**Activity 1.1: Defining a Problem within an organization**

*Adapted from UNDP, A Guide to Data Innovation for Development (2016)*

**Objectives:**

* Learn how to address a challenge at your organization by defining a problem that you can use data to solve.
* Understand how to think through the problem, what types of data may already be available to you, and how you can collect new data to address that problem.
* Think critically about how to ask the right questions, collect the right data, and how that data can inform the decisions you make at your organization.

**Total anticipated time:** 35 mins

**Materials Needed:**

* Problem definition tool from UNDP, A Guide to Data Innovation for Development (2016)
* Pencils

**Introduction: (Use the following information to introduce and explain the activity to the class)**

A key piece of using data for decision making is learning how to specify how you would like to use your data as evidence, and what questions you would like to ask your data in order to generate that evidence. This begins with being able to define a problem or need in your organization.

Defining a problem or challenge that you wish to solve using data can help you space time and resources while you maximize your project returns. With a clearly defined problem, you can build your own capacity to collect only the data that you need to answer your own questions.

The Problem definition tool can help identify the key challenge you are trying to address, and to being thinking about what data already exist on the issue. The tool will push you to think specifically about how better measurement or more complete information can help solve the problem. What new decisions will be made? What responses can be faster?

As you complete the problem definition tool, you should ask yourself what data you already have surround the problem. You should also think how you can find any existing data about previous projects in the same problem area or around similar data sources. This can spark new ideas for potential data sources for potential data sources for a solution.

Before having the participants begin, ask them to think critically about an issue they have in their organization. Then, have the participants work through the problem definition tool provided on the next page (20 mins).

**Participant Guide: Problem Definition Tool**

**Directions: Use this guide to help you think through a key issue you are trying to address, the factors that contribute to that issue, the people it affects, existing data surrounding the issue, potential sources of new data, and how to use those data to make a decision.**

1. What is the key issue you want to address and why is it important? 
2. What is contributing to the problem? (Guiding questions: What issues surround the problem that key it from being solved? What is the environment of the problem?)
3. Who are the people that are directly affected by the problem?



1. Who, if anyone, is currently working on the problem?



1. What data, relevant to this problem, exist already?



1. How update are these data? What do they focus on? (Demographics? Geography?)



1. How can you use those data to solve your problem?



**Presentations and Debrief (15 minutes)**

Ask the participants who would like to volunteer and share what they wrote on their problem definition tool. After each presentation, ask some guiding discussion questions for the participants, such as: What was the problem the participant was trying to solve? How did they use new forms of data collection to solve it? How can they now use those data for decision making?