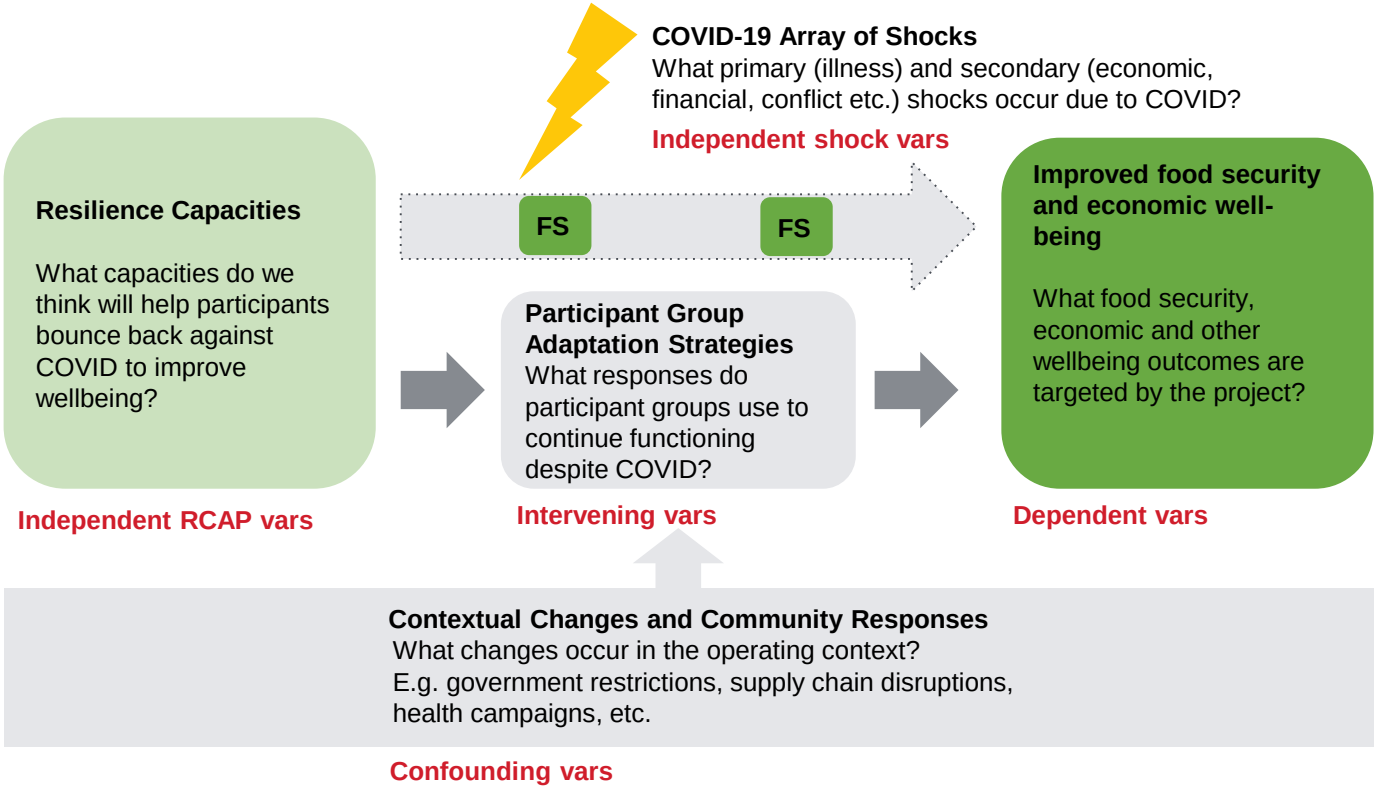
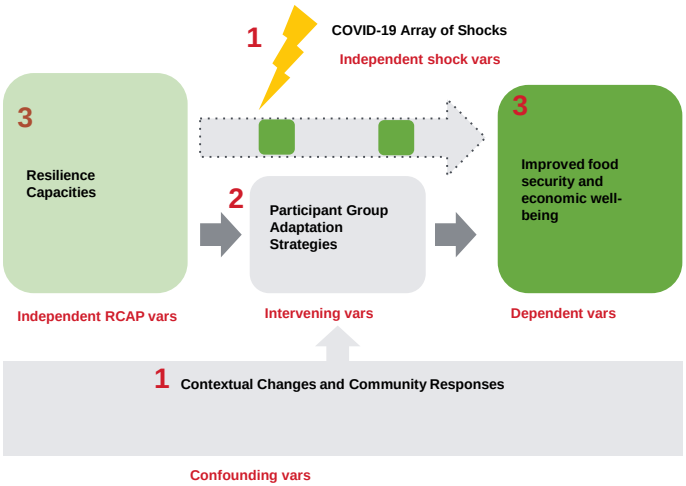
01 Frame Anticipated Changes



02 Identify and Prioritize Information Gaps

Framework



Information gaps

1. **What is:** How does the COVID Array of Shocks affect markets, communities, participants and select participant groups?
2. **What works:** What resilience "responses" against COVID are key participant groups using?
3. **What matters:** What capacities are linked to reduced shock exposure, improved recovery and improved outcomes?

Objective

Respond

Reinforce and share knowledge

Redesign

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03 Adapt Monitoring Strategies

Identifying remote monitoring methods:

1. **About who** do we need information?
2. **From whom** can we get it?
3. **How** can we reach them?

Selecting right-fit methods:

1. **Fast:** Is a given method fast to set up, collect, analyze and act upon?
2. **Feasible:** Is it feasible to implement given cost and safety limitations?
3. **Precise:** Does it produce data precise enough to be actionable for decision-making?

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03 Adapting Right-Fit Methods for Context Monitoring

		Phone Surveys		Phone KIIs	
Dimension	**Criterion**	**Self-selection through phone ownership**	**Phone distribution to representative sample**	**KIIs with one stakeholder type, no triangulation**	**KIIs with triangulation between stakeholders**
Fast	Fast to set up				
	Fast to collect				
	Fast to analyze				
Feasible	Appropriate cost for required precision level				
	Compliant with safety prototols				
Precise	Appropriate sampling (varies by data demand)				
	Triangulation	n/a	n/a		

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04 Tool and Retool

Platform considerations	Build on existing platform environment. CommCare has a leg up for panel data, web forms and SMS functionalities.
Retool where possible	It is easier to adjust existing tools and talk to existing stakeholders, rather than creating new data flows.
Keep interviews short	Do not exceed 30 minutes. Factor in a 0.5 time lag due to connection issues. Split questionnaires, conduct more calls.
Protect the equipment	Provide powerbanks to extension agents if needed so that their Android batteries won't be exposed to overvoltage

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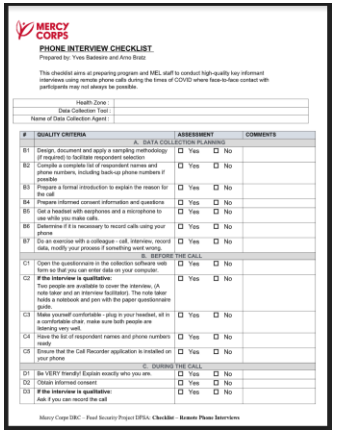
04 Tool and Retool

Field quality control Create specific phone interview guidance to reduce respondent interaction bias



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PHONE INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

Prepared by: Yves Badesire and Anno Bratz

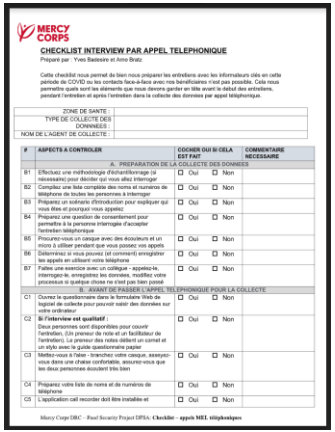
This checklist aims at preparing program and MEL staff to conduct high-quality key informant interviews using remote phone calls during the times of COVID where face-to-face contact with participants may not always be possible.

Health Zone :	
Data Collection Tool :	
Name of Data Collection Agent :	

#	QUALITY CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT	COMMENTS
	A. DATA COLLECTION PLANNING		
B1	Design, document and apply a sampling methodology (if required) to facilitate respondent selection	☐ Yes ☐ No	
B2	Compile a complete list of respondent names and phone numbers, including back-up phone numbers if possible	☐ Yes ☐ No	
B3	Prepare a formal introduction to explain the reason for the call	☐ Yes ☐ No	
B4	Prepare informed consent information and questions	☐ Yes ☐ No	
B5	Get a headset with earphones and a microphone to use while you make calls.	☐ Yes ☐ No	
B6	Determine if it is necessary to record calls using your phone	☐ Yes ☐ No	
B7	Do an exercise with a colleague - call, interview, record data, modify your process if something went wrong.	☐ Yes ☐ No	
	B. BEFORE THE CALL		
C1	Open the questionnaire in the collection software web form so that you can enter data on your computer.	☐ Yes ☐ No	
C2	**If the interview is qualitative:** Two people are available to cover the interview, (A note taker and an interview facilitator). The note taker holds a notebook and pen with the paper questionnaire guide.	☐ Yes ☐ No	
C3	Make yourself comfortable - plug in your headset, sit in a comfortable chair, make sure both people are listening very well.	☐ Yes ☐ No	
C4	Have the list of respondent names and phone numbers ready	☐ Yes ☐ No	
C5	Ensure that the Call Recorder application is installed on your phone	☐ Yes ☐ No	
	C. DURING THE CALL		
D1	Be VERY friendly! Explain exactly who you are.	☐ Yes ☐ No	
D2	Obtain informed consent	☐ Yes ☐ No	
D3	**If the interview is qualitative:** Ask if you can record the call	☐ Yes ☐ No	

Mercy Corps DRC - Food Security Project DFSA: **Checklist – Remote Phone Interviews**

https://tinyurl.com/fsp-phoneint-en



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CHECKLIST INTERVIEW PAR APPEL TELEPHONIQUE

Préparé par : Yves Badesire et Anno Bratz

Cette checklist nous permet de bien nous préparer les entretiens avec les informateurs clés en cette période de COVID ou les contacts face-à-face avec nos bénéficiaires n'est pas possible. Cela nous permettra quels sont les éléments que nous devons garder en tête avant le début des entretiens, pendant l'entretien et après l'entretien dans la collecte des données par appel téléphonique.

ZONE DE SANTE :	
TYPE DE COLLECTE DES DONNEES :	
NOM DE L'AGENT DE COLLECTE :	

#	ASPECTS A CONTROLER	COCHER OUI SI CELA EST FAIT	COMMENTAIRE NECESSAIRE
	A. PREPARATION DE LA COLLECTE DES DONNEES		
B1	Effectuez une méthodologie d'échantillonnage (si nécessaire) pour décider qui vous allez interroger	☐ Oui ☐ Non	
B2	Compilez une liste complète des noms et numéros de téléphone de toutes les personnes à interroger	☐ Oui ☐ Non	
B3	Préparez un scénario d'introduction pour expliquer qui vous êtes et pourquoi vous appelez	☐ Oui ☐ Non	
B4	Préparez une question de consentement pour permettre à la personne interrogée d'accepter l'entretien téléphonique	☐ Oui ☐ Non	
B5	Procurez-vous un casque avec des écouteurs et un micro à utiliser pendant que vous passez vos appels	☐ Oui ☐ Non	
B6	Déterminez si vous pouvez (et comment) enregistrer les appels en utilisant votre téléphone	☐ Oui ☐ Non	
B7	Faites une exercice avec un collègue - appelez-le, interrogez-le, enregistrez les données, modifiez votre processus si quelque chose ne s'est pas bien passé	☐ Oui ☐ Non	
	B. AVANT DE PASSER L'APPEL TELEPHONIQUE POUR LA COLLECTE		
C1	Ouvrez le questionnaire dans le formulaire Web de logiciel de collecte pour pouvoir saisir des données sur votre ordinateur	☐ Oui ☐ Non	
C2	**Si l'interview est qualitatif :** Deux personnes sont disponibles pour couvrir l'entretien, (Un preneur de note et un facilitateur de l'entretien). Le preneur des notes détient un carnet et un stylo avec le guide questionnaire papier	☐ Oui ☐ Non	
C3	Mettez-vous à l'aise - branchez votre casque, asseyez-vous dans une chaise confortable, assurez-vous que les deux personnes écoutent très bien	☐ Oui ☐ Non	
C4	Préparez votre liste de noms et de numéros de téléphone	☐ Oui ☐ Non	
C5	L'application call recorder doit être installée et	☐ Oui ☐ Non	

Mercy Corps DRC - Food Security Project DFSA: **Checklist – appels MEL téléphoniques**

https://tinyurl.com/fsp-phoneint-fr

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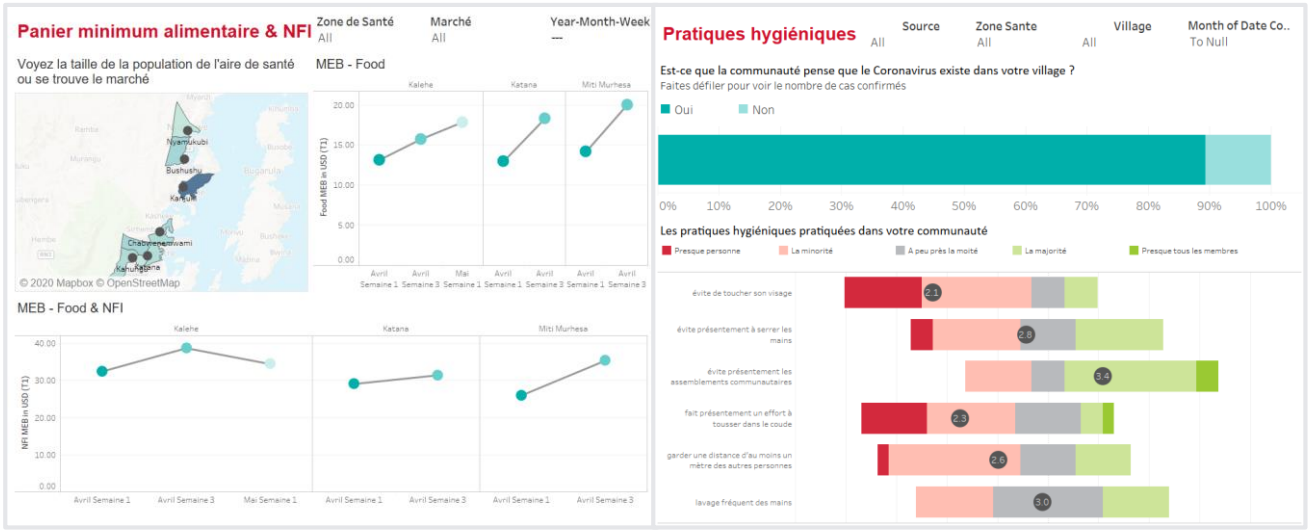
Initial Results #1



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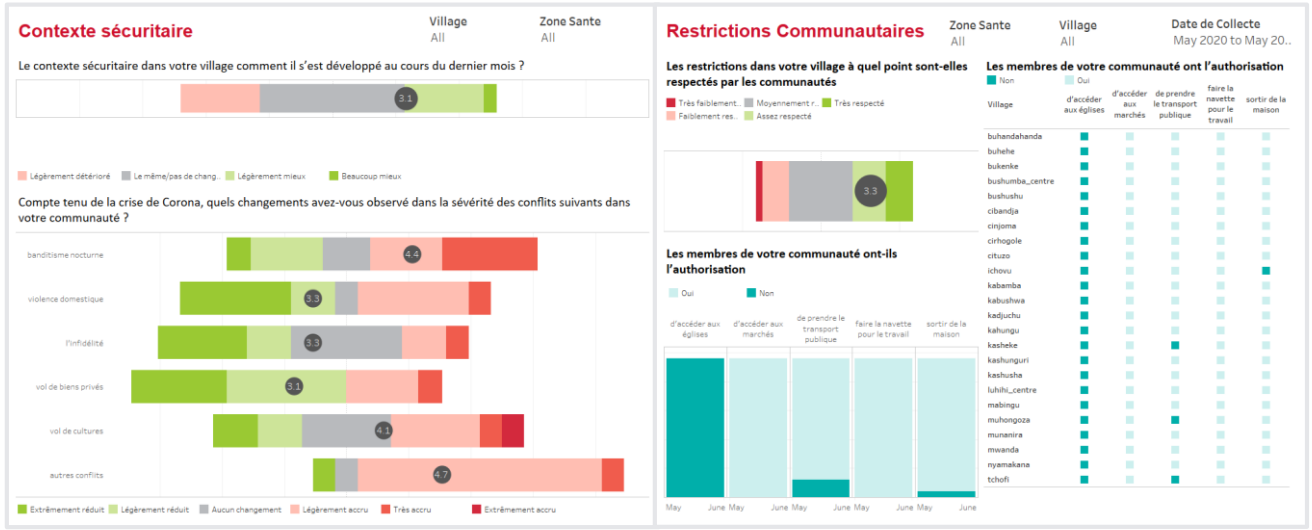
Initial Results #2



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Transitioning to Mobile Data Collection: Lessons from L4R RMS Ethiopia

Mehari Belachew, Head of Surveys

June 10, 2020

AGENDA

- Objective
- Background
- Key Successes
- Essential Preparatory Activities
- Lessons Learned

OBJECTIVES

- Share lessons from Kimetrica's experience **transitioning** to phone-based interviews

- **Integrate learning** into other Kimetrica surveys in Ethiopia and elsewhere

BACKGROUND

- Kimetrica recently conducted a telephone data collection in Ethiopia (May 2020).
- This survey is part of a Recurrent Monitoring System (RMS) that follows **900 panel households** every quarter since August 2019

- The first three rounds were conducted via **face-to-face interviews**

- The **Telephone-based data collection** was implemented for the 4th RMS round as a COVID-19 adaptation strategy.

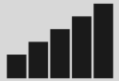
We obtained a **98.1 percent** response rate, which is **higher** than the previous three RMS rounds done via face to face interviews.

REASONS FOR SUCCESS

- Persistence and ability of interviewers to **phone back multiple times** (as opposed to few call backs on face to face interviews).
- Use of **local village guides** to facilitate on-ground coordination
- We had local administrators (**Kebele managers)** on standby for any challenges on the ground
- The RMS panel households had already been visited face-to-face several times in previous rounds, giving our interviewers a **solid acquaintance with the households.**
- We had allotted sufficient time and money to make all the necessary logistical and technical preparations in line with telephone data collection.

ESSENTIAL PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES

- Exploring **availability of telephone network** in planned survey areas
- Establishing a **complete telephone directory** for sample households (from available data or other sources, like local government structures)
- Exploring if households have a **functional telephone apparatus**
- Exploring the **availability of electricity** or other options to charge phones, like solar means
- **Assigning focal persons** from within the sample clusters (community leaders, elders, chiefs, etc.) that can help in filling potential gaps.



ESSENTIAL PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES

- Liaising with focal persons on the ground:
  - To identify the **best spots** in the clusters for **telephone network**
  - To **fix interview appointments**, when direct call doesn't work
- **Securing ethical approvals** from relevant authorities
- **Informing respective government structures** about the survey and the modality of data collection, through email, voice calls and text messages and documenting communications
- Ensuring that **interviewers have smartphones or tablets** to conduct the data collection.
- Availing sufficient **airtime**

Mobile data collection is a viable alternative with the correct preparation

LESSONS LEARNED: PREPARATION

- Prearranging to **use the local guide's phone** for those households that do not have a phone

- Prearranging **interview date and time** with households:
  - To sufficiently charge their batteries.
  - To be in a ready mode for the interview (like, position themselves in the best network spot, arranging a convenient interview environment/ privacy and confidentiality)
  - The call should not be a surprising one, while the respondents are in the middle of an important business.

- Interviewers must be **experienced**, **well-trained,** should **speak the local languages and know local contexts**

- Providing interviewers with **unlimited voice call subscription** to make multiple calls, as needed, and to take the necessary **time to complete their interviews**

LESSONS LEARNED: DURING THE INTERVIEW

- Given the attention span of households and the inconveniences of phone data collection, interview **should not take over 45 minutes.**

- Providing respondents with **an incentive**, in the form of airtime, was found to help for a smooth interview. It also motivates households to remain in the panel for subsequent rounds.

- Securing **consent** from respondents and establishing good **rapport** at the beginning contributed to the smooth flow of interviews

- Since calls might drop off at any time in the middle of an interview (for battery, network or other reasons), informing respondents at the beginning to **call back** when they can was found to be helpful.

LESSONS LEARNED: POST-INTERVIEW & COSTS

- **Daily review of data** entered by enumerators prior to uploading to server
- **Data quality checks at home office** for consistency, completeness and validity; and provision of **real-time feedback** on suspicious values
- **Never underestimate the costs** of phone interviews, **are not that much lower** than face-to-face due to:
    - **Takes longer to complete** survey – enumerator must often call multiple times/days
    - **More preparation work needed** – arranging for support on the ground (local guides, local administrators, etc.), building phone directories, verifying phone numbers, scheduling interviews, etc.
    - **Unlimited airtime and incentives** add to the costs

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Thank You

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USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

IDEAL

MONITORING EVALUATION DURING COVID-19

What are M&E teams doing where there are no networks?

International Advisory, Products and Systems Ltd. (i-APS)
Amina Ferati, President
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About us

International Advisory, Products and Systems Ltd. (i-APS) is a **woman-owned and managed consulting firm** that leverages global expertise with local presence to transform organizations and communities into partners for change. We turn data into actionable knowledge and strengthen the capacity of organizations and communities through innovative solutions that enhance program impact and accountability.

U.S. Small Business Administration

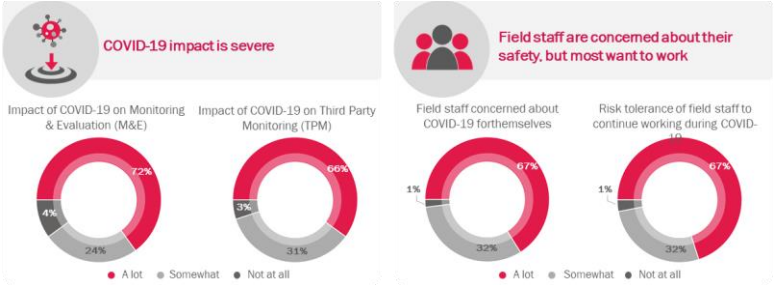
Economically Disadvantaged Women Owned Small Business

i-APS Response to COVID-19

NEW: i-APS Guide on M&E in Limited Resource Settings during COVID-19.

i-APS Guide on Adapting Third-Party Monitoring to COVID-19.

Results of i-APS Global Survey:



#1 Do No Harm

iAPS

GUIDE ON MONITORING, EVALUATION AND RESEARCH
in Limited Resource Settings in the COVID-19 Context
June 1, 2020

Key Considerations

1

Do No Harm: [3] Care must be taken by actors at all levels (donors and organizations, third-party monitoring organizations, field staff and respondents) to minimize risk of transmission to themselves and others.

Add monitoring, evaluation and research activities to already planned program activities to minimize risk.

2

Conduct a Risk Analysis: Conduct a risk analysis of what monitoring activities are being planned, what data is needed, what activities can be postponed, for what purpose will data be used, and what data might be available to assess the impact of program activities.

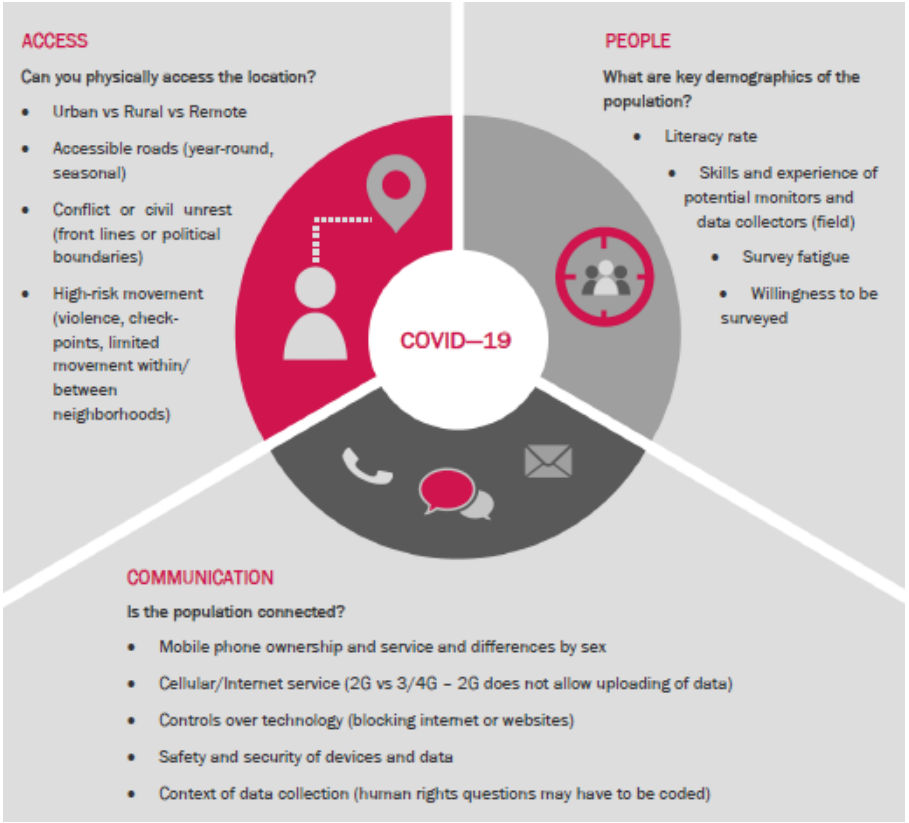
Reduce data collection to the minimum necessary to answer monitoring, evaluation and research questions. E.g. avoid asking extra questions "just because you are doing a survey."

Select a minimum set of indictors or rotate data collection with different indicator sets to minimize physical contact with persons.

3

Understand the Local Context: Recognize that urban, rural and remote settings may be limited resource. Just because an area is urban does not mean that movement is unrestricted. COVID-19 compounds challenges already present in urban and rural and limited resource settings.

#2 Consider Your Context



#3 Options When there is Limited/No Connection

In-Person Data Collection

Option	Pre-COVID-19	COVID-19 Adaptions
Community Liaison/Focal Point as *Data Collector*	Identified Community Liaison/Focal Point utilizes existing phone (with Airtime provided) or is supplied with phone/tablet (prepaid SIM).	If Community Liaison/Focal Point did not have phone/tablet prior to COVID-19, consider impact that introducing the technology may have on the local community and integrate explanation for use to build trust.
	Phone/tablet has mobile-based survey tool (e.g. Kobo ToolBox) that allows for offline data entry.	If there are multiple Community Liaisons/Focal Points in a single area, ensure individuals do not share phones as doing so can risk transmission.
		Follow social distancing local guidelines while conducting survey (mobile or paper) and maintain 2 meter distance. [4]
	Acts as a data collector to conduct survey via target audience using mobile device or paper with target audience.	Conduct survey outside of dwellings (ideally outdoors) or in well-ventilated area, ensure privacy of responses, and ensure persons other than respondent do not congregate.
		Community Liaisons/Focal Point should consider wearing masks and encourage respondent to do so as well. [5]
	At agreed points, travels to site with cellular and/or internet service for data upload.	Paper surveys: COVID-19 requires adaptations to minimize risk of transmission given potential physical contact with survey data (paper):
	Paper option of survey available in case of technology failure or used as primary method of data collection.	• Consider limiting the number of focal points to minimize the number of persons having contact with paper to minimize risk of COVID-19 transmission.
	Transport of paper surveys via local transport to headquarters/regional office at routine intervals.	• Instead of distributing printed surveys to the target population (which has implications for literacy and requires assistance in completing them), have Community Liaisons/Focal Point conduct the survey on paper.
		• Community Liaisons/Focal Point can take photos of paper surveys or use mobile-based scanner app to transfer paper survey to electronic format to minimize number of persons in physical contact with paper.

What Works – Adapting to COVID-19 in Yemen

ACCESS

- Protracted conflict
- 63% population is rural
- North-South divide

PEOPLE

- 51.1% literate

COMMUNICATION

- 54% have phone with cellular service
- Authorities control internet access

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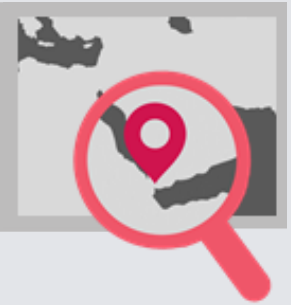

CONTEXT

- 17m in need of urgent food assistance
- 17.8m in need of WASH

COVID 19

- First case April 10
- 486 cases
- Stigma, fear of seeking care, destruction of health facilities

What Works – Adapting to COVID-19 in Yemen

- ✓ Data collectors provided phones with Kobo ToolBox installed.
- ✓ Data collectors trained on COVID-19 precautions.
- ✓ Surveys conducted in-person with COVID-19 precautions (distance + PPE + sanitation) using Kobo ToolBox and storing data **offline**.
- ✓ Data collectors provide phones with data to field leads for transport to urban area with service and/or travel to service points for uploading.

YEMEN

PHOTO CREDIT: I-APS

Thank you!

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