Guiding Questions for Data Justice

Who holds the power in the research project?

• Identify the key interested parties and decision-makers in the project. Are there power imbalances within the research team or between the researchers and the community?

• Reflect on your own power and privilege. How might this impact your work as a researcher?

How are research priorities set?

• Determine how research topics and questions are selected. Is there a fair and inclusive process for deciding what is studied, or are decisions primarily made by those in power?

• Are research priorities aligned with furthering social justice, equity and community interests?

Do communities the research is about have a voice in shaping the research agenda?

• As much as possible, communities should be involved in defining research objectives and methods.

How are community members involved in the research project being acknowledged and compensated?

• Ensure that recognition and compensation is proportional and aligns with community expectations, including cultural practices and values.

• Are concepts, terms and definitions acceptable to the community and inclusive of their experiences?

Who benefits from the research findings and data?

• Determine who benefits from the results of the research. Are there mechanisms in place to ensure that the benefits are distributed equitably?

What mechanisms are in place for accountability and redress?

• Identify procedures for addressing power imbalances, grievances, and disputes within the research project, and specify who is responsible for addressing these issues.

Are there safeguards against data misuse?

• Consider strategies to prevent data misuse, especially when dealing with sensitive or vulnerable groups, and whether power imbalances could influence data misuse.

How are knowledge and expertise distributed and valued?

• Examine whether there is recognition and respect for local knowledge and practices, and whether expertise from communities is valued.

• Consider whether certain types of knowledge are being privileged over others.

What efforts are made to address historical injustices?

• Assess whether the research project acknowledges and seeks to redress historical injustices and power imbalances.

How is community input and feedback integrated into the research process?

• Evaluate the extent to which community input is sought and incorporated into decision-making and research activities.

Are there mechanisms for ongoing monitoring of power imbalances?

• Discuss how power imbalances will be continuously monitored and addressed throughout the research project.