



Needs Assessment of a target group

A variety of information sources can be used to assess the needs of a target group:

- Official data on population health, especially on the local level
- Official reports on social status and social problems
- Academic research
- Observations and experiences of project personnel
- Press articles, publications in electronic media and on the internet, documentaries
- Statements and reports of other organisations or experts
- Regional or institutional data sources (e.g. school entry health examination data from the local district)
- Target-group-specific information sources (e.g. if the target group is young people who use drugs: police reporting on young offenders and drug-related crime, youth studies)
- Members and representatives of the target group itself (e.g. reports of self-help organisations, advocacy groups, personal experiences as a member of the target group or target group surveys)

The necessary information can normally not be provided by a single source. Information from a variety of sources should be combined – see also *Triangulation*.

The following questions arise during a Needs Assessment:

- “Who is the target group concerned?”
- “Which information is required?”
- “Which information sources should be considered?”
- “How do we obtain this information?”
- “What is the information telling us?”
- “How credible is the information?”
- “How can contradictions within the information be explained?”
- “What is missing?”

When information is missing, there is an opportunity to collect additional data. The local needs of a target group are best assessed with the involvement (meaning: participation) of the target group. This means that information is not only collected about the target group, but also from and with the target group.

Continue with:

- [Participatory Needs Assessment](#)
- [Multiple Perspectives \(Triangulation\)](#)

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