Data for Decision-Making

INCREASING ACCESSIBILITY OF DATA

With global internet penetration topping now above 50%, and **more than 5 billion unique mobile subscribers**, there are many opportunities to improve the effective use of data collection and use in development.

Jessica Scranton/FHI 360

INCREASING THE SPEED OF APPLYING DATA

FHI 360's work is guided by responsible collection and use of reliable data, including in all aspects of our service to others. Our focus is to be constantly improving our decision-making processes to enhance the effectiveness of our work. We are leveraging technology to continually increase the speed of data collection and use.

FASTER IS DIFFERENT

The timing of data-based decisions can literally be a matter of life or death. From qualitative analysis of the tone of trending political topics on social media to the chemical analysis of disease vectors, our approach emphasizes enabling human decision-making that is informed by as much data as quickly possible.

ROLE FOR PRIVATE SECTOR

Many of the most dynamic sources of data come from our use of the services offered by private companies, especially those of mobile network operators (MNOs), internet service providers (ISPs) and social media. Pro-development collaboration with companies can both lead to timely identification of programmatic needs and opportunities, and establish project-specific data flows enabling real-time analysis. FHI 360 collaborates with organizations like the GSMA and the Telecom Infra Project to improve the availability and usefulness of data in its projects.

fhi360
THE SCIENCE OF IMPROVING LIVES

About FHI 360: FHI 360 is a nonprofit human development organization dedicated to improving lives in lasting ways by advancing integrated, locally driven solutions. Our staff includes experts in health, education, nutrition, environment, economic development, civil society, gender, youth, research, technology, communication and social marketing — creating a unique mix of capabilities to address today's interrelated development challenges. FHI 360 serves more than 70 countries and all U.S. states and territories.

DIGITAL DATA FOR DECISION-MAKING IN DEVELOPMENT: 5 KEY POINTS

There are five widely-accepted aspects of digitally-created data that relate to its application in development contexts:

1. ***Digitally generated:*** The data of greatest interest is created by digital technology, not entered manually onto digital platforms, and can be analyzed/utilized by software.
2. ***Passively produced:*** Data is a by-product of human interaction with digital tools or services.
3. ***Automatically collected:*** Systems automatically collect, extract and store relevant data.
4. ***Geographically trackable:*** For instance, this is the case in mobile phone location data or call duration time.
5. ***Continuously analyzed:*** Information can be analyzed in real time, allowing for timely decision-making.

FHI 360'S EXPERIENCE

Responsible Data Guidelines for Digital Development

FHI 360's Mobile Solutions, Digital Assistance and Research (mSTAR) project supported the USAID Global Development Lab's Development Informatics (DevInfo) team to develop guidance on processes and practices for the responsible collection and use of data that USAID missions and/or implementing partners need for delivery and improvement of field-based development programs, monitoring, evaluation and learning.

Ethnographic Studies

FHI 360 also worked with Reboot Design, the USAID Development Informatics team and the USAID Data Analytics team to complete an ethnographic study of three USAID missions. The study analyzed how data is used to make decisions about programming and strategic planning and will determine the enablers and inhibitors of adaptive programming at the USAID mission level.

Real-time Data Adaptive Programming Initiative

The Real-time Data (RTD) Adaptive Programming Initiative was a joint effort between mSTAR and the USAID Global Development Lab to test how RTD systems underpinned by mobile technology can enable a more adaptive and participatory approach to development in complex settings. As a component of this, a Learning to Adapt Workshop was held in October 2015 focused on how RTD systems can facilitate adaptive programming and aid decision-making.

Open Data in Developing Countries

From 2016–2017, FHI 360 collaborated with the USAID Development Informatics team and New York University's Govlab to document the value and impact of open data initiatives in low and middle-income countries in order to understand the path forward for future interventions.

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