How and why do partners embark on a profiling process?

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What additional tools are there for this phase?

**Guidance:**
- Profiling process

**Templates:**
- Concept note
- Work plan
- Budget plan
It is also important to communicate that profiling is not a one-size-fits-all process. Profiling exercises always differ based on context: the process and methods must be adapted to suit the partners’ capacities, information needs, the type of displacement, and the field realities of the operation. Because of this, three major questions need to be answered to assess whether or not to initiate a profiling exercise:

1) **Existing data**
What data currently exists on the displacement situation and are there major gaps? Is this data of sufficient quality and does it fit the needs of the context? Do all partners accept and use the data, including from national and local governments?

2) **Data needs**
Why do the partners working on displacement need more evidence? What for? What kind of information?

3) **Interest and capacity for profiling**
Are partners interested to fund and undertake a joint data collection exercise?

A profiling exercise can produce a wide range of information needed to make decisions. This often includes disaggregated population estimates, and a snapshot of the humanitarian and development needs, living conditions, and coping mechanisms of different displaced and local populations. The results can provide a solid and trusted baseline, which may be critical if no data exists or the little data available is disputed. It can also provide a basis for identifying where more specific follow-up data collection needs to happen. But most importantly, profiling can be used to inform programs and policies to protect displaced populations, and to plan complementary government, humanitarian, and development responses to support displaced persons and communities in their efforts to reach durable solutions.

**Why is this phase important for a profiling process?**

Because profiling is a process for gathering information that is collaborative and comprehensive in nature, it may be more resource-intensive than other types of data collection efforts. As such, it is important to discuss with partners what this type of process is and what it can and cannot offer before initiating a profiling. For example, profiling does not produce a full census of a population, nor does it set up a registration or monitoring system to collect individual-level data on a recurring basis. But it does provide valuable information for a joint understanding of the displacement situation and the joint planning of responses.

Profiling provides valuable information for a joint understanding of the displacement situation and the joint planning of responses.

www.jet.jips.org/phase/initiating-the-profiling-exercise
Develop an initial concept note outlining the data needs and general priorities of the context.

Start secondary data collection to assess the existing data and remaining data needs, talking with a broad group of stakeholders to access data available (as most data is not published online).

Develop and implement a strategy for reaching out to a broad group of stakeholders to discuss the data needs and explore the benefits of a profiling exercise, making sure to look beyond traditional partners to consider local-level actors responding to displacement or working on data collection (such as municipalities, local academic institutions, and civil society groups from among the displaced communities).

Hold a workshop with a broad group of stakeholders to agree on whether to proceed, and to establish the overall objective for a profiling exercise. This broad group of stakeholders should remain informed of the progress of the profiling exercise throughout, but may not necessarily take part in the core working group undertaking the exercise. This will be decided in the next phase.

Develop a preliminary work plan that includes to keep an overview of the tasks and an estimate of the timeframes for each.

Develop a preliminary budget plan.

Revise the concept note, and share with a broad group of stakeholders for comments and endorsement.
Communicate clearly with potential profiling partners

It is critical to have frank discussions on the context’s data needs, and the benefits and drawbacks of a collaborative profiling exercise. A profiling exercise should be motivated by significant data gaps or a need for the development of a national-level policy to protect or assist displaced populations for attaining solutions.

Talk to a wide variety of stakeholders about profiling and what it can accomplish

This helps to generate discussions and encourage support and participation in the profiling exercise. Showing the type of data that profiling exercises have produced in other, related contexts can help make the discussions less abstract. For example, the profiling exercise in Honduras in 2015 made visible the internal displacement crisis in the country to place IDPs on the public agenda. It also provided a better understanding of the scale of displacement and the profile of those displaced for planning programs, informed concrete proposals in the government to address internal displacement and protect displaced persons, and paved the way to further research on these issues.

Start with the data users

The more clarity you have on what the data users need to use the data for and why, the easier it is to design and develop the methodology you need to collect the data. When working with or within governments, this means identifying which agency has the specific mandate for programs or policies affecting displaced populations, and how these agencies link with other agencies (for instance development or urban planning). It is important to remember that many different types of programs or policies can affect the situation of the displaced, including for example agencies working on housing developments.
Develop a stakeholder map

This may be a helpful way of planning how to bring relevant partners on board and to move profiling discussions forward.

This involves first identifying the stakeholders’ roles in the context, especially which stakeholders will be critical users of the data for a displacement response, how stakeholders’ data needs align with what a profiling can produce, and what kind of influence stakeholders have in the context for responding to displacement.

The next step is to identify the actors that are relevant for displacement responses. This also includes finding stakeholders willing and able to support the profiling, in other words to what degree they will enable and/or participate in the collaborative process. This means that if a specific partner does not seem interested or lacks capacity but is a key actor for displacement responses, it is important to assess how to bring that actor on board. For example, by demonstrating the potential for the evidence to be relevant for their work, or discussing a more specific role in the profiling within that actors’ capacity.

Again, it is critical here to make sure to look beyond traditional partners to consider local-level actors responding to displacement or working on data collection (such as municipalities, local academic institutions, and civil society groups from among the displaced communities). They often have more direct contact with displaced communities with the potential for large impact.
What are the background concepts I need to know?

What is profiling?
The official definition of profiling has evolved since it was first endorsed in 2008. The best working definition is featured in the Guidance for Profiling Urban Displacement Situations (2014).

Profiling is a collaborative, information-gathering process that provides disaggregated, comparative data about displacement situations. This information is intended to guide programming, to advocate for protection and assistance, and to inform policy and long-term solutions. Profiling is distinguished from other field data collection approaches in the following ways:

**It is a process**
Profiling is not limited to data collection but comprises a sequence of interlinked steps beginning with consensus building around the need for profiling, and ending with the validation of findings by target groups and the wide dissemination of results.

**It is comparative**
Displaced and non-displaced people often face similar conditions and challenges, so clarifying their differences and similarities can help with the strategic targeting of program development and reveal program synergies.

**It provides disaggregated data**
Profiling collects comparative data disaggregated by location, sex, age and diversity. This comparative information is crucial for operational and policy decision-making.

**It is collaborative**
Profiling brings together a range of actors, including governments, to increase the likelihood that information will be widely used, and to reduce the practice of multiple surveys (questionnaires) and assessments being conducted in parallel. Profiling provides a platform for common understanding of the local challenges and available resources in a humanitarian or development operation.

**It contributes to solutions to displacement**
The information collected includes indicators about vulnerability, how different groups are integrated, and their likelihood of future return or onward movement. This kind of information can be tracked over time allowing better insight about protection and durable solutions.