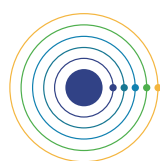


Unpacking intersectional approaches to data

A white paper produced by the Inclusive Data Charter, Champions and partners.



INCLUSIVE
DATA CHARTER



Global Partnership
for Sustainable
Development Data



Office for
National Statistics

DANE
INFORMACIÓN PARA TODOS

iDMC
internal displacement
monitoring centre



Sightsavers

Executive summary

Data is increasingly driving all areas of contemporary life. It is essential to governments' and organizations' responsibilities, decisions, and management. Crucially, the ways data is currently collected and used often leads to those at greatest risk of marginalization being hidden, excluded, or discriminated against. Data systems and practices need to account for these disparities and **our data futures need to be designed for the protection and empowerment of the most vulnerable people in society**. Intersectional approaches to data can address these issues, promoting equity across the data value chain and ensuring that data systems are inclusive.



What is intersectionality?

Intersectionality is about examining how multiple aspects of a person's identity such as their background, ethnicity, gender, religion, disability, sexual orientation, and so on combine to shape their experiences of advantage and disadvantage, discrimination and privilege (Crenshaw, 1989; 1991).

Intersectionality centers the voices of the individuals and groups that are most impacted by inequality or discrimination and includes them in processes to identify solutions, develop programs, or create policy -- as well as in related the data work. To practice inclusive development and reduce inequality, it is critical to embrace an intersectional perspective.

This white paper unpacks intersectionality in the context of data, focusing specifically on intersectional approaches to data.

What is an intersectional approach to data?

Intersectional approaches to data identify inequalities within and between groups of people based on the way multiple facets of an individual's identity interact. They ensure that data contributes to the reduction of inequality - which includes using intersectionality as a lens through which to examine data practices, processes, and institutions reflectively. Read our primer for more information at: bit.ly/IDC-primer

Why this white paper?

This white paper is part of a project led by the Inclusive Data Charter (IDC), Champions and partners to share good practice, learning, and common challenges around intersectional approaches to data. The IDC is a global initiative supporting governments and organizations to take action and share knowledge on inclusive data.

Who is this white paper for?

This guidance is written for practitioners working for governments, including national statistics offices, and multilateral and civil society organizations. It is intended to help practitioners begin conversations within their organizations about intersectionality, and to support experimentation with the ideas and strategies presented about intersectional approaches to data.

Key messages

This white paper is divided into two main sections, and each section ends with key recommendations organizations should consider.

Reasons to adopt an intersectional approach to data

To practice inclusive development, we must find better ways for data to represent and include individuals experiencing marginalization or discrimination. Intersectional approaches center the voices of marginalized people and include them in decision-making across the data value chain.

- **Adhering to the ‘Leave No One Behind’ (LNOB) principle of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) means addressing individual needs and structural change.** Intersectional approaches to data support work to leave no one behind by centering the voices and experiences of people who face the greatest risk of marginalization or discrimination. Such approaches tackle social inequality by using this experience, reflected partly in data, to deconstruct and change power relations.
- **Inclusive insights require consideration of all dimensions of personal identity.** Intersectional approaches to data show how a person faces increased social inequality or discrimination due to how multiple aspects of their identity, such as age, gender, or ethnicity compound.
- **The benefits and risks of data collection must be balanced for people whose lives are compromised by intersecting inequalities.** Intersectional approaches to data require practitioners to be deliberate about the data they collect and how they store or share it, along with how it is shared and used, and for what purposes. Including individuals at risk of being marginalized as active agents can help ensure that the benefits of collecting data outweigh the associated risks.

Tips to establish an intersectional approach to data in your organization

Intersectional approaches can be embedded in existing practice or used to design core or complementary data initiatives. Consider establishing intersectional approaches to data in progressive stages as you gain experience.

- **Clarify intent.** Clarifying intent is about deciding on the aims and objectives for your intersectional approach to data, and what areas of policy or practice you will focus on.
- **Engage stakeholders.** Intersectional approaches to data almost always involve collaboration: engaging directly with groups that are being marginalized is critical.
- **Advocate for time and budget.** A good first step when planning an intersectional approach to data is to perform a data gap analysis in order to determine what data is available and what data is needed.
- **Establish roles and responsibilities.** When starting out, broad base capacity building across organizations can bring staff up to speed on intersectionality and, in turn, intersectional approaches to data. A working group or community of practice tasked with developing organizational capacity may be useful.
- **Develop action plans.** Action plans solidify commitment and organizational accountability for intersectional approaches to data.

Reasons to adopt an intersectional approach to data

The Primer at: bit.ly/IDC-primer outlines how intersectional approaches to data build on the human rights-based data principles and should incorporate:

- **Commitment to centering the voices of individuals at greatest risk of marginalization or discrimination in all aspects of data systems and practice.**
- **Promoting equity across the entire data value chain.**
- **Ensuring that institutional data systems are inclusive and safe.**
- **Engaging data to increase context awareness and reduce inequality.**
- **Building inclusive institutions.**

The Primer also explains that individuals who are being marginalized are not a fixed group of people or an identity. Marginalization is a process that refers to the way or the extent that a person experiences disadvantage, discrimination, or social exclusion. Having certain personal characteristics does not automatically mean a person is marginalized. However, one of the most important things to recognize is that marginalization is often maintained through structural inequalities such as through institutional racism, classism, or sexism.

In this white paper, we occasionally shorten ‘individuals at risk of marginalization or discrimination’ to ‘marginalized people’ for succinctness. This does not mean that there are levels of marginalization that can be presupposed. Intersectional approaches to data require marginalized people’s voices to be centered and the next section unpacks how this may be done.

Leaving no one behind must address individual needs and structural change

Every person should have access to equitable opportunity, and every person deserves to live free from discrimination or social exclusion. The LNOB principle of the SDGs calls for states to identify and prioritize the needs of the most marginalized people of society – those furthest behind – to increase their visibility and inclusion.

The UN’s Committee for Development Policy (United Nations CDP, 2018, p.3) states that:

It is not enough to address inequality by focusing on those “left behind” at the bottom. It is also necessary to address the concentration of wealth, income and decision-making power at the top and break the link between economic and social exclusion and decision-making power.

Intersectional approaches to data draw on intersectionality theory and practice, to focus on those left behind, but they also address social inequality, especially by challenging decision-making power across the entire data value chain.

Intersectionality, as a field of theory and practice, emerged in the 1980s. The idea of intersectionality was created by feminists of color, to investigate how women’s everyday life experiences are influenced by societal power relations (hooks, 1981). In general, it has been used to show how aspects of a person’s identity such as class, gender, and race are connected and how they interact to impact the opportunities they can access and the experiences and disadvantages they face.

As introduced in the Primer at: bit.ly/IDC-primer, intersectional approaches to data center the voices of individuals at risk of marginalization or discrimination. The Primer explains that ‘centering voices’ means finding those individuals that are most impacted by inequality or discrimination

and including them in processes to identify solutions, develop programs, or create policy, as well as in the data work that surrounds these activities. Table 1 highlights some examples of how individual needs can be met by implementing centering voices as a principle in data practice.

| Principles of centering voices | Examples of how to implement these principles in data practice |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Listening to people with lived experience of disadvantage or discrimination – especially individuals at greatest risk of marginalization or discrimination.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consulting people who are being marginalized throughout the data value chain. • Working in partnership with (other) civil society groups to adapt your research/program design or data collection strategy, to include relevant groups appropriately. This may involve changing the questions asked, the way they are asked, or by whom. |
| <p>Recognizing that individuals who are being marginalized may share common experiences, but that those holding intersecting identities have unique lived experiences.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that data is adequately disaggregated. • Identifying ranges of characteristics that may affect an individual – this depends on context awareness. • Including opportunities for communities to generate their own data. |
| <p>Shifting the narrative in organizational or research communications to address inequity, and how intersecting identities shape experiences of disadvantage or discrimination.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using data to highlight social inequality. • Valuing the collection and use of multiple types of data (numbers, text, sounds, and images) to enable richer story-telling. • Involving communities in data sharing and using this collaboration to close the feedback loop within inclusive development practice. |

Table 1: Principles of centering voices and how they can be implemented in data practice

Data production should contribute to the reduction of inequality: a working example

Researchers at the Centre for Internet and Society, India, have engaged representatives of the Domestic Workers' Trade Union in Bangalore as co-researchers to investigate impacts of digital platforms on domestic work. Working together, they have developed survey and interview questions by considering how caste discrimination manifests in domestic work for women. For instance, domestic workers may often have to take different lifts in buildings or use different eating utensils – which are caste-based discriminatory practices. Engaging the Trade Unionists as co-researchers has enabled better, context-sensitive data collection, while developing their research and leadership skills.

This data has informed responsive policy recommendations on what strategies could be used to accelerate progress towards women's full and equal economic participation in the context of specific communities of domestic workers, as well as providing a framework to measure the impact of policies on these communities (CIS India, 2019). Furthermore, resolving social inequality requires communities to work together. Unequal power relations establish long-standing patterns of social inequality. Identity factors are indicative of social structures that shape overall inequality and, in turn, impact on a person's position in society (Collins, 1997). Intersectional approaches are holistic in nature in order to increase context awareness and address structural inequality.

Change Alliance, India, is working to implement an intersectional approach across its programs (Majumdar, Bennet, and Mangubhai, 2017; Box 1). They provide practical strategies for community-level engagement that focuses holistically on reducing social inequality. For example, they suggest working with different types of 'men's groups' to discuss gender discrimination and recommend working through conflicting values and interests to develop long-term solutions to problems.

Box 1: Excerpt from Change Alliance's guide on addressing intersectionality in development programming

Reflective questions on intersectionality in development programs

- In your program geography – in a village/community: who holds power? Who has less power and who is most vulnerable? What are their social identities?
- Among the poorest, what identities intersect and become the cause for multiple burdens for those identified social groups? What are the identity-related barriers to accessing the rights and services meant for them?
- If your programs are to address these issues, what strategies would you consider for meeting those people's practical and strategic needs? How would you address patriarchy and caste together in designing a program? In what ways can civil society at large simultaneously address the power of caste and the power of gender in policies and programs?
- How can organizations define and review social norms around identities, including crosscutting identities?
- Does your program give added emphasis on enhancing Dalit women's leadership?
- How can programs work with powerful actors to help them to realize that power inequalities are self-destructive and harmful for social and economic development?



Key recommendations

- **Intersectional approaches to data emphasize the experience of social inequality or discrimination by specific groups of people. Consider working in partnership with the people you intend to support, to amplify impact and improve your data practice.**
- **Intersectional approaches focus on those people who are left behind, but they also incorporate analysis and engagement with social inequality by challenging decision-making power across the data value chain.**

Want to know more about systematic ways to leave no one behind by using an intersectional approach?

Read our case study on Development Initiatives' P20 approach, which focuses on the specific needs of the poorest 20% of the population as a systematic way to leave no one behind. The case study discusses what's involved in the P20 approach and how to implement it.

Read the case study at: bit.ly/IDC-DI

Inclusive insights require consideration of all dimensions of personal identity

Making sense of data by using an intersectional approach considers how many factors of a person's identity come together. However, there are many ways to go about doing that. This section introduces some common approaches and how they may help to identify intersectionality.

At UN Women, the LNOB principle is operationalized through an intersectional approach to data that aims to identify not only who is left behind, but also the ways that marginalization and exclusion are experienced. The factors that contribute to women's and girls' disadvantage do not operate in isolation. Differences related to factors such as wealth, location, and ethnicity combine to create deep pockets of deprivation across a range of SDGs—from access to education and health care, to clean water and decent work. UN Women's analysis of who is being left behind demonstrates that, across countries, women and girls – who face the

compounded effects of gender-based and other forms of discrimination – are among the most disadvantaged (UN Women, 2018; UN Women, 2020).

The Inequality, Gender, and Sustainable Development (IGSD) approach, developed by researchers at UN Women (Azcona & Bhatt, 2020), is an intersectional approach to the measurement of progress that recognizes the role of inequalities, not only between women and men but within groups of women and girls and across various aspects of sustainable development. It is premised on the idea that a focus on gender-based discrimination without a deeper recognition of the other group-based inequalities that women face runs the risk of invisibilizing the barriers faced by marginalized groups of women and girls. IGSD takes a multidimensional and multi-sectoral approach to the analysis of deprivations.

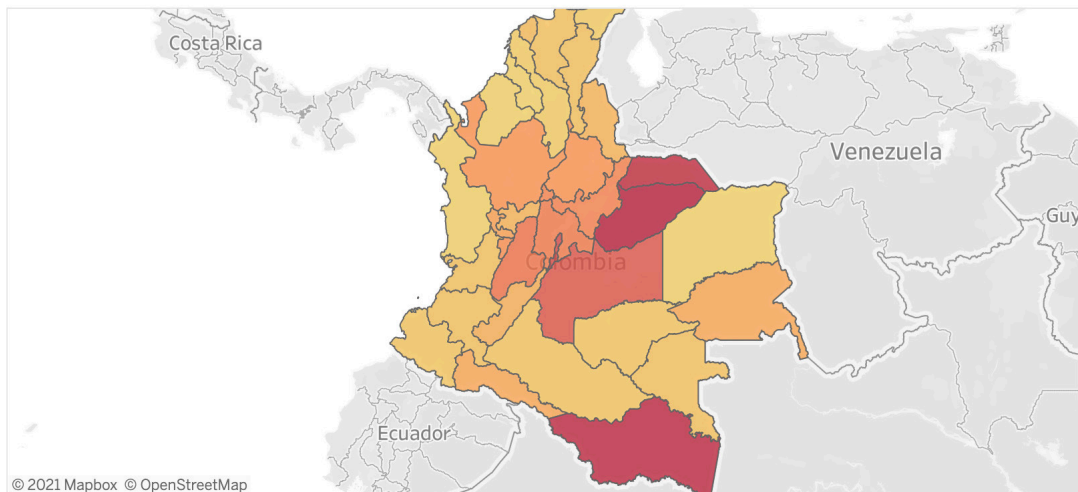
In Mongolia, the National Statistic Office and UN Women has worked closely to better understand education poverty from an intersectional perspective (UN Women, 2021). The analysis has shown that the likelihood of being education-poor increases if women and girls identify with ethnic and/or religious minorities, and live in a poor household. These factors compound to create substantially deprived groups of women.

In contrast, it is also possible to analyze a particular issue across multiple population groups to pinpoint areas for further investigation. DataRepública¹ has collaborated with 'Alianza por la Niñez Colombiana', to show how violence against children in Colombia differs for various groups (DataRepública, 2020). They present breakdowns of data, such as overall percentages by year and disaggregated by sex. Cases of domestic violence by age and sex show differences by sex between the ranges of 0 to 10 years and 10 years and older. In the first range, between the

ages of five and nine, the highest percentage of abuse is experienced by boys, 7.3 percentage points above girls. The situation changes after the age of 10, when there is a greater degree of violence against girls, 3% more than boys, and it worsens in adolescence, between 15 and 17 years of age, where the difference is 8.3%. Moreover, looking at children living with disabilities, rates of violence are on the rise overall.

DataRepública and 'Alianza por la Niñez Colombiana' have also mapped the figures by region, where another picture emerges, showing where children are much more likely to experience violence. They also indicate where data is probably missing – in that there are relatively few cases of reported violence against children living in rural areas. Confronting violence against children in these different areas is likely to require different strategies because there could be cultural reasons for under-reported violence. This suggests more investigation is needed.

Mapa de calor violencia intrafamiliar contra la niñez en 2020



TASAS MAPA DE CALOR

| Depar. 🇨🇴 | Tasa |
|---------------|-------|
| Casanare | 114,9 |
| Amazonas | 109,5 |
| Arauca | 105,0 |
| Archipiélag.. | 94,0 |
| Bogotá, D.C. | 85,1 |
| Meta | 78,7 |
| Tolima | 59,0 |
| Cundinam.. | 51,1 |
| Boyacá | 48,7 |
| Quindío | 40,9 |
| Antioquia | 40,3 |
| Santander | 38,5 |
| Risaralda | 33,2 |
| Putumayo | 29,9 |
| Guainía | 29,5 |
| Huila | 25,7 |
| Caldas | 23,6 |
| Norte de Sa.. | 21,5 |
| Atlántico | 17,8 |

Fuente: Datos procesados por la Alianza por la Niñez Colombiana del Instituto Nacional de Medicina Legal y Ciencias Forenses - INMLCF - Centro de Referencia Nacional Sobre la Violencia - Base: Sistema de Información de Clínica y Odontología Forense - SICLICO. Fecha de corte 31 de diciembre de 2020 (Preliminar).

* Tasa por cada 100.000 habitantes

** Tasa nacional 35,5

¹DataRepública is a digital hub for the creation of data-based knowledge and storytelling. The Hub makes data analysis more accessible and reveals the connections and relationships between data, sources, and the path to meet the SDGs.

Taking all of these analyses together (rates of violence according to gender, for children living with disabilities, or in specific regions) points to possible groups of children that could be experiencing intersecting inequality. Sometimes, it is statistically invalid to analyze multiple identity factors together (e.g. girls living with disabilities in a particular region may make up too small a sample size for statistical analysis). This means creating multiple breakdowns is a good practice to begin with. Essentially, these analyses would help practitioners to identify patterns of disadvantage, and where to focus resources.

Intersectional approaches to data are often hindered by data gaps. For example, only 60 out of 193 countries (or 31%) currently report data on COVID-19 cases by sex and age to WHO². In terms of the Sustainable Development Goal indicators, 53 out of 232 (or 23%) indicators are gender-specific (Pasta, 2020). Of these 53, only two are disaggregated by disability in SDG 8 (Pasta, 2020).

Filling these data gaps through more sample surveys may not be good value for money, especially when looking at small pockets of very deprived populations. Fostering participation of community members, developing partnerships with civil society groups, and using complementary research designs may be more effective than sample surveys alone. Intersectional approaches therefore often take advantage of mixed-methods approaches by incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data.

² www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/gender-equality-in-the-wake-of-covid-19-en.pdf?la=en&vs=5142



Key recommendations

- **Intersectional approaches to data uncover insights by considering how multiple aspects of a person's identity come together.**
- **Data analysis can be performed to show how multiple identity factors compound, demonstrating inequality faced by marginalized people.**
- **Analyses of multiple identity factors side by side, such as age, ethnicity, gender, location, and disability, can also be taken together to point to areas or people more likely to be experiencing intersecting inequalities.**
- **Intersectional data analysis often suffers from a lack of disaggregated data: availability of this should be increased according to the Inclusive Data Charter principles.**
- **Intersectional approaches favor research designs that are participatory, combining the use of both quantitative and qualitative data to garner insights.**

Want to know more about multivariable statistical data analysis techniques for intersectionality?

Read our case study on how Sightsavers has been using multivariable analysis techniques to uncover intersectional forms of inequality that cause avoidable blindness in Nigeria. The case study explains the practical steps involved in this type of data analysis.

Read the case study at:
bit.ly/IDC-Sightsavers

The benefits and risks of data collection must be balanced for people whose lives are compromised by intersecting inequality

Highly marginalized people face increased risk of violence and discrimination, and these risks have heightened due to the role of data in societies (O'Neil, 2016; Spade, 2015). A wave of research and recommendations has emerged to develop more responsible data practices across the globe (D'ignazio and Klein, 2020; Identity 2.0, n.d.; Taylor, 2017). Intersectional approaches to data help identify and manage risk and vulnerability due to data collection, analysis and use.

The Consortium for Street Children (CSC) is a network of organizations working to support street children worldwide. The circumstances of street children differ drastically between cities and countries, but advocating for their needs requires international cooperation. Sharing data collected from the network is one way that the Consortium has been raising awareness among policymakers. To ensure safety of street children, they require network members to have their own organizational safeguarding or child protection policy in place. They also have to agree to CSC's general safeguarding principles. This allows contextually specific protection mechanisms to be put in place. Another layer of protection is added when handling data, in that informed consent for the use of photos and quotations needs to be collected, and all quotations are anonymized.

The practice of collecting data can also pose a risk to marginalized people, when the questions asked are sensitive and responses can be overheard. Sharing data may also put individuals at risk of violence or persecution.

To support frontline workers in Thailand, the Apprise system has been developed to screen vulnerable people and identify forced laborers or victims of human trafficking. Such victims do not often speak the Thai language and may be threatened if they seek help. Box 2 shows how data collection methods have been adapted to account for this situation.

Box 2: The Apprise system is used by frontline responders to screen vulnerable populations

How does the Apprise system collect data?

- A frontline worker gives a phone with headphones to a vulnerable person.
- The vulnerable person selects their own language and listens to an introduction that explains the purpose of the interview, demonstrates how to respond to questions, and requests consent to begin the interview.
- If consent is given, it cycles through a series of yes/no questions, with the person indicating their answer by tapping on a button on the screen. This ensures there is no risk for others to understand what the person has responded.
- Apprise uses an expert system to calculate the vulnerability of the situation, presenting a summary of indicators of exploitation that have been raised in the interview. These indicators are aligned to labor law and provide suggestions to the frontline worker, about the next steps they could take in their on-site investigation.

Sometimes, however, the safest course of action is not to collect, store, and (ultimately) share data about vulnerable people at all. Intersectional approaches prompt us to question the value of data and for whom, or why, it is needed. There are legitimate reasons for why individuals should have a right to remain less visible in data.

UN Women have developed a decision-tree to help researchers determine whether or not it is safe to collect data about incidence of domestic violence. Without the benefit of a way to collect data confidentially (by using a system like Apprise), researchers are urged to prioritize women's safety over data collection.

Beyond data collection, it is also necessary to consider where data will go. When the Beneficial Owner Open Data Standard was developed, it was determined that including gender in the Standard would pose too much risk for transgender people in countries where it is illegal to be transgender.

Open data has a longer, less-controlled data lifecycle by design. This means that when records are shared as open data, it becomes impossible to guarantee their future deletion or amendment. The purpose of the Standard was to bring transparency to company ownership, helping to crack down on cross-border tax evasion and illicit financial flows. In this instance, the owner's identity needs to be public because making a request for information might alert the subjects of an investigation. Along with this, gathering records one by one through requests can be prohibitively expensive, particularly when needing to connect data across borders.

This means that, while it may be useful to know how many self-identifying women own companies worldwide to find disparities, this was not the main purpose of the Standard, and gender was therefore omitted. In the end, the only way that the team developing the standard came to know of these risks was by speaking with a representative of the transgender community directly.



Key recommendations

- Ensure that you have implemented adequate data privacy protection policies and mechanisms, such as the OECD Privacy Principles.
- Intersectional approaches acknowledge that different contexts will require tailored strategies, but tailored policies must be made explicit to participants and partners.
- Data collection methods can frequently be adapted to address unequal power relations in context. Collect data only when it is absolutely necessary and consider the potential risks involved for marginalized people to participate.
- Know when not to share data and think through the implications of storing, publishing, and deleting data.

Want to know more about how to develop an intersectional approach that is inclusive and safe?

Read a case study that explains what the Institute of Global Homelessness recommends when working to support people that are experiencing homelessness. This shows what is involved in making fit-for-purpose data systems that only collect data when absolutely necessary and for a specific purpose.

Read the case study at: bit.ly/IDC-IGH

Five stages of establishing intersectional approaches to data

Intersectional approaches to data can strengthen organizational planning processes and activities, as well as data systems and projects. All of these activities will take tailored plans. Evolving the intersectional approaches to data as you gain experience is warranted. The following stages can be iteratively repeated.

1. Clarifying intent

Clarifying intent is about deciding on aims and objectives for your intersectional approach to data, and the areas of policy or practice you will focus on. The form and duration of this process can vary greatly. It is often informal, emerges from experience or insight, or depends on wider government policy areas of focus or organizational strategic planning.

HelpAge International is a global network of organizations that work to support older people experiencing humanitarian crises. They have developed an Inclusion Standards guide to help practitioners gather differential needs of older persons living with disabilities in particular communities. By clarifying intent to support this specific group of people, they have been able to define what data and procedures are

needed. Their guide also points to particular aspects of the data value chain, that they might choose to focus on to continue developing their intersectional approach, such as finding out whether the data collected while using the standard has led to reduced inequality for older people with disabilities compared to others.

If you are focusing on identifying the most marginalized, or areas of disaggregation, a good strategy may be to set objectives to carry out research or pilot projects to determine what data is most feasible or relevant to collect for your organization and why.



Key recommendations

If you are new to this, some research or evaluation may be necessary. You may, for example, need to consider outcomes of similar projects or organizational plans, so you can learn from them.

To reexamine past experience with an intersectional approach, use an after-action review technique and look for evidence of who was included, the identity characteristics they have, and how they were included. What potential intersecting inequalities could have affected the outcomes? The discussions prompted by this question may point to aims for further investigation.

Other strategies when starting out include:

- Holding a reading group amongst staff to read key resources on intersectionality.
- Inviting intersectionality experts from multi-disciplinary areas to give talks.
- Convening a wide consultation with multiple stakeholders involved in your programs or projects.
- Embedding conversations on intersectional approaches into team meetings or existing organizational groups, such as working groups or communities of practice.
- Developing a pilot project to experiment with applying an intersectional approach to data, to learn what works, or what doesn't work, for your organization.

Want to know more about how to begin an intersectional approach to data?

Read a case study on steps that the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) takes to understand the context before beginning any primary research. This outlines good practice on monitoring practice, stakeholder engagement, and thinking holistically about the context.

Read the case study at: bit.ly/IDC-IDMC

2. Engaging stakeholders

Intersectional approaches to data almost always involve collaboration between the following stakeholders:

- An organization and the people it intends to support.
- Other organizations that represent marginalized people.
- Organizations or government actors that share similar goals.
- Or academics or practitioners with multidisciplinary backgrounds.

Stakeholder engagement may involve consulting a broad range of representatives of relevant communities to identify people or issues of interest or concern, or it can focus on particular issues or groups of people.

It's essential to speak directly to individuals at greatest risk of marginalization or discrimination. Sometimes, broad

consultation to uncover those who are being marginalized may be required, as they can be hidden, invisibly hidden, invisible, unknown, or unheard (UN University Institute in Macau, n.d.). This is why consulting a broad range of stakeholders is necessary.

Completing a stakeholder mapping exercise can often be a good first step to identify marginalized people and other partners to engage with. This involves diagramming the landscape of actors involved in the policy area of interest, what they do, and how they are related to each other.

The purpose and objective of stakeholder engagement can vary at different stages of a data value chain. It is crucial to define how contributions from marginalized people will factor into policy or practice as a result. Too often, stakeholder engagement is a lengthy consultative process with very little impact on policy or practice.

| Stage of the data value chain | Examples of stakeholder engagement | How to close the feedback loop in policy or practice |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Collection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging marginalized people or people with lived experience as co-researchers. • Public consultation carried out online and in specific locations where marginalized people reside to collect views on issues of public concern. • Conducting collaborative research on question design or data collection process. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving regular feedback on performance, supporting co-researchers to develop their skills, and considering pathways to future employment. • Publishing results of public consultations and outlining the specific decisions that were taken to implement feedback. • Communicating results of research and how they were implemented into survey methodology or other aspects of the research. |

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| Stage of the data value chain | Examples of stakeholder engagement | How to close the feedback loop in policy or practice |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Publication | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checking preliminary analyses with marginalized people. • Releasing and communicating data in actionable and understandable ways to relevant communities. • Inviting community members to events or meetings so that marginalized people can speak about their experience in relation to data published. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sending participants final copies of publications, with any requested changes outlined. • Planning follow-on research to understand the effectiveness of published data. • Listening to community members and communicating how experience/suggestions were taken on board. This includes engaging appropriate media outlets and mediums (e.g. print, radio, and video) to increase the accessibility of the information and community members' ability to use it. |
| Uptake | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present data to decision-makers, explaining the value of intersectional approaches. • Make data available for use and reuse by advocacy groups and allies who can use the information to hold policy-makers to account. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include concrete requests, such as resources for more disaggregated data, or collaborative work. |
| Impact | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask marginalized communities about what else is needed to make use of data effectively and make the required changes. • Ensure that you are engaging stakeholders considered to have more power within a community/organization, as they will also contribute to change. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure the impact of data on targeted outcomes, noting that intersectional approaches often include monitoring indicators of structural change. • Plan adequate resources to engage with relevant stakeholders for follow-up on data use and decision-making. • Take steps to identify powerful actors that need to be engaged in change processes. |



Key recommendations

- Ensure that you are engaging a broad range of stakeholders, especially individuals at greatest risk of marginalization or discrimination. Listen to what issues are important to consider, along with who else needs to be involved and how.
- Adopt appropriate strategies to engage with stakeholders at various stages of data production and use throughout the data value chain.
- Develop concrete ways to respond to feedback and to increase accountability towards marginalized people.
- Allocate adequate time and human resources to stakeholder engagement, as most intersectional approaches to data are collaborative and need to be inclusive.

3. Advocating for time and budget

Collecting disaggregated data and consulting stakeholders within an intersectional approach can be costly. Limited research is available to outline estimated costs of having data to leave no one behind (Avendano, Culey and Balitrand, 2018). Establishing a case for the time and effort required to implement an intersectional approach is going to be needed to stimulate political will. This can involve reviewing existing data practices and resources in order to locate data gaps, and see what data can be linked, combined, or reused for intersectional data analysis (see Box 3). Another option is to present a case to allocate greater resources to add specific activities that have clear, measurable outcomes.

It is also possible to explore the potential to develop pilot projects as a way to better understand the time and effort required, or to engage with other organizations with experience in this area – to share knowledge and learning about good practice and the pitfalls to avoid.

Box 3: Undertaking a data inventory or audit to establish a budgetary baseline and/or establish what data is needed

A key way to advocate for more time and budget is to measure the costs effectively via a **data inventory or audit**. Intersectional approaches to data may frequently draw on data produced by your organization, or by others. ‘Data’ within intersectional approaches also incorporates academic publications, policy papers, impact studies, qualitative data from research, emails, and feedback forms. Managing this complexity can be a challenge, depending on the scale of your data systems and who needs access to different sources of data.

Data inventories document the location or provenance of the data and its description. Basic metadata includes: name, description, type of data, year produced, year updated/reviewed, and remaining operational life. However, further information specific to intersectional approaches should be included, such as:

- Who collected the data.
- How it was collected and where it is stored throughout its lifecycle.
- Why it was collected.
- How participants were involved or consulted.
- Which groups of people and/or personal characteristics were focused on.
- Related social/development outcomes.

A **data audit** is created by identifying and evaluating the composition and quality of the data your organization collects. An example can be seen in our case study with the ONS, which details one method to assess data from an intersectional perspective. Another consideration would be creating a rating system that incorporates whether or not data sources enable intersectional analysis and how.

In turn, **data gap analysis** takes an inventory and audit, and evaluates it against an action plan to ensure that the available data meets the required needs. Conducting a data gap analysis may help an organization see what data assets are crucial and prioritize data maintenance and quality control.³



Key recommendations

- It is not always cost effective or feasible to implement multi-dimensional data collection across large populations. Sometimes it is better value for money to design mixed-methods or participatory activities within intersectional approaches to data.
- Often, data an organization already has – or that is produced by other units or external partners – can be used instead of collecting data. Doing a data gap analysis is a good first step to understand what resources are needed to provision an organization.
- Creating a pilot project to test what is feasible for the organization to do, what works, and what doesn’t is also a good first step.

³ The Paris 21 Assessing Data and Statistical Capacity Gaps for Better Gender Statistics is also a useful guide to consider: paris21.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Framework%202019_web_0.pdf

4. Establishing clear roles and responsibilities

As yet, few organizations have defined roles and responsibilities for intersectional approaches. It is unlikely that teams will only work on intersectional approaches to data, or specialize in this area, as this work benefits from the expertise of multiple teams. This means capacity building across teams is probably necessary, which can be supported by a working group or community of practice.

In terms of roles, there is a significant emphasis on multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary collaboration in intersectional approaches to data. Teams should include people with lived experiences of marginalization, but also potentially a spectrum of others (for example, community members, organizational representatives, and experts such as: development practitioners, statisticians, critical ethnographers, and feminists or other academics specializing in intersectionality). If it is not possible or practical to include a range of perspectives, colleagues should acknowledge the limitations of the perspectives within the team and find alternative ways to address unacknowledged or weak areas, such as through research or consultation.

Increasing accountability towards individuals at greatest risk of marginalization or discrimination involves reflecting on who has responsibilities for data, including looking at data ownership and control.

Indigenous people are reclaiming their rights to own and manage data about themselves and their communities through the indigenous data sovereignty movement, which declares this as their role and responsibility. The FAIR CARE principles, created by the Global Indigenous Data Alliance, help to establish roles and responsibilities in this context.

As activities grow, a more established accountability and support structure is needed, such as a cross-cutting Center,

and a steering or advisory committee of senior executives and practitioners. Having an advisory committee that is distanced from activities helps to critically appraise practice from multiple angles and different disciplinary, knowledge, and experience areas.



Key recommendations

- **When starting out, broad base capacity building across an organization can bring staff up to speed on intersectionality and an intersectional approach to data.**
- **Some communities are increasingly advocating for rights to own and manage data about themselves. It is important to consider how these communities could be supported in these endeavors.**
- **Roles and responsibilities for intersectional approaches will solidify as activities grow. Establishing an organizational support structure to steer these activities can help ensure accountability towards the people an organization intends to support.**

Want to know more about establishing intersectional approaches at your national statistics institute?

Read a case study on how Colombia and the United Kingdom's statistics institutes have started to engage with intersectionality.

Read the case study at:
bit.ly/IDC-DANE-ONS

5. Developing action plans

The last stage of establishing intersectional approaches to data in an organization entails developing a concrete action plan. Action plans solidify commitment, enable measurement of progress, and increase organizational accountability. They also help staff and collaborators to know what needs to be done, why an activity is important, and charts a concrete timeline.

Plans rarely unfold as expected – especially within intersectional approaches to data, as issues connected to intersecting inequalities may crop up without warning. Consider adopting action plans that incorporate contingencies for major deliverables, and split initiatives or projects into phases and milestones. To design flexible action plans, stakeholders should be asked to review and sign-off on progress so that adjustments can be made over time.

Action plans should contain at least two perspectives on planning and practice:

1. Macro-level, cross-cutting practice and perspectives are focused on how to achieve structural change in various contexts (e.g. in institutional data systems, policies, or procedures). Activities can include institutional reforms to data systems and guidelines, diversity and inclusion initiatives within an organization, research on wider structural inequality in society, or large-scale initiatives involving multiple population groups and/or impact areas.
2. Micro-level, multi-disciplinary practice and perspectives are highly context-specific, and focused on specific communities or issues. Activities can include targeted consultation and how or why policy/practice needs to be adapted in specific contexts. They can also encompass research and analysis investigating specific issues or inequalities experienced by individuals who are being marginalized or discriminated against.

Activities and plans should be periodically reviewed, with an assessment of how the two perspectives on planning and practice (macro/micro) are speaking to each other. For instance, has targeted research had an impact on wider organizational data systems or practice? If so, how and why?



Key recommendations

- Once you have gained a bit of experience experimenting with intersectional approaches to data, you develop concrete action plans.
- You can adapt your plans if necessary. Consider including stakeholders in a sign-off or periodic review to make adjustments as you go along.
- Your action plans should contain two perspectives on planning and practice: micro-level plans are highly context specific, focused on particular communities or issues, while macro-level plans include activities needed to achieve structural change, such as in institutional data systems, policy, or procedure.

Conclusion

This White paper aims to outline key recommendations for governments and organizations to consider when implementing an intersectional approach to data. It expands on the five core tasks listed in the Primer. It has been written for practitioners who wish to know more about the benefits of an intersectional approach, and the practical steps involved to begin implementing one.

In order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, and to Leave no one behind, data needs to be collected, analyzed and used to reduce inequality. Intersectional approaches respond to individual needs, while also tackling systems of inequality. They take into account how multiple characteristics of each individual come together to create differences between groups of people. Data can be used to highlight these differences or identify those who are often excluded or silenced in data analysis. Intersectional approaches critically assess whether the benefits of collecting data outweigh any associated risks for people facing intersecting inequality. These reasons suggest that a holistic and collaborative strategy is necessary – data is only one part of the equation.

There is no one-size-fits-all procedure to establish intersectional approaches in organizations. Governments and organizations need to factor in their own local contexts and priorities. The five stages outlined demonstrate what is involved in starting and developing an intersectional approach. How these recommendations are taken up will depend on political will, the extent of disaggregated data available already, the resources and funding available, and the priorities of the stakeholders. Small pilot projects, collaboration and knowledge sharing can always be used to develop examples of good practice, but longer-term initiatives focused on making data systems and institutions inclusive are necessary. Across all programs and practice, practitioners need to take care of the impact they have on reducing inequality within their own data practice and institutional data systems.



Acknowledgements

This project would not be possible without the support and valued input from the core partners: Colombia's National Administrative Department of Statistics, Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, Sightsavers and the UK's Office for National Statistics

We are grateful to IDC Champions and partners who have contributed to the insights for this project and whose work has been cited: Asikana Network, Center for Internet and Society(CIS) India, CEPEI, Consortium for Street Children, Data2X, Development Initiatives, HelpAge International, Institute for Global Homelessness, UNU Macau, UN Women

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