Indigenous Information Needs Assessment

The Guatemalan Indigenous Inclusion in Media Toolkit toolkit adapts Internews' Information Needs Assessment to the Guatemalan context for organizations to understand how indigenous people consume and gather information. This assessment will help organizations build capacity for creating media interventions and identify how indigenous audiences consume, receive, share, verify and use information. In other words, it will help organizations identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current media infrastructure through the eyes of indigenous communities.

Instructions: Read the questions under the "To Answer" subsection. These are the questions you need to answer for identifying the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, needs and obstacles you will be addressing. Obtain the information needed by asking each indigenous community you are partnering with the questions listed under the "Ask" subsection.

Information landscape: Physical and institutional infrastructure that supports information and flow (media outlets, government, private corporations, civil society)

    a. To answer
- i. What are the distribution networks? Are there areas of redundancy (multiple channels) or areas of darkness (no information?)
- ii. Who has the capacity to curtail or expand infrastructure?

    b. Refer to:
- i. Country context
- ii. Media landscape
- iii. Self-education resources

Dynamics of access: The environment in which information flows; factors which influence information access (political, cultural, economic, technological)

    a. To answer
- i. How do political, socioeconomic and geographic factors affect access?
- ii. Through what channels do people access information - TV, radio, word of mouth, mobile etc?
- iii. What power relationships shape community access to information?

    b. Ask this
- i. What information channels do you gather information from and why?
- ii. What information channels do you NOT gather information and why?
- iii. Who controls the channel you gather information from?
- iv. Who controls the channel you do NOT gather information from?
- v. Can you access these information channels? If no, why not?
- vi. Does someone control or regulate your access to information? If yes, who and why?
- vii. Do you control or regulate someone's access to information? If yes, whose and why?
- viii. Are there any identity markers (age, gender, role, occupation etc.) that affect your access to information? If yes, how?

Information needs: Needs across different segments of the population and how they change across time

    a. To answer

        i. What information do communities need to receive? What information do they need to share?

        ii. How do information needs change in times of stress, shock and disruption?

        iii. How do political, socioeconomic and geographic factors affect information needs?

    b. Ask this

        i. What issues are most important to you in everyday life? In times of crisis? Why?

        ii. What issues are the least important to you? In times of crisis? Why?

        iii. What types of information do you receive?

        iv. What types of information do you want to receive?

        v. What types of information do you NOT want to receive?

        vi. What topics do you want to see be depicted or represented more?

        vii. What topics do you want to see be depicted or represented less/not at all?

        viii. Is there any information that is restricted to persons of a specific identity marker (such as gender, role, occupation, age etc.)?

        ix. Do your information channels of choice meet your need for information in everyday life? In times of crisis? If yes, how? If no, why?

Production & movement: Types of information available to a community. Information providers and information flows.

    a. To answer

        i. What types of information are available? Who provides or disseminates it?

        ii. Who are the producers of the most timely, accurate and targeted information?

        iii. What do information flows look like (who does information flow through, how fast does it move)? How does information change as it moves?

    b. Ask this

        i. Who or what information channel do you consult when you need information immediately?

        ii. Which information channel is the most credible and reliable? Why?

        iii. Which information channel is the least credible and reliable? Why?

        iv. Where do you think your information channels get their information from?

        v. How easily and quickly do you receive information?

        vi. Do you consult multiple channels? If yes, does the information differ from one channel to the other? If no, why not?

        vii. Is there any information that is produced only by persons of a specific identity marker (such as gender, role, occupation, age etc.)?

        viii. What kinds of information are you able to produce? What kinds of information are you NOT able to produce? Why?

        ix. What kind of sources do you want to see more of? What kind of sources do you want to see less of/not at all?

Information use: how information is processed, used and applied

    a. To answer

        i. What do people do before using information (verifying with friends, triangulating sources)?

        ii. What factors influence the relevance of information to people (content, medium, source, habits)?

        iii. How does the form of information affect its use (audio, video, text, images etc)?

    b. Ask this

        i. Do you consult different channels to verify information? If yes, do you find that the two channels provide significantly different information? If no, why?

        ii. Do you consult other sources if the information you received isn't clear or sufficient? If yes, how? If no, why?

        iii. What do you do with the information you receive? Do you think your information channels provide you with the information or resources to take action? If yes, how?

        iv. How do you decide which information is important to you?

        v. What format of information is most useful for you - audio, video, verbal, text, etc?

        vi. What types of information do you use? How do you decide which information to use?

        vii. What kinds of information are you unable to use based on identity markers (age, role, occupation, gender etc)?

Influencers: people, organizations and institutions that shape information flows

    a. To answer

        i. What factors define influence (politics, religion, socioeconomic status etc)?

        ii. Who are the most accessible and collaborative influencers?

        iii. Are there unintended consequences to engaging influencers (eg: loss of community trust)?

    b. Ask this

        i. What channels, sources, people, organizations or institutions do you consider influential? Why?

        ii. Do people in your social group also consider them influential? Why?

        iii. What channels, sources, people, organizations or institutions do other people in your social group consider influential? Why?

        iv. Do you trust the information that comes from channels you think are influential? Do others? Why?

        v. Do you trust the information that comes from channels that others think are influential? Why?

        vi. Are you able to share information and needs with channels you think are influential?

        vii. Which influencers are available or accessible to you? Which influencers are NOT available or accessible to you? Why?

        viii. Are there any influencers that are unique to your identity marker (gender, age, role, occupation etc.)?

Social trust: Influence of trust networks on flow and use of information

    a. To answer

        i. How do I protect the most trusted networks from disruption? What are the greatest threats to trust?

        ii. What factors affect change in trust over time?

        iii. What are the most trusted information sources? How does this change during disruption?

    b. Ask this

        i. What are the greatest challenges for your trusted channel in sharing information?

        ii. What is the impact of the information shared by your trusted channel in your social group?

        iii. How will you be impacted if your trusted channel is unable to share information?

        iv. Are there any alternate sources of information that you will consult if you are unable to access your trusted channel?

        v. Is it possible for a channel to replace your trusted channel as your go-to source of information? Why?

        vi. Do you have any concerns regarding publicly sharing information, influencers or sources of information? Why?

        vii. What kind of information, sources or influencers do you treat as private or confidential? What kind of information, sources or influencers are you comfortable speaking publicly about? Why?

Information impact: relationship between information, knowledge and behavior change

    a. To answer

        i. How do political, geographic and socioeconomic factors affect impact?

        ii. What previous communication failures could undermine future efforts?

        iii. Could information have unintended consequences? If so, how do you identify and monitor them?

    b. Ask this

        i. How likely are you to act on information and resources that you receive from your information sources? Why?

        ii. What types of information are you most likely to act upon? Why?

        iii. What types of information are you least/not likely to act upon? Why?

        iv. What types of information bring you most satisfaction/worry? Why?

        v. What kinds of information or messages do you find most persuasive? Why?

        vi. What kinds of information or messages do you find least persuasive? Why?

        vii. What types of information prompt you to take action? What types dissuade you?

        viii. Do identity markers (age, gender, role, occupation etc.) affect your ability to act on information? If yes, how?