## Different methods, different strengths

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population-based samples (more representative)</th>
<th>Pre-defined problems (outsider perspectives)</th>
<th>Perceived problems (local perspectives)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Surveys of mortality nutrition and diseases</td>
<td>Humanitarian Emergency Settings PERceived needs scale (HESPER)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience samples (easier)</td>
<td>Old version of IRA</td>
<td>- Focus groups with open questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- MIRA (uses adapted HESPER)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What does the HESPER look like?

- 26 **subjective** questions such as:
  - Do you have a **serious** problem because you do not have an adequate place to live in?
  - Is there a **serious** problem for women in your community because of physical or sexual violence towards them, either in the community or in their homes (relevant to MIRA)

- Additional question(s):
  - Do you have any other **serious** problems that I have not yet asked you about?
  - Out of these problems, which three are the most serious problems? (eg livelihoods)
Aims of HESPER

- To **scientifically quantify the prevalence and distribution of people's subjective perceptions** of social, physical and mental needs in general (sub)population(s) in humanitarian settings

- To have excellent properties
  - can be quickly implemented
  - **valid** and **reliable** (have explicit and strong **psychometric properties**)
  - completed rapidly (between 15 to 30 minutes on average)
  - easily learned and used on the basis of a **training manual**
  - applicable to many populations and settings in low- and middle-income countries (option: adding locally relevant items)
How was the HESPER being developed?

- With a King's College PhD student (Maya Semrau) with field access through lots of agencies: UNHCR, IMC, FAFO, HAP, and WHO

- Steering group of experts in humanitarian assessment

1. Item generation: Development of item pool based on review of 16 existing assessment reports on perceived needs (e.g., free listings, Fritz surveys): 38 items

2. Item reduction: Expert ratings of importance of items: 32 items remained

3. Pilot testing with small samples in Jordan, UK, Sudan, Gaza to assess items' feasibility, intelligibility, and cultural applicability: 26 items remained
   - Interviewers and interviewees were asked on experience of filling out HESPER
   - Understandability, relevance, completeness, appropriateness/honesty

4. Field testing in large samples in Jordan, Nepal, Haiti
   - Test-test retest reliability, Convergent validity, Duration
HESPER training manual

- 30 pages in Appendix 2 of overall manual

- A professional Humanitarian Officer can read it and implement it if and only if s/he reads all including exercises

- Quickly hired, lay people need grade 12 plus 0.5-1 day training
Example interview 1

- **Interviewer:** “Do you have a serious problem because you do not have enough water that is safe for drinking or cooking?”

- **Mani:** “We had problems for a long time and we had to find water wherever we could. In the last few days though aid workers have come and they have given us water to drink.”

- **Interviewer:** “That’s good. So would you say that you have still got a serious problem with this, or is it okay now?”

- **Mani:** “It is a problem, but it is not a serious problem.”
Example interview 2

- Interviewer: “Do you have a serious problem with food? For example, because you do not have enough food, or good enough food, or because you are not able to cook food.”

- Mani: “We don’t have enough food at all.”

- Interviewer: “Would you say that this is a serious problem?”

- Mani: “Yes, very serious.”
Interviewer: “Do you have a serious problem because of inadequate aid? For example, because you do not have fair access to the aid that is available, or because aid agencies are working on their own without involvement from people in your community.” (question 18)

Person being interviewed: “I have not heard anything. Maybe you can tell me. What is happening? Are we going to receive any aid? And where do we get it from? We haven’t been told anything.”
What should the interviewer do?

a. Say: “That’s a shame. Unfortunately I do not have much information either. I am happy to talk about this after the interview. We would really like to hear about your experiences at this time. Would it be okay to continue with the interview for now? So, would you consider the lack of information a serious problem?”

b. Rate the question as a Serious problem and move on to the next question.
Advantages HESPER

- Broad range of perceived needs
- Rapid (learning, implementing, analyses)
- Covers many issues (mostly physical basic needs)
- No cluster – no politics
- Can be used in random samples (but not in MIRA)
- The only humanitarian tool (outside mental health) that has a scientific underpinning in terms of reliability.