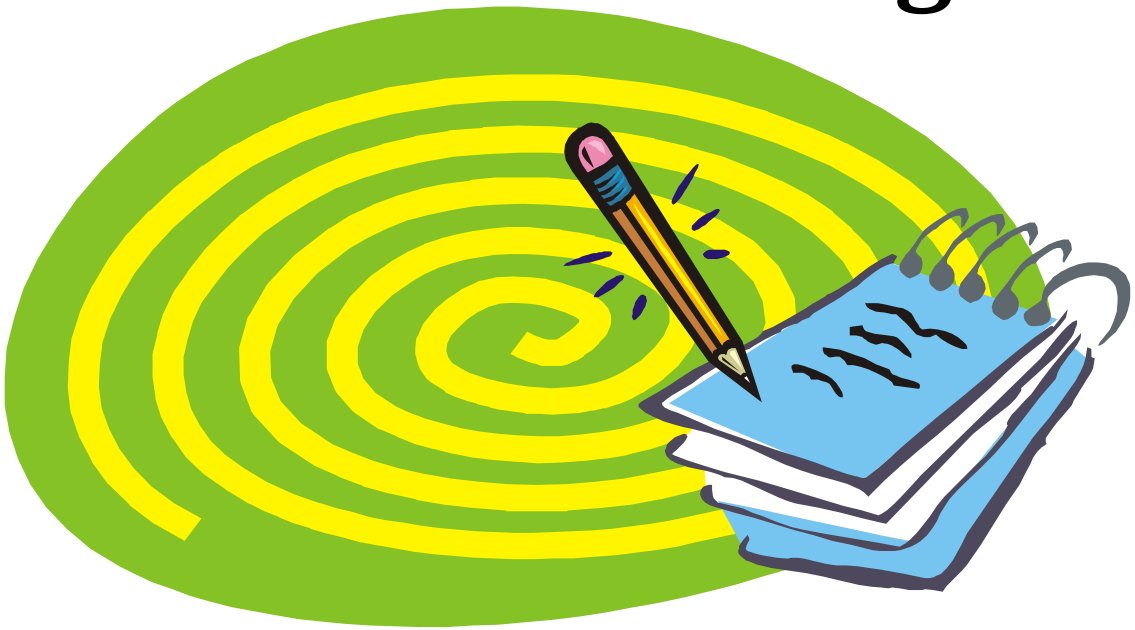
Lecture/Discussion #5:

Gathering secondary information and interviewing



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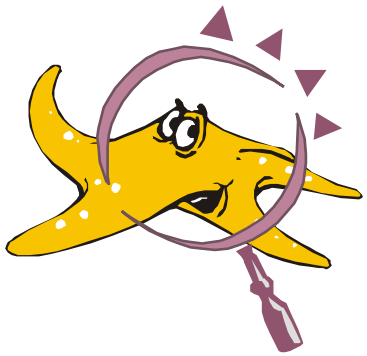

Key content points:

- Secondary data are information that have already been gathered or published for some other purpose. Generally, it is faster to collect and less expensive than primary data.
- It is always useful to begin any research or study by gathering relevant secondary data.
- The time involved in searching secondary data is ordinarily much less than that needed to complete primary data collection.
- Secondary data can play a substantial role in the exploratory phase of research.
- In PCRA, secondary sources can be extremely useful in defining both the population and the locality being assessed.

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Why gather existing information?

- To serve as an initial introduction to the locality and the community
- Provide baseline information which could serve as basis for assessing early CRM actions/interventions in the area
- Lessen data duplication
- Help identify data gaps

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Sources of secondary information

- National and local government agencies (*development plans, land use plans, cadastral maps, census data, fisheries data*)
- Nongovernment organizations (*documentation of past and current development projects in the area, national and local situationers, case studies, etc.*)
- Academic and research institutions (*researches, theses, habitat assessment, resource and ecological surveys, water quality assessment, socio-economic profile*)

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Secondary data may be collected using different means like:

- Letter writing
- Making telephone calls
- Visiting offices and libraries
- Interviewing officials, teachers, scientists and researchers
- Checking data available in the village/barangay/municipality
- Gathering general information from the national agencies, donor-funded projects or non-government organizations

While the benefits of using secondary information are numerous, it has its shortcomings. Among these are:

- Reliability and accuracy of data provided
- Relevance of old information (except as baseline for comparison)
- Existence of possible data bias
- Dependability of research methodologies employed

Gathering information through interviews

Interviewing is a method of gathering data/information by asking questions.

The 2 parties involved in this process:

1) Interviewer(s) – the person(s) asking the questions
2) Respondent(s) – the person(s) who provide the information/data

The aims of a PCRA interview are:

- Gather reliable information for resource assessment
- Facilitate improved communication for community development and institutional strengthening
- Understand the perspective of others in the community
- Find out what is important to the community

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The following data/information may be obtained from interviews

- Socio-economic data
  - occupation/livelihood
  - household composition
  - housing condition
  - others
  - income
  - health
  - education
- Knowledge, attitudes, perceptions about the coastal environment
- Existing coastal habitats and fisheries resources
- Perceived status of these resources
- Community activities and existing organizations in the community
- Existing livelihood/resource management projects in the community
- Assessment of trends in fish catch
- Perceived changes in fisheries resources
- Existing infrastructure projects/coastal development activities
- Perceived problems, concerns, issues
- Proposed solutions to these problems

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Types of interviews

Structured interviews: Composed of specific set of questions outlined in a specific sequence, often with closed-ended or multiple choice options for responses.

Semi-structured interviews: Generally composed of a combination of closed-ended and open-ended questions, with a lot of follow-up or probe questions.

A semi-structured interview usually involves a set of guide questions or discussion points.

Design of the interview schedule must be prepared beforehand and with care.

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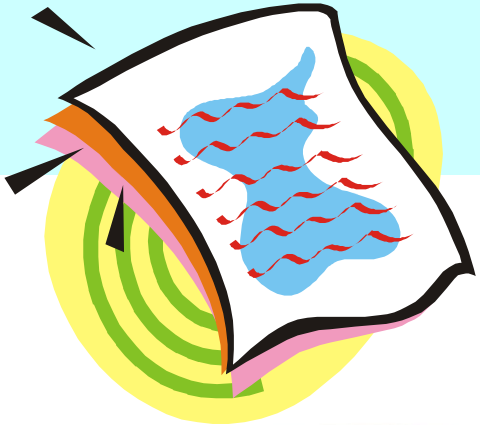
The interview process

- Beginning
  - Introduction
  - Ask permission
  - State purpose
  - Set time frame
- Interview proper
  - Actual asking of questions
- Closing



Tools or instruments used to guide the interview

- Interview questionnaire
- Interview guide
- Focused group discussion guide
- Use of diagrams, graphs

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Types of questions to ask

- **Descriptive questions** - require the informants to describe activities or issues (*Describe how your fishing methods and fish catch have changed over the years*);
- **Structural questions** - elicit a response that indicates how well the informant understands the complexity of the situation (*What effect has the degraded condition of the reef had on your livelihood?*);
- **Contrast questions** - provide an opportunity for the informant to compare and contrast situations in their world. (*How would you compare the quality of life in the village now with 10 years ago?*); and
- **Probing questions** - give the informant an opportunity to analyze situations and look for underlying causes (*Why do you think the fish catch has declined?*)

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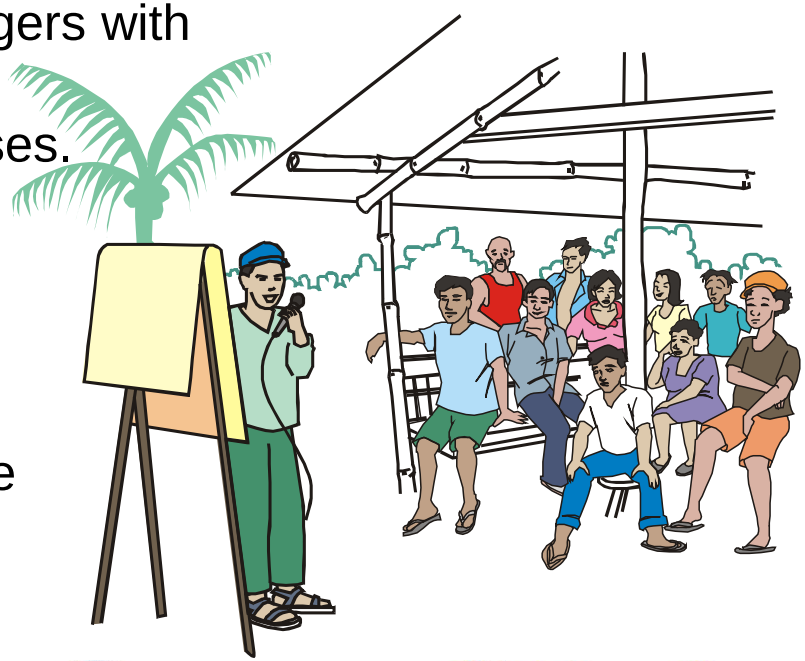
Key respondents in interviews

- **Individuals/Key informants and opinion leader.**
  Selected community members who are able to provide information on particular subjects based on their knowledge, skills or experience are specially sought to provide information.

- **Groups or specific sectors in the community.**
  Significant information like fishing practices & gears, health data, community issues and concerns are better generated through group interviews given the familiarity of the villagers with one another, thereby making it easier for them to confirm or challenge their responses.

- **Participants in Focus Group Discussions (FGDs).**
  FGDs are conducted to discuss specific topics or issues in detail. A small group of people (4 to 10) who are knowledgeable or interested in the topic are invited to participate in the discussions.



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Interviewing Guidelines

DO's

Before the interview

- Inform concerned local leaders about the PCRA activity and the need to conduct interviews. Set a date, time and place most convenient to the respondents.
- Obtain a broad overview of the area and the community so that you are able to select a representative sample of interviewees.
- Prepare for the interview.
- Identify persons to be interviewed beforehand and schedule appointments. State the purpose of the interview.
- Be sensitive to cultural practices.
- Arrange for a translator if you do not speak the local language/dialect of your respondent.
- Be aware of the daily schedule of community members. Schedule interviews so they do not interfere with respondent's important activities.
- Assess length of time needed to complete the interview.
- Ensure all the materials needed for the interview are in order.

Before the interview (*continued*)

DONT's

- Arrive at a community without previous agreed-upon arrangements with local leaders.
- Conduct interviews in an "ambush" manner.
- Call attention to your arrival through the use of fancy vehicles, non-conformist attire, and loud behavior.
- Be unprepared with your interview materials (e.g. you have to send out someone to make copies of your interview guide or to buy pencils or notebooks because you forgot to bring these.

Skills needed to interview

- **Questioning**
- **Observing**
- **Listening**
- **Focusing and guiding**
- **Recording**
- **Establishing rapport**

DO's

During the interview

- Conduct interviews in the language of the respondent(s)
- Begin with the traditional greeting and properly introduce yourself/members of your team and the purpose of the interview.
- Advise respondents as to the length of time expected to complete the interview.
- Express to respondents that you are there to learn from their insights and experiences.
- Conduct interview informally and mix questions with discussions.
- Be open-minded and objective.
- Be respectful and sensitive to non-verbal language.
- Be gender-sensitive.
- Establish rapport and build trust with your respondents by showing interest
- Ask easy questions before the more difficult ones.
- Use indirect questions for sensitive aspects such as income, education, ownership, etc.
- Ask open-ended questions so that they require explanations.
- Make questions short and easy to understand and ask these clearly and one at a time.
- Show interest and encouragement when asking for additional information.
- Record only what is being said.
- Finish the interview politely and thank the respondent(s) sincerely.

During the interview (*continued*)

- Go direct into the interview proper without greeting respondent(s)
- Assume that respondents have all the time in the world for the interview.
- Use tape/video recorders without the permission of the respondents.
- Unnecessarily interrupt discussions between respondents and other members of your team.
- Use leading questions and volunteering your own opinions.
- Make conclusions and finish the sentences of respondents, even if they have difficulty expressing themselves.
- Encourage a few to monopolize discussions.
- Ask vague questions.
- Lecture to respondents.
- Argue with respondents.
- Indicate any signs of disbelief to responses given.
- Allow interview(s) to go too long.
- Ask insensitive questions.
- Abuse the respondent(s) hospitality.
- Discourage alternative views and opinions.
- Be gender-insensitive.
- Do any inappropriate behavior.

DO's

After the interview

- "Clean-up" your notes on the interview the soonest possible time as you may quickly forget the information provided.
- Test your understanding of the issues/problems by validating these in subsequent interviews with other respondents.
- Note down your observations and add any general information you may have gathered in the course of the interviews.
- Record only what is being said and what you see.
- Note down "quotable quotes" from respondents that you can use in your reports.
- If you don't speak the local language, use an interpreter's services to ensure you have correctly noted the responses.
- Ensure completed notes/responses/questionnaire guides are properly identified for easy retrieval in report writing.