10 TIPS
For visualizing data

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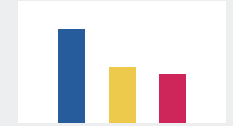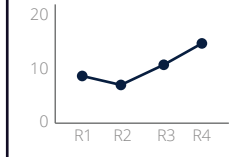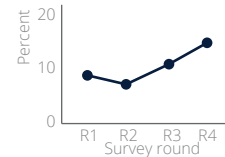**1 Use color strategically**
Use colors consistently throughout your reports. If you want to draw your reader's eye to a certain data point, use an alternate color so that point stands out from the rest.
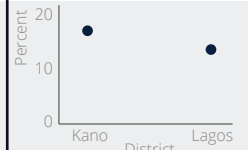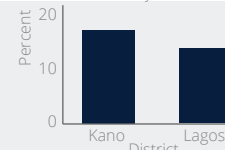
2 Label the x and y axes
Put a descriptive label on both axes so the reader can clearly understand the information presented.
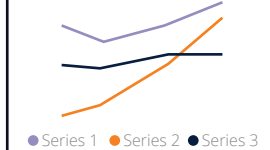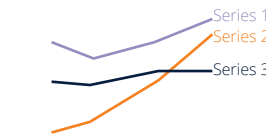
3 Use the correct chart type
For example, line graphs are appropriate for showing trends over time, while bars charts are best for comparing different categories.
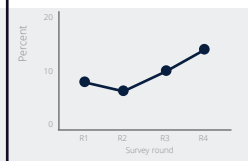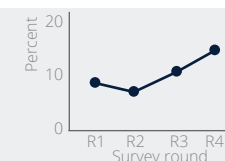
4 Label lines directly
If you have more than 3 lines in a line graph, it is easier to interpret if you label the lines directly instead of in a separate legend.
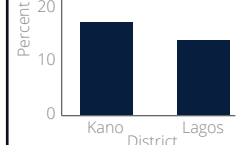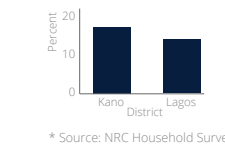
5 Use large enough font size
Make sure your font size is large enough to read easily. We recommend using 9 pt font or larger for print documents and 12 pt font or larger for Powerpoints.
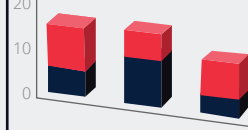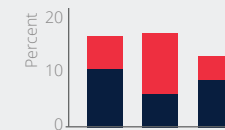
6 Identify your data sources
It is important to cite your data sources so the reader knows how to check your data; this makes your data more trustworthy.
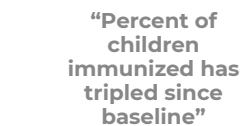
7 Do not use 3-D format
When a chart is in 3-D format, the data could appear distorted and lead to misinterpretation.

8 Use a strong title
Instead of using a generic title, use the space to highlight your chart's key message. Ensure all chart components come together to highlight your chart's key message.

9 Put your data in order
Sort your data in a meaningful way: either alphabetically, sequentially, or by value. This will help your reader to quickly find the information they need.

10 Eliminate chart junk
Grid lines, tick marks, borders, double labels, or shading can all distract from your key message. Keep your chart clean and remove "chart junk".