

Non-English Speaking Communities as Evaluation Partners

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF CONSIDERATIONS TO KEEP IN MIND ANYTIME YOU HOPE TO COLLECT DATA FROM NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING COMMUNITIES. IN A BRIEF DOCUMENT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO ADDRESS THE INNUMERABLE DIFFERENCES AMONG CULTURES AND NORMS THAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED, HOWEVER, THE BROAD GUIDELINES INCLUDED HERE CAN BE USED AS A STARTING POINT.

DEMONSTRATE WILLINGNESS TO LEARN

It is important to respect and abide by cultural norms to the extent possible to demonstrate your interest and willingness to understand the community.

In order to create buy-in, it may be helpful to include community members through participatory practices such as the development of evaluation materials. If possible, create opportunities to meet with community members and allow for them to share their concerns and past experiences with evaluation efforts.

PARTNER WITH MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY

Identify a person who can be a trusted 'champion' of the evaluation within the community who can act as a liaison to other community leaders and support the data collection effort.

Keep the community engaged throughout the entire evaluation process, even when data collection is complete, leaving room for continued opportunities for sharing and interpreting results.

DEVELOPING EVALUATION MATERIALS

Ensure that all recruitment and evaluation materials are culturally relevant and provided in the language used within the community to ensure the evaluation is accessible to all members. A partner within the community may be able to provide this type of feedback. Not all areas of

interest in evaluation have meaning to all communities. Consider piloting data collection materials with a subset of community members.

Ensure that someone is available who can answer questions in the language used by the community. Additionally, it is helpful to have someone who can provide support if evaluation questions are not culturally relevant.

Consider not only vetting data collection tools with communities, but also the processes and logistics related to data collection.

EXPLAINING AND REINFORCING CONFIDENTIALITY

Many communities have concerns about the information they are providing, who will be looking at it, and how it will be presented. It is important to be transparent about the data collection and how the data will be used. Offering to present or report findings to the community is one way to gain buy-in from community leaders.

If members of the community are in the country without documentation, there may be additional concerns about whether the data may be used in government related efforts. If data will be used by a government funding source, it is important to reinforce the anonymity and confidentiality of the evaluation and assure the community that the data will not be used by government to enforce immigration laws.

