



Case studies and best practices

We have heard from members of the Data Values community that they support the actions recommended in the Manifesto and arguments made in the white paper, but often are not sure how to go about applying them.

This document is full of examples of people from across the data for development network who are implementing the ideas and values highlighted in the [Data Values Manifesto](#). The hope is that they will provide inspiration for you and your organization.

Anyone can create change. Below are examples from governments, grassroots organizations, community activists, and youth leaders taking action to create a fairer data future. They show the wide range of activities, big and small, that bring to life the Data Values Manifesto and illustrate its impact on real life and real people. You will also find case studies from organizations that have embedded Data Values in their ways of working, taking you step by step through their processes of utilizing the Manifesto.

These examples are meant to help illuminate the path forward and show the huge range of actions and projects that embody Data Values. Enacting the agenda need not require huge resources or investments to help create a fairer data future.



Learn



Engage



Spark conversation



Measure progress

1

Support people to shape how they are represented in data

People must have a say in data design and collection that affects their lives. Everyone deserves to have their needs, priorities, and experiences—as they define them—captured in data. Some examples of projects and actions that live this:



Mayuri Dhumal, a Data Values advocate, undertook a project to collect data to better understand the impact of water scarcity on women and young girls in rural India, and ultimately to support advocacy for government services to better cater to their needs. She hosted a group of 20 women and girls from three villages in Nashik, Maharashtra, and conducted a primary survey in their respective localities. Before the data collection, Mayuri held workshops on Data Values, and as a result, she was able to build the capacities of the young women and girls to understand, analyze, and use data to solve their issues at the local level. Additional outcomes of her project include a meeting with a district-level official to present a policy brief based on the research findings related to the water crisis and women's involvement in water committees.



Restless Development is a global nonprofit agency that supports the collective power of young leaders to create a better world. Its team members are working with a number of civil society organizations in Nepal on a project called **TAGME**. Utilizing a mobile platform, young people can document how climate change is impacting their lives, collect data that reflects the impact on their communities, and utilize it to advocate for local and national government action.

Centre for Social Equity and Inclusion is an Indian civil society **organization** that focuses on promoting the socioeconomic and cultural rights of socially excluded children and youth, particularly girls. One way it does this is by supporting citizen-generated data projects that fill data gaps pertaining to marginalized communities, ensuring the policies developed meet the needs of all people, and ensuring that there are local and government provisions to address their critical and contextual challenges. This effort has included a project completed in partnership with UNICEF and Azim Premji Foundation to assess the impact of COVID-19 on households' livelihood, employment, education, and access to public provisions from the government.



Indigenous First Nation communities in Canada have long argued that the government's data collection has historically focused on negative characteristics, rather than their communities' strengths and abilities. They hold that this approach to data collection has been a tool of oppression and poor decision-making. Through Statistics Canada, the government of Canada has been working with First Nations communities and other marginalized communities to address this problem. In 2021, Statistics Canada **established** a disaggregated data action **plan** that prioritized the voices of diverse and communities to better reflect their experiences and meet their needs. They **continue to publish** and evolve their approach to ensure high levels of data disaggregation to represent diverse communities in government data. Through direct involvement in data processes, people can surface various perspectives and influence decision-making and implementation.

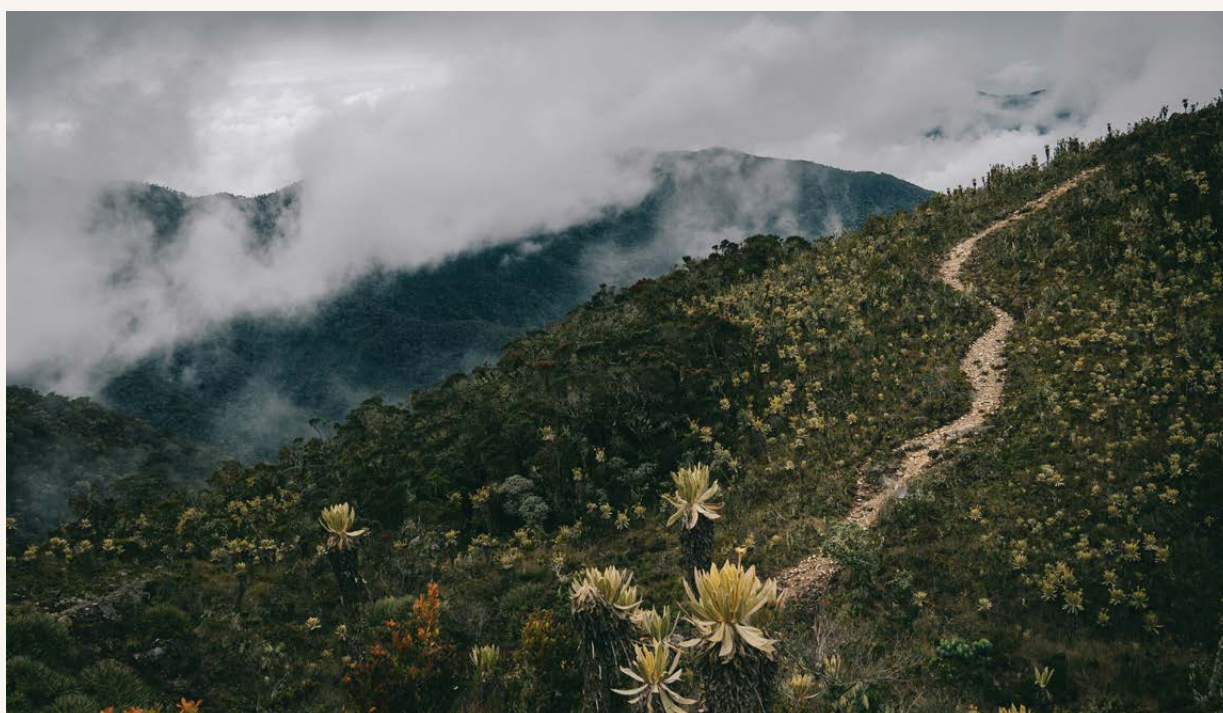
When the **Centre for Internet and Society** undertook a **project** to build digital platforms in the domestic and care work sectors in India, researchers initially planned to ask direct questions about how caste discrimination impacted women from Dalit and indigenous communities. But members of the Domestic Workers Union who were included as project co-researchers cautioned against asking specific types of questions, based on their personal experiences of domestic work and the sensitivity of the subject. In response, Centre for Internet and Society researchers revised the questions. The answers they received brought the realities of domestic workers' experiences to the forefront. Such person-focused and inclusive approaches lead to better data and research design and, consequently, better policies and outcomes.

The Central Bureau of Statistics of Nepal and the **National Human Rights Commission**, among others, are working with **youth and women** to generate data on their situations. Citizen-generated data methods such as open mapping (used by groups such as the Humanitarian OpenStreetMapping Team [HOT]), citizen science, subnational data collection by citizens, and disability data collection enable citizens to decide what issues are important to them, collect the data, and use it to engage their leaders.



The Washington Group on Disability Statistics was established 20 years ago to develop internationally comparable disability measures. The development of these measures has been an inclusive process that has brought together government and nongovernment stakeholders. Through the UN Statistics Division, the international statistics community has also established city groups on statistical methodologies in which communities that are directly affected review data on, for example, governance and aging.

From 2015, **Afro-Colombian and indigenous community members and organizations consulted** with officials from the Colombian Institute of Statistics (known as DANE) to develop better measurements for race and to train enumerators to be sensitive when asking questions by, for example, not assuming people's ethnicity because of their skin color or clothing. For the first time, indigenous communities were responsible for the census operations (transport and staff) in their territories. Collaboration led to a public education campaign to increase Colombians' understanding of and willingness to participate in the census. When the census results were initially contested by Afro-Colombians, DANE responded by combining census data with identification and georeferenced data and data from other sources, such as administrative records, to identify omitted populations in the census. Using artificial intelligence, DANE has also been able to scale up existing poverty estimates from 1,123 data points to 78,000 data points—a 70-fold increase.



2 Invest in public participation for accountability

People must be included in decisions related to data use and reuse. This is essential to hold leaders accountable, protect people from harm, and improve lives. Some examples of projects and actions that live this:



D-tree is an organization working in East Africa to leverage digital technology and data to transform health systems. One project is aiming to improve transparency and accountability around how government health data is used and shared in Zanzibar. **D-tree** is working with the government of Zanzibar and its Ministry of Health to develop **guidelines and procedures** for managing access to health data, including assigning the roles of data owners, data stewards, and data custodians for each dataset, and training key stakeholders to follow the guidelines and procedures.

Connected by Data is a nonprofit based in the United Kingdom that campaigns to put communities at the heart of data practices, policies, and narratives. In 2024, Connected by Data launched **The Good Governance Game**, which aims to help organizations engage meaningfully with the many ways they can create inclusive and accountable data governance practices. The game provides examples of different data governance approaches and practices to help those who want to develop data governance and accountability strategies for their projects.



In 2020, **Wellcome Trust** commissioned a large-scale program of engagement called **MindKind** to support design of a global mental health databank. The project put the voices of young people with lived experiences of mental health challenges at the heart of designing and testing data governance models for the project. Working across three countries, the project involved youth advisors, young people's advisory panels, deliberative workshops, and a randomized control trial to explore attitudes toward different models for governing the collection and sharing of sensitive mental health data.

The United Kingdom Home Office organized **Open Space**, a forum to engage civil society organizations in discussions around the integration of policing datasets and the development of biometric data analysis capabilities. The process allowed civil society a role in setting the agenda for discussions, which took place through a series of workshop-style meetings.

Researchers from **Monash University** in Australia set out to explore the potential deployment of sensor networks, micro-grids, and other innovations to help achieve net-zero carbon emissions across the university's four campus locations by 2030. Through the Net Zero Precincts **Project**, they carried out a series of participatory workshops and mapping activities to identify promising models of democratic engagement and citizen empowerment in governing data related to the smart cities-style project.

The United Disabled Persons of Kenya is an umbrella **organization** that brings together organizations for persons with disabilities in Kenya. The organization arranged discussions with the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics to provide a forum for their members to voice their thoughts and concerns on the collection and production of disability data in the lead-up to the national disability survey in 2024. It also provided training to member organizations on producing quality data on disability to enable these conversations to happen successfully.



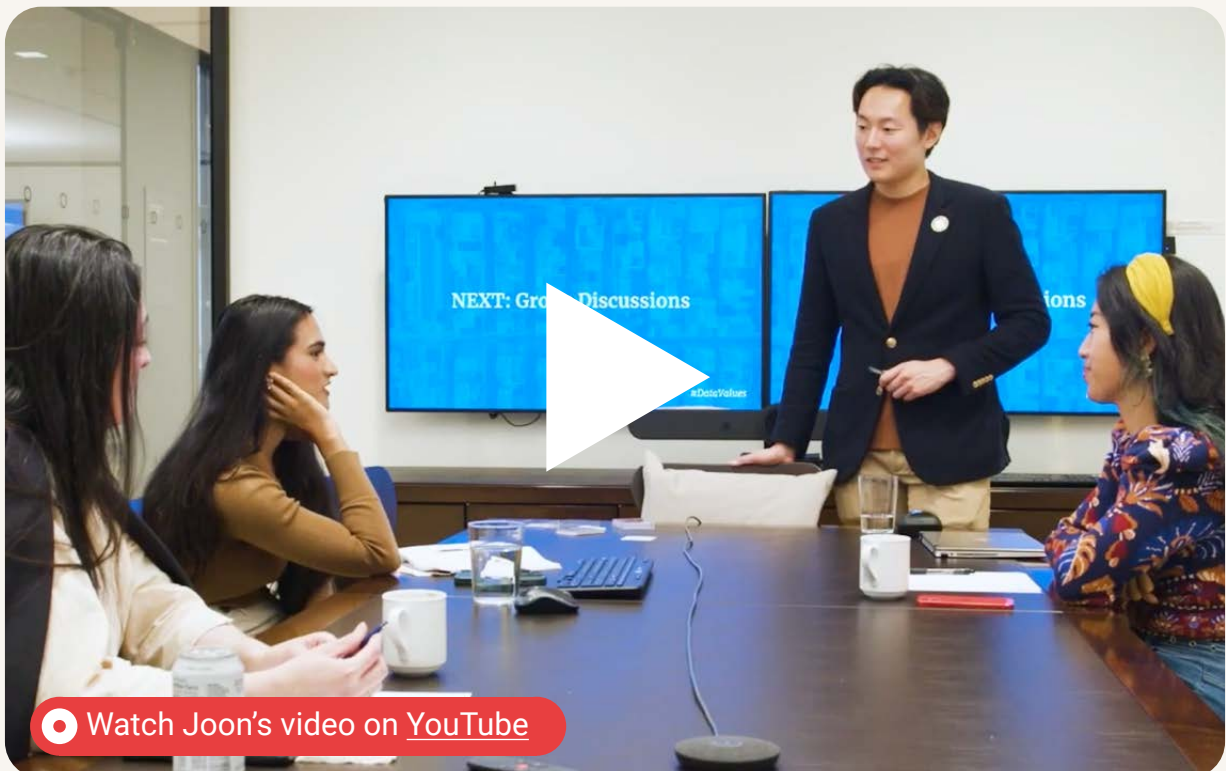
3

Democratize data skills for greater equality

Everyone everywhere must gain confidence to engage with and use data. Widespread data confidence is a building block of a fair data future.



Joon B is a youth organizer from South Korea and an advocate for data privacy, digital rights, and youth empowerment who has experience working in artificial intelligence. He recognized that young people are the most digitally connected worldwide, generating vast amounts of data, yet often lack awareness and representation in data privacy and processes. To address this gap, Joon brought together 50 young leaders from 18 countries for the Data Values Bootcamp, a dynamic three-day workshop designed to raise awareness and equip participants with practical skills and knowledge on Data Values, privacy, and responsible technology. The bootcamp led to the creation of a **youth network** where participants regularly connect and engage on topics related to Data Values.



Data4Change connects social change organizations with designers, journalists, and technologists to create data-driven solutions to some of the world's most pressing problems. One way the Data4Change team achieves this is through providing training on data skills, including collection, cleaning, analysis, visualization, storytelling, and advocacy. An example of the organization's work is its collaboration with the Egyptian **Centre for Economic and Social Rights** to improve the institution's data collection methods and to create a model for documenting protests in Egypt. By upskilling the institution's team, Data4Change helped them create a tool for researchers and journalists to explore data on protests in Egypt and create data-driven documentation and data visualizations for use in their advocacy work to change government policies.



Data for Social Impact is an **initiative** of the Center for Social Development at Washington University in St. Louis that builds data capacity and collaboration among social-sector organizations. By being more strategic in how they engage with data, these organizations have an opportunity to advance their missions, increase impact, and promote equitable outcomes. Data for Social Impact offers free programming opportunities to social-sector organizations in the St. Louis region and beyond. Among the initiative's efforts was the development of a free **online course** to improve social-sector organizations' impact by cultivating collaborative, equitable, community-centered data practices.

BudgIT, a Nigerian civil society organization, offers a useful illustration of how increasing people’s understanding of and access to official data can shift power dynamics and increase government accountability. Launched in 2011, BudgIT makes the federal budget more transparent to Nigerians by offering simplified explanations and visual representations of data. In the 2017 budget review process, BudgIT’s campaign reached 2.5 million people and engaged 25,000 people, leading to exposure of fraudulent projects and a cap on pay for civil servants. A case study report prepared by the research publication *SDSN TReNDS* noted that BudgIT’s success illustrates the ways in which “data openness, accessibility, and literacy can build trust in public institutions and improve efficiency in public spending.” BudgIT continue to publish their analysis and content that makes it easy for the public to engage with government budget decisions, and in 2023 they reached **15 million people** across Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Senegal.

The Data Values Advocates Program provides training, mentoring, and support to grassroots activists looking to help create fairer data practices in their communities. It focuses on upskilling community leaders to be able to advocate for fairer, more inclusive data practices through training as well as financial support.



4

Create cultures of transparency, data sharing, and use

All leaders must invest in strengthening cultures of data use and reuse. Repeated positive experiences of regulating, sharing, and using data for public good will build trust. Some examples of projects and actions that live this:



The Global Data Barometer is a collaborative project that aims to measure the state of data in relation to urgent societal issues. It was developed in response to the needs expressed at the 2019 Open Government Partnership Global Summit for updated, in-depth, country-level insights on data governance and availability. Its findings are completely open access and free to use. Currently, the team is working on its second set of results and has expanded its scope to assess whether countries manage data for the public good.

In Togo during shutdowns related to COVID-19, the government set up a program that transferred cash to 138,000 people living in poverty through their mobile phones. No application process, survey, questionnaire, enumerator, or social worker was involved. Instead, four data-holding partners came together behind the scenes, using phone records, satellite data, and population data to develop MobileAid. MobileAid's cash delivery program demonstrates that existing data can be shared and leveraged through innovative partnerships to make meaningful improvements in people's lives.



During the COVID-19 pandemic, stakeholders in **Kenya's agricultural sector** agreed that the government lacked reliable information on food stocks to guide policy and action. Farmers, grocers, producers, and other stakeholders worked with government officials in multiple departments and with companies including Microsoft and ESRI to create the **Food Staples Dashboard** to monitor prices and the availability of food stocks. The information was used in the context of Kenya's Food Security War Room, a consortium of more than 50 partners from development agencies, civil society, international organizations, government, and the private sector. The project enabled government officials to respond to the impact of COVID-19 lockdowns on food insecurity by strengthening food supplies, targeting food distribution, providing accurate information to citizens and the media, and communicating directly with producers and consumers.

In Senegal, the **Agridata project**, led by the Initiative Prospective Agricole et Rurale (IPAR), a Senegalese think tank, and supported by Development Gateway, brought together more than 50 agricultural



data stakeholders to create a common data platform, launched in early 2022. Agricultural activities account for the majority of Senegal's economic activity. Yet for years, the Ministry of Agriculture produced regular data on farmers in the country that wasn't used by other government ministries or nongovernmental organizations. Instead, individual ministries, development agencies, and civil society organizations produced datasets for their own use, often duplicating efforts and multiplying inconsistencies, which led to poor policy outcomes. By working together to align interests and resolve conflicts over who had ownership of this data, Agridata stakeholders were able to build trust and agree to a common data platform to inform better decision-making.

5

Fund open and responsive data systems so that all people share the benefits of data

Governments and donors must dedicate more funding to data systems that support action and promote participation and inclusion from start to finish. Some examples of projects and actions that live this:



Code for Africa is a nonprofit building digital democracies across Africa through the utilization of open data and technology. The organization has funded the development and assembly of 160 custom-made air quality monitors—including ones that use solar power rather than AC current and Wi-Fi—in Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, and Tanzania for the first-ever Household Air Pollution pilot survey in partnership with the World Bank. The data the sensors collect is made available through several channels: API endpoints (the primary way to access sensor data), a sensors.Africa [website](#) on which users can search for data by location, and Code for Africa’s openAFRICA platform. By making this data completely open access, Code for Africa is supporting **advocacy efforts** and providing information to local governments to inform policymaking to reduce urban air pollution.



The **Power of Data** is one of the UN's High Impact Initiatives to accelerate progress on the Sustainable Development Goals by harnessing the incredible potential of data and technology. It works with countries to build political support, strengthen partnerships, and mobilize investment in national data systems to support development strategies. The initiative was launched in September 2023 in tandem with the Sustainable Development Goal Summit. It is co-led by the UN Development Programme, the UN Children's Fund, the UN Population Fund, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Committee of the Chief Statisticians of the UN System, the World Bank, and the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data. Among its main tasks are the creation of new funding opportunities from major international donors and ensuring alignment of existing funding with priorities of receiving countries so that no money is wasted. The initiative is already bearing fruit and surfacing country priorities and needs to enable better investments and support from funders such as the World Bank.



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The Data Values Manifesto

Funding



The Data Values Project team and wider Global Partnership are here to help any individual, organization, or team who wants to go further in implementation, whether through training or consultation on strategy or project development. To start the discussion, please get in touch with the Data Values team (DataValues@data4sdgs.org).

data4sdgs.org/datavaluesproject