



# SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY LISTENING FRAMEWORK

2024

This framework was authored by Hameed Kashan, Social and Community Listening Consultant, with support from Massimiliano Sani, Senior Adviser, SBC. We appreciate the contributions of time, expertise, and experience from colleagues in Regional and Country Offices.

Special thanks to Adnan Shahzad, Alessia Radice, Amos Zikusooka, Andres Esteban Ochoa Toasa, Christopher Brooks, Dorina Andreev-jitaru, Elodie Ho, Fabrice Laurentin, Gopinath Durairajan, Guillaume Michels, Harim Humayun, Islam Ahmed, Jose Lainez, Juan Andres Gil, Karen Greiner, Khaled Abushaban, Laetitia Pactat, Neha Kapil, Rudrajit Das, Siddartha Shrestha, Silvia Sommariva, Surangani Abeyesekera - for coordinating input, participating in multiple consultations, and supporting rounds of reviews.

Please cite this document as: United Nations Children's Fund. Social and Community Listening Framework. New York, 2024.

© UNICEF 2024

The material in this report has been commissioned by United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

UNICEF accepts no responsibility for errors. The designations in this work do not imply an opinion on the legal status of any country or territory, or of its authorities, or the delimitation of frontiers.

Permission to copy, disseminate or otherwise use information from this publication is granted under the following terms:

Attribution — You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.

Non-Commercial — You may not use the material for commercial purposes.

No additional restrictions — You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits.

# CONTENT

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Background</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Defining Social and Community Listening (SCL)</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Triggers and Use Cases for SCL</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Framework</b>	<b>10</b>
Planning	13
Collecting Data	18
Analyzing Data	21
Reporting Results	26
Validating Insights	28
Integrating SCL	31
Monitoring and Evaluation	33
<b>Limitations and Ethics of SCL</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Moving from SCL to On-Ground Action</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Comparing SCL, Primary Research, and CFM</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Misinformation and SCL</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Artificial Intelligence (AI) and SCL</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Behavioural Drivers and SCL</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Standard SCL Report Format</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>55</b>

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The UNICEF Social and Community Listening (SCL) Framework better defines the practice and presents it as a cross-cutting pathway for incorporating the voices of communities into programme planning and implementation. This framework represents a significant evolution from 'online social listening' by integrating a wider array of sources and methodologies to capture a more inclusive and representative spectrum of community perspectives. The framework outlines the processes and suggests recommended actions and insights aimed at maximizing the effectiveness of this approach in responding to community needs and preferences.

**Framework Overview:** The SCL framework spans across several phases: Planning, Collecting Data, Analyzing Data, Reporting Results, Validating Insights, Integrating SCL into Programmes, and Monitoring and Evaluation. Each phase comes with specific recommendations for implementation:



**Planning:** Start with a clear and focused research question, grounded in a specific programmatic objective. The question should be actionable, allowing for the exploration of unexpected patterns and themes. An Information Ecosystem Analysis (IEA) is recommended to identify relevant data sources and community information channels.



**Collecting Data:** Utilize a mix of online, offline, and on-ground sources to ensure diverse and inclusive data collection. This includes using social media, conventional media, and field origin data sources.



**Analyzing Data:** Emphasizes both quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques. For quantitative data, monitoring metrics like volume, sentiment, reach, and engagement are suggested. Qualitative analysis focuses on identifying themes, narratives, and patterns within the data.



**Reporting Results:** A recommended SCL report format is presented to ensure consistency and ease of comparison across different reports, countries, and time periods. Reports should clearly state the research question, research findings, data sources, and Opportunities to Act (OTAs).



**Ethical Considerations and Limitations:** The framework stresses the importance of ethical practices, particularly in terms of data privacy and consent. Anonymization of personal data and transparency about SCL methods and limitations are crucial. Framework acknowledges limitations of SCL, especially regarding the over-representation of online voices and the potential biases in Artificial Intelligence (AI) analysis.



**Misinformation and Use of AI:** Given the prevalence of misinformation, the framework recommends proactive monitoring of misinformation trends and developing tailored response strategies that do not amplify harmful narratives. For AI, while acknowledging its potential in enhancing SCL practices, the document advises caution due to AI's inherent biases and limitations in understanding linguistic nuances.



**Listening to Action:** A key recommendation is the integration of SCL findings into programmatic actions through regular reports, presentations, and trainings. This includes establishing 'SCL champions' to advocate for the use of insights and ensuring leadership buy-in for resource allocation.



**Monitoring and Evaluation:** The framework proposes a plan and indicators to assess the inputs, outputs, and outcomes of SCL. This involves setting specific, measurable goals for SCL activities, tracking adjustments made based on SCL insights, and evaluating their contribution towards desired outcomes.

Designed using a systematic consultative process, the framework leverages proven lessons and best practices from SCL action in regional and country offices. It further strengthens UNICEF's commitment to evidence-based and responsive programming to protect children's rights around the world.

# BACKGROUND

Actively listening to communities and designing evidence-based interventions that best serve on-ground needs has been a cornerstone of UNICEF programming for decades. Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) research, community consultations, Knowledge, Attitude and Practices (KAP) surveys, community rapid assessments, field visits, and community dialogues are all examples of listening. This deep commitment to inclusive programming was challenged by COVID-19 related lockdowns which severely restricted field-level access.

Teams across the world responded by using still-accessible community interaction channels such as call centers and social media platforms as mechanisms for evidence generation to guide their interventions. In those early days due to ease of access majority of the information collected came primary from social media and was referred to as 'social listening', a common private sector term.

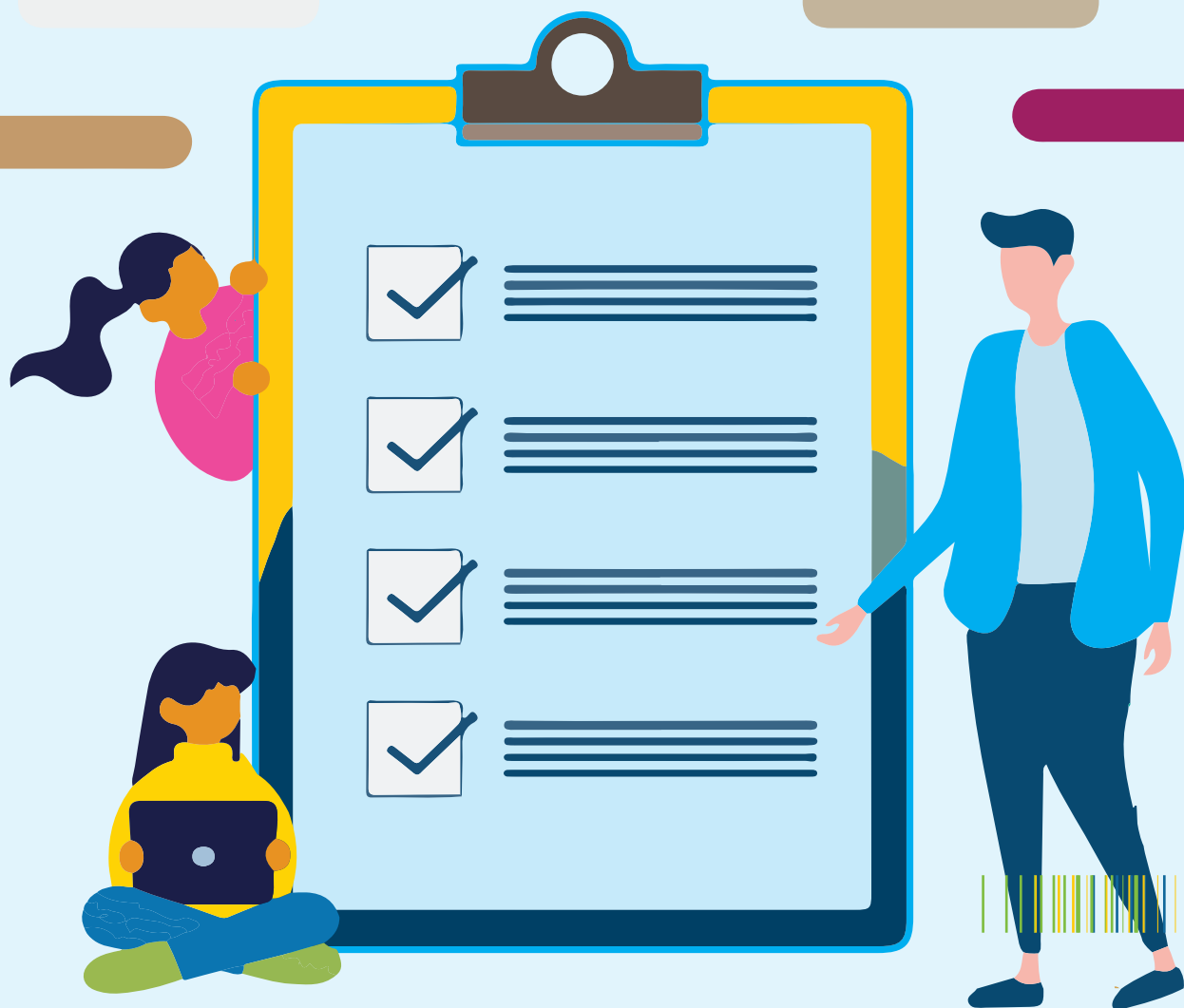
There were little to no official guidelines on how social listening can be implemented and integrated into existing programming. Teams mobilized all available resources at their disposal, engaged partners, trialed new approaches, and built social listening capabilities from the ground up. This concerted effort led to incredible results, acknowledgement, and organizational learnings.

Since then, social listening as a discipline within UNICEF has dramatically evolved in its scope, approach, and operations. There is firm recognition that social listening is a critical component for our operations, and it should include voices from community members who may not have access to mobile phones, social media, internet, or even conventional media.

This paradigm shift and lessons learnt necessitated a new inclusive definition, updated terminology, and a consolidated approach to social listening. This document leverages latest knowledge, technologies, proven strategies, best practices, and successful implementations to recommend a framework-based approach to social listening.



# DEFINING SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY LISTENING



To better represent the broader, more inclusive focus, social listening has been redefined as ‘Social and Community Listening’ or ‘SCL’.

“Social and Community Listening (SCL) is the process of gathering and analyzing readily available community voices from publicly accessible online, offline, and on-ground sources to inform programmatic action.”

The definition highlights that SCL is community-centric, insight-driven, inclusive, and actionable. It formalizes the following aspects of SCL:



**“Social and Community Listening”** – places the focus of SCL firmly on the people and communities we serve.



**“process”** – showcases that SCL isn’t a single action, but a continuous and systematic approach to better understanding community needs, expectations, and wants.



**“gathering”** – highlights collecting large amounts of data from various sources.



**“analyzing”** – underscores a need to make sense of the data, find patterns, and extract programme relevant meaning.



**“readily available”** – maintains that SCL relies on already existing information instead of generating new data.



**“community voices”** – stresses the authenticity and directness of the insights gained, representing genuine thoughts and feelings of community members.



**“publicly accessible”** – asserts that community voices must come from sources where community members consented or intended for their voices to be visible to everyone, as opposed to private conversations.



**“online”** – social media, blogs, websites, internet, loGT, Bebbu, U-Report, etc.



**“offline”** – conventional media, public meetings, news reports, call centers, etc.



**“on-ground”** – frontline data, social data, primary research, surveys, community feedback mechanisms (CFM), etc.



**“to inform programmatic action”** – insists that insights gathered are meant to be translated into decisions and changes that improve new or existing programs.



# TRIGGERS AND USE CASES



The modern information ecosystem is a constant stream of information, opinions, and experiences shared online, in the news, and within communities themselves. Identifying the critical signals in this vast landscape can shape the difference between timely action and missed opportunities.

The following non-exhaustive triggers and use cases suggest instances where SCL can be a powerful tool for understanding community needs, and driving positive change:



### Public Health Emergencies

- **Disease Outbreaks:** Monitoring conversations on social media, news outlets, and community forums can help teams identify early signs of an outbreak, track its spread, and understand public sentiment, and concerns. Example: detecting a surge in social media posts about unexplained illnesses in a specific region, allowing for faster response and containment.
- **Vaccination:** SCL can gauge public attitudes towards vaccines, identify hesitancy hotspots, and tailor messaging to address specific information needs or misinformation. Example: finding reports of prevalent rumors about vaccine side effects, allowing for targeted interventions to dispel associated fears and beliefs.



### Natural Disasters

- **Needs Assessment:** During and after a disaster, SCL can help identify the most urgent needs (food, shelter, medical aid) and where to distribute resources effectively. Example: People posting about a lack of clean water in a flooded area.
- **Tracking Recovery and Response:** SCL monitors the long-term impact, identifying potential mental health concerns, the effectiveness of reconstruction efforts, and emerging challenges for affected communities.



### Conflict and Displacement

- **Understanding Vulnerabilities:** SCL can reveal the specific challenges faced by displaced populations, including access to resources, safety concerns, and protection risks, especially for children. Example: identifying reports of exploitation or human trafficking in refugee camps, enabling protective and mitigating actions.
- **Mapping Sentiment:** SCL can help understand tensions between host communities and displaced populations, potentially facilitating conflict resolution and integration.



### Formative research and programme monitoring

- **Stakeholder Feedback:** Gathering feedback on existing programmes, identifying successes, challenges, and areas for improvement. Example: news reports quoting community members commenting on a programme's positive impact or issues with implementation.
- **SCL can help identify gaps** in current programmes and discover new, emerging needs within a community that require action.



### Policy and Programme Advocacy

- **Gathering Evidence:** SCL can provide data-backed support for advocacy efforts, highlighting widespread issues and trends. Example: Tracking rising reports of child malnutrition, building a case for increased funding or policy interventions.
- **Amplifying Community Voices:** Sharing the direct experiences and concerns of affected communities, giving them a platform, and adding weight to advocacy efforts.



### Misinformation Response

- **Detecting Falsehoods and Inaccurate Beliefs:** SCL helps identify harmful rumors and inaccurate information circulating within communities, especially those affecting children's health and well-being.
- **Targeted Counter-Messaging:** Teams can use SCL insights to develop tailored campaigns that dispel misinformation and promote accurate, potentially life-saving information.



### Stakeholder and Partner Relations

- **Understanding Sentiment:** SCL helps gauge publicly expressed attitudes by stakeholders such as government officials or donors towards a programme, track shifts in priorities, and identify emerging areas of interest for funding.
- **Reporting Impact:** Sharing authentic stories and voices from the field demonstrates the tangible results of stakeholder contributions, fostering trust and continued engagement.
- **Identifying Compelling Narratives:** SCL reveals real-world issues that resonate most with potential donors, helping shape powerful fundraising appeals.



### Media Monitoring and Engagement

- **News Monitoring:** SCL helps teams to stay on top of how their work is portrayed in the media, enabling engagement, and shaping of the public narrative.
- **Identifying Influential Voices:** Finding journalists, bloggers, and social media figures who amplify a programme's message and support its mission.



### Behavioural Research

- **Understanding Motivations:** SCL helps uncover why people engage (or fail to engage) in behaviours or services crucial for child well-being, such as vaccination, handwashing, or seeking healthcare.
- **Designing Effective Interventions:** Insights from SCL inform the development of programmes or highlight need for further to address behavioural barriers and encourage positive changes.



### Crisis Response and Risk Mitigation

- **Pre-emptive Monitoring:** SCL can track emerging community narratives before, during, or after they become a public facing crisis.
- **Predictive Response:** Using historical data to anticipate community and media narratives can help to mitigate reputational and programmatic risks.

The above examples demonstrate that SCL is inherently applicable to all aspects of a programme including operations, implementation, resource mobilization, SBC, communication, and advocacy. It is critical to note that social and community listening is most effective when used proactively and continuously, rather than solely reactively during crises.

# FRAMEWORK



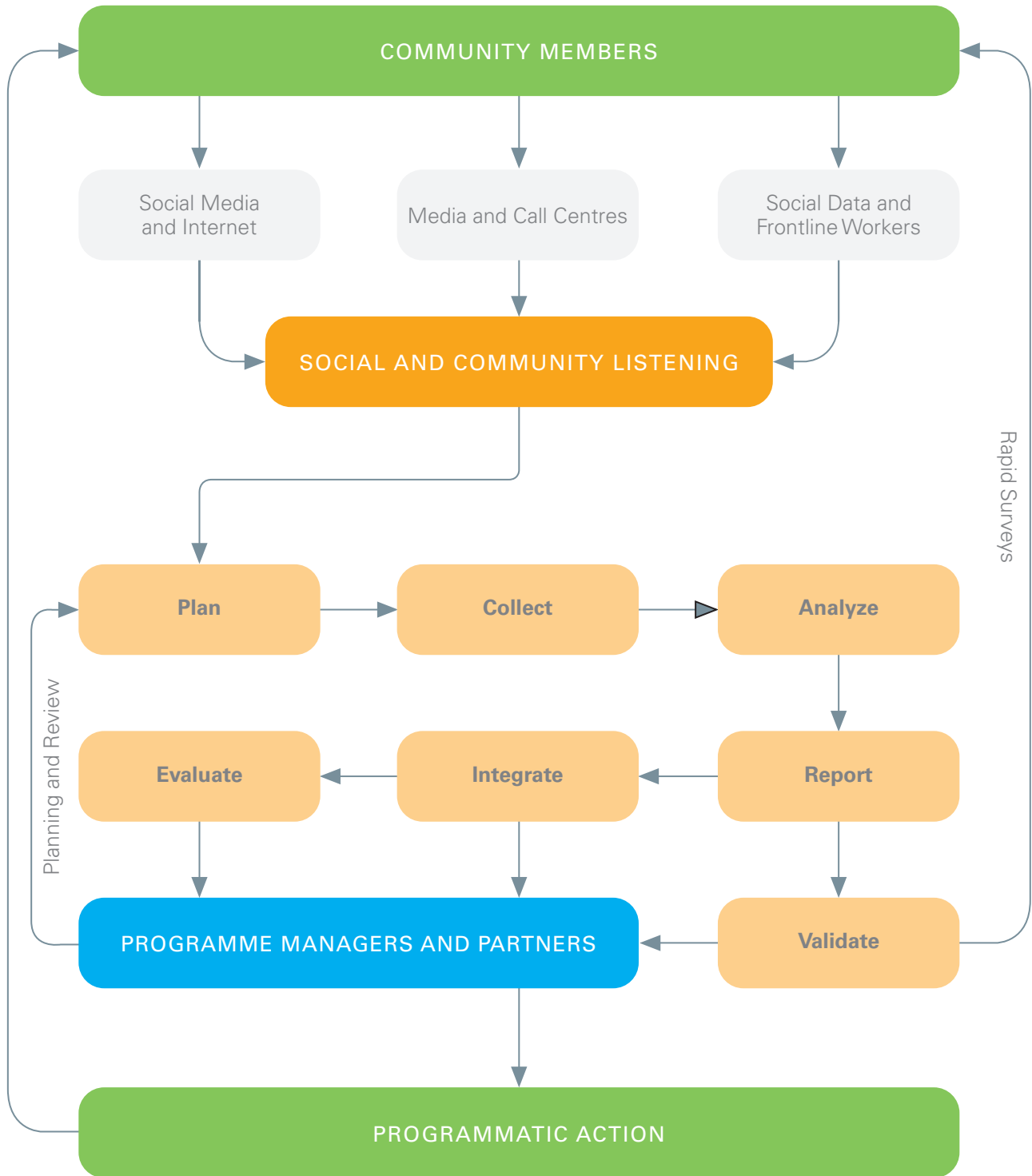
The UNICEF Social and Community Listening (SCL) Framework presents a structured approach to gathering and analyzing information from community sources.

The framework starts with community members and the mediums where they may express themselves. Information from each of these mediums is actioned under SCL, which is divided into the following seven sections:

- 1**  **Plan**  
The framework begins with a focus on defining the goals and objectives of the SCL initiative. What question needs to be answered? What data is required? Which platforms needs to be established/activated?
- 2**  **Collect**  
The collection phase identifies the methods to gather data from the community. This could include social media monitoring, data from call centers, surveys, or community meetings.
- 3**  **Analyze**  
Once the data has been collected, it needs to be analyzed to identify patterns and trends. This involves using qualitative or quantitative analysis techniques.
- 4**  **Report**  
Sharing SCL findings with stakeholders in a clear and concise manner. This could be done through a report, presentation, email, or alert.
- 5**  **Validate**  
Where required, validating SCL insights through rapid surveys, community meetings, or frontline workers (FLW) interviews can generate greater confidence in SCL outputs.
- 6**  **Integrate**  
SCL reporting and insights are integrated into existing programmatic processes by circulating them or by presenting them in meetings and by adjusting the programmes themselves.
- 7**  **Track, Monitor and Evaluate**  
Evaluation phase of the framework presents opportunities and indicators that can be used to assess the success of an SCL programme.

The SCL Framework can be used by a variety of organizations, including government partners, and in broad contexts to better understand the needs and perspectives of the communities being served.

## SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY LISTENING FRAMEWORK



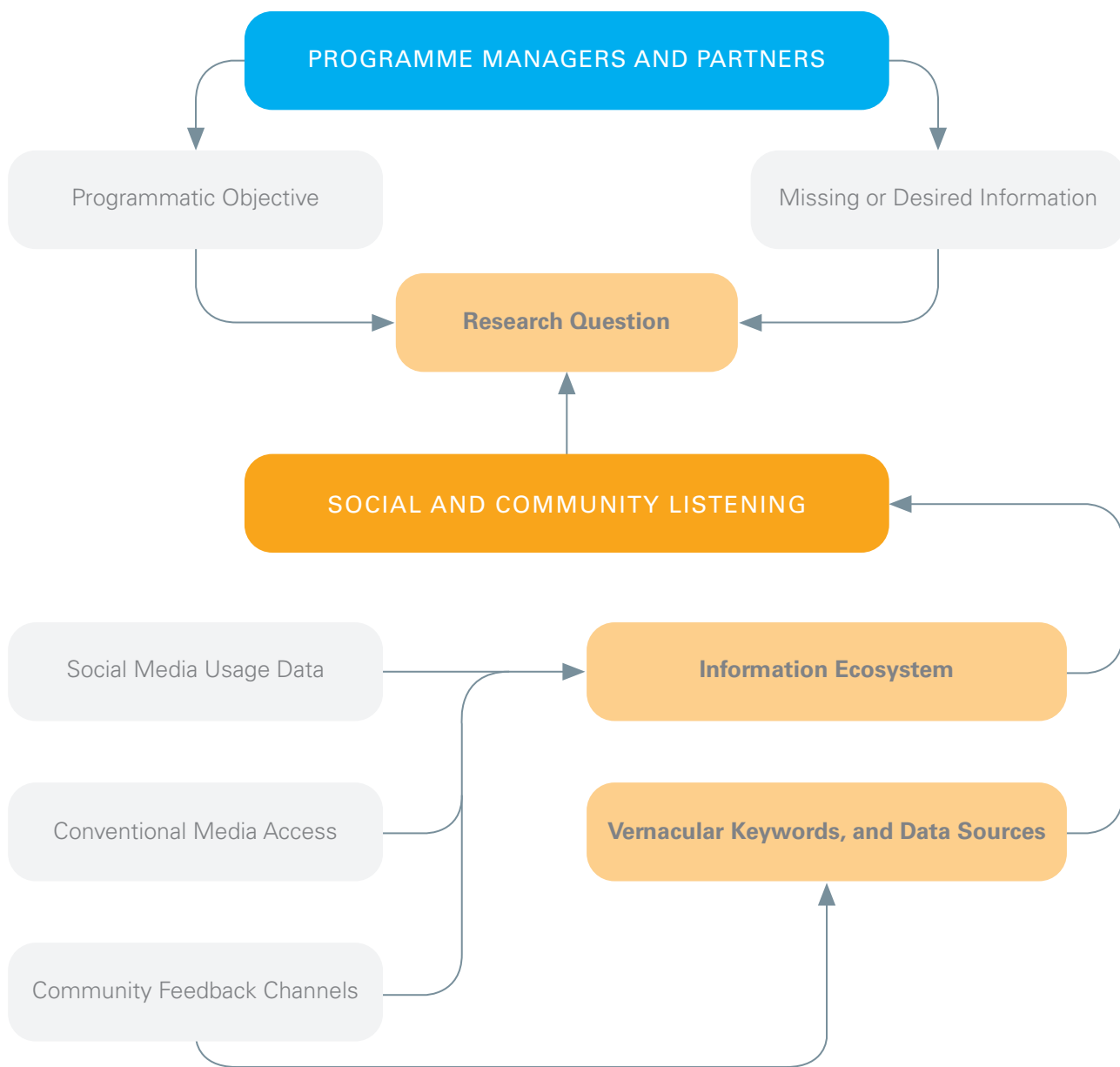
# 1. PLANNING

Planning for SCL needs to begin with a strong research question that is rooted in a programmatic objective or the need for missing or desired information. This research question(s) needs to specify the programme, community, geographic scope, and timeline for SCL research. Starting with a research question ensures that the SCL analysis and outputs are not only relevant to programmatic needs but also lead to on-ground action.



Social and Community Listening team members should be included in the research question design process. Collaborating with the SCL team at the inception stage ensures that the research question is formulated considering current SCL capabilities and the communities' information ecosystem, leading to a greater likelihood that the research question will be adequately answered.

Good SCL research questions are specific, time bound, directly relate to programmatic objectives, aim to uncover actionable insights, and allow for exploration of unexpected patterns and themes.



## Examples of Strong Research Questions

- What are the primary reasons for parental hesitancy towards malaria vaccine in Nairobi, Kenya in last 3 months?
- How has the perception of UNICEF changed within online youth groups in India over the past year?
- What is the Zambian media narrative on school reopening amidst the cholera outbreak in the last 2 months?
- How has public opinion on climate change evolved in the 2 months before and after floods in DRC?



Consequently, weak research questions are too broad, try to steer towards a convenient answer, are yes/no questions, are extremely specific, is seeking to place blame, aiming to replace primary research, or are trying to prove an untested hypothesis.

## Examples of Weak Research Questions

- What do people think about UNICEF?
- Do parents agree that the new education curriculum is the best version introduced?
- Do people like the logo for the school meals programme?
- Who is spreading disinformation about our organization?
- If we ran free adolescent education classes in the evening, would people send their children?

The following considerations can help in formulating a strong research question:

- What do we want to learn, understand, or change?
- Why is it important to answer this question?
- What decisions will be informed by this research?
- Do we need SCL or do we need primary research?

Once a research question has been finalized, Information Ecosystem Analysis (IEA) and Keyword Mapping are the next actions that are prerequisites to initiating any SCL activity. Keyword mapping identifies the terms and words communities use to talk about our areas of interest. These activities may be conducted at the national, sub-national, and priority areas levels, depending on programmatic scope and resources.

## Conducting an Information Ecosystem Analysis (IEA)

Identifying information sources for the community has wide ranging consequences for SCL data collection, infrastructure, insights, and resulting programmatic action. For example, newspaper monitoring to track narratives for a community or district that has very low literacy may not be efficient. An IEA relies on existing data available with government, programme, and partners, and should particularly focus on mapping existing resources such as reports, websites, and teams. This mapping can support social and community listening infrastructure development, and programmatic response capabilities during emergencies or crises. It can also support in tracking, responding, and preventing any circulating misinformation. In the absence of relevant data, frontline workers are the best sources of information to conduct an IEA. An IEA scores the reach and community trust in a medium such as 'TV' on a subjective scale of 'High', 'Medium' and 'Low'. It scans for common online, offline, and on-ground mediums of information in a community. This approach is designed to work in low resource settings or communities without existing data. In urban or high data environments, an IEA allows inclusion of relevant data points to contextualize the scoring for each medium. This hybrid approach provides a strategic pathway to design evidence based SCL interventions.



## Inputs and Resources

Social and community listening is a specialist skillset and requires considerable time and technical knowledge, implementing it as an additional responsibility for existing personnel has not proven to be a sustainable and effective strategy. The right candidates for SCL roles will bring expertise in data collection, data analysis, digital media, and communication. It is highly recommended that at least during emergencies, dedicated SCL personnel are recruited through institutional or individual consultants, or temporary appointment posts.

Since SCL is a cross-cutting activity that is relevant for all programmes, one SCL resource may be able to support multiple priorities across the office or at regional level. Innovative funding mechanisms such as contributions from all programmes or from more than one country office that may benefit from SCL have been used to recruit personnel. Alternatively, governments and ministries have been able to reallocate personnel to SCL specific roles that UNICEF supported through technical trainings and capacity building.



Because SCL mostly relies on pre-existing data, the largest cost of implementing a social and community listening intervention is often the personnel. The technical tools for online, offline, and on-ground data collection such as online social listening platforms and digital data collection forms are commercially available, allow for monthly payments, and can be procured through existing global Long Terms Agreements for Services (LTAS) which ensure highly competitive pricing and value for money.



The following table highlights, some but not all, inputs and resources related to various components of the SCL Framework:

Phase	Personnel	Tools and Resources
<b>Plan</b>	SCL Personnel, Programme Managers, and Partners	Microsoft Office
<b>Collect</b>	SCL Personnel, Frontline workers/ mobilisers, UNICEF partners on the ground	Online Social Listening Platforms, Media Monitoring Reports, ODK Forms, Academic Journals, Field Data, Internet
<b>Analyze</b>	SCL Personnel, SBC M&E Personnel	Microsoft Office, MS Power BI, Google Cloud, Amazon AWS, Tableau, Internet
<b>Report</b>	SCL Personnel	Microsoft Office
<b>Validate</b>	SCL Personnel, Partners, Frontline Workers, Programme Managers	Viamo, Rapid Pro, U-Report, uInfluence, Premise, Field Surveys, IoT
<b>Integrate</b>	SCL Personnel	Microsoft Office
<b>Evaluate</b>	SCL Personnel, Programme Managers, and Partners	Microsoft Office

## 2. COLLECTING DATA

SCL data can originate from virtually any source such as internal programme data, global research, academic journals, field surveys, and many more. To ensure adequate visibility and community representation, data collection must be preceded by an Information Ecosystem Analysis (IEA) which will inform the types of tools required and the selection of data source.



SCL data collection can be divided into 3 categories:

- **Online:** Internet, Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Telegram, community platforms such as U-Report and others), Websites, Blogs, Forums, etc.
- **Offline:** Conventional Media, Television, Newspapers, Radio, Phone, Call Centers, etc.
- **On-Ground:** Field Data, Primary or Academic Research, Programme or Gov. Reports, etc.

Teams may choose to alter the allocation of mediums between these categories, for example, some teams may choose to place Call Center data into the 'On-Ground' category or move internet enabled surveys into 'Online' category.

Such alterations may not directly affect data collection but will have implications during data reporting and referencing. This categorization is entirely context specific and can vary from country to country. It is recommended to spend time to create such a classification at the country level at the start of a SCL programme.



**Online data collection** uses local and vernacular linguistic customs to identify keywords relevant to the research question. These keywords form the basis of strategic Boolean Queries that can find relevant results on search engines and on online social listening platforms such as Talkwalker or Meltwater. For example, to track children's education-related topics, Boolean operators such as 'AND', 'OR', 'NOT' can be used to connect keywords. 'AND' narrows results, requiring both terms to be present (e.g., "elementary school" AND "math resources"). 'OR' expands results, finding documents with either term (e.g., "tutoring" OR "mentorship"). 'NOT' excludes topics from a search (e.g., "higher education" NOT "university"). Consider synonyms and variations of your keywords for a more comprehensive search. Online data collection is often the easiest and fastest to implement source of data. It is also the largest contributor to the total amount of SCL data. Without a strong Boolean Query, a targeted research question, and planned filtering, the volume of collected online data can overwhelm any amount of analysis capability and resources; which in turn can lead to important results or voices being omitted from analysis. Online SCL platforms have inherent limitations such as inability to represent community members that don't have access to the internet, and having limited access to data on highly popular platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok.

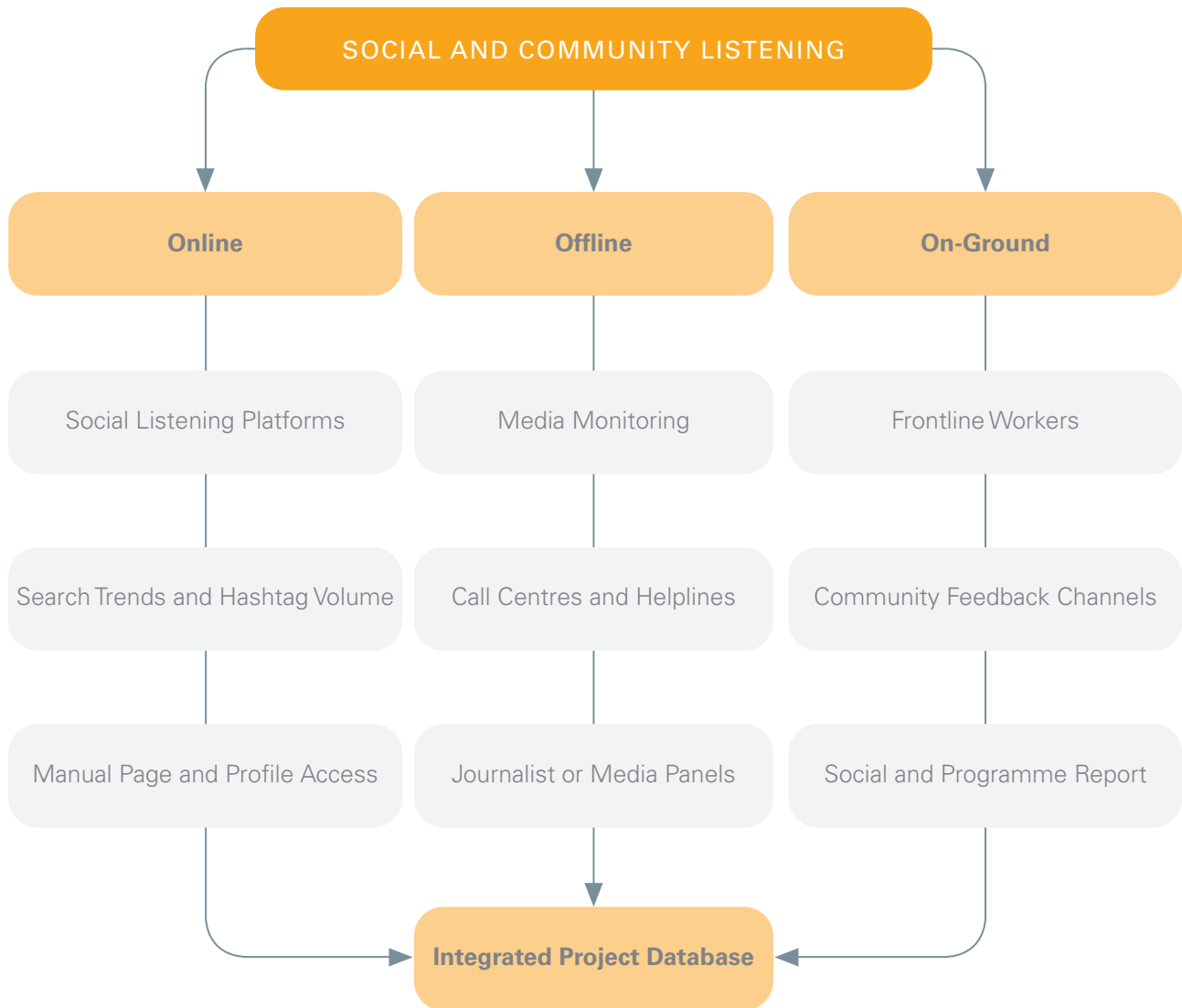


**Offline data collection** often relies on media monitoring reports. UN agencies, partners, or government ministries in most countries already have media monitoring structures in place. Requesting access to these reports or partnering on these contracts, which are often with third parties, can be a cost-effective solution for offline data access. Increasingly conventional media outlets are placing their stories and content on their social media profiles or websites. They do so to increase their content visibility and offer an alternate route to gain visibility on narratives in conventional media by using online social and community listening tools. Call centers and hotlines are a powerful mechanism to tap into. Call centers are primarily designed to support community information needs and answer their questions. Partnering with relevant teams to slightly update data recording, tagging, and sharing at call centers can make them incredible offline SCL sources. Any such partnerships and updates must ensure to not add substantial additional workload for call center teams, and spread changes across time to not disrupt existing operations.



**On-Ground data collection** can begin with a search on internal databases and information repositories such as SharePoint, followed by reaching out to relevant colleagues or partners to identify relevant data sources. This can be supplemented by exploring global data hosts such as the World Bank and UN Data websites which consolidate field level research from multiple sources. Data may be found through online research, but it represents field level action and is thus treated as originating from on-ground sources. All collected data must be consolidated into an Integrated Project Database which, depending on the amount of data, can be as simple as a separate Microsoft Excel file. Combining information from all categories into the same database allows for easier referencing, data cleaning, and analytics. Where possible, it is a good practice to separate or tag datasets by research question, which can ease insight verification and data reviews.

The diagram below presents a non-exhaustive list of most common tools that can be used to collect social and community listening data under each category.



### 3. ANALYZING DATA

Depending on the research question and the geographic context, the collected dataset could be too large to manually analyze all potentially relevant results. It is highly recommended to start with consolidating, cleaning, coding, and segmenting the data first before quantitative, qualitative, and triangulating analysis begins.



#### Data Cleaning

The following tips could help in improving data relevance:

- Removing irrelevant content such as spam or promotional posts unrelated to the topic, and anything tangential to the research question is a good start.
- Since data could be coming from multiple sources, formatting it for consistency standardizing date and time, aligning columns for source names and content, correcting typos or misspellings, is essential.

- When working with multilingual data, translating it into a common language helps with analysis. Automated translation tools can assist, but for sensitive materials and numerical data will need rechecking for accuracy.
- Eliminating redundant or repeating posts is required to avoid skewing analysis.
- Batch tagging data as online, offline, or on-ground helps comparing narratives across mediums and audiences.
- Segmenting the data by age, gender, location, cultural or linguistic identifiers, or sources is often needed.
- Social listening platforms such as Talkwalker, Brandwatch, Mention, etc. offer varying levels of data cleaning, analysis, and visualization features.
- Spreadsheet software such as Microsoft Excel or Google Sheets are still useful for basic sorting, filtering, and smaller datasets.
- It is critical to anonymize personal data to protect privacy of people whose opinions and voices are included in the dataset. This is more important if the SCL Analysis is meant to be shared externally.
- Bots, trolls, and old data can skew the data, identifying and filtering them out could be a good strategy if possible.



## Quantitative Data Analysis

Once data has been cleaned, upward or downward movements in the following metrics can be used for quantitative analysis:

- **Volume**  
Number of mentions for a word/issue/person/partner, number of posts, stories, unique authors, etc. These metrics can show levels of conversation and public interest.
- **Sentiment**  
Positive, negative, or neutral feelings about the selected topic. Automated sentiment analysis is not reliable yet and should be used with caution, it often labels content such as factual reporting on conflicts as negative because they mention a negative subject. For manual sentiment analysis on large datasets, a sampling methodology can be used and must be explicitly mentioned.
- **Reach**  
How many people potentially saw or were exposed to the content. Shows the scope and breadth of the content. This represents people who can see a piece of content, number of people who actually saw it is likely to be far lower.
- **Engagement**  
Likes, shares, calls, messages, SMS, comments, etc. People tend to engage with content that captures their attention and makes them take an action such as a like. Shows how successful or impactful a post is.
- **Share of voice**  
How much a topic is discussed compared to other topics. For example, comparing total results for education with total results for nutrition, can signal a community's current needs or priorities.



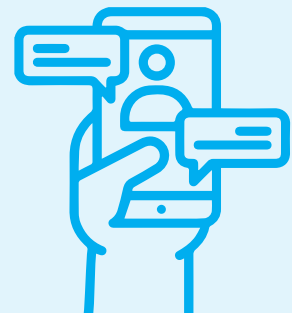


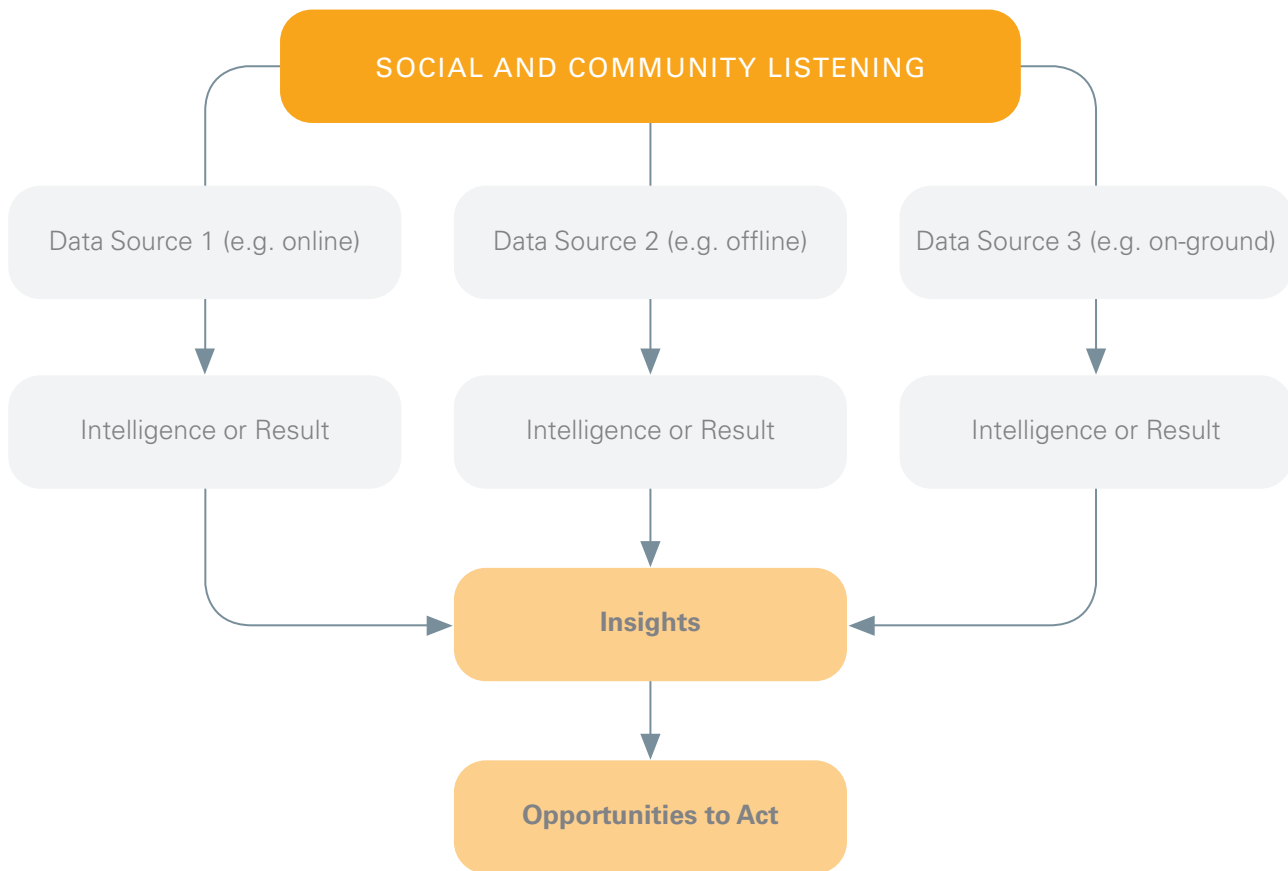
## Qualitative Data Analysis

Most SCL data is likely to be words and not numbers which requires specific qualitative data analysis strategies. Some of these are:

- Finding recurring themes, patterns, words, and ideas across data. This helps to make sense of large datasets.
- Digging deeper than positive, negative, and neutral ratings could be powerful. Exploring specific emotions such as anger, frustration, joy, surprise, etc. Consider the reasons behind these emotions.
- Examining how language and subtext is used to suggest meaning, power relations, and social identities in conversations can be helpful.
- Narrative Analysis: Look at the stories people tell. How do they frame their experiences? What are the common scenarios, locations, times, languages, terminology, or issues?
- Reading and re-reading the raw data helps in going beyond surface-level mentions and can provide new insights into conversations, comments, and longer-form posts.
- Coding data using a predefined taxonomy can help with both qualitative and quantitative analysis. Assigning codes or tags to capture interesting phrases, concepts, and patterns emerging directly from the data. As patterns emerge, related codes can be consolidated into broader themes.
- Considering tone of voice, sarcasm, irony, and humor is necessary. Noticing what is not said can be revealing. Similarly, metaphors and imagery in text offers insight into how communities conceptualize issues.
- Contradictions and outliers in the data can be just as valuable as patterns. Why do some people feel differently? What alternative perspectives do they offer?
- Mind maps, word clouds, and thematic diagrams can help in organizing analysis and presenting insights clearly.
- Tools like NVivo and MAXQDA can assist with coding, organizing, and visualizing large amounts of data for qualitative analysis.

Qualitative analysis of social and community listening data goes beyond the “what.” It’s about delving into the “how” and “why” of people’s conversations to uncover deeper meaning and actionable insights.





## Triangulation and Insight Generation

SCL offers valuable insights, but its effectiveness is greatly enhanced by a triangulation approach. Triangulation involves combining and correlating findings from multiple data sources, including online, offline, and on-ground channels. This strategy provides a more comprehensive and reliable understanding of public sentiment and community needs.

To fully grasp the impact of events, policies, or public perception, isolated data streams are insufficient. Social media analysis alone can be skewed by vocal minorities or automated activity. Conventional media offers a wider view but may lack the specificity of those directly affected by an issue. On-ground reports, focus groups, and localized research provide essential granular detail from the field but may not be recent or exactly related to the research question.

Successful triangulation lies in identifying both convergence and divergence between data sources. Points of agreement between online sentiment, media narratives, and on-ground reports strengthen and validate findings. Conversely, discrepancies highlight potential blind spots, illuminate nuance, and reveal potential disparities between lived experience and broader public discourse. Several techniques can facilitate the triangulation of SCL data:

- Looking for convergence in the sources could be telling. For example, do online posts echo sentiments from on-ground focus groups? Or do media narratives contradict or align with field reports?

- Exploring discrepancies can also form the basis of an insight. For example, why might frontline workers report different perceptions than what's trending online?
- Overlaying geographic mapping of social media sentiment alongside relevant on-ground research findings helps with visual analysis.
- Thematic comparison of common themes across online discussions, media stories, and field reports can provide a more nuanced multi-dimensional perspective.
- Correlating spikes in online conversations with real-world events mentioned in conventional media or on-ground reports can reveal potential causal relationships.
- Using representative quotes from varied sources humanizes data and reinforces thematic findings.

It's important to remember that triangulation does not require perfectly aligning data. Divergent findings can offer valuable insights into the complexities of a research question. Data quality and potential biases within sources should be carefully considered for accurate interpretation. The benefits of triangulation make it essential to incorporate into SCL research when investigating public opinion or the impact of initiatives. By carefully aligning data collection strategies with research objectives, a triangulated approach allows for the identification of patterns, outliers, and the rich nuance that informs robust analysis and decision-making.



## Personal Biases

SCL Analysts, like all people, may have social or cultural biases without knowing about it. Being aware of how personal biases might influence data interpretation is important. It is difficult to implement but SCL Analysts must aim to minimize the impact of these biases on how insights are generated and maintain the integrity of community voices.



## 4. REPORTING RESULTS

An impactful SCL report begins by clearly stating the initial research question and succinctly summarizing the answer derived from the data. Even if inconclusive, an acknowledgement of missing information or the necessity for primary research underscores the integrity of the process.



A comprehensive SCL report strategically builds upon the following elements:

- Starting with the research question and summary answer anchors the report in the research objective. It provides focus and establishes the context for the analysis.
- Referencing evidence for the analysis and citing specific data points, quotes, and sources that support the findings builds trust in the insights presented.
- Writing briefly and concisely with clear visualizations make the report accessible to a wider audience, increasing the likelihood of it being read and acted upon.
- Using the provided recommended SCL Report Format will result in consistent reporting that facilitates cross-referencing and comparison, especially when SCL data is collected from diverse regions or contexts.

- It is essential to anonymize the voices of private individuals who have not explicitly consented to participate in the research, safeguarding both ethical considerations and participant confidentiality. Names of public figures and people named by the media may be used.
- Insights section presents the heart of the report, where findings should be presented thematically or aligned with research objectives. Effective visualization through charts, graphs, and other visual aids can enhance clarity and facilitate the identification of trends or anomalies.
- Opportunities to Act (OTA): A dedicated section, clearly labeled, provides the suggested action based on available information in the report. Each OTA should explicitly address a problem or area for improvement revealed by the data, offering specific programmatic actions and outlining their potential impact.
- Acknowledging data biases and limitations in the report strengthens credibility, while contextualizing findings within broader organizational goals highlights the strategic value of the analysis.

While formulating Opportunities to Act (OTAs), the following considerations could be useful:

- Present OTAs as catalysts for change, underscoring their potential benefits.
- Recommendations should directly translate insights into concrete action.
- Target defined audiences (e.g. Supply Team, SBC Team, Management, etc.) and tailor OTAs accordingly.
- Rank OTAs based on a combination of potential impact, urgency, and feasibility, emphasizing readily implementable solutions.
- Robust OTAs are rooted in findings, demonstrating a clear link between the data and proposed interventions.

To maximize impact, consider SCL reporting as an ongoing dialogue. Sharing preliminary insights can invite feedback and ensure OTAs resonate with programme stakeholders.

Integrating collaborative OTA development fosters a sense of ownership. Furthermore, by tracking the outcomes of implemented OTAs, future reports can illustrate the concrete results achieved through SCL-driven insights.



## 5. VALIDATING INSIGHTS

Social and community listening (SCL) provides a powerful lens on community sentiment. But in certain instances, it may be necessary to validate the insights it uncovers. By improving trust in SCL insights, validation empowers informed decision-making, contextualizes data with on-the-ground realities, and demonstrates respect for the communities whose voices are heard in the research.

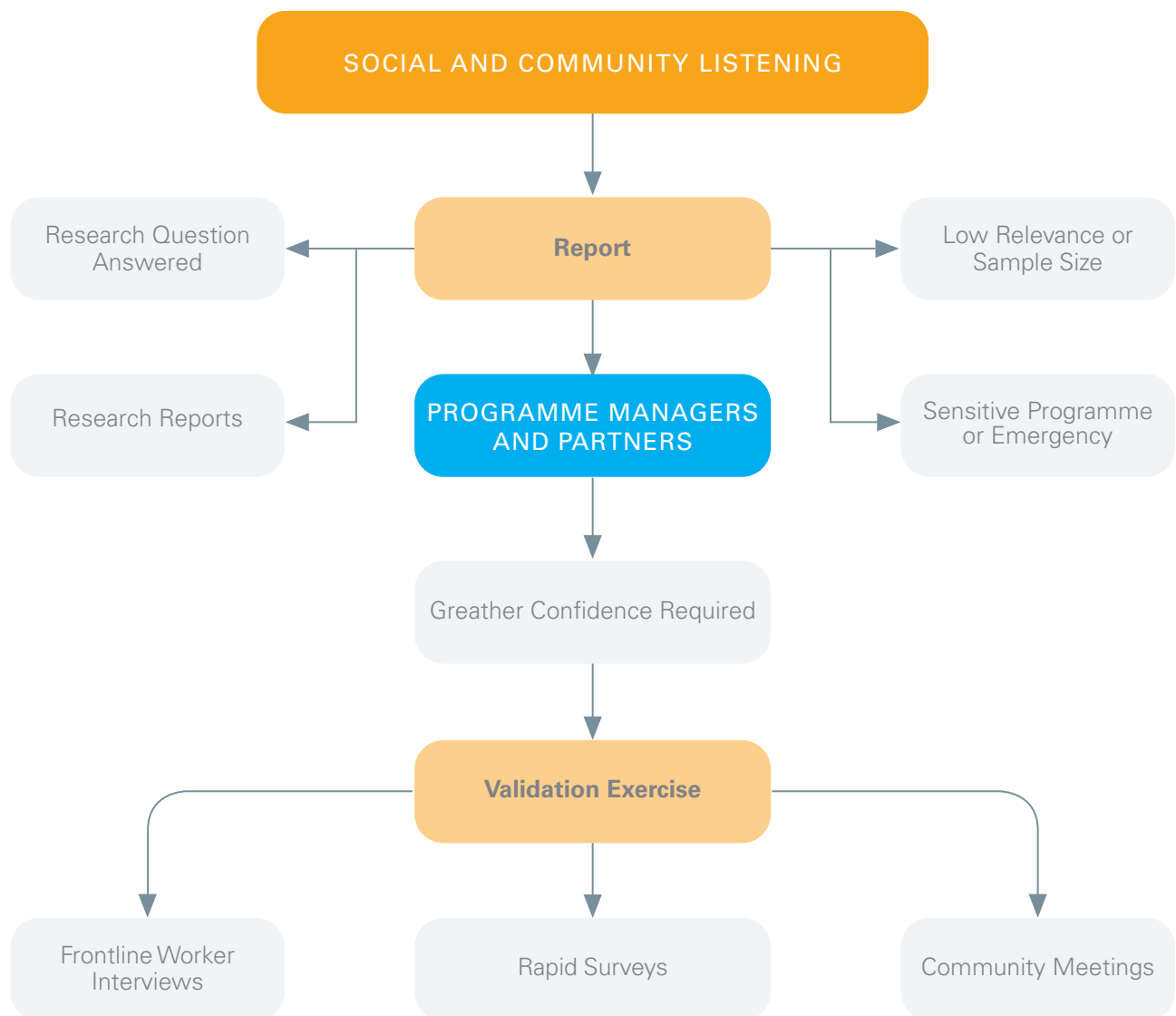


Validation is particularly important when:

- Data quality issues, small sample size, or the complexity of the topic leave questions about the reliability or completeness of findings.
- Conflicting trends or a lack of clear patterns emerge from the analysis, prompting a need for deeper investigation.
- Findings may not reflect wider community experience due to biases within the data or a focused sample pool.
- The consequences of misinformed action based on SCL data are heightened in emergency response, conflicts, or contexts dealing with sensitive topics.

At its core, a Validation Exercise is going directly to the community members to verify if they also believe the SCL insight we have identified. To do so the following strategies may be the most relevant:

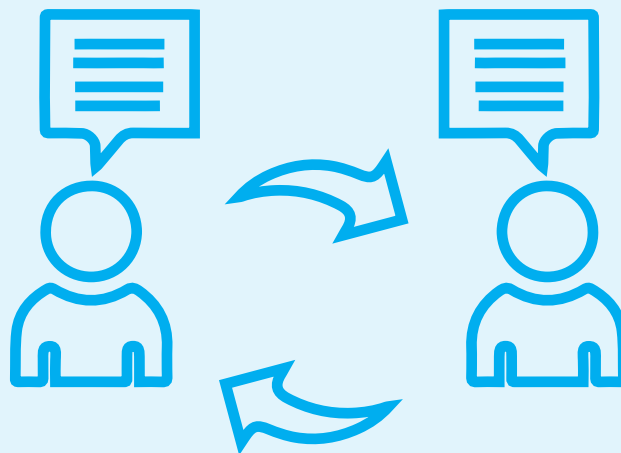
- Frontline Worker Consultations tap into the experience of field staff, who possess deep knowledge of local dynamics and community needs. Discussions and interviews help gauge whether SCL findings resonate with their on-the-ground observations.
- Rapid Surveys, online or offline, can efficiently expand the sample and gauge the prevalence of attitudes and experiences beyond the initially observed sample. They are best used to probe specific themes or demographics identified in the initial SCL research.
- Direct Community Outreach connects directly with community members through calls, interviews, focus groups, or carefully moderated feedback channels. This provides firsthand insights and can uncover nuances overlooked in purely observed-data analysis.



To implement an effective validation exercise and further build trust into the process, the following considerations may be useful:

- Highlighting triangulation techniques and varied data sources provides greater clarity picture and increases confidence in identified insights.
- Using validation to inform subsequent SCL research cycles or refining programme actions further establish their utility.
- When resources are limited, prioritizing to validate the most uncertain or potentially impactful findings is prudent.
- Communicating the validation processes to stakeholders and programme teams builds trust and demonstrates a commitment to rigorous practice.
- Developing case studies for every validation exercise helps to improve future SCL processes, allows for wider sharing of lessons, and builds further trust in the process.
- Ensuring adherence to data privacy protocols and securing informed consent when seeking direct community input can help avoid future challenges to insight validation.

Validating SCL insights does far more than address potential shortcomings in the SCL data. It fosters two-way communication, moving from simply listening to active engagement with community perspectives. Validation also helps identify where data and lived experience might diverge, leading to more robust and context-aware problem-solving. By integrating validation into the SCL practice, programmes build a stronger foundation for action, ultimately leading to better-informed interventions and meaningful outcomes.





## 6. INTEGRATING SCL

Social and community listening (SCL) has the potential to transform programme operations, but its true value lies in moving from insights to informed action. Effectively integrating SCL requires embedding it seamlessly into existing workflows and ensuring that teams are not only aware of the findings but also motivated to respond proactively.



Establishing SCL as a regular and valued source of information is a necessary first step. Develop a routine for concise, timely reports or alerts that are disseminated through existing communication channels such as emails and meetings. The key to integration lies in identifying decision-making points within programme management, coordination mechanisms, and amongst stakeholders, where SCL insights can directly influence plans. Appointing “SCL champions” within different teams fosters enthusiasm and facilitates smoother adoption.



Static reports alone may not be enough. Interactive workshops and presentations encourage teams to engage with the data, brainstorm relevant “Opportunities to Act,” and take ownership of problem-solving. Placing developed reports and insights on shared online collaboration spaces such as Microsoft SharePoint enables continuous discussion around proposed actions, ongoing refinement, and progress tracking.

Highlighting SCL successes or action resulting from SCL is crucial. When positive outcomes are demonstrably linked to actions inspired by SCL, it reinforces the value of integrating these insights. Encouraging cross-team communication can ensure insights relevant to outreach, service delivery, and resource optimization are utilized to their full potential.

It’s important to provide training on SCL methodology and data collection to establish trust in the findings. Skepticism should be pre-emptively addressed by framing SCL as a continuous source of insights driving ongoing improvement, rather than a repository of radical revelations.

Securing leadership buy-in further paves the way for dedicated resources and a clear prioritization of SCL. Leaders should visibly incorporate the insights and community voices into their own decision-making, setting an example for others. Developing methods to track how teams engage with SCL findings (even if a suggestion is ultimately rejected) provides valuable metrics for evaluation.

Successful integration takes time and a willingness to adapt. Starting with a few targeted areas where SCL insights can demonstrate tangible impact and building on those successes can generate wider support. Openly and candidly inviting feedback on how reporting and integration processes can better serve programme needs further enhances participation and leads to a truly collaborative approach.

## 7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Social and community listening (SCL) provides a window into public sentiment and community needs. However, to justify continued investment and optimize its effectiveness, a well-structured Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plan is essential. This plan should be closely aligned with the programme's overall goals to ensure SCL delivers measurable value.



Before diving into data collection, it's crucial to define how SCL activities will contribute to broader programme objectives. Set SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) goals for your SCL efforts. These goals will guide the development of appropriate evaluation metrics.



Regular monitoring of SCL activities helps assess both process efficiency and the data itself:

- Monitor the volume, diversity of sources, and types of data collected to ensure representativeness and identify potential biases.
- Track resources (time, personnel) devoted to SCL to evaluate efficiency and streamline processes where needed.
- Establish a consistent cadence for sharing SCL insights and reporting on progress. The frequency will depend on the nature and pace of your programme.

Evaluating SCL requires going beyond compiling reports or tracking data points. The core aim is to demonstrate how these insights are translated into actions and ultimately, how these actions contribute to achieving desired programme outcomes. Focus on:

- Tracking the specific adjustments made to your programme (advocacy, communications, supply, actions) based on SCL findings.
- If possible, measure changes in key programme indicators that can be directly attributed to those SCL-driven actions.
- Acknowledging the complexity of isolating the sole impact of SCL is essential. Use mixed methods, combining quantitative data with qualitative stakeholder feedback to establish a stronger case for causality.

The following best practices can further enhance the organizational support for SCL and demonstrate value:

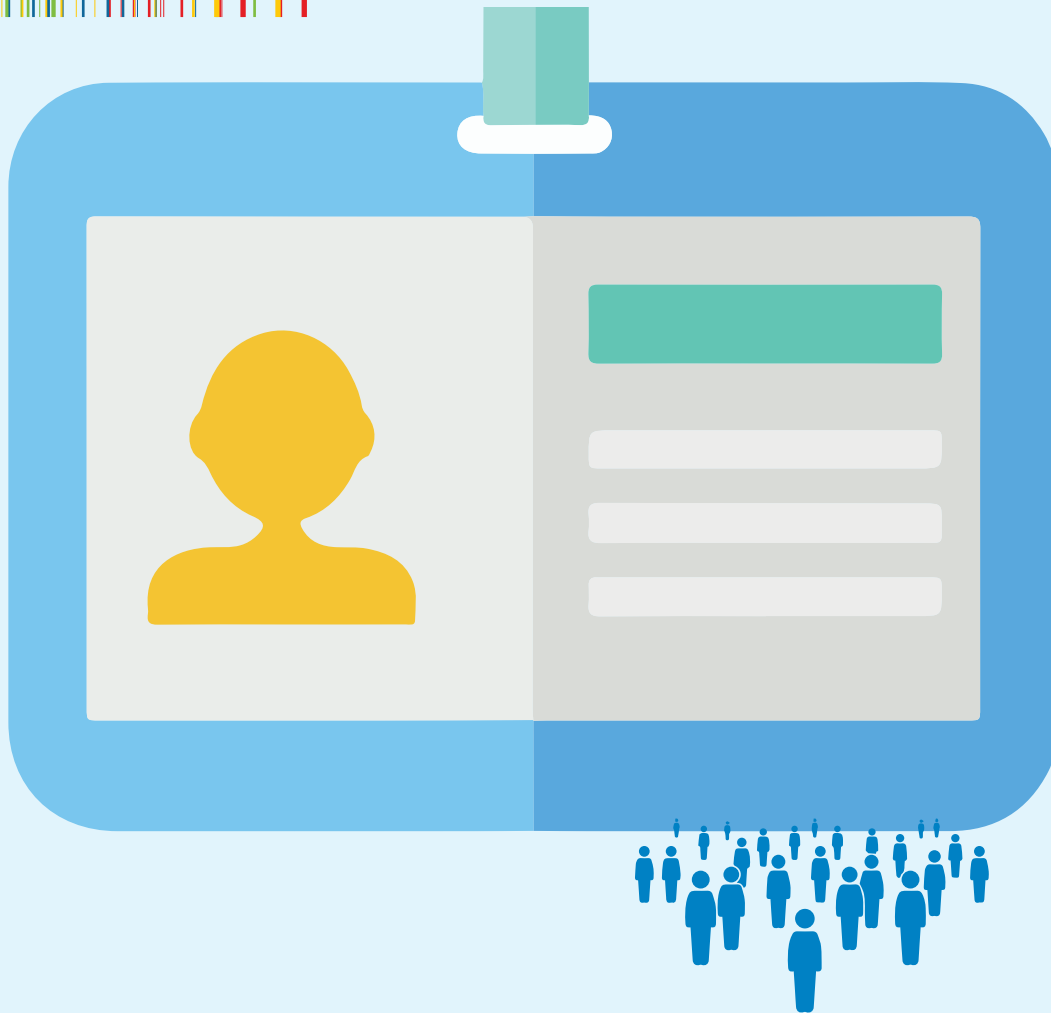
- Provide training on SCL M&E principles to relevant staff, promoting a data-driven culture within the organization.
- Employ charts, graphs, and other compelling data visualizations to communicate SCL findings effectively.
- Where possible, incorporate SCL-specific M&E components or indicators into existing programme-wide evaluation frameworks to provide a holistic assessment.
- Use M&E results to continuously improve SCL practices, refine data collection techniques, and adapt analysis strategies.

The indicators in the diagram on the previous page could be used to track input, output, and outcome level results. However, impact assessment is a more complex evaluation which will require comprehensive primary research. Such an assessment may be done at a case study level but conducting it at the programme level or for every SCL intervention may not be financially or practically viable.

A robust M&E plan elevates SCL from a passive tool to a powerful driver of programme improvement. Meticulously tracking activities and evaluating outcomes can make a strong case for the continued value of SCL investment and ensure that it drives meaningful change.



# LIMITATIONS AND ETHICS OF SCL



Social and community listening (SCL) offers invaluable insights but must be exercised with both care and a clear understanding of its limitations. Prioritizing ethical considerations and acknowledging methodological boundaries is crucial for responsible and impactful SCL implementation.

## Ethical Responsibilities

- Scrupulous anonymization of personally identifiable information (PII) should be standard practice before analysis or sharing of results. In cases of direct community engagement, informed consent regarding data use is essential.
- Programme Managers must be made aware of potential unintended consequences from SCL, such as accusations of ‘spying’, particularly when dealing with sensitive discussions or vulnerable groups. Additional anonymization or purposefully broader analysis may be required for protection.
- Remaining open and forthright about SCL methods, data sources, and any potential biases is necessary. Findings should be presented with context and, when appropriate, acknowledgement of ambiguity or dissenting perspectives should be made.

## Limitations

- Acknowledging that SCL is not a replacement for primary research can ensure that programme teams allocate resources to the right methodology. See section on comparing SCL with Primary Research.
- Recognize that online populations and those most vocal on social platforms may not mirror offline communities or majority viewpoints. Be wary of generalizing without referencing additional context.
- The presence of bots, sarcasm, and inherent biases in ranking algorithms can all negatively impact data reliability. Verification, triangulation, and careful analysis are necessary to mitigate for inaccurate insights.
- Even the most well-intentioned SCL researchers are influenced by their own perspectives. Build diverse teams who have local cultural and linguistic familiarity to the research question. Actively solicit different interpretations of findings to avoid overly narrow conclusions.
- SCL naturally focuses on the digital realm more due to ease of data access and risks overlooking the insights and experiences of those less connected to the internet. Combining SCL with other on-ground data sources creates a more holistic understanding.

## Best Practices

- Work with stakeholders to establish a clear, internal ethics framework guiding SCL work. Review and adapt this framework as needed.
- Delineate boundaries of data collection in alignment with privacy principles. Maintain a targeted focus on data directly relevant to your programme or research objectives.
- Do not publicly circulate or place SCL reports on the internet, these could carry reputational risks due to assumptions made, data collected, and could create a divide between a programme and the communities it serves.
- Deliberating potential unintended consequences, even when using technically anonymized data, can lead to more responsible decision-making.

SCL’s potential for positive impact is undeniable. However, upholding ethical standards and recognizing the inherent limitations of the methodology ensures this tool is used in service of communities rather than to their detriment. This conscientious approach ultimately builds trust and leads to more meaningful insights.

# MOVING FROM LISTENING TO ACTION





The SCL journey does not end with insights, its goal is translating that knowledge and insight into tangible benefits for the community. Here's a roadmap for programme managers to effectively bridge the gap between SCL and on-ground action, focusing on:

## Asking the Right Research Question

- Move beyond broad questions like “What do people think of our programme?” Instead, target specific areas for improvement: “Are there aspects of our outreach strategy hindering programme enrollment in certain communities?”
- Leverage existing programme data to identify potential areas of concern or gaps in knowledge. Use SCL to delve deeper into those specific questions.
- Phrase your research question in a way that prioritizes solutions that directly address community needs and challenges.

## Assessing Opportunities to Act (OTAs)

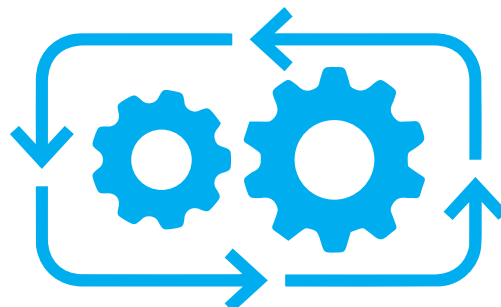
- Prioritize OTAs with the greatest potential to deliver positive change for the community, aligning them with your programme's objectives.
- Ensure proposed actions are realistic and achievable within resource and time constraints. Pilot smaller-scale interventions before committing to a widespread rollout.
- Choose OTAs with the potential for long-term impact and consider how they might be integrated into existing programme structures.
- Involve stakeholders, including community representatives, in evaluating OTAs to ensure they are culturally appropriate and address genuine needs.

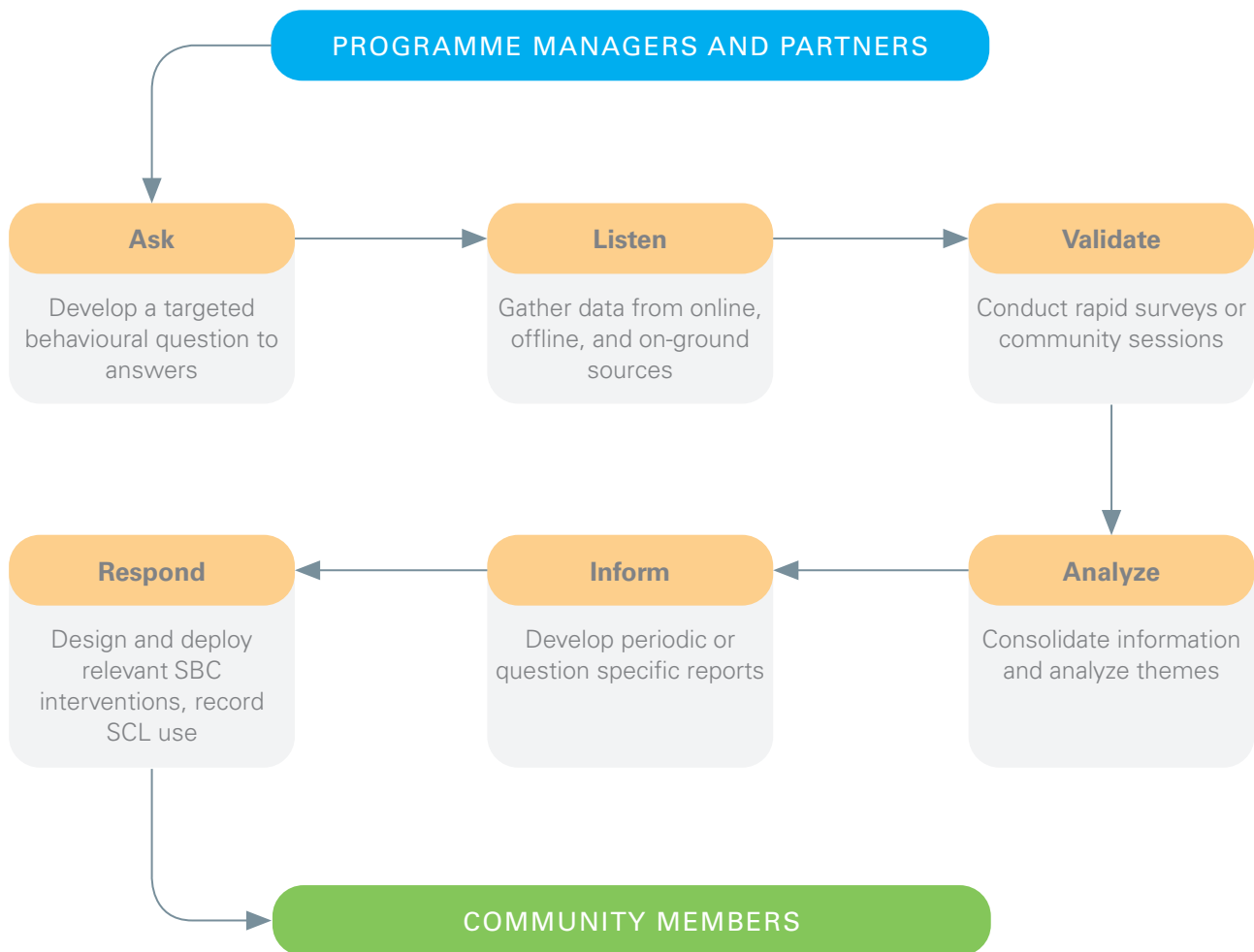
## Deciding the Best Response Strategy

- Don't rely solely on intuition. Use the SCL data to support your decision-making and demonstrate the potential impact of your chosen response.
- Consider if a combination of OTAs might be more effective than a single intervention.
- Develop a communication plan to inform affected communities about the chosen response and how it addresses the insights gleaned from SCL.

## Closing the SCL Loop

- Integrate SCL throughout the programme cycle, from planning and design to ongoing monitoring and evaluation.
- Ensure staff responsible for analyzing SCL data and developing OTAs have the necessary skills, resources, and visibility to develop more actionable insights and recommendations.
- Create a system for gathering community feedback on implemented OTAs. This allows for course correction and continuous improvement.





## Example: SCL in Action

An SCL analysis reveals low programme enrollment rates in a specific demographic.

The programme manager prioritizes developing culturally relevant outreach materials and partnering with trusted community leaders to enhance targeted outreach.

Based on the data and input from community representatives, the programme manager decides to pilot this revised outreach strategy in a designated area and track its impact on enrollment rates.

By following these steps, programme managers can become advocates for their communities, leveraging SCL as a powerful tool to drive evidence-based change and ensure the voice of the community shapes the programme's evolution.

Closing the SCL loop isn't a linear process. Embrace iterative approaches, be open to adaptation, and celebrate the ongoing dialogue between programme and community.

# COMPARING SCL, PRIMARY RESEARCH, AND COMMUNITY FEEDBACK MECHANISMS (CFM)



To truly understand needs, perceptions, and experiences of the communities, programmes must tap into a diverse range of voices and perspectives. SCL, primary research, and community feedback mechanisms (CFM) each offer distinct tools for gathering and analyzing these valuable insights. While all focus on community-centered decision-making, they differ in their approach, strengths, and best use cases. By understanding these nuances, programs can strategically select the most appropriate methods or blend them together for a comprehensive and inclusive understanding.

SCL, Primary Research, and CFM are complementary. They are best used in conjunction, not in isolation, and are not a replacement for each other. For example, SCL might identify an issue, CFM helps explore it with the community, and Primary Research measure the issue’s impact.

Select the method based on your research question or the required information. Do you need a quick overview (SCL), deep insights on a specific topic (Primary Research), or feedback from a specific community (CFM)?

SCL can inform the design of CFM and Primary Research, which in turn, can provide data to validate or challenge SCL findings. By understanding the unique strengths and limitations of each method, programs gain a 360-degree view of community sentiment, enabling them to make well-informed, responsive, and data-driven decisions.

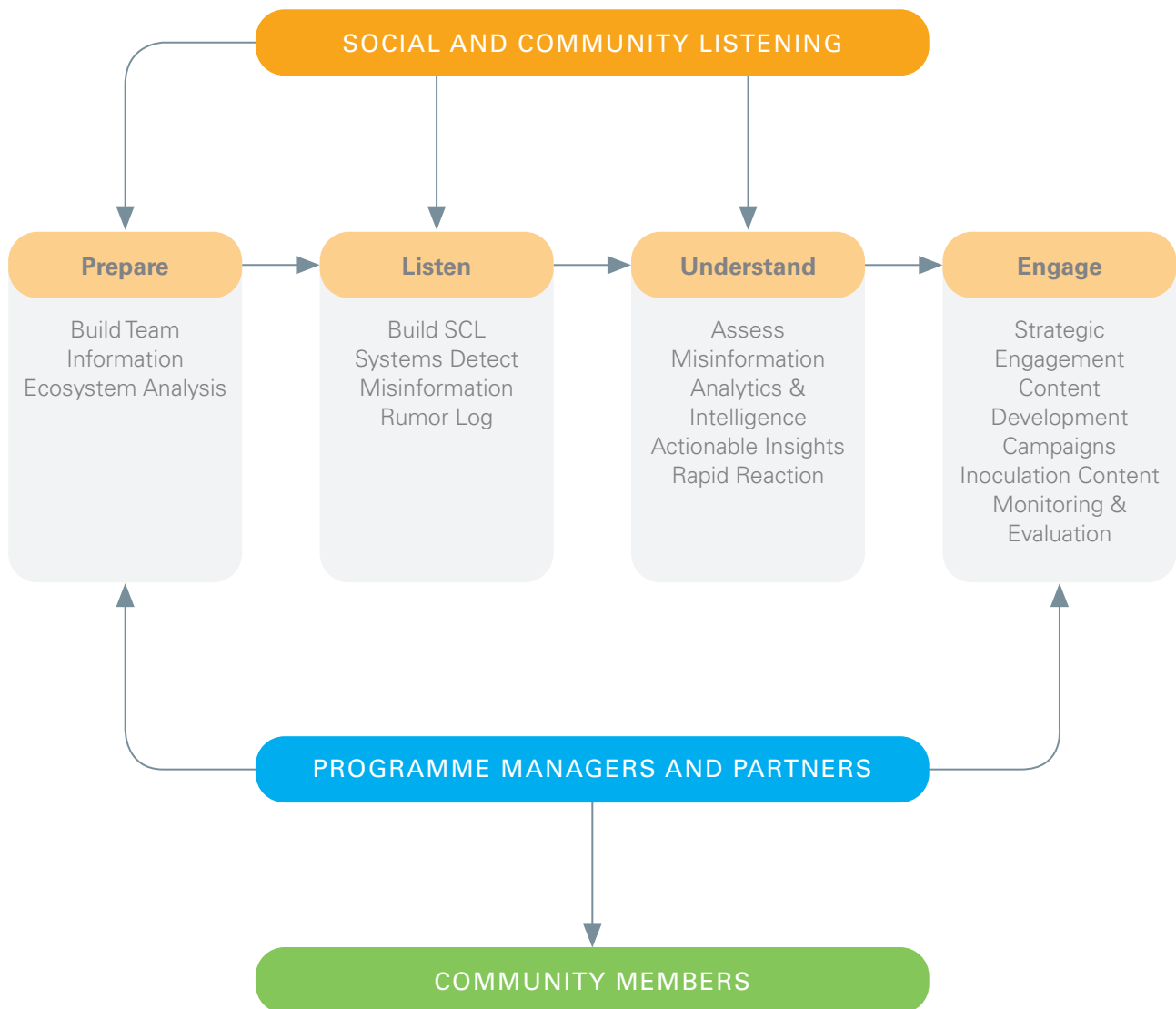
Method	Description	Key Strengths	Ideal Use Cases
Social & Community Listening (SCL)	Analysis of existing conversations and data from online, offline, and on-ground sources.	Cheaper and faster than generating new data. Captures sentiment in real-time. Uncovers trends across a large volume of data.	Monitoring public perception or implementation of a programme. Identifying emerging issues. Tracking the spread of misinformation.
Primary Research	Systematic generation of new data directly from the community, using methods like surveys, focus groups, and interviews.	Can be designed to answer very specific questions. Provides rich quantitative and / or qualitative insights. Allows for full control over sampling to ensure representation.	Deeply exploring a specific issue. Understanding complex attitudes or behaviours. Needs assessment prior to programme design.
Community Feedback Mechanisms (CFM)	Systems for gathering ongoing input from communities, such as suggestion boxes, town hall meetings, feedback forms, or direct outreach.	Captures a diverse range of perspectives. Facilitates two-way communication. Can build trust and community ownership.	Gathering input on a specific programme element. Soliciting feedback for programme improvement. Identifying community priorities.

# MISINFORMATION AND SCL



Social and community listening (SCL) is an essential step in creating a strong misinformation tracking and response capability. Misinformation, especially related to health, safety, or civic processes, can have dire consequences for children. It can erode trust, promote harmful behaviours, create social divisions, and hinder community and child well-being. Misinformation thrives in information vacuums and is most commonly visible in comments on a social media post or during instances of service hesitancy. Identifying misinformation within social commentary or service refusals requires attention, as these often indicate deeper circulating narratives.

It is important to recognize that SCL may identify numerous misinformation narratives, all of them do not require a response. Some narratives are individual opinions or reach too small a population subset to warrant a full response. The decision to create a response and the scope for it resides with the programme leadership and not with the SCL personnel. SCL may provide a risk assessment on whether a narrative can create behavioural barriers, this assessment could be inaccurate and should be combined with a validation exercise or primary research before a response is implemented.



## Proactive Preparation

- Establish a routine for monitoring common topics where misinformation tends to proliferate (vaccination campaigns, political campaigns, climate summits, etc.). This helps to establish “normal” levels of discussion and sentiment.
- Track which accounts, groups, or websites routinely amplify harmful behaviours and misinformation narratives. Knowing frequent sources helps to identify narratives early and enables countering narratives as they emerge.
- Create a database of the most prevalent misconceptions or false claims related to the programme or broader field being tracked. Use search terms to actively monitor if these statements gain traction.
- Pay attention to themes, rhetorical devices, and emotional appeals used in misinformation. Spotting patterns helps predict how narratives might evolve.

## Response Strategies

While misinformation response is not a SCL function, SCL has a core responsibility in identifying harmful narratives and supporting the evaluation of a misinformation response intervention. The following proven misinformation response strategies sourced from [UNICEF Vaccine Misinformation Management Field Guide](#) may be utilized:

- Don't amplify misinformation by repeating it. Instead, use clear, concise, evidence-based rebuttals, focusing on the core factual inaccuracy.
- If you know certain inaccurate narratives are circulating, proactively share reliable information, framing it in a way that resonates with your target audience.
- Partner with influential community voices or leaders viewed as credible sources within those most likely to be affected by the misinformation.
- Where appropriate, work with social media platforms to flag and report accounts or groups that consistently promote harmful misinformation.

## Key Considerations

- Expect misinformation to exist, it is the rare programme that is not hindered by misinformation or harmful beliefs.
- Keep misinformation response readiness high for high priority programmes. Developing a response when a harmful belief is already spreading risks losing the opportunity to stop the misinformation from spreading further.
- Misinformation often preys on fear, anger, etc. Monitor spikes in emotional language to identify potentially misleading content faster.
- Not all negativity is misinformation. Avoid engaging with bad-faith actors, focusing instead on providing accurate information for genuinely concerned individuals.
- Build relationships with fact-checking organizations, academic researchers specializing in misinformation, and programmes with similar challenges.

Addressing misinformation is a continuous process. By diligently monitoring community narratives using SCL, responding with empathy and facts, and fostering a culture of information literacy, programme teams can build resilience and mitigate potential harms.



# ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND SCL







Artificial intelligence (AI) and Generative Pre-trained Transformers (GPTs) offer exciting possibilities for enhancing social and community listening (SCL) practices. However, strategic and informed implementation is crucial. The following considerations provide a pathway to harness AI responsibly while keeping in mind its inherent limitations.

AI models are trained on massive datasets, largely from more affluent and global north sources, these datasets can reflect and amplify societal biases. This can lead to skewed results, particularly when analyzing sentiment about marginalized groups or topics with complex social and cultural connotations. Additionally, AI models may struggle to understand the subtleties of human language, non-standard spellings, mixed language text, evolving cultures, sarcasm, irony, and humor. This can result in misinterpretations, especially when dealing with informal communication channels like social media posts or online forums.

AI shines in specific SCL tasks, making it well-suited for augmenting human analysis. One of the biggest challenges with SCL analysis is the sheer volume of data that can potentially be relevant to a research question. Consider using AI for filtering and sorting of large datasets, identifying recurring themes in conversations, and translating multilingual data for broader reach. By focusing on well-defined, verifiable tasks, you establish a foundation for AI integration where errors can be quickly identified and corrected.

AI should be treated as a starting point, not a final arbiter of insights. Integrating human review and verification into your workflow is essential, particularly when dealing with nuanced language, complex social dynamics, or sentiment analysis regarding specific populations. Consider customizing or fine-tuning AI models with data relevant to your program or field to improve accuracy and domain-specific performance.

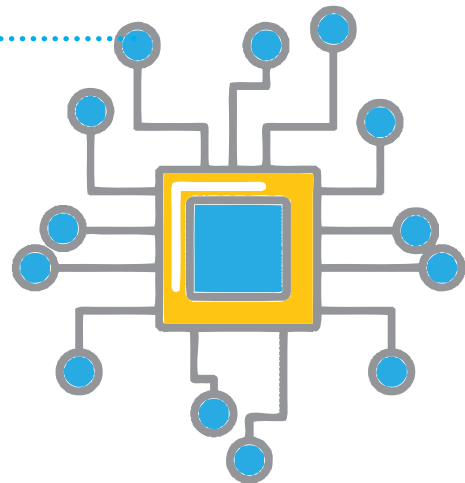
## Key Considerations

- AI models may contain inherent societal and cultural biases. Proactively seek to identify and mitigate this bias in your outputs.
- While increasingly sophisticated, AI tools may struggle to grasp sarcasm, cultural context, or intricate emotions. They should not replace in-depth qualitative analysis, especially for communities and cultures that are historically under-represented in the global discourse.
- Some models may lack transparency in their decision-making processes. Understanding the reasoning behind AI classifications is crucial for verification and responsible use of findings.
- This is a fast-paced field. Staying informed on new research and developments is essential for maximizing AI potential within an SCL programme.



**Moving Forward:** Avoid overreliance on AI as the sole interpretive lens for your SCL data. Used ethically and strategically, AI can streamline processes, but is not yet ready to fully replace the human element in understanding and responding to community sentiment. Pay close attention to data privacy protocols and avoid making analyses focused on individuals, as this raises significant ethical concerns. Uploading community voices or giving AI models access to community data may lead to these voices being used to train the underlying AI model and shared with other users of this AI; such a use may be a violation of community trust and SCL ethics.

AI can be a powerful asset in your SCL toolset. By combining targeted implementation, awareness of limitations, and a commitment to responsible practices, you can unlock its potential while ensuring your programs remain human-centered and responsive to the nuanced needs of your community.



# BEHAVIOURAL DRIVERS AND SCL



UNICEF’s Behavioural Drivers Model (BDM) provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the complex factors that shape human behaviour. By aligning Social and Community Listening (SCL) with BDM, programmes gain deeper insights to inform interventions and drive positive change. BDM unpacks behaviours by examining driving forces across three primary levels:



## Psychology

Internal processes that influence behaviour, including an individual’s knowledge, attitudes, self-efficacy, and risk perception. SCL can track the evolution of these factors through sentiment analysis, and analysis of reporting and discussions.

- **Knowledge and Awareness:** SCL tracks the spread of information and misinformation, gauging community understanding of an issue.
- **Attitudes and Beliefs:** Sentiment analysis reveals positive, negative, or mixed feelings about a behaviour or its perceived consequences.
- **Risk Perception:** SCL data can reveal how people estimate the likelihood and severity of risks associated with certain actions.
- **Self-Efficacy:** Analysis of language choices (e.g., “I can’t” vs. “I’ll try”) provides clues about how capable people feel of taking action.
- **Motivations and Intentions:** SCL can uncover expressed reasons for engaging in, or avoiding, a behaviour, and highlighting community values.



## Sociology

Social influences, such as social norms, peer networks, and the role of influential figures. Conversations on social media, media reporting, and data from the field can shed light on these dynamics and their impact on behaviour.

- **Social Norms:** SCL offers a window into what people perceive as “normal” or socially approved behaviour within their community or specific groups.
- **Social Influence:** Identifying influential figures and understanding how their opinions are amplified is key for understanding how social pressure works.
- **Peer Networks:** Mapping creators and repeaters of narratives can reveal social groups with distinct perspectives on a behaviour, highlighting potential sources of support or resistance.
- **Stigma and Discrimination:** SCL can uncover harmful language and social attitudes that might discourage positive behaviours.





## Environment

External conditions, including accessibility, affordability, physical infrastructure, and the availability of services. SCL can uncover practical barriers expressed online, in reviews, or through field reports emphasizing logistical challenges.

- **Accessibility and Availability:** Complaint calls, reviews, and discussions often reveal if people find services or resources easy to access or encounter barriers.
- **Affordability:** Sentiment analysis around the cost of services or associated expenses can expose financial barriers.
- **Physical Infrastructure:** SCL can help identify logistical difficulties in communities, such as a lack of transportation options or unsafe conditions hindering behaviour change.
- **Policy and Regulations:** Monitor community reactions to new policies or laws as they relate to a specific behaviour.



## Aligning SCL with BDM

BDM offers a lens to sharpen your SCL strategy with focused questions, targeted data collection, and analysis that directly informs behaviour change interventions:

- Design your SCL research questions to explore specific drivers within the BDM. For example, instead of simply asking about overall service satisfaction, investigate questions addressing perceived risks, social norms around the behaviour, or obstacles to adopting a new practice.
- Utilize social media platforms, online reviews, and insights from field reports to uncover motivations, social pressures, and the role of access or environmental constraints surrounding a targeted behaviour.
- Consciously organize and categorize your SCL findings according to BDM's structure, clearly identifying which drivers seem to exert the greatest influence on behaviour within your target community.
- When crafting "Opportunities to Act" (OTAs), consider those which impact multiple BDM drivers simultaneously. This multifaceted approach can achieve a more profound impact.

SCL often infers behavioural drivers rather than directly measuring them. Combining with surveys or interviews strengthens confidence in your interpretation. Don't oversimplify a result to fit a single behavioural driver. A single word or phrase might express different drivers depending on the situation and speaker.

BDM serves as a powerful analytical toolkit. Combine these insights with context-specific knowledge and creative problem-solving to design tailored interventions. SCL, when guided by a nuanced understanding of behavioural drivers, becomes a powerful asset for programmes aiming to create impactful and sustainable change.

# RECOMMENDED SCL REPORT FORMAT



Standardizing Social and Community Listening (SCL) reports format might seem like a bureaucratic detail, but it has immense advantages that streamline SCL operations, improve data-driven decision-making, and enhance collaboration across teams.

A well-designed standard report format provides a reliable framework for SCL analysis. It ensures all vital information finds its place, allowing for quick comparisons over time and across reports. This helps track shifts in community sentiment, evaluate the impact of interventions, or identify patterns across various locations where you operate.

Efficiency is a natural outcome of this format. Analysts know where to focus their efforts rather than reinventing report structures each time. Readers and new staff effortlessly grasp the key components of the report and on the process. Standardized reports make the most valuable insights easy for decision-makers to locate, saving them time and ensuring data-driven actions are prioritized.

A common template creates a shared language for teams and external partners. This clarity allows for smoother collaboration and fosters a collective understanding of community needs or evolving perceptions. Over time, standardized reports become a historical record of both community voice and program responses.



Striking the right balance between rigidity and flexibility is crucial. While core sections should remain consistent, flexibility needs to be maintained to ensure local and team preferences can be incorporated. Treat the recommended report template as a living document, open to refinement as SCL practice evolves. Involve both report creators and key stakeholders in periodically reviewing and improving the template to ensure it serves everyone effectively.



Investing a bit of time upfront in creating a thoughtful standardized report format pays off exponentially. It helps the programme make the most of SCL data, leading to more informed decisions and ultimately, greater impact within the communities you serve.

The following template is a recommended format that all SCL teams are encouraged to use. It prioritizes the research question, its answer and simple provides the parameters of data collection. It also ensures that the process from results to analysis and recommendations is visible to everyone reading the report.

UNICEF Social and Community Listening: Recommended SCL Report Format (LINK)			
<b>Research Question</b>	Insert research question, ideally only one per report		
<b>Research Answer</b>	Add the answer to the research question based on the insights and opportunities to act		
<b>Geographic Focus</b>	Add village, city, country	<b>Community Focus</b>	If relevant, insert the community impacted by this analysis
<b>Data Sources</b>	Which sources of data were used?	<b>Date of Analysis</b>	On which date was this report finalized?
<b>Data Validity Start</b>	Start date for data relevance	<b>Data Validity End</b>	End date for data relevance
<b>Result</b>	<b>Community Voice</b>	<b>Analysis and Insight</b>	<b>Opportunity to Act</b>
Add the data point, headline, or result found, use new lines for each result	Add community voices, if available, from this or from other relevant results	What can we learn from available information? Ideally use at least 3 results for each insight. Insights may be tagged as Psychological, Socio-Cultural, or Systems level.	What actions can the programme take based on this insight?



# REFERENCES

- Backer, Larry Catá. "Social Listening and Infodemic—An Epidemiology for the Body Politic." Available at SSRN 4712251 (2024).
- Baggio, O. "Real-time Ebola community feedback mechanism." Report, UNICEF, IDS and Anthrologica, Brighton, United Kingdom 16 (2020).
- Hove, Charity, and Liezel Cilliers. "A Social Listening Tool to Mitigate the Global Health Infodemic: A Case Study of 'EARS' in the South African Context." (2023): 74.
- How to build an infodemic insights report in six steps. Geneva: World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2023.
- Jani, Nrupa, Leanne Dougherty, and Martha Silva. "Using social listening to inform integrated social and behavior change programs in Burkina Faso." (2021).
- Kitchens, Brent, Jennifer Claggett, and Ahmed Abbasi. "Timely, granular, and actionable: Designing a social listening platform for Public Health 3.0." *Management information systems quarterly* (2024).
- Listen to Act: UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Social and Community Listening Strategy 2023-2025
- Machiri, S., et al. "An ethics framework for social listening and infodemic management." *European Journal of Public Health* 33. Supplement\_2 (2023): ckad160-66
- Pomputius, Ariel. "Can you hear me now? Social listening as a strategy for understanding user needs." *Medical reference services quarterly* 38.2 (2019): 181-186.
- Sakamoto, Daisuke, Ryo Uchida, and Kazuhiko Tsuda. "Problem Presentation of Echo Phenomenon on Social Listening and Proposal of Avoidance Method for It." *Procedia computer science* 112 (2017): 1412-1419.
- Scott, Irene. "(Mis) communication? Social listening and the exclusion of marginalised voices." *The Humanitarian Leader* (2022)
- Sommariva, Silvia, et al. "Social listening in Eastern and Southern Africa, a UNICEF risk communication and community engagement strategy to address the COVID-19 infodemic." *Health security* 19.1 (2021): 57-64.
- Stewart, Margaret C., and Christa L. Arnold. "Defining social listening: Recognizing an emerging dimension of listening." *International journal of listening* 32.2 (2018): 85-100.
- Stewart, Margaret C., et al. "Consequences of Social Listening via Mediated Communication Technologies (MCTs): Application Across Levels of the Communication Hierarchy." *IJSMOC* vol.15, no.1 2023: pp.1-20.
- Petit, Vincent. "The Behavioral Drivers Model." UNICEF. URL: [https://www.unicef.org/mena/media/5586/file/The\\_Behavioural\\_Drivers\\_Model\\_0.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/mena/media/5586/file/The_Behavioural_Drivers_Model_0.pdf) 20 (2019).
- Westermann, Arne, and Jörg Forthmann. "Social listening: a potential game changer in reputation management How big data analysis can contribute to understanding stakeholders' views on organisations." *Corporate Communications: An International Journal* 26.1 (2021): 2-22.
- White, Becky K., et al. "Using Machine Learning Technology (Early Artificial Intelligence–Supported Response With Social Listening Platform) to Enhance Digital Social Understanding for the COVID-19 Infodemic: Development and Implementation Study." *JMIR infodemiology* 3 (2023): e47317.
- Yavuz, Şenay, and Engin Tire. "A survey of corporate communication professionals' perspective on social listening and analytics." *Corporate Communications: An International Journal* 28.4 (2023): 564-581.
- Zhou, Alvin, Linjuan Rita Men, and Wan-Hsiu Sunny Tsai. "The power of AI-enabled chatbots as an organizational social listening tool." *Organizational listening for strategic communication* (2023): 63-80.

## For every child

Whoever she is.

Wherever he lives.

Every child deserves a childhood.

A future.

A fair chance.

That's why UNICEF is there.

For each and every child.

Working day in and day out.

In more than 190 countries and territories.

Reaching the hardest to reach.

The furthest from help.

The most excluded.

It's why we stay to the end.

And never give up.

