



Office of Research-Innocenti

UNICEF Procedure Ethical Standards in Evidence Update

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Structure

Principles

Procedures

Instructions and Annexes

Resources

Principles

(reflected in
Procedures)

- **Respect:** This principle involves engaging with all stakeholders in a way that honours their **dignity, well-being, participation and personal agency**. It also acknowledges any limitations to this agency.
- **Beneficence:** This principle means striving to do good for **people and planet** while minimizing harms arising from evidence generation. It requires the weighing of harms and benefits. The data collected must be **purpose-driven** (directly informed by the activity or benefit), and proportional (only collecting what is required) and **protective of children's rights**.
- **Justice:** The principle of justice requires that consideration is given to who benefits and who carries the burden of evidence generation and the broader equity of the project, its implementation and outcomes. **The work should be “people-centric” – ensuring the needs, interests and expectations of people—including children and their caregivers in particular—are prioritized by those handling data about them.**

Principles + 2

Integrity: This principle necessitates the **active adherence to moral values and professional standards**, which are essential for all evidence that is commissioned or undertaken. This entails:

- **Honesty and truthfulness** in communication and actions.
- **Professionalism** based on competence, commitment, on-going reflective practice as well as credible and trustworthy behaviour.
- **Independence, impartiality and incorruptibility.** *for every child, answers*

Principles + 2

Accountability is the **obligation to be answerable for all decisions made and actions taken, and to report potential or actual harms** observed through the appropriate channels. This entails:

- **Transparency** regarding evidence generation purpose and actions taken, establishing trust and increasing answerability on performance to stakeholders, particularly those populations affected by the evidence generation.
- **Responsiveness** as questions or events arise, adapting intentions and plans as required.
- **Taking responsibility** for meeting the purpose of the evidence generation, for actions taken, for the exercise of due care and, for ensuring redress as needed.
- **Account giving** through clear justification and fair and accurate reporting to stakeholders on decisions, actions and intentions.

Procedures

+ Procedures on
Professional Conduct



Core management Procedures

Added/clarified:

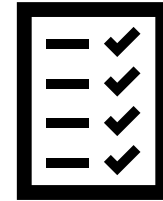
- Reflection on the IASC Accountability to Affected Populations throughout
- Monitoring and reporting ethics throughout project
- Mechanisms and environments to raise issues/concerns confidentiality
- Contractors and partners to be made aware of Procedure and relevant contracting T&C



Procedures for Minimising Harms and Maximising Benefits

Added/clarified:

- all relevant stakeholders are able to participate and have their voices heard or justify exclusion
- ensure accuracy, validity, completeness and reliability
- Adhere to guidelines in relation to potential or actual human rights violations or data breaches
- vetting wherever possible

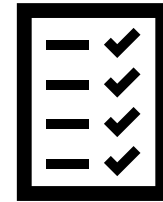




Procedures for Minimising Harms and Maximising Benefits

Added/clarified:

- Respecting competencies and knowledge and recognising vulnerabilities of local field staff
- When negative events occur, undertake an assessment immediately
- clear pathways for discussion of ethical considerations arising, complaints and redress.
- Zero tolerance for SEA
- Undertake risk assessments where automated decision making is used





Procedures for Informed Consent

Added/clarified:

- Note whether data will be used again
- Where third party data sets are used, ensure that information about the evidence generation project is noted in public domain
- data collected for the explicit purposes of provision of services is exempt from informed consent.



Procedures on Privacy and Confidentiality

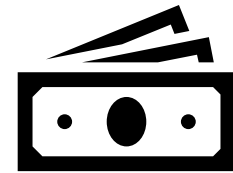
Added/clarified:

- Adhere to UNICEF's Policy on Personal Data Protection
- Consider **personal** as well as **categorical privacy**
- Inform participants **who data will be shared with**
- **Do not undertake sensitive data collection remotely if privacy is likely to be compromised.**

Procedures for Payment, Compensation and Reciprocity

Added/clarified:

Acknowledge the value of participation . Wherever possible, reciprocate through the provision of in-kind or non-material approaches including sharing of findings in accessible formats or directly addressing concerns raised through the evidence process



Procedures on Professional Conduct



Added/clarified:

Staff and Contractors act with honesty and integrity throughout:

- **Respectful behavior**
 - **Clear disclosure of the limitations**
 - Clear referencing (not plagiarizing))
 - **Clear articulation of alternate or competing implications of findings**
 - **Honest and sensitive presentation** of findings.
-
- Findings must be supported by robust, verifiable methods
 - where appropriate **findings provided in an accessible format**
 - Ensure **evaluators are independent** of the project that they are evaluating

Annexes and Instructions

- **INSTRUCTION 1: ACCOUNTABILITIES, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**
- **INSTRUCTION 2: DOES THIS UNICEF ETHICS PROCEDURE APPLY TO MY DATA PROJECT?**
- **INSTRUCTION 3: CRITERIA FOR ETHICAL REVIEW**
- **INSTRUCTION 4: WHICH ETHICAL REVIEW PROCESS TO USE**
- **INSTRUCTION 5: CONTENT OF A PROTECTION PROTOCOL**
- **INSTRUCTION 6: DOCUMENTATION OF ETHICS IN RESEARCH, EVALUATION AND DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS OR SENSITIVE SECONDARY DATA.**
- **ANNEX I: DEFINITIONS**
- **ANNEX II: KEY DOCUMENT AND TEMPLATES**
- **ANNEX III: PLEDGE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT IN EVIDENCE GENERATION**

INSTRUCTION 3: CRITERIA FOR ETHICAL REVIEW

Added:

EG utilizing new/emerging/novel technologies or innovations for data collection or processing (directly or through third parties), inclusive of predictive or other “black box” analytics.

Note: Routine Monitoring and data collection DOES NOT need ethical review – Procedure still applies!

INSTRUCTION
4: WHICH
ETHICAL
REVIEW
PROCESS TO
USE

1. National Ethics Review Board/Institutional Review Board if Mandatory if not...
2. Create a Panel of at Least 3 experts
3. Use LTA Ethical Review
4. In consultation with the Senior Advisor, Ethics in Evidence Generation, alternate ethical review processes can be established
 - Criteria may include frequency and nature of data
 - Example = U-Report Polls
 - Ethics Focal Points

Questions?

The slide features a dark blue background. The word "Questions?" is written in a large, white, sans-serif font, centered horizontally in the upper half of the slide. Below the text, there are two horizontal blue bars. The first bar is a solid medium blue and spans most of the width of the slide. The second bar is a slightly darker blue, positioned to the right of the first bar, creating a layered effect.

ANNEX II: KEY DOCUMENTS AND TEMPLATES

Core Management Processes

- [UNICEF Research Policy](#)
- [UNICEF Evaluation Policy](#)
- [UNICEF Procedure for Quality Assurance in Research](#)
- [UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation](#)
- [Agora Introduction to Ethics in Evidence Generation Online Training](#)
- For guidance on ethical monitoring and evaluation in Humanitarian contexts see [Ethical Standards for Data Collection and Analysis in Humanitarian Settings](#)
- Berman, Gabrielle, Hart, Jason; O'Mathúna, Dónal; Mattellone, Erica; Potts, Alina; O'Kane, Clare; Shusterman, Jeremy; Tanner, Thomas (2016). [What We Know about Ethical Research Involving Children in Humanitarian Settings: An overview of principles, the literature and case studies](#), Innocenti Working Papers no. 2016 18, Florence, Italy: UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti.IASC (2017)
- [The Commitments to Accountability to Affected Populations](#)
- UNICEF Evaluation Office (2002) [Evaluation Technical note No. 1, Children participating in research, monitoring and evaluation — ethics and your responsibilities as a manager](#)

Harms and Benefits

- [UNICEF's Policy on Conduct Promoting the Protection and Safeguarding of Children \(CF-EXD-2016-006\)](#)
- [Standards of Conduct for International Civil Service](#)
- [UNICEF \(2020\) Personal Data Protection Policy](#)
- [UNICEF Child Safeguarding Personnel Standards](#)
- [UNICEF's policy of zero tolerance for sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation and discrimination](#)
- [Procedure for Managing Risks of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Implementing Partnerships \(CSO's\)](#)
- [Reporting Allegations of Sexual Exploitation and abuse](#)
- [Protection Protocol Template](#)
- [Global Pulse Risks, Harms and Benefits Risk Assessment Tool](#)
- [Example of Guidelines for Handling Disclosure of child Abuse or neglect during Fieldwork](#)
- [Example Form for Mandatory Reporting of Abuse or Deliberate Neglect](#)
- [Reporting of Abuse Checklist for Data Collectors](#)
- [Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse: A Toolkit for UNICEF and Partners \(incl. sample training agenda, TORs investigators of SEA and other\)](#)
- [Guide to Ethically involving Local Professional Staff and Field Workers in Evidence Generation in Low and/or Middle Income Settings](#)
- [Ethical Considerations Children and Use of Behavioural Insights \(Forthcoming\)](#)
- [Ethical Consideration Children and Predictive Analytics \(Forthcoming\)](#)

Informed Consent: Templates

- An example template for [informed consent from parents or guardians](#) for children
- An example template to secure [assent from a child](#)

Privacy And Confidentiality:

- [UNICEF \(2020\) Personal Data Protection Policy](#)
- [UNICEF Data Protection Impact Assessment \(forthcoming\)](#)
- [UNICEF \(2021\) Personal Data Breach Procedure \(forthcoming\)](#)



- [Ethical considerations for remote data collection in times of COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [UNICEF Standard on Information Security Incident Management](#)
- [UNICEF Standard on Information Security: Access Control](#) (outlines who can access UNICEF ICT infrastructure and host storage, when and for how long)
- [UNICEF Standard on Information Security: Cryptography](#)
- [UNICEF Standard on Information Security: Vendor Management](#)
- [NDA for contractor use of Government Partner Data](#)
- [Class I System UNICEF Security Requirements](#)
- [Class II System UNICEF Security Requirements](#)

ANNEX III: PLEDGE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT IN EVIDENCE GENERATION

By signing this pledge, I hereby commit to discussing and applying the UNICEF Procedure on Ethics in Evidence Generation and to adopting the associated ethical behaviours.

Respect

I will engage with all stakeholders of an evidence generation in a way that honours their dignity, well-being, participation, personal agency and characteristics. Specifically, I will ensure:

1. **Informed consent processes for all participants to the evidence process.** This requires due consideration of how, whether and any risks of engaging/not engaging persons whose agency may be limited due to age, circumstance or personal capacities and capabilities.
2. **Access and engagement with the evidence process by all relevant stakeholders-** be they powerless or powerful, with due attention to factors that may impede access such as sex, gender, race, language, country of origin, LGBTQ status, age, background, religion, ethnicity and ability. This includes engagement in shaping/informing data needs and access to results.
3. **Meaningful engagement and fair treatment of all relevant stakeholders at all stages of the evidence generation process.**
4. **Fair representation of different voices and perspectives in evidence products.**
5. **Equitable partnerships with communities acknowledging that communities have attributes and value that go beyond the mere sum of its members and may be impacted by evidence in ways that are distinct from individual impacts and recognizing and valuing the community's time and knowledge base and consulting consults all relevant/affected communities throughout this cycle.**

Beneficence

I will strive to do good for people and planet while minimising harm arising from evidence generation as an intervention. Specifically, I will ensure:

6. **Explicit and on-going consideration of risks and benefits from evidence generation processes, the products of such processes and longer-term consequences.**
7. **Maximum benefits at systemic (including environmental), organizational and programmatic levels.**
8. **Minimum harm.** I will not proceed where harms cannot be mitigated.
9. **Evidence generation makes an overall positive contribution to human and natural systems and the mission of the United Nations.**

Justice

I will give consideration to who benefits and who carries the burden of evidence generation. Specifically, I will ensure:

10. **Selection of Participants based on appropriate methods.** Selection should not result in unjust distributions of the burdens and benefits of evidence processes on particular individuals or communities. Such considerations are required to avoid the injustice that arises from social, racial, sexual, and cultural biases institutionalized in society.

11. **Relevance of the evidence generation process to those who will be participating.**

Integrity

I will actively adhere to the moral values and professional standards of evidence generation practice as outlined in the UNICEF Procedure on Ethics in Evidence Generation and following the values of the United Nations. Specifically, I will be:

12. **Honest and truthful in my communication and actions.**

13. **Professional, engaging in credible and trustworthy behaviour, alongside competence, commitment and ongoing reflective practice.**

14. **Independent, impartial and incorruptible.**

Accountability

I will be answerable for all decisions made and actions taken, responsible for honoring commitments, without qualification or exception, and will report potential or actual harms observed. Specifically, I will be:

15. **Transparent regarding purpose and actions taken, establishing trust and increasing answerability on performance to the public, particularly those populations affected by the evidence generation.**

16. **Responsive as questions or events arise, adapting plans as required and referring to appropriate channels where corruption, fraud, sexual exploitation or abuse or other misconduct or waste of resources is identified.**

17. **Responsible for meeting the evidence generation purpose and for actions taken, and for ensuring redress and recognition as needed.**

I commit to playing my part in ensuring that evidence generation is conducted according to the Charter of the United Nations and the ethical requirements laid down above and contained within the UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis. Where this is not possible, I will report the situation to my supervisor, designated focal points or channels, and will actively seek an appropriate response.

(Signature and Date)