

THE EQUITY TOOL CASE STUDY



Effectively identifying and serving the most vulnerable crisis victims with the EquityTool and



PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) responds to humanitarian crises around the world to help individuals who have been affected by conflict or natural disasters. The organization is starting to move toward increased use of cash transfers to meet the needs of individuals impacted by a crisis. While research has demonstrated the effectiveness of cash transfers to improve economic welfare, limited work has been done to improve the operational efficiency of such programs. The eligibility criteria for an IRC cash transfer program are often defined by a crisis, such as a flood or earthquake. The IRC's research and development work in Pakistan wanted to test the methods used to identify a vulnerable individual, using poverty as a proxy for vulnerability, in the absence of a disaster. In order to improve cost and time efficiency of cash transfers, the IRC wanted to evaluate two different targeting methods in a rural area of Pakistan: a community based approach and one that uses the government's socioeconomic registry to target client households. The IRC used the EquityTool to determine how accurately these two targeting methods selected clients.

EQUITYTOOL EXPERIENCE

The economic recovery and development program uses door-to-door household level surveys to identify vulnerability, often focusing on different characteristics such as a female head of household, or a household member who is disabled, or a high number of dependents compared against income or household with borderline food consumption scores. The EquityTool was used to understand how well the community-based and government database worked to identify vulnerable individuals, and to determine if one method was more accurate than the other. The IRC opted to use the EquityTool questions, factor weights, and quintile cut-offs with their own data collection tools. Data was collected via paper-based forms, entered into Excel spreadsheets and analyzed using Stata. With minimal training led by IRC staff, survey enumerators were able to quickly collect data from 300 households in two locations. Metrics for Management provided technical assistance to use the EquityTool outside the browser-based platform and through M4M's analysis guidance, the IRC was able to easily run and interpret the results.

FINDINGS & LESSONS LEARNED

By using the EquityTool to examine two existing methodologies to understand vulnerability, the IRC learned that both the community-based approach and government database worked equally well to target the poor. The results will inform future iterations of the program. Because the program operates in a rural area of Pakistan, IRC also learned that 85% of their population fell in the first quintile, meaning these households are nationally among the very poorest. Therefore, because such a large proportion of the population is in the lowest quintile, IRC finds it is important to use the EquityTool alongside other crisis-specific or vulnerability criteria to most effectively target their service population.

When individuals and households are affected by crises, the poor are often disproportionately impacted and take more time to recover. This analysis helped the IRC to confirm that their targeting methods to reach those most in need are working, ensuring the continued effectiveness of their programs.

Learn more at www.rescue.org

