

Considerations for ethical data collection

People we work with and for often live in highly precarious, uncertain situations. To uphold UNHCR's mandate when collecting data for the RMS, it is vital that all colleagues and partners champion the following **guiding principles**:



Respect and Dignity

- **Be sensitive** to people's **situation and hardship**.
 - Uphold a **zero-tolerance approach to sexual exploitation and abuse**.
 - Respect everyone **without discriminating** based on gender, age, ethnicity, religion, politics, status, etc.,
 - Respect **privacy**.
 - Respect **cultural and social norms**.
- [PSEA / Policy on a Victim-Centred Approach in UNHCR's response to Sexual Misconduct](#) / [UNHCR code of conduct](#) (also see: [UNHCR Ethics Office](#))



Informed Consent

Ensure that:

- All participants fully **understand and verbally approve of the purpose and use of the data** collected.
 - All **respondents** understand that they **can cease participation** in the survey at any time.
- RMS consent form in the [RMS questionnaire overview](#)



Confidentiality

Ensure that:

- Data provided by each respondent is **solely disclosed to relevant parties involved in data management, analysis, or reporting, even after a data subject is no longer of concern to UNHCR**.
 - Data collected is **only used for humanitarian purposes**.
- [UNHCR General Policy on Personal Data Protection and Privacy](#)

To embody these humanitarian principles, interviewers should ensure that their behaviour and actions align with the list of 'dos and don'ts' below.

 **DO**

- ✓ Respectfully **introduce yourself** and the **organisation(s)** you represent (for **in-person** data collection, enumerators/interviewers should **wear official badges** or tags).
- ✓ Be polite and friendly to **inspire trust** and confidence, in line with local **cultural and social norms**.
- ✓ Ensure the respondent that **RMS data is used for statistical purposes** and does **not affect** the respondent's **status determination**.
- ✓ **Clarify** that if, for whatever reason, **respondents become uncomfortable** or stressed, **the topic can be skipped, or the interview can be terminated**.
- ✓ **Speak clearly**, using plain language and **avoiding** the use of **acronyms**.
- ✓ **Listen actively** and attentively to **accurately record all** relevant **information**.
- ✓ **Be patient, repeat** concepts or questions **if necessary**.
- ✓ **Thank the participant(s)** for their time.

 **DON'T**

- ✗ **Ask for nor receive any remuneration** or **favour** from anyone involved in the survey.
- ✗ **Sexually exploit or abuse** anyone involved in the survey.
- ✗ Use **judgmental or argumentative tones**, gestures, or **language**.
- ✗ **Make promises** about humanitarian support **that cannot be kept**.
- ✗ **Modify or falsify responses**.
- ✗ **Prevent** a respondent from answering a question.
- ✗ **Presume, assume, or influence a respondent's answer** – if at all unsure, you should **ask the respondent to repeat** their answer or **use alternative phrasing**.
- ✗ **Force respondents to answer questions** on topics that **they find uncomfortable** or traumatic.
- ✗ **Prevent respondents from asking you questions** after the interview.
- ✗ **Disseminate or leak data to uninvolved third parties**.