

## WHAT IS INFORMED CONSENT?

If someone gives informed consent it means they voluntarily and knowingly agree to participate in an activity or provide their data, with a full understanding of their rights and in the case of M&E or communication efforts possible uses of their data.

**Full consent needs full conversations.** This includes informing participants that they have the right to withdraw their consent at any time. Consent is an ongoing process; respondents should be aware of that.

Informed consent helps ensure that people have control of their (digital) identities and that the right to privacy is implemented even in the digital space.

Informed consent:

- Fosters trust and shared decisions
- Empowers target communities

Consent should **be informed, explicit and freely given**. For M&E this means:



### INFORMED

means understanding what data is being collected, why, for what purpose, who it is shared with, and how it has affected the project after it was collected.



### EXPLICIT

means consenting to all the potential uses of the data (or opting out of some or all of them).



### FREELY GIVEN

means the ability to refuse consent without detriment.

**Culture, literacy, and power asymmetries** may affect individuals' decision to give consent.



**CULTURE:** Some cultures, especially if they are collectivist, avoid outright disagreement, and in others, families and communities are supposed to give consent for another person. A sensitive approach is needed.



**LITERACY:** Literacy levels impact the degree to which a person can read and sign a consent form. If someone cannot read a consent form it must be explained to them. Consent may be witnessed or audio-recorded when respondents are illiterate.



**POWER ASYMMETRIES:** Coercive statements on consent forms such as: "If you do not agree, you cannot participate in this project", heavily impact the willingness of the given consent.

### When children are involved, their rights must be respected.

In addition to the children's informed consent, the informed consent from the parents (or legal guardian) needs to be obtained.

Commit to **data minimisation** and only collect data that is necessary.

Data collection should be GDPR compliant, even outside of Europe. People should be made aware that **they have the right** to have their data erased and be forgotten if they wish.