



WHY INCLUSIVE DATA COLLECTION MATTERS



In Practice: IRI's USAID-funded Jordan Elections and Political Processes program ensures an inclusive monitoring approach by budgeting for assistants and sign language interpreters who enable participants with disabilities to participate fully in trainings. Beyond ensuring the overall accessibility of trainings, assistants support participants who are blind or have low vision in completing questionnaires during activities. The interpreters, meanwhile, ensure that follow-up interviews can be conducted with participants who are deaf.

IRI's Approach

A key element of IRI's inclusive monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) approach is intentionally engaging marginalized groups in project monitoring efforts and collecting data on how our work affects them. Without their active involvement, projects cannot effectively target and support communities that face systemic discrimination and exclusion around the world. At IRI, we include these groups in our data collection efforts to amplify their voices and effectively empower them to play an active role in civic and political life. Our approach prioritizes:



Learning about and assessing the context in which target marginalized groups live.



Developing responsive programming that matches their priorities and needs.



Empowering marginalized groups by ensuring their voices are heard.



Preventing further marginalization, discrimination and invisibility of these communities.

What Inclusive Data Collection Looks Like:



Using inclusive sampling that represents sub-communities within groups

For instance, when collecting data about people with disabilities (PWD), all types of disabilities should be considered in the sample. A person in a wheelchair, for instance, experiences different challenges in accessing their local government than a person who is blind. A nuanced understanding of the PWD community, and who we aim to target, is critical to supporting inclusive local governance.



Selecting culturally-appropriate terminology and methods

For instance, when asking about gender identity, response options should not be restricted to only "man" and "woman". Options such as "transgender" and/or "something else: fill in the blank" should be included. IRI also identifies appropriate data collection methods, given a society's unique cultural norms and political context. For instance, group interviews – depending on their composition – may prevent marginalized individuals from providing their honest perspectives.



Ensuring accessibility by planning ahead and providing alternative options

Identifying the possible needs of beneficiaries and adapting data collection tools accordingly is key. For instance, translating data collection tools to Braille helps include people who are blind or have low vision in the data collection process. Flexibility is also important, given many people in this community do not read Braille. Offering an interview option as an alternative to a self-administered questionnaire can therefore be helpful. Providing the necessary space and time for an aide to read and complete the questionnaire on behalf of the respondent also increases accessibility. At IRI, we advise a mixed-method approach to data collection to counter any possible bias.



Addressing data privacy and security considerations

For lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) individuals who live in restrictive and hostile environments, thoughtful and thorough procedures that ensure data privacy and security are crucial. When collecting data, IRI first considers the negative or positive implications of visibility for the LGBTI community. Access to personally identifiable data must be on a need-to-know basis and securing informed consent before obtaining or using any such information is central to IRI's approach.



Ensuring informed consent of every participant before collecting data

IRI takes the time to explain the purpose and process of data collection while highlighting security procedures to alleviate participant concerns and provides alternative options that protect participant anonymity as necessary.

INTERNATIONAL REPUBLICAN INSTITUTE

A nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, the International Republican Institute (IRI) advances freedom and democracy worldwide by helping political parties to become more responsive, strengthening transparent and accountable governance, and working to increase the role of marginalized groups in the political process – including women and youth. More information is available at www.iri.org.

Natalie Trisilla, Associate Director, Evidence and Learning Practice, ntrisilla@iri.org, (202) 572-0097