

## Case Study: Within-Community Sampling in an Internally Displaced Persons Camp

This case study describes an application of active and adaptive case-finding in IDP camps. A SQUEAC investigation was carried out in two IDP camps, Adn and Nu'ma, in a north African country to assess coverage for an established NGO-implemented TFP. The surveys reported here are small-area surveys of suspected low coverage areas, but the approach used and the lessons learned could be applied to wider-area likelihood surveys in similar settings.

### Challenges and Constraints

An initial investigation identified two challenges to within-community sampling in the camps:

1. The physical and social boundaries of 'communities' in the camps were not known.
2. There was an absence of persons typically recruited as key informants to assist with case-finding.

Security constraints also limited access to the camps.

### Physical and Social Boundaries of Communities

Adn and Nu'ma camps were nominally divided into 'sectors'. Each sector accommodated the influx of a new group of IDPs. A sector was not a cohesive unit, but was composed of a set of smaller communities based on pre-displacement community of origin. Each community identified with a particular *sheikh* (village leader). Sector numbers were not recorded in the OTP registration book because these were often not known to carers. The name of the *sheikh* was, however, always recorded.

The influx of large numbers of IDPs resulted in organic growth. Individual sectors and communities were not clearly delineated and 'official' sector boundaries varied both within and between agencies working in the camps. There was no obvious structure in terms of the arrangement of streets and houses in the camps. Communities were not always accommodated together and some were dispersed throughout the camp. The population and extent of each community was not, therefore, immediately or easily identifiable.

The reproduction of home communities also meant that, although some new acquaintances were made, it was common for people to have limited knowledge of and contact with members of neighbouring households if they belonged to different communities. Initial case-finding efforts in Nu'ma camp proved ineffective until it was realised that the failure to find SAM cases in a particular area of the camp was due to the informant's lack of knowledge of people that they lived in close proximity to but who belonged to different communities.

### Absence of Typical Key Informants

The need to gain an income meant that looking for work and maximising opportunities for casual labour were household priorities. People tended to leave the camps during the day to find work in neighbouring towns. Many houses stood empty or were occupied only by children during the day.

The need for income also applied to those in positions of responsibility. These included many of the key informants that are typically used for active and adaptive case-finding in SQUEAC investigations. TBAs were prohibited from working as midwives in the camps.

It was not possible to survey in the evening, when many would have returned from work in the town, due to security restrictions.

## Active and Adaptive Sampling

One sector was selected for assessment of coverage by small-area survey in each camp. These sectors were selected because routinely collected and qualitative data indicated that coverage was likely to be low in these sectors.

Adn – Sector 5	Nu'ma – Sector 7
<p>Vulnerable sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Many recent arrivals</li><li>• Poor sanitation and hygiene</li><li>• Risk of flooding</li></ul> <p>Pockets of malnutrition identified by screening</p> <p>Very few admissions to CMAM program</p> <p>Very low awareness of malnutrition</p> <p>Very low awareness of the CMAM program</p> <p>Neglected sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No responsible NGO</li><li>• Focus of activities on Sector 10</li><li>• Known poor coverage of general ration</li></ul>	<p>High population movement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Daily workers to local towns</li><li>• High numbers of defaulters</li><li>• Many children left alone or with neighbours</li></ul> <p>Small number of admissions for population size</p> <p>Low awareness of malnutrition</p> <p>Low awareness of the CMAM program</p> <p>Large number of women-headed households</p> <p>Large number of children-headed households</p>

Each sector contained 100 or more communities.

Communities were mapped by a process of determining belonging (see below).

Case-finding was done using community-specific informants identified by social network analysis (see below).

### Mapping by Determining Belonging

To ensure that case-finding was exhaustive, each community in the selected sector was sampled separately, assisted by informants specific to that community. The number and location of houses belonging to each community was established and boundaries were continually reconfirmed during the exercise to avoid:

- a. Eligible houses being missed
- b. Straying inadvertently into a different community
- c. Getting lost

This mapping of communities involved moving from house to house and asking:

*Which sheikh do you belong to?*

*Do the adjacent houses belong to the same sheikh?*

*Are there people that belong to the same sheikh but that live in a different part of the camp?*

Communities were sampled one at a time using key informants specific to each community.

Communities were **not** 'mapped' in the usual sense of the term (i.e., a diagrammatic representation of an area drawn on paper). The process of mapping was dynamic, with community boundaries located and membership confirmed during case-finding by constant questioning. This way a working *mental map* of communities was built up.

### ***Exploit Social Networks for Case-Finding***

Social networks were explored to facilitate the identification of potential SAM cases when no obvious key informant was available. Family members of persons typically recruited as key informants in SQUEAC assessments were recruited because they often shared knowledge of the wider community. Some women were able to provide information that extended beyond their immediate neighbours because they were often linked in both formal and informal ways. Faced with a common problem, social ties had frequently been strengthened and groups of women would join together to travel in safety to undertake work outside of the camps. Similarly, they would take turns collecting rations to enable others to continue working. A number of women also participated in NGO-organised craft activities and, as a consequence, widened their social networks.

Although they were no longer practising, the continued friendship of TBAs with different families proved useful in identifying potential cases. Common interests also drew wider groups of people together at water points, shops, and ceremonies (e.g., christenings, marriages, and funerals), which often transcended community boundaries. The awareness and contacts of people found at these sites were also exploited to ensure exhaustive sampling. Communities were sampled one at a time using informants specific to each community. These informants were identified and recruited as case-finding moved from community to community.

### ***Lessons Learned***

Conducting a SQUEAC assessment in these camps raised a number of sampling issues and underlined the importance of adapting methods to the particular context. Case-finding methods need to be designed and adapted for specific contexts. There is no guarantee that a method that works well in one setting will work well in another.

For future SQUEAC investigations in camp settings the following steps are recommended:

- Allow time to understand the complexities of camp structure.
- Allow time to understand the social and economic realities of camp life.
- Allow time to identify and map individual communities during case-finding.
- Allow time to identify and recruit (key) informants during case-finding.

### ***Conclusions***

It should not be assumed that active and adaptive case-finding methods that usually work well in rural communities will also work in other settings. Our experience is that active and adaptive sampling can work in IDP camps, but only if efforts are made to identify and map communities and social networks during case-finding.