POLICY ON COUNTING PEOPLE INVOLVED IN OUR PROGRAMMES

INTEGRITY ACTION

Purpose

Integrity Action's mission is to help build societies in which all citizens can - and do - successfully demand integrity from the institutions they rely on. A clear and robust approach towards counting people involved in our programmes is crucial to ensure we:

- understand our progress towards achieving impact at scale;
- understand whether all citizen groups have the opportunity to be involved, and ultimately benefit, from our programmes ; and
- learn lessons from our programmes so that we can continually improve.

This policy covers both (1) how we count people, and (2) how the resulting numbers are presented and described.

Our approach

Overall principles

We have identified three key principles which guide our approach:

- **Accuracy and clarity**: we are accurate when reporting numbers, and clear when describing groups of people and the link they have with our programme/s
- **Openness**: we are open about any assumptions we make in generating numbers, and about any weaknesses in our methodology
- **Avoidance of jargon or generic categories**: we avoid using terms that are inaccessible or lack precise meaning and, instead of putting people into generic categories (such as "indirect beneficiary"), we say exactly what we mean (for example, "students attending the school where monitoring took place")

Our approach will also be in line with Integrity Action's approach to gender and social justice. This requires us to understand whether, and how, our programmes benefit different types of citizen, particularly people who are marginalised.

Counting adults (18 and over) who directly undertake programme activities (such as citizen monitoring)

We work with various different stakeholders in our programmes. The most common participant is a citizen taking part in monitoring or other citizen-centred accountability activity. When working with people directly, it is important that we count them in a verifiable way.

For every person who engages with a programme directly, when informed consent is given, we will aim to collect the following:

- full name
- contact details (most likely an email address or phone number, if available)
- gender

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- disability status[1]
- age
- the nature of their engagement with the programme

We will also record when they began participating, and track their participation so that we know when they stop participating.

This information will be stored securely in accordance with relevant laws including GDPR.

Verifying each individual who participates should minimise the risk of double counting. To further minimise this risk, we may ask people who join our projects whether they have taken part in a programme before with Integrity Action (and its relevant partner/s), or ask people taking part in community surveys whether they have answered the survey before.

We will refer to people taking part accurately and clearly. For example, we would **not** say, "this project had 100 direct beneficiaries", or even "this project had 100 monitors" in the absence of other information.

Instead we might say "in this project, 100 citizens living in South Kivu, DR Congo, acted as citizen monitors". Depending on the context, we might also expand on the gender balance in this group, etc.

Counting children directly engaged in programmes (under 18)

Some of our programmes involve young citizen monitors who are engaged as members of a group (e.g. Integrity Clubs in schools, or other community-based groups). Here, we do **not** collect information for each young participant in the same way as for adults. Instead, we collect the following information for each **group**:

- the name of the school or organisation that hosts the group
- the number of children taking part in the group
- the gender split within this number
- potentially other project-specific measures, such as the number of students with a disability

This means **no** personalised information is collected. This approach will lead to numbers that are less accurate and verifiable than for adult monitors, and therefore it is important we are open about how these numbers are obtained.

Counting people who are otherwise involved in programmes

Alongside people who directly take part in activities, there are also people who engage with the programme in other ways, such as duty-bearers who take part in regular meetings with citizen monitors, or community members who are surveyed by citizen monitors. In these cases it may not be possible or desirable to collect their names and contact details. However as a minimum, where informed consent is given, we would seek to collect:

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[1] Disability status will always be determined in one of two ways, depending on which is most appropriate in the context. In cases where the individual is closely engaged and the questions can be handled sensitively, an application of the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning will be used. In all other cases, individuals will be asked whether they consider themselves to have a disability.

- gender
- disability status
- age
- the nature of their involvement in the programme

People who benefit from the results of our programmes

If citizen monitors manage to "fix" problems they have identified, or if wider systemic changes are achieved, these improvements have the potential to benefit the wider community of people in a programme location.

It is important that we estimate the number of people benefitting in this way, but it is equally important to be open about how we are calculating such numbers because they are vulnerable to significant inaccuracies.

We will apply the following approach:

- **We will be accurate and clear about who we are referring to, and the link between them and the programme itself**. For example, "students at the school where monitoring took place; they benefitted from improvements that were brought about by monitoring". We must be mindful that effects from a programme may not always be positive.
- **We prefer the term "reach" to indicate benefits accruing in a wider population**. For example, "The programme's reach was 550 students at the school where monitoring took place; they benefitted from improvements that were brought about by monitoring".
- **We will be open about how the number is sourced or calculated and any weaknesses therein**. For example, the 550 students cited above may be according to the school's official attendance records – but this could be an overestimate of the number of students who actually attend each day.
- **When feasible, we will seek to collect information on the distribution of gender, disability, and age among any wider group of people benefitting.** Such information may not be available. If it is, we will be open about how it is calculated.
- **We will avoid aggregating numbers of people reached unless there is a clear rationale for doing so**. This is to avoid the risk of double counting. For example, contracts for infrastructure projects often specify the number of people that the project is intended to benefit, and we have asked monitors to report this number in DevelopmentCheck. However if we add the numbers from two projects happening in the same area, there is a strong possibility that at least some of the same people will benefit from both projects. (A more valid aggregation would be to add the student numbers of different schools, if we are confident that students are not registered to attend more than one school in that location.)

While aggregation is usually not possible, we can still represent scale in other ways, for example by calculating the *average* number of people reached per infrastructure project, alongside the number of infrastructure projects, and clearly explaining why these numbers cannot be aggregated.

Resources permitting, we may be able to commission a study that more accurately estimates the number of people who benefit from the results of monitoring in one location – however the findings of such a study would only apply to that location.

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Responsible staff member for this policy

Head of Programme Development

Related policies and other documents

Data Protection Policy

Gender and social justice approach