



# WASH Needs Assessment

**Asia Pacific Surge Training:  
Emergency WASH**

21 November 2022



*Are any of your family members sick?  
Where are they now?  
Have any other NGOs been here to give help?  
How about your water supply?  
Do you need hygiene items?  
????*

*???*

*Who are these people?  
Why have they come?  
What are they giving us?  
Why is he asking so many questions?  
Why are these people asking the same questions?*

*???*





# Content

- Why do we need to do a needs assessment
- Assessment process
- Assessment focus
- Methods of data collection
- WASH needs assessment tools



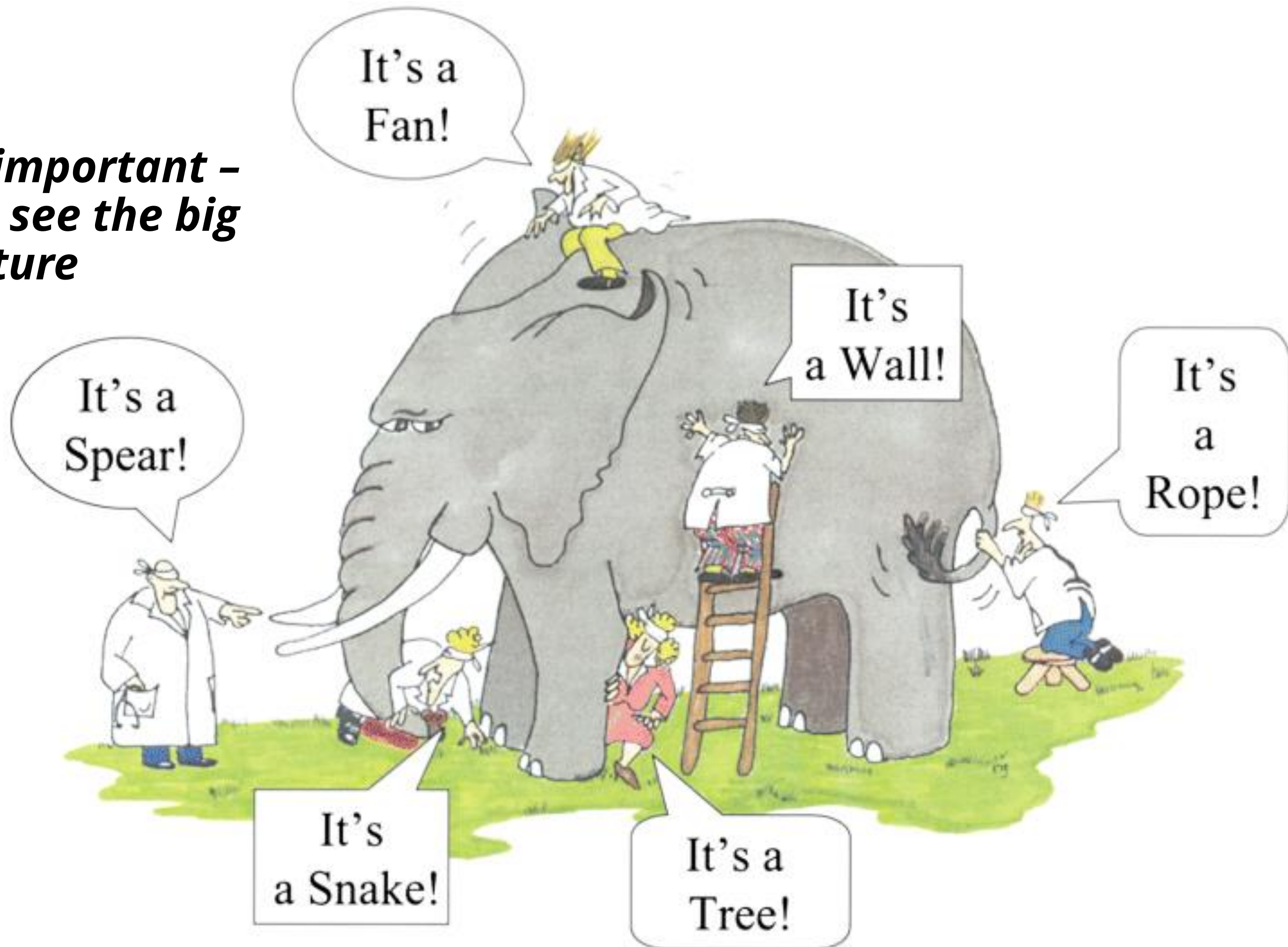
# Why do we do a needs assessment



- To understand a situation in order to:
  - Identify problems
  - Source of problems
  - Consequences of problems
- Purpose:
  - Not to identify interventions but to find out whether an intervention is needed and if yes:
    - It enables prioritization of response based on the needs identified.
    - It enables the development of an emergency plan of action.



***Context is important –  
we have to see the big  
picture***



# The assessment process

## Phase 1: Before the field visit

Preliminary review of the secondary information

Is an assessment needed?

If NO, nothing further

If YES, prepare the assessment

- Preparation for the field visit
  - Define assessment objectives
  - Who, where, when, how long, assessment methods, who to meet, etc.
  - Appointment of team members

# The assessment process

## Phase 2: During the field visit

- Observation
  - look, smell, hear, feel and touch

- Talking to people
  - Interview: individual/group
  - Structure: semi, unstructured

## Phase 3: After the field visit

- Analysis of information obtained
- Recommendations
- Reporting
- Determine whether there is a need for follow-ups/more assessments

Be aware of danger of **assessment fatigue** - think of the aim of your assessment and what information is most needed



# Data collection timeline



**1 week**

## **Rapid assessment:**

Provides general information about needs, possible intervention types and resource requirements

### **Methods:**

- Observation
- Exploratory walks
- Household/group/key informant interviews
- Assessment checklist

**1 month**

## **Detailed assessment:**

Provides more detailed/sectorial information about needs after a rapid assessment has been done, when considering operations in a new area or if situation changes

### **Methods:**

- Observation
- Household interview
- Focus group discussion
- Survey

**Continuous process**

## **Continual assessment:**

Process whereby information is continually updated

### **Methods:**

- Three-pile sorting
- Pocket chart
- Seasonal calendar

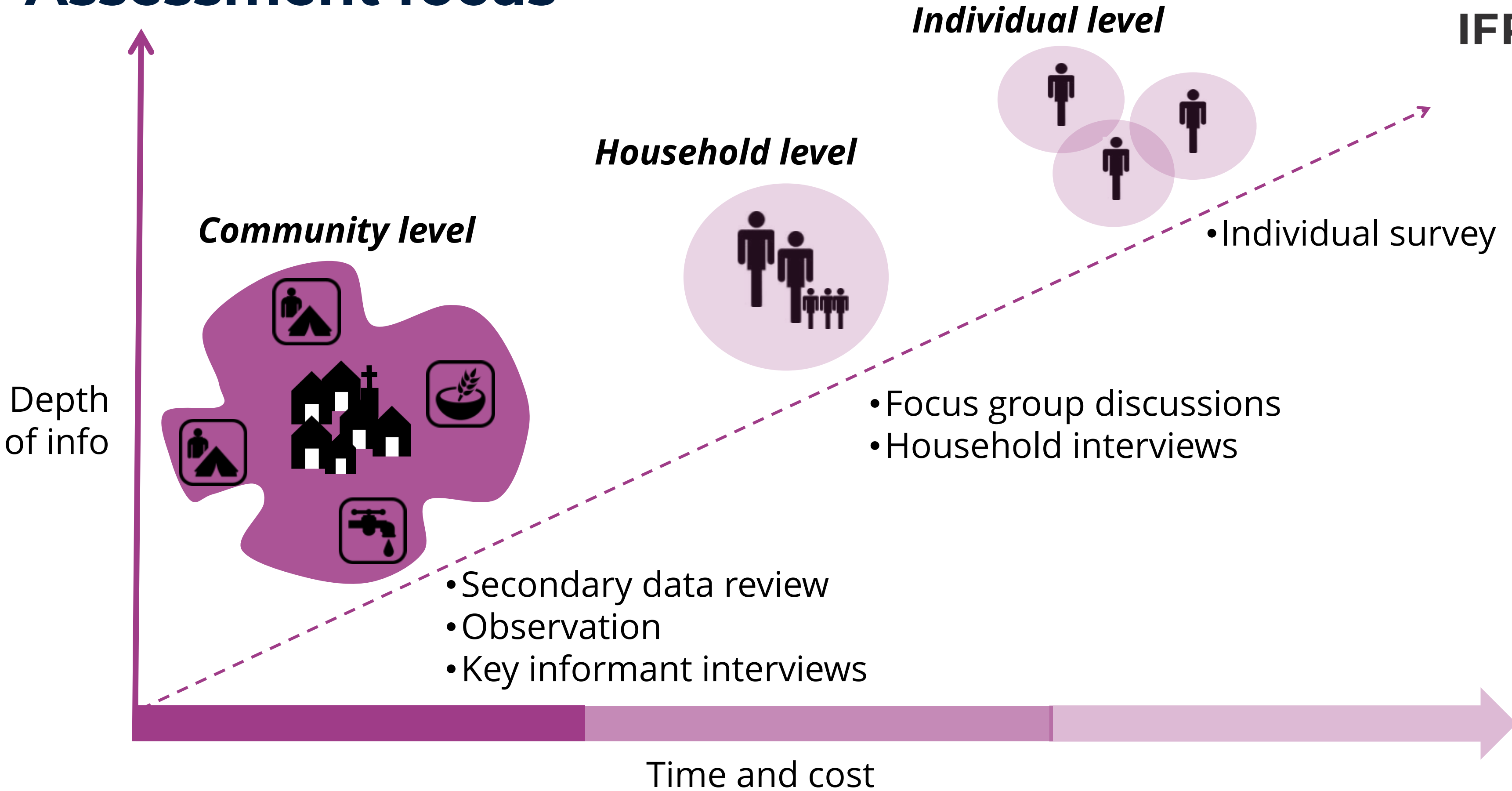


# Data collection timeline



	Rapid assessment	Detailed assessment	Continual assessment
Time	About 1 week	About 1 month	Info regularly collected throughout operations
Access to info sources	Limited – no time to visit all locations and to talk to full range of informants	Possible to visit different locations and interview full range of informants	Full access
Typical info sources	Secondary info, local services, government, NGOs, affected population/HHs (small sample)	Secondary info, full range of informants	Secondary info, selected informants, RCRC staff and volunteers
Type of assessment team	Generalists, with previous exposure to the same type of emergency	Generalist, with possible support of technical specialists	Generalist (could be RCRC staff and volunteers)

# Assessment focus





# Methods of primary data collection: Observation



- Direct observation – a good starting point in an assessment (and is often under-rated as an information source)
- Walk through area with locals - have casual conversations with people you see
- Observation is useful for cross-checking and could provide unexpected information
- Be curious, ask questions and listen!



# Methods of primary data collection: Interviews



- **Group interviews**

- Wide range of topics - people from different backgrounds who can provide an overview
- Deep understanding of a particular issue - people from similar backgrounds
- People from certain groups who may be reluctant to speak openly



- **Individual interviews (key informants)**

- People with specific knowledge or information about certain aspects of the community of interest
- Useful when exploring sensitive issues that are not appropriate to be discussed openly
- Do not have enough time to organize a group interview





# Do's and don'ts during an interview



## Do

- Introduce yourself
- Assure confidentiality
- Be focused and clear of the aim of your assessment
- Ask open-ended questions
- Find out when, where and how long to talk to people
- Wait for response, then probe neutrally e.g. anything else?
- Do not suggest answer – verbal/non-verbal
- Do not react to answers
- Maintain conversational tone
- Know some key local words
- Dress the part
- Look interested and concerned
- Limit what you ask to essentials



## Don't

- Wear sunglasses when talking
- Take too much notes
- Make promises you can't keep
- Use of jargon or words that the people you are interviewing don't understand
- Ask yes/no questions (try to limit)
- Ask unnecessary questions

# Methods of primary data collection: Three-pile sorting





# Methods of primary data collection: Three-pile sorting



Good



Bad



In-between

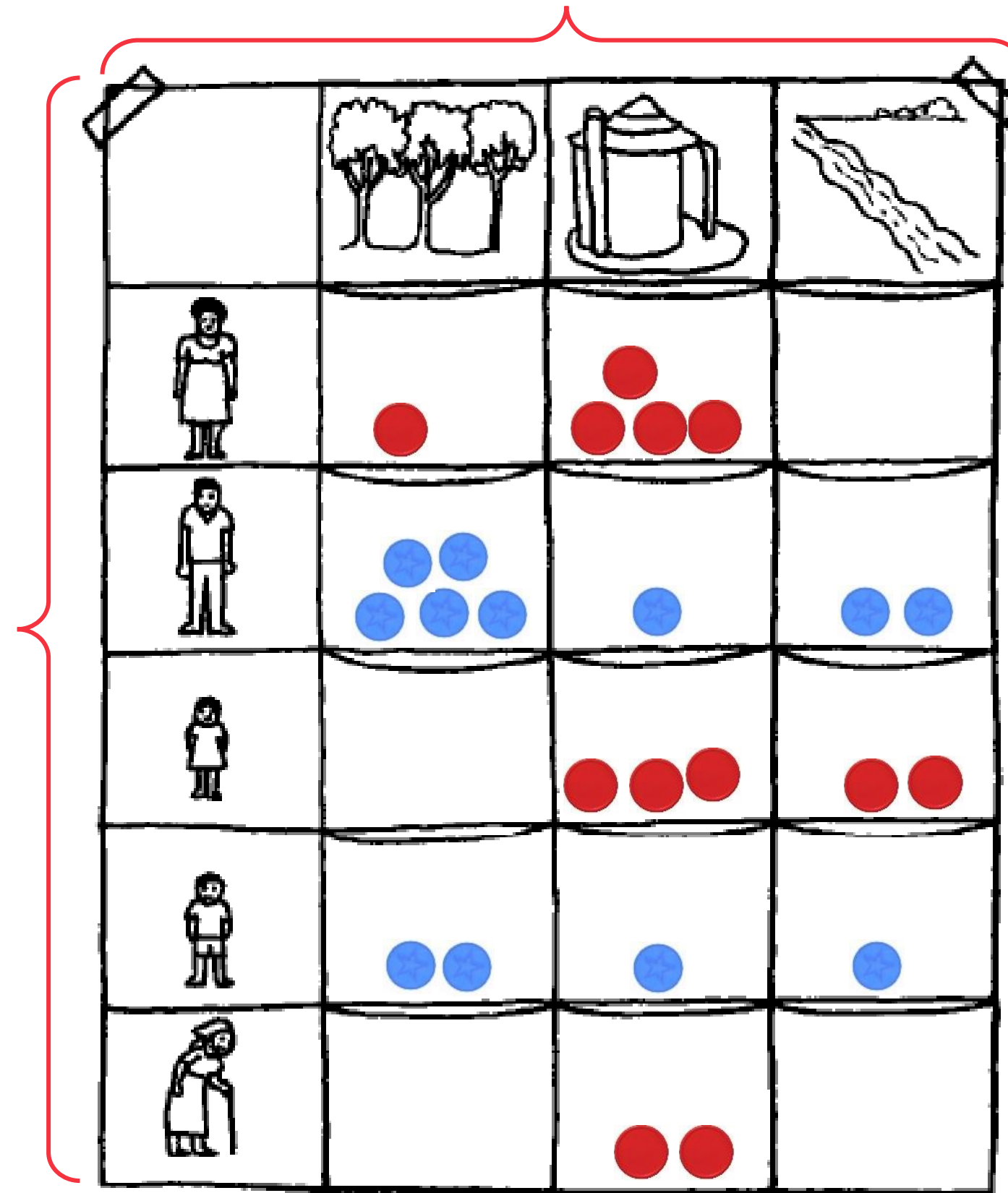


# Methods of primary data collection: Pocket chart voting

E.g. hygiene practices, types of latrine/defecation practice, ...

E.g. Different types of people in the community

- Adult man
- Adult woman
- Boy
- Girl
- Elderly person
- ...





# Methods of primary data collection: Some examples



Three-pile sorting



Pocket chart





# WASH initial needs assessment checklist



**Appendix 1:** Water supply, sanitation and hygiene promotion initial needs assessment checklist (*pg 139 of the Sphere handbook – 2018 edition*)

- **General**

- How many people are affected and where are they? Get disaggregated data by sex, age, disability, etc.
- What water, sanitation and hygiene practices were the population used to before the disaster?
- Who are the key people/authorities to consult or contact?

- **Hygiene promotion (and MHM)**

- Do people wash their hands after defecation and before food preparation and eating?
- Where do people access/buy their essential hygiene items? Has this access changed since the disaster?
- What are the needs and preference of women and girls for menstrual hygiene practices?

# WASH initial needs assessment checklist



- **Water supply**

- What are the current water supply sources?
- What are the alternatives if water sources are inadequate?
- Is the current water supply reliable?
- Do people have enough water containers to collect and store water?

- **Excreta disposal**

- Are there any existing facilities? If yes, are they used? Are they sufficient?
- Are there any socio-cultural norms to consider in the design of the toilet?
- Are people familiar with the design, construction and use of toilets?
- What local materials are available for constructing toilets?
- Are there skilled workers in the communities, such as carpenters?

- **Vector-borne diseases**

- What information and safety precautions need to be provided to households?

- **Solid waste management**

- How do people dispose of their waste? What type and quantity of solid waste is produced?



# Key messages



- Assessment is a vital element in the process of developing an **emergency plan of action**, that provides an **understanding of an emergency situation**.
- The purpose to find out whether **an intervention is needed or not**, and if yes, assist with **prioritization of the response** based on identified needs.
- Be clear of your **assessment objectives and questions** that must be answered in order to achieve the required outputs. Think of the do's and don'ts!!
- There are **a variety of assessment methods** to carry out assessments.
- **Analyze information**, with this in mind: main problems, who is affected by these problems, what is the capacity of the affected population and how well can they cope with the problems.