

RESEARCH PEARLS | FEDU PEARL #1

This is the first edition of our series called “Research Pearls”, a periodical providing first-hand insights into our dynamic and powerful financial and energy diaries research in Uganda (FEDU). The Pearls will share learnings, experiences, research outcomes and present practical implications. In the first edition of this series we are looking at the very first step of the research process: selecting researchers and respondents.

Sample selection

Supervisor and researcher selection

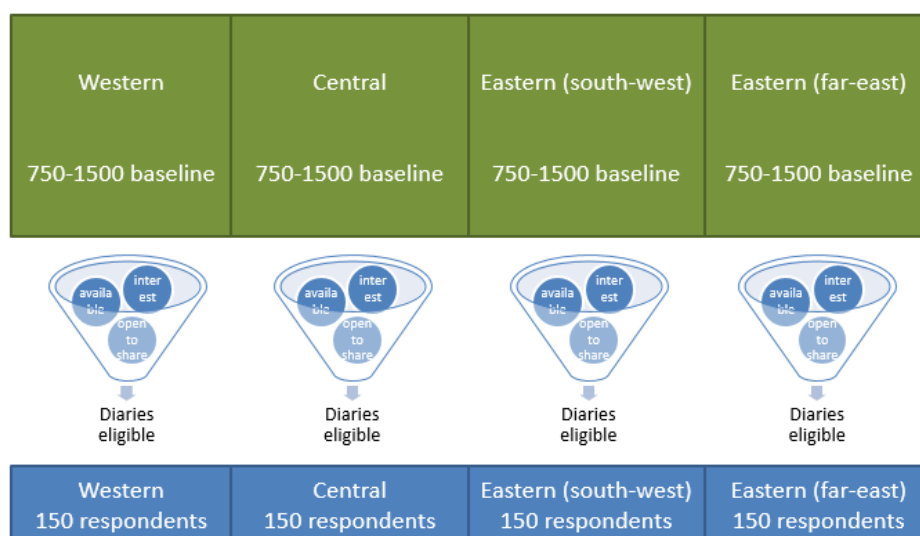
One of the first steps in the research process is the hiring process. Out of four supervisors, three were selected on a basis of a previous research study. They were researchers in that study, so being familiar

and having learned about the process, they were now in a position to become supervisors for the next research. They were selected from among their peers because of their strong merits and leadership skills. To hire the additional supervisor (in Western where we had not yet worked) and field researchers, a vacancy was announced on the L-IFT website, a Ugandan job website and on a notification board of counties (sub-counties). In addition, we also used community development workers.



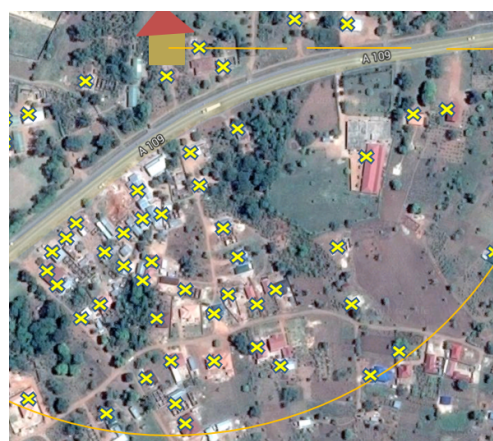
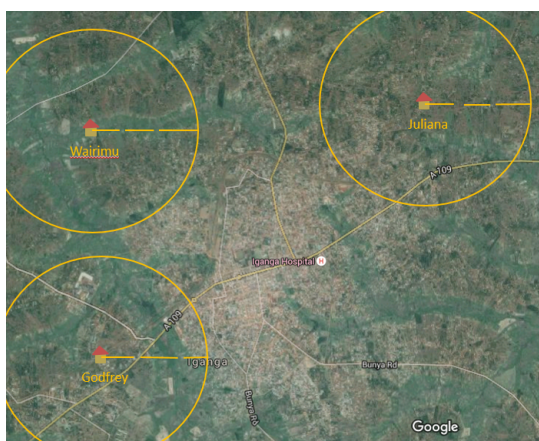
We then went to each research area to conduct written exams and interviews. We selected the supervisor and researchers based on the combined results, and if they showed interest in being potentially employed in the financial/energy sectors.

Each supervisor was assigned one area out of the four selected for the research areas: Western region, Central region, and two clusters in Eastern region. Per area, each supervisor was assigned to 7 researchers. For the baseline survey, each researcher was then to interview 110 respondents (around 770 respondents per area), later on from which 150 respondents will be chosen for the biweekly interviews.



Respondent selection

To select the households for the baseline interview we use the researcher's house as the starting location. From their house, a "circle" with a radius of 2 kilometers was to be drawn around their house, within which they were supposed to choose random households using Google Maps to locate houses. The below images show this process: on the left, you can see three (fictive) researchers' houses, with their research circle marked. The right image shows a close up of one of these circles, within which all the houses of potential respondents are marked with an "x".



Assuming that two or more adults live in one household, researchers were expected to visit on average 55 households in order to reach the target of 110 interviews.

Reducing bias

Then we sought advice from an academic, Haki Pamuk, to judge whether this sample selection would contain acceptable bias and how we could improve on the design. Haki explained that the sample would be biased towards the location of the researchers' residence. If the researchers were not representative for the population, e.g. richer, more educated, more entrepreneurial, the sample of the houses close to their home would also carry that bias. Haki therefore recommended that we would only start sampling at a certain distance from the researchers' homes. Hence, we decided to sample in a circle with a radius of 2 kms from the researchers' homes.



Haki also recommended that interview houses should be at a minimum distance from each other. If two houses very close together would be sampled, they would likely be of similar socio-demographically. Therefore, the sampled houses have been selected to be at least 100 meters apart, along the circle around the researchers' houses with a radius of 2 kms.

In the following Research Pearl we will examine in detail the challenges encountered during sample selection.