# 9 Making Decisions with Data

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# Making Decisions with Data

**Every day humanitarians make decisions with data. The IFRC Digital Transformation strategy prioritizes data literacy as a component to enable more efficiency and effectiveness in humanitarian response. Building a data culture is supporting 'data readiness' and improving 'data literacy' is a long-term organisational transformation. How can we improve our decisions with data and be more evidence-driven? There are many complexities in decision-making, organisational data readiness, and digital transformation. Data readiness for local communities provides an opportunity for local leadership to be supported.**

# Questions this module explores:

- How can we use data for decision-making?
- What are some ways to localise data workflows?
- How can decision-makers use data to negotiate and have impact?

# Learning Objectives

- Explore the different decision-making processes
- Understand the (potential) role of data throughout these processes
- Consider and become familiar with the different needs and complexities surrounding decision-making

# Module Topics

- What is decision-making/Data-driven decision making for everyone
  - Using data in everyday operations - who makes the decision
  - Using data for decisions tactically
  - using data for decisions strategically
- How to make decisions with data
  - Improving our workflows with local data
  - Don't make the decision first
  - Understand who is making the decision
  - Beware of confirmation bias
  - Don't forget the humans
  - Questioning the data - is it true?
- How do we keep learning after a decision gets made? – Encourage the use of data for decision-making for leaders
  - Influencing the program strategy
  - Involving leaders in a directed conversation on the State of Data
- Different levels of data complexity
  - Dealing with the complexity of decision making inputs - from data to politics to social/org needs, information overload
  - What is evidence? Why or why not?
  - From a question to answer

# Recipes

## A suggested step-by-step process to achieve learning objectives

1. A good starting point for considering how we make decisions with data is to consider the: **[State of data (9 - 9)]** and review **[What is Evidence? (9 - 1)]**. These two sessions with senior decision-makers and staff can be helpful to determine next steps on the data and digital journey. Also see **[Nurturing a Data Culture (2)]**.
2. How are decisions made? Teams can consider this exercise **[Making Decisions with Data (9 - 5)]** with the accompanying slides **[Information Needs for Decision-making (9 - 12)]**. At the end of the workshop, participants can review and revise this and this handout **[Best Practices for Data-informed Decisions (9 - 4)]**.
3. Localisation and community engagement are two priorities in our humanitarian work. How can we better engage and learn with local communities while making decisions with data? This exercise and associated handout can provide insights for teams to discuss and plan their efforts to achieve these priorities. Exercise: **[Engaging local communities in data projects (9 - 7)]** Handout: **[Localising Data Workflows Checklist (9 - 6)]** (handout)
4. The opportunity to use data for decisions requires communication and data literacy of staff and decision-makers. Asking questions and **[Negotiating with leaders (9 - 10)]** (exercise) is important to build a common understanding and support use of data as part of decisions. Teams also put together these **[Best Practices for Data-informed Decisions (9 - 4)]** (handout). It is recommended to share this handout after the exercise for further discussions.
5. An important aspect of being data-driven in our decisions is to evaluate the decisions we make based on data. The following hand-out provides a way to keep learning from our decisions, improving the way we make future decisions within the IFRC: **[How do we keep learning from decisions? (9 - 11)]**. In addition, for those especially interested in this topic, the following report can be read to get even more in-depth knowledge on this topic: **[Data, Decisions, and Strategy 2030 (9 - 3)]** (PDF)

# Ingredients

Pick and choose ingredients to create your own recipe. Do you have an ingredient we're missing? Send an email to data.literacy@ifrc.org

# Exercises

### Short, discrete social learning experiences

- [State of data (9 - 9)]
- [How do we keep learning from decisions? (9 - 11)]
- [Engaging local communities in data projects (9 - 7)]

# Session Plans

### Longer social learning experiences

- [How to support data-informed decision-making? (9 - 2)]
- [Making Decisions with Data (9 - 5)]
- [How to Localise Data Workflow Exercise (9 - 8)]
- [Negotiating with leaders (9 - 10)] (exercise)

# Slide Decks

### Presentations to be used and/or adapted

- [What is Evidence? (9 - 1)]
- [Information Needs for Decision-making (9 - 12)]

# Checklists, Materials, Handouts

### For documentation of essential elements of the learning experience

- [Data, Decisions, and Strategy 2030 (9 - 3)] (PDF)
- [Best Practices for Data-informed Decisions (9 - 4)] (handout)
- [Localising Data Workflows Checklist (9 - 6)] (handout)

# Next Steps

### Relevant modules in the Data Playbook

- [Nurturing a Data Culture (2)]
- [Understanding and Analysing Data (6)]

## Credit

Olaf Steenbergen, Margarita Griffith, Rania Alerksoussi, Heather Leson, and IFRC V1 Sprint and Data Playbook Beta contributors

# 9 - 1 What is Evidence?

# Data can lead to:

Data → Information → Learning → Decision

(i) Helen Welch, MEAL Director American Red Cross, the Digital Transformation Strategy digital.ifrc.org

# What is Evidence?

Data can translate to more than numbers or statistics: a dataset, observation, interview transcript, or picture.

Evidence is **facts** or **information** indicating whether a belief or proposition is *true* or *valid*.

# Evidence is...

a coherent set of testable hypotheses (e.g. a theory or idea) of why something is likely to work backed by the robust data to validate and refine these hypotheses.

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**It can be achieved with:**

- A theory of change - what type of change expected?
- Data (Qualitative and Quantitative)
- Context, knowledge
- Ability to validate, test, and refine.

# Your Evidence

**1.** Can you share some specific examples of how data influenced a decision?

Data → Information → Learning → Decision

**2.** How do we keep learning after decision gets made?

# Example: IFRC People Reached as Evidence

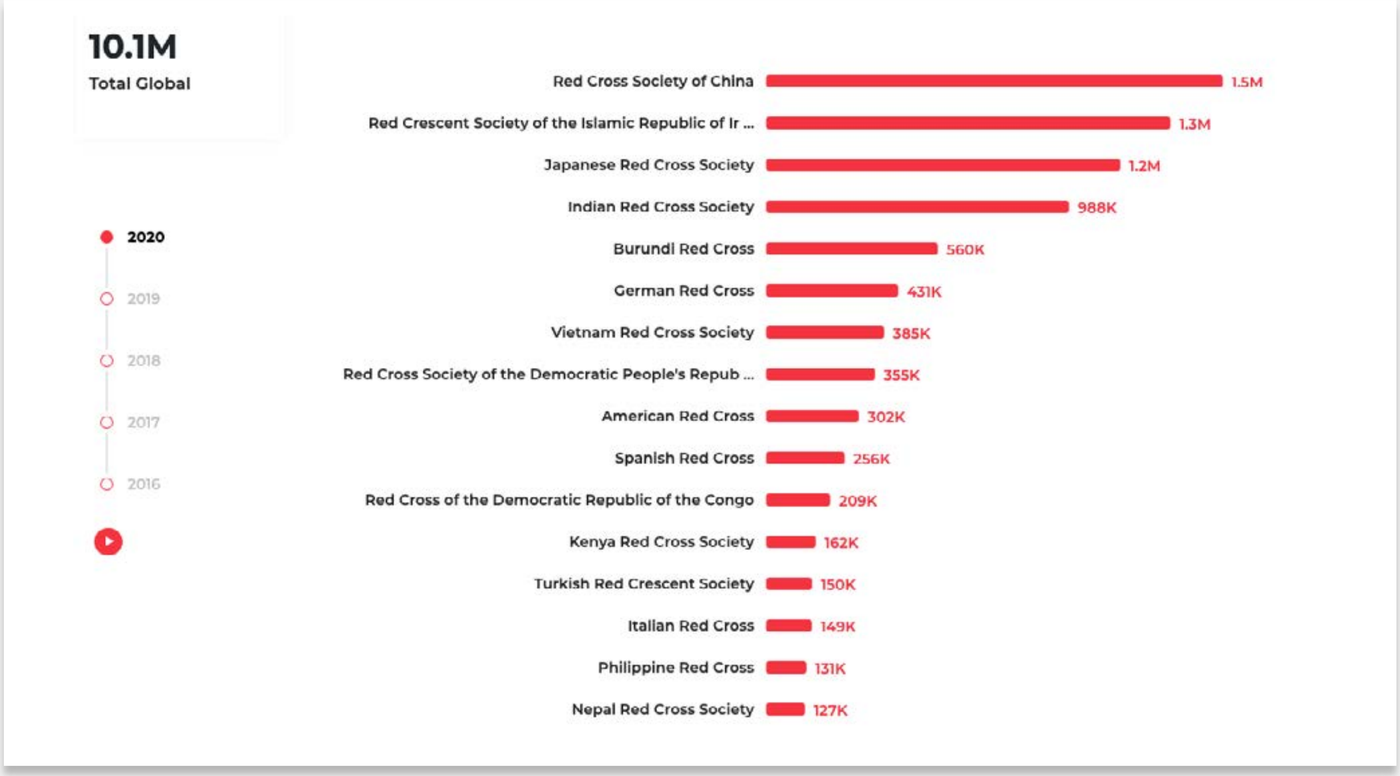
- IFRC has reached 305 million people for health response (Source: FDRS, 2022), (See FDRS for the most updated data)
- This data was obtained and validated by the FDRS and from the National Societies. The FDRS team aggregated the information and provided the full evidence on the website.


(i) Source: https://data.ifrc.org/fdrs

# Counting People

National Societies follow processes to count people. They consult and verify information in partnership with their chapters and local units/branches. The Regional Offices and the IFRC Secretariat also consolidate and verify this data.

These processes for counting people have refined over time. We have teaching materials and verification processes to ensure the most valid data is presented as evidence. Only validated data is published on FDRS's website. This data is also used for analysis.




(i) To learn more about this process see the Everyone Counts Report — (Source: chart data from FDRS, 2021)

# From Research to Action

IFRC and National Societies are using the '*evidence*' from **FDRS** and the *Everyone Counts Report*.

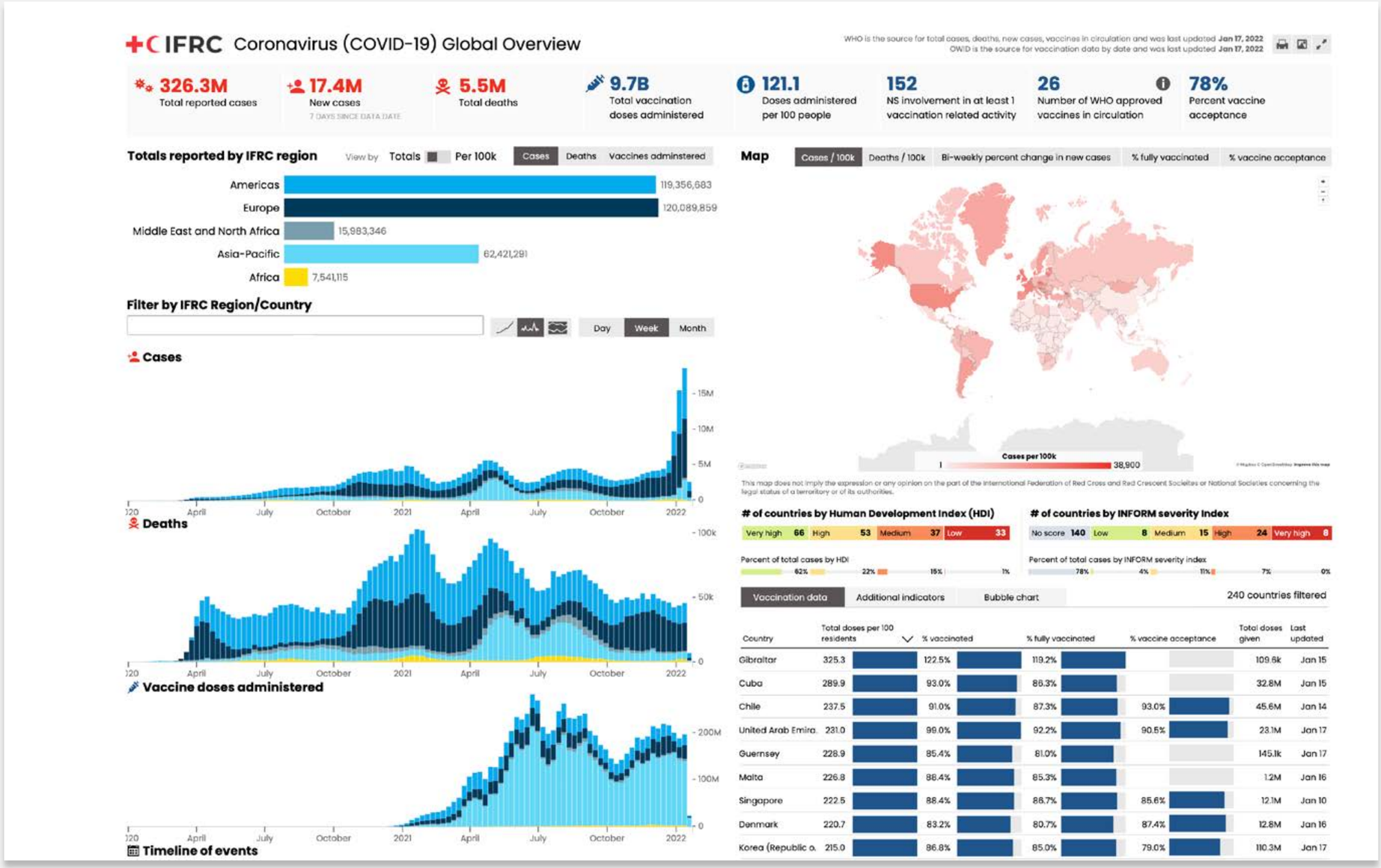
This data raises awareness about volunteer engagement. It is also a **key result** (denominator) used as evidence to influence strategy and policy.

Data and analysis are provided to decision-makers to design policies adapted to the context and to **implement relevant actions**.

# IFRC Global reporting for Covid response

- Methodology
  - Used and augmented existing FDRS-team, processes, and tools
  - Increased frequency of data collection (every 3 months, then every 4 months)
- Network approach:
  - Worked together with IFRC GO team to survey and publish data
  - IFRC Regional offices had a bigger role in data collection
  - 100s of people engaged to get quality and timely data
- Impact:
  - 170 countries reported on expenditures and needs for response
  - Data used by senior leaders, donors and staff.
  - The Everyone Counts, Covid edition with full analysis will be published in 2022. Also, see the Go platform (Covid emergency data)

## IFRC Go - Global: Covid-19 pandemic




(i) Source: Go platform (Covid emergency data)

# Questioning evidence

- How can we be sure that our humanitarian work is **evidence-based**?
- What is **evidence** in a complex and volatile world where what seemed *true* yesterday is obviously *wrong* today?
- How **reliable is evidence** when facts and figures are filtered by six or more layers of bureaucracy with competing interests, siloed expertise and differing worldviews?
- How can any kind of evidence help **predict a project's success** or the **consequences of a policy**?

# Thank you

# 9 - 2 How to support data-informed decision-making?

**There are many factors that influence and inform a decision. We aim to make data-informed decisions whenever possible. How can we support this methodology? What are some best practices or lessons?**

- **People:** 4 to 30 people
- **Time:** 60 Minutes
- **Difficulty:** Easy
- **Virtual Materials:** virtual meeting platform, shared document/writing space
- **In Person materials:** Flipcharts/noteboards, sticky notes, markers

# Exercise

## Part 1: (10 minutes)

Ask people to map out or draw how a recent decision was made in their organisation. Recommend some creative drawing of this 'map' and or diagram. The goal is to represent the complexity of decision-spaces and get participants considering the variables. They can work as individuals or pairs.

## Part 2: Explain and show types of Decision-making (15 minutes)

Ask people to share their examples (briefly). Then, ask people to share types of decision-making (in plenary)

Types can include Strategic, programmatic, operational.

**Strategic** - policies, long term planning

**Programmatic, tactical** - delivery, targets/indicators

**Operational** - project implementation, monitoring, training

## Part 3 (20 minutes)

In small groups, discuss:

- How do we support data-informed decision making?
- What is your experience in supporting data informed decision-making, what works and what doesn't?
- Take notes on any insights or questions on a shared document.

## Part 4: Plenary (10 minutes)

Ask people to share some of their best practices. Any insights.

## Extra credit

Create your own handout of best practices to support data for decision-making.

## Credit

IFRC Data and Digital Week participants, Olaf Steenbergen, Dirk Slater, Heather Leson, IFRC Humanitarian Information Analysis (HIAC) course (internal)

# 9 - 3 Data, Decisions, and Strategy 2030

Download resources

# 9 - 4 Best Practices for Data-informed Decisions

**Decisions are often informed by many factors, data as evidence is one component. On the journey to being data ready, staff and volunteers shared the following best practices to support data-informed decisions. This handout was co-created at the IFRC Data and Digital Week. It is encouraged that organisations add to this list and co-create one with your network. It is not designed to be 'comprehensive.'**

# People

- Create a supportive environment for individuals, teams and the organisation as a whole regarding data literacy and the importance of data for informed decision making:
  - Advocate importance of data driven process to non technical people;
  - Make sure people within the National Society understand the full purpose of why we collect data (beyond just for reporting to donors);
  - Understand exactly who uses the data and the decisions they face by developing and maintaining data-user personas.
- Choose the right team to work with:
  - Allow coworkers to share and apply their best skills;
  - Facilitate and allow the opportunity for upskilling within the team;
  - Recruit for specific and different skill sets;
  - And, most importantly: do all this with a vision; a people strategy (staff and volunteers) to support the shift.
- Have a clear overview of who the decision makers are, so that the level of decision making is clear:
  - Prevent 'information-overload': have a clear overview of who the decision makers are, what data they require (quantitative vs. qualitative), how you will present the data;
  - More information: The humanitarian decision makers taxonomy | ALNAP.
- Monitor how decision makers respond to the information presented to them by gathering feedback systematically; what works to the decision makers to adapt data presentation:
  - Understand how decisions have been taken in the past and are being taken: don't assume that more/new data is the answer or will change decisions or decision-making processes;
  - Realize that data literacy is key for decision makers to be able to appreciate the role of previous collected data.
- Actively incorporate stakeholders:
  - Establish a stakeholder 'data and tech'-advisory board which collaboratively defines roadmaps for any new data creating tools within the organisation;
  - Breaking down silos and creating understanding on what data is critical and what is not;
  - Understand and gather feedback on how to package information to decision makers at different levels (country level, regional level, etc.) and donors: how to influence different structures to make sure no interventions are done that cause harm.

- Present data in an effective way:
    - Always put the data into context: decision makers appreciate comparisons, instead of just showing quantitative. Without context, data is often unable to explain the "complex systems" we work in. More information: Complex systems modeling for humanitarian action – The Centre for Humanitarian Data (humdata.org)
    - Do not present data in a complex way: clear connection to the data, make sure the data collected is relevant;
- Allow decision makers to connect data to decisions easily:
    - Clearly explain and show the process of data collection and the outcome. The decision maker should understand the process to have trust in it;
    - Have bilateral discussion between decision makers and technical people producing statistics and communication of goals;
    - Decision-making is everyone (everyone makes data decisions), so strive to share this power and understanding throughout the organisation.
- Advocate the importance of market and needs assessment: helps inform how the response will look like in the community when presenting to the decision makers.
- Make sure to share back the processed data with those who shared it with you.
- Decision makers do not always understand what they need to know on beforehand:
    - Accommodate sensible request for information; use observative and iterative approaches to develop info products;
    - Involve decision-makers at the start, as many as useful.

# Policy

- Realize the importance of data privacy and data security as part of everything we do;
- The management of data is essential: governance of systems needs to account for what the business needs in order to evolve. This includes a vision for the future, instead of looking only at the immediate needs;
- Develop proper protocols, ethical guidelines and a plan before starting the process of collecting and managing data.
- The whole team should be aware of these protocols, guidelines, and plan, so that it is known when, what, and how the work will be done;
- Consider different perceptions and approaches beforehand, such as cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and regulations. This empowers people and increases the acceptance of data-driven initiatives.

# Process

- Begin with the end in mind, identify the knowable outcomes and associated actions to alleviate some of the work:
  - Know what questions you want to answer with the data, before finding ways to use data: What do we need/want to know? How is this going to inform our programs? Why do we need this data?
  - Understand the needs before jumping on data collection and analysis.
- Visualise data to aid communication effectively by using visuals, graphs and other presentation formats to aid decision making:
  - Make data accessible for all to profit from;
  - Connect data from different branches (within national societies) and between national societies;
  - Define data parameters.
- Involve yourself in the data collection to understand it better and use the right language to transmit results.
- Question and analyse everything, look from different perspective:
  - Ask as many questions needed before we (data analysts) and program managers agree on the analytical needs;
  - Analysing everything without being biased and without making value judgments, we just verify our information and make decisions from what we have;
  - Find the right balance between proactive and reactive responses when having data-informed decisions to prevent analysis paralysis and/or reckless abandon.
- Be clear in designing data collection tools and collecting data with proper tools and guidance:
  - Be SMART in the use of metrics;
  - Use a centralized approach to data sharing to inform international policy;
  - Make data accessible to all;
  - Understanding what is quantitative and qualitative data;
  - Keep data as simple and succinct as possible; less is more, unless that extra thing is bringing anything of value to the table.
- Define processes (who, when, where) to reflect on collected data and make it the actual base for decisions:
  - Define data structure and the process for data collection
  - Understand the data cycle as a circular process: from defining the research question to data collection, data analysis, reporting... and USING the results!

## Credit

IFRC Data and Digital Week participants

# 9 - 5 Making Decisions with Data

**What is the process by which people make decisions? What are some of the influences and risks? Using scenario-based learning, this exercise aims to explore some concepts around Decision-making.**

- **People:** 6 – 20 people
- **Time:** 60 Minutes
- **Difficulty:** Intermediate
- **Virtual Materials:** virtual meeting platform, shared document/writing space
- **In Person materials:** Flipcharts/noteboards, sticky notes, markers

# Exercise

This exercise will use a scenario to drive some key questions around 'How to make decisions with data.' There are a few parts to this event - breakout discussion, plenary feedback and conclusion.

In advance of the session, discuss a plan with two decision-makers. It is recommended that they play 'roles' in this scenario. One role example might be to have someone be a decision-maker who is working with 'confirmation bias' - meaning -they already made their decision and want the data to provide backup. It is encouraged to advise participants to have fun as they imagine real world and/or fictional experiences with decisions.

## Part 1: Reflection (15 minutes)

Ask participants to share either on a collaborative document or verbally:

- How do they make decisions with data?

Take notes on any insights or questions on a shared document.

## Part 2: Scenario (30 minutes)

It's Tuesday, September 28th, 2021. Just 6 weeks ago, Haiti was struck by disaster, an earthquake with a magnitude of 7.2 at a depth of 10.0 km. You have been called in to provide information management support to the Haiti Earthquake.

Your decision-maker needs help and you need to meet the needs.

A donor has provided you with a total of 65.000 NFI's to distribute among the affected population. The items include:

- 25,000 First Aid kits
- 20,000 hygiene kits
- 10,000 tents
- 10,000 mosquito nets

The decision-maker will need to decide:

*Which area should we send these 65.000 Non-food items (NFI's)?*

1 South
2 Nippes
3 Grande'Anse

# Instructions

Participants should be divided into two groups for the discussion. If you have a smaller group, consider coaching your 'decision-makers' to debate in the small group. In your groups, you will meet your 'decision-maker'. You will need to determine what are the decisions to be made. How will ensure that the data informs the decision.

Facilitators should advise participants that decision-makers have some additional information that you need to 'discover' by asking questions. Take notes on any insights or questions on a shared document.

## Part 3: Discussion (15 minutes)

Groups should report back on the questions they asked and provide any insights. The 'role playing' should be helpful in highlighting these conditions around decision-making. If participants don't cite these, bring these topics up in the plenary discussion.

- Improving our workflows with local data
- Don't make the decision first
- Understand who is making the decision
- Beware of confirmation bias
- Don't forget the humans
- Questioning the data – is it truth?

## Extra Credit

Invite a guest decision-maker for operational or strategic work speak at the end of the session to provide reflections about the real world complexities of decision-making in their role. Concrete and practical guidance linking decision-makers with 'data ready' colleagues can help inform shared understanding around data-informed decision-making.

## Credit

Olaf Steenbergen, Margarita Griffith

# 9 - 6 Localising Data Workflows Checklist

**How can we better incorporate local data in our decision-making?**

How might we localise aid by keeping local communities at the centre of our work? Data is one component of humanitarian work. Currently, there are data workflows that engage local volunteers in program/project design and data collection. There is a growing recognition that we also need to support new and existing data skilled colleagues. Community engagement and accountability (CEA) and the localisation agenda are two IFRC priorities. Involving communities in all parts of the data cycle is the improved method for more effective and inclusive humanitarian services. Local data could result in the most current snapshot of what is needed. This draft checklist is to drive conversation on how we might use and improve data workflows at a local level. It is not a comprehensive list, but it is a way to illustrate how data/information management workflows incorporate local communities.

What are some of the examples and tactics to integrate multiple data types, including crowdsourcing or other data collection methods, into your workflows? How might we use Community Engagement and Accountability lessons? What are some of the barriers and opportunities to improve this?

There is space at the end of each list to add your own questions. Consider your data-driven project design and responsible data/data protection practices. Update this checklist to your sector and specific use case. Some of the items may not apply for your situation.

# Primary questions

| Item | Question | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | How is the National Society engaged? Do they have any local data workflows and/or datasets to share? | |
| 2. | Do other National Societies work in the area? Do they have data that they might share? | |
| 3. | Have you reviewed the data on FDRS and GO? Both platforms have different types of data about national societies. Does the Regional office have additional data? | |

| Item | Question | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| 4. | What other sectors might have relevant local sources? eg. health, surge, wash, etc. | |
| 5. | How is the local community engaged? There may be NGOS or civil society groups who have access to appropriate, verified datasets? | |
| 6. | Is there a local or national data portal or official statistics website? | |
| 7. | How will you incorporate Responsible Data/ Data Protection Practices into your work-flow? | |
| 8. | How will you incorporate a community engagement and accountability plan with your project? | |
| 9. | How do you plan to learn from the above considerations of the project? Will you actively implement feedback mechanisms? | |
| 10. | How are you planning on taking the lessons learned from the project into future projects? How will we keep increasing our engagement with local communities? | |
| 11. | | |
| 12. | | |

# Planning with the community

| Item | Question | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | How are the National Society/chapters/ local units/branches engaged? Do they have any local data workflows and/or datasets to share? | |
| 2. | Do other National Societies work in the area? Do they have data that they might share? | |
| 3. | Have you reviewed the data on FDRS and GO? Both platforms have different types of data about national societies. Does the Regional office have additional data? | |
| 4. | How will you involve the local community? Who are the key stakeholders? Who are the respondents? | |
| 5. | What is the community structure, leadership style or cultural needs? What are the risk and vulnerability considerations? | |
| 6. | What considerations should be taken around the literacy rate and language use? What are the best communication methods? | |
| 7. | What is the local infrastructure and/or preferred communication style? E.g. internet access, use of mobile phones, paper use. | |
| 8. | | |
| 9. | | |

## Credit

Isaac Ndoricimpa, Henk Hoff and Heather Leson. This session was piloted at the Nairobi Data Skills Workshop in partnership with the Centre for Humanitarian Data. Thank you as well to Malcolm McKinlay.

# 9 - 7 Engaging local communities in data projects

**Engaging local communities in our work is essential for effective and inclusive humanitarian response. What are some of the examples and tactics to integrate multiple data types, including crowdsourcing or other data collection methods, into your workflow? What are some of the barriers and opportunities to improve this? This exercise uses breakout groups for discussion.**

- **People:** 6 to 30 people
- **Time:** 60 to 90 Minutes
- **Difficulty:** Intermediate
- **Virtual Materials:** virtual meeting platform, shared document/writing space
- **In Person materials:** Flipcharts/noteboards, sticky notes, markers

# Preparation

Invite a guest speaker to help inform this conversation. This person should be from a local community/national society and be familiar with field data from the local community perspective. They will serve as the subject matter expert or the 'key informant.'

Allocate 1 facilitator helper/notetaker for every 6 - 10 people. Be sure to meet with them in advance to explain the exercise to support the experience.

# Exercise

## Part 1: Introduction (15 - 20 minutes)

Introduce the topic and the guest speaker highlighting the following topics. The speaker should encourage people to build plans to 'localise data workflows' and provide concrete examples and impact statements. Some topics that can help build the conversation

- Importance of Community engagement data workflows/localisation/inclusive
- New types of data – Crowdsource/collective intelligence data as one data type
- Process considerations – What is localized data and why is it important
- Data sharing – Collaborating locally and globally

Describe a situation in which you need data to implement and monitor a program. You want to have local data (from the community you are going to work with). What kind of data do you need? The group will work with you on setting up a process/checklist on how to get this data.

## Part 2: Create a Checklist (25 minutes)

Depending on the size of participants, break into 2 groups (maximum 25 per group). In the sub-groups, people will create a 'localise data checklist' for all users.. The goal is 'talking points' and 'things you need to know' to better include local data into your overall data workflows.

Invite participants to document those key points on sticky notes or collaborative documentation. Your helpers should add these to the two separate documents. Encourage people to consider the topics at a high level. This exercise is about identifying the next

stage discussions rather than solving all the issues during the brief session. Participants should have an equal moment to share their observations.

## Part 3: Discussion (15 minutes)

It is best to host this discussion in plenary rather than in small groups. The reason is that the 'shared dialogue' for decision-makers means hearing all the key examples and needs for a 'big picture' effect.

Each group is tasked to create a checklist guidance to 'localise data workflows'. Some questions to consider:

- What are the problems you are addressing with local data?
- How would you implement this? Which types of data are needed? How will you collect and involve the community?
- What were the results/how does this localized data inform/improve the work?

Some further guidance:

- Be interactive
- Consider the steps and workflows
- Ask about the challenges.

## Part 4: Conclusion and next steps (15 minutes)

Ask people to reflect on barriers and opportunities for local data flows:

- What are some best practices for community engagement?
- How can we be more inclusive when it comes to engaging local communities in data projects?
    - Do we see that certain groups are currently excluded from participation?
    - What is the reason that this is happening?
    - What do we need to actively involve these groups?

### Resources

IFRC CEA Toolkit

### Extra credit

Consider asking one of the groups to include a "Community Role Play" aspect to do an informal needs assessment. This will highlight the opportunity to change the workflows.

## Credit

Isaac Ndoricimpa, Henk Hoff and Heather Leson. This session was piloted at the Nairobi Data Skills Workshop in partnership with the Centre for Humanitarian Data.

# 9 - 8 How to Localise Data Workflow Exercise

**With 192 National Societies and 14.8 million volunteers, the IFRC is the largest humanitarian network in the world. It is both a local and global network. How can we ensure that our activities include local data and local perspectives? This exercise asks participants to consider the key questions on more locally-driven '*data practices*'. We've provided you with a generic draft checklist. Edit this for your own purposes. To help in your dialogue, we're sharing participant input from a previous session.**

- **People:** 2 to 10 people
- **Time:** 30 Minutes
- **Difficulty:** Medium
- **Virtual Materials:** virtual meeting platform, shared document/writing space
- **In Person materials:** Flipcharts/noteboards, sticky notes, markers, printed or shared copies of the **[Localising Data Workflows Checklist (9 - 6)]**.

# Exercise

## Part 1: Reflection (5 minutes)

Ask participants to share either on a collaborative document or verbally: Ask colleagues to share an example on how local data informed their work. Local data means 'primary data' or data obtained with the local community.

## Part 2: Exploration (15 minutes)

Depending on the number of participants, divide into small groups. Ask each group to a project that you and your team are doing. Ask: How are local communities engaged throughout the process? Use the handout to assist in guiding the conversation Localising Data Workflow (handout).

- How should it be updated for your work?
- What does localisation mean and why does it matter?
- How can we improve our workflows with local data?

## Part 3: Discussion (10 minutes)

In plenary, ask people to share their insights and questions about their projects. Discuss human-centred design methods. What changes can be made to their projects - current ones or future projects? Share the principles of community engagement and accountability as well as how our fundamental principles can be applied in a digital age.

### Resources

IFRC Fundamental Principles

IFRC CEA Toolkit

### Extra credit

Using the **[Data Simulation (3 - 10)]**, consider how you might engage the local community in your activities throughout all the stages of a data-driven project.

## Credit

Isaac Ndoricimpa, Henk Hoff and Heather Leson. This session was piloted at the Nairobi Data Skills Workshop in partnership with the Centre for Humanitarian Data.

# 9 - 9 State of data

**How can we get an overview on the 'State of Data' in our offices, sectors, or the wider organisation? This data discussion can help teams. The team members engaged should be from across the organisation: management, various sectors, and other 'data curious'/'data advocates'. This discussion can be an open forum to gain their perspectives on data use and quickly have the team share a common view on the 'state of data'.**

- **People:** 5 to 30 people
- **Time:** 60 to 90 Minutes
- **Difficulty:** Intermediate
- **Virtual Materials:** virtual meeting platform, shared document/writing space
- **In Person materials:** Flipcharts/noteboards, sticky notes, markers

# Preparation

It is very important that senior leadership is engaged in this conversation. Brief them well in advance and provide them with this exercise worksheet to support advocacy. Engage with all the stakeholders in advance to encourage them to join the dialogue. Invite them to prepare some observations and potential solutions. There are often different reasons for data - data for reporting and data for programming.

Here are some questions to share in the invitation notice and in your communications:

- How is data used at **[add organisation/division/region name]**?
- What are some of the skills and tools/technology around being data-driven? Are there challenges/gaps/opportunities?
- What are some of the data workflows? Do we have the right data?

# Exercise

## Part 1: Explore (40 minutes)

For the session, create two documentation spaces (either digitally) or in person with the following questions:

- What is the “State of Data” in (add organisation/division/region name)?
- How might we use our data for leadership (decision-making)?

Encourage participants to share their perspectives and organisational knowledge in an equal way. Depending on the size of the group, using breakout groups might be helpful. There should be 1 helper per 6 people to support, drive, and document the conversation. Take notes on any insights or questions on a shared document.

## Part 2: Discussion (20 minutes)

Once people have completed sharing their perspectives, ask people to share some high level observations and insights from the discussion. Identify any future actions. Encourage the most senior leader to provide a summary and feedback on those next steps.

## Extra credit

The next steps would be to share the IFRC Digital Transformation strategy or your national society strategy. Teams/organisations should consider undergoing a digital maturity model assessment and digital 'quick scan.' Details can be found on digital.ifrc.org. Also see **[Nurturing a Data Culture (2)]**.

## Credit

IFRC Nairobi Regional Office, IFRC IM team, Henk Hoff, and Heather Leson.

# 9 - 10 Negotiating with leaders

**How is data supporting decision-making in humanitarian response? Do decision-makers use information products to guide their work? This session requires two unique stakeholders - one decision-maker in a disaster response/ operational role and one decision-maker in a strategic policy and/or operational manager roles. The speakers will introduce how data can be useful for emergency operations and how data supports the decision-making process during humanitarian response. Participants will first hear from the leaders to frame the discussion. Then, they will divide into teams to prepare their negotiation with decision-makers.**

- **People:** 10 to 40 people
- **Time:** 60 – 90 Minutes
- **Difficulty:** Intermediate
- **Virtual Materials:** virtual meeting platform, shared document/writing space
- **In Person materials:** Flipcharts/noteboards, sticky notes, markers

# Session Goals

The goal of this session is to build a common language around how data might be used for evidence. The session also seeks to provide guidance from decision-makers on how colleagues can provide more useful evidence as well as tactics to talk about how to negotiate the use of data to inform decision-making. Participants will explore each of the topics with these key questions:

- Useful: What data do you consider useful to inform response?
- Types of Data: How are decision-makers using data? How can data be better communicated in order to reach its full potential?
- Local Capacity: How do you invest in local capacity and facilitate local ownership of data? Or what needs to be done to increase local ownership?
- Consensus and Negotiation: How do we reach agreement on data to set priorities for decision-making?

# Preparation

Each speaker should be briefed in advance on the session. Here's what they need to know to prepare:

## Part 1:

Decision-makers will speak for 5 minutes each about their experiences. Slides are welcome but encourage a conversation-based approach. Concrete humanitarian examples will help the understanding and future conversations during the session.

## Part 2:

Decision-makers become observers. They are encouraged to support the teams by listening to the discussion and taking some notes. They will provide some comments and reflections in part 4.

## Part 3:

Each team will share the various talking points in plenary on how data can support their work. Decision-makers should be prepared to give real world examples. Their role is to help the audience frame their work in terms of 'negotiating with decision-makers.' They should be prepared to reflect on the key questions and challenges to making evidence-based decisions.

Depending on your audience (e.g. sector), pick a few example datasets/tools or types of information products that can 'guide' the audience in their discussion.

Each group should be assigned in advance of the session. In addition, signs should be made for each group topic:

- **Group 1** – Confusion and Knowledge gaps
- **Group 2** – Challenges in systems, new technology, and processes
- **Group 3** – Trust, Accuracy, bias, and quality
- **Group 4** – Security, legal, and policy

# Exercise

## Part 1 - Explain the format and Frame the discussion (15 minutes)

The host introduces the 3 parts of the session. Speaker 1 and Speaker 2 each talk between 5 - 8 minutes about their experiences around evidence-based decisions. They can attempt to address the key questions by illustrating real-world examples. Slides are ok, but the preference is to default to conversational insights.

## Part 2 - Breaking down the talking points (20 minutes)

Participants will prepare their negotiation to consider their learnings around data/ information products for decision-makers. Be sure to use some example tools and datasets from both internal and external sources. Each sector might have a different type of 'information delivery mechanism.' One example might be a dataset from the Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX) or another example is a dataset from GO (the IFRC emergency operations tool.)

The room will be divided into 4 groups. In their groups, people have 20 minutes to determine the top answers for 'data-driven' arguments to negotiate with the decision-makers by listing on their collaborative spaces:

- Type of challenges decision-makers might have in order to not use our data
- Arguments to overcome these challenges

- Group 1 - Confusion and Knowledge gaps
- Group 2 - Challenges in systems, new technology, and processes
- Group 3 - Trust, Accuracy, bias, and quality
- Group 4 - Security, legal, and policy

Groups will pick their top 2 points and assign 1 person to report back in Part 3. Document and rate ideas on flip charts.

## Part 3 - Negotiation Room (25 minutes)

Now that the participants have determined their talking points for the decision-makers, they will use 'negotiation' tactics and 'share' why the decision-makers should use the datasets.

- Each group gets 2 minutes to give their highlights. The panel will then listen and take notes (10 min).
- The panellists will give feedback on what they thought worked or did not work. They will identify gaps and opportunities to improve negotiating with leaders about using data (10 min).
- Closure – The host will summarize the session, and highlight outcomes of the session.

### Extra credit

Here are some additional exercises to build teamwork and a common language:

- Atlassian Team Playbook
- Humanitarian Data Exchange
- IFRC GO Platform

### Credit

IFRC Africa regional office, Henk Hoff, Assanke Koedam, Guido Pizzini, and Heather Leson. Isaac Ndoricimpa, Henk Hoff and Heather Leson. This session was piloted at the Nairobi Data Skills Workshop in partnership with the Centre for Humanitarian Data.

# 9 - 11 How do we keep learning from decisions?

**Using data as evidence to inform our decisions also includes the need to 'learn from our decisions.' In this exercise, participants are encouraged to explore how data-informed decisions might have an impact on organisational transformation. How are we learning from decisions over time? Are we using data as part of decisions? What is the impact of doing so or not doing so?**

« Without data you're just another person with an opinion » — Edward Demings

- **People:** 6to 20 people
- **Time:** 60 – 90 minutes
- **Difficulty:** easy
- **Virtual Materials:** virtual meeting platform, shared document/writing space
- **In Person materials:** Flipcharts/noteboards, sticky notes, markers

# Exercise

## Part 1: Guest Decision-maker (30 minutes)

Invite a guest decision-maker to share concrete examples on how we might learn from data-informed decisions? And, specifically, how can we keep learning from decisions? The guest could share strategic, reporting and/or operational examples.

This portion of the event would be 30 minutes for the talk plus time for questions.

## Part 2: Explore (30 minutes)

Coordinate the teams into small groups. Ask participants to share a story about a time they made a decision based on information or data. This may either be as local as possible, but can be head office level. Assign someone to take notes on any insights or questions on a shared document. Teams can answer all or elect to answer some of these questions in the conversations:

- Explain the process after the decision was made:
- Was it the right decision?
- Did you afterwards review the decision?
- What was the added value of the data/information for your decision?
- Did you have biases that influenced your decision?
- What were your main "lessons-learned" from the scenario?
- How could the decision have been improved – what would you have needed for future decisions (documents, better information, a procedure, etc.)?

## Part 3: Discussion (15 minutes)

After everyone has given input, ask for participants to identify similarities in stories:

- What are the overlapping "lessons-learned"?
- How would we translate that into the playbook?
- In short: How to revolutionize decision-making?

## Extra credit

The team could create their own checklist or reminders on 'how to build learning from decisions based on evidence '.

## Credit

Olaf Steenbergen, Margarita Griffith, Heather Leson

# 9 - 12 Information Needs for Decision-making

# Levels of decision making

Strategic planning, long term, macro, policies, goal settings, slowly changing (senior management)

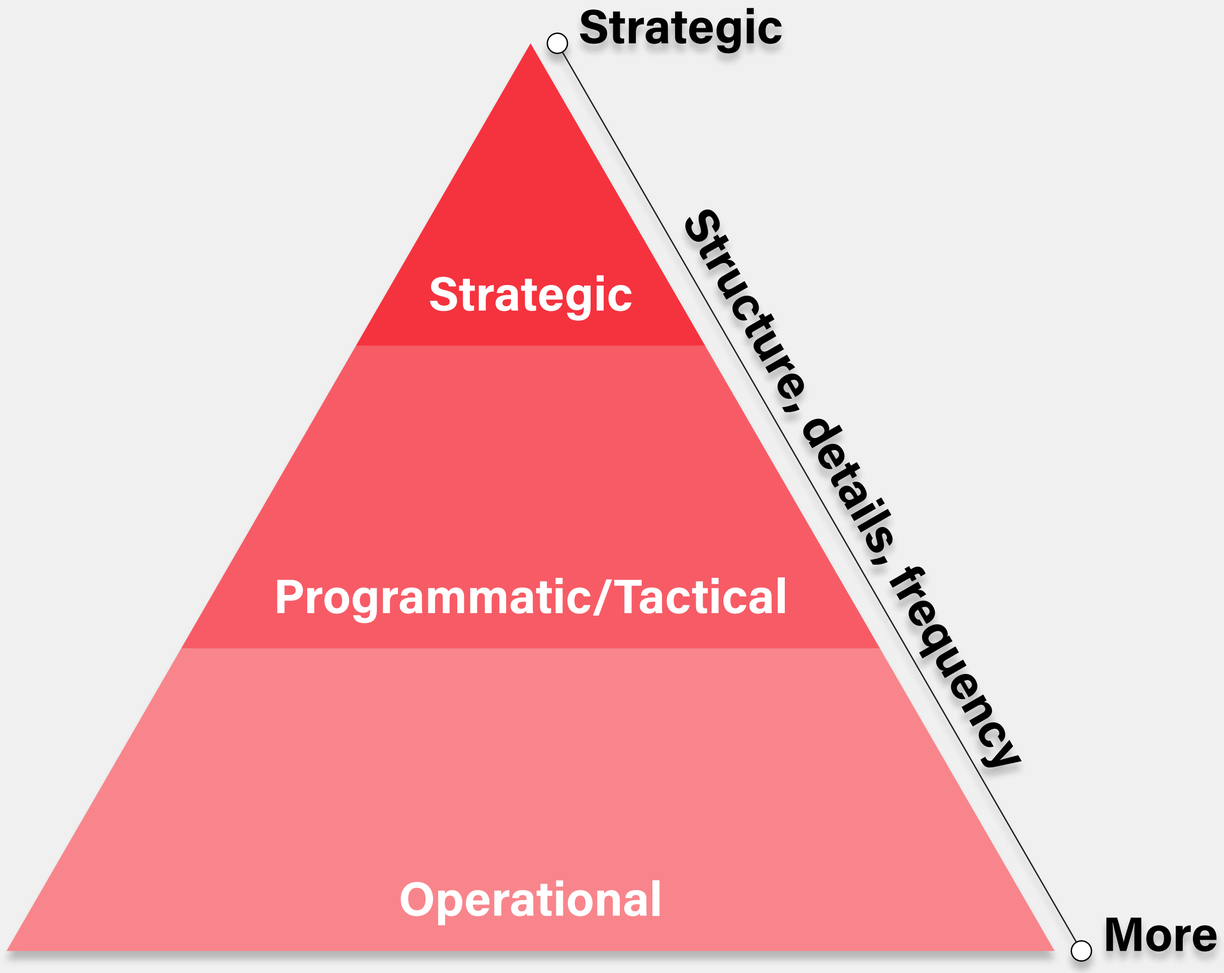
- Government leaders
- surge team leaders, head of delegation
- Humanitarian coordinators/ Resident coordinators
- Humanitarian country teams
- Policy-makers, Donors
- Cluster lead agencies
- NGOs (Regional/Country directors)

Programme planning, medium term, meso level, delivery methods, targeting and conditionality (middle management)

- National/local authorities
- Cluster coordinators
- Cluster member organisations
- Inter Cluster Coordination Mechanism/OCHA
- NGOs (Programme managers)

Project implementation, short term, micro, local partnerships, monitoring, training, etc.

- Project managers
- Team leaders
- Project staff
- Functional specialists



# Examples

## Strategic

- Target groups includes: IDP, refugee, returnee, host community
- Timeframe, budget
- Geographic areas of the country
- Political dimensions
- Specific sectors to be given priority
- Elements of early recovery

# Example

## Programmatic

- Cash, services, goods.
- Temporary, semi-permanent, permanent solutions.
- Work with/through the cluster system.
- Partnership will relevant government departments.
- Standards to be adhered to.

# Examples

## Operational

- Where are the hubs
- How many staff
- Source items locally or abroad
- Security measures/protocols
- Logistics chain
- Numbers of tents, NFIs, schools supplies etc.