

Five Discussion Questions: determining emergency needs

WHAT are they for?

These questions will help individuals to begin to engage in conversation with people who have been affected by a disaster, to determine their priority needs and to record the content of those initial conversations.

WHEN are they for?

To be used within the **first 24 to 72 hours** of a rapid-onset emergency when there is limited time to engage in the IRNA. We expect this should take 10–15 minutes to complete.

WHO are they for?

For any individual sent to assess the emergency situation. They are especially useful for staff, partners or local churches that do not have previous experience of conducting needs assessments in an emergency context.

HOW to use

Print several copies of this document before you travel to affected communities. Hold conversations with individuals or groups of individuals. You will need to:

1. Introduce yourself and your organisation. Explain your reasons for visiting the community. Ask if they would be happy to answer some questions.
2. Ask the five questions to ensure that you obtain critical information about the effects of the emergency. Record the answers.
3. Before you close the conversation, record basic information (gender, ethnicity and age) about the person(s) you have been speaking to.

Limitations of the questions

These questions are only intended for initial, informal conversations with affected people. They do not replace a needs assessment. **They should be followed by a formal and detailed needs assessment when time allows.**

My name is _____ and I work for Tearfund/[*partner name*] – a relief and development organisation. We are here to understand more about your situation to help our organisation determine the most appropriate response to the crisis. Would you be happy for us to ask you some questions about how you have been affected?

Thank you for your willingness to talk to us!

Location (village/community level)	
GPS coordinates	
Date of conversation	
Gender of informant	
Ethnicity of informant	
Age of informant	<input type="checkbox"/> 12 – 17 years old <input type="checkbox"/> 25 – 34 years old <input type="checkbox"/> 45 – 54 years old <input type="checkbox"/> 18 – 24 years old <input type="checkbox"/> 35 – 44 years old <input type="checkbox"/> Over 55 years old

How has the crisis affected you? How many people/households in your community are affected?

Where are you staying right now? Do you have access to food and clean drinking water? Are you aware of anyone in your community with immediate medical needs?

What are your (top three) needs?

**How would you like to be assisted? Would you prefer to receive cash assistance, vouchers or items in-kind?
See definitions at the bottom of this page.**

Have you received assistance from any organisation yet – eg government, INGO, NNGO, civil society, churches? If so, what assistance have you received or what assistance are they planning to give?

Definitions of cash, vouchers and in-kind assistance

- **Cash:** Provision of assistance in the form of money – either physical currency or e-cash
- **Vouchers:** Provision of assistance in the form of a paper, token or e-voucher that can be exchanged for a set quantity or value of goods
- **In-kind:** Provision of assistance in the form of physical goods



learn.tearfund.org
100 Church Road, Teddington TW11 8QE, United Kingdom
T UK +44 (0) 20 3906 3906 E publications@tearfund.org