Category

Data & AI

Data Literacy in Humanitarian & Social Impact Settings Playbook

A field-ready method — built for low-connectivity, high-turnover, funder-reporting realities — for helping NGO and social-impact teams use data for decisions, not just compliance.

- Practitioner
- Intermediate
- Template Included
- Workshop Ready

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- 8 minute(s)

Overview

A field-ready data literacy method for NGOs and social-impact teams, built for low connectivity and high turnover, that turns donor-compliance reporting into data actually used for program decisions.

How do we run data literacy training with no reliable internet access on-site?

Design all training materials to work fully offline from the start — printed quick-reference cards, locally installed content on the data collection devices, and training sessions that never assume a live connection. Treat any online component as an optional supplement, never a requirement.

How do we handle data literacy training given how often field staff turn over?

Document the training as thoroughly as if the current staff member will be gone within six months, because in many field programs they will be. Local-language quick-reference materials and a handover checklist matter more here than in almost any other setting.

What data protection steps are essential before collecting data from vulnerable populations?

At minimum: documented informed consent appropriate to the population and context, a clear justification for why each data point is being collected, and a protection review before the collection tool goes live — not after. This step should never be skipped or treated as a formality to satisfy later.

How do we stop data collection from being purely for donor compliance?

Map every collected indicator back to your program's theory of change and cut anything that doesn't inform an actual program decision, as Meridian Relief Alliance did when it dropped three of eleven indicators. Then structure your donor report around the same indicators the program actually uses, rather than maintaining two disconnected data efforts.

What does a "community feedback loop" actually look like in practice?

A simple, regularly scheduled session — often monthly — where summarized, anonymized findings are shared back with community representatives in an accessible format, with a way to log their responses or concerns. It doesn't require technology; a printed summary and a structured conversation is often sufficient and more accessible than a digital tool.

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Bring data literacy to your field program

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