The Basics - Core considerations
Inclusiveness

Questions relevant to inclusiveness to discuss with crisis-affected people

Inclusiveness in digital technology requires understanding who may be excluded, why, and under what conditions.

This set of questions supports conversations that explore how different people experience barriers to using digital tools, including challenges related to disability, age, connectivity, cost, and access to devices. It invites reflection on what design features, formats, or shared solutions could make technology more usable and accessible for a wider range of people.

By grounding discussions in everyday realities, these questions help teams identify practical adaptations that ensure technology acts as a bridge rather than a barrier in humanitarian contexts.

1. Facilitator guidance

These questions are intended to help facilitators understand who may be excluded by digital technologies and why, rather than to assess people's abilities or limitations. Inclusiveness is not only about accessibility features, but about recognising structural, social, and economic barriers that shape who can use technology safely and comfortably.

Approach these conversations with sensitivity and openness, acknowledging that barriers related to disability, age, connectivity, cost, or device ownership are often interconnected and unevenly distributed. Avoid framing exclusion as an individual problem; instead, explore how design choices, infrastructure, and context create or remove barriers.

Encourage people to describe their experiences and needs in their own terms, and be attentive to who is present and who may be missing from the conversation. Use the questions to identify practical adaptations—such as alternative formats, offline options, or shared access points—while also recognising that some solutions may introduce new risks or power dynamics. The goal is to inform design decisions that reduce exclusion and ensure technology supports dignity, autonomy, and equitable participation.

2. Practical checklist for facilitators

Before the conversation

- ☐ I do not assume that everyone can or wants to use digital technology.

- ☐ I have considered possible barriers: disability, age, connectivity, cost, gender.

- ☐ I am prepared to talk about exclusion without blaming individuals.

- ☐ I have thought about alternative formats for the conversation (oral, visual, demonstration).

During the conversation

- ☐ I ask who has the most difficulty using technology and why.

- ☐ I listen to the experiences of older people, people with disabilities, and other less visible groups.

- ☐ I explore whether connectivity, data costs, or device ownership limit usage.

- ☐ I ask what features would make technology easier to use (simplicity, audio, size, etc.).

- ☐ I validate that not being able or willing to use technology is a legitimate reality.

- ☐ I pay attention to who is not participating and why.

After the conversation

- ☐ Record identified barriers and suggested possible adaptations.

- ☐ Distinguish between expressed needs and solutions assumed by the team.

- ☐ Analyze whether the proposed solutions could create new exclusions.

- ☐ Share findings with the design and decision-making team.

- ☐ Verify whether the technology or process needs to be adjusted to be more inclusive.

3. The questions for inclusiveness

❋ Are there people with disabilities who need screen readers, voice commands, or alternative input methods?

❋ Are older adults who are unfamiliar with digital tools able to use them? What challenges do they face?

❋ What features would make digital tools easier to use (for example, larger buttons, voice guidance, simpler interfaces)?

❋ Is Internet connectivity reliable? Would offline functionality be helpful for you or for people in areas with limited phone reception and Internet connectivity?

❋ What barriers exist to using mobile technology (for example, the cost of buying data, device ownership)?

❋ Would a shared community technology hub help increase technology use? Where should it be located if so?