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## Introduction

INCLUDE+ Process is our attempt to create an inclusive, holistic, and responsive (or agile) model to systematically address the topic of digital equity.

In the context of our work, we’re specifically focusing on three broad areas:

1. Wellbeing
2. Precarity
3. Civic Participation

Six open-ended principles come together to inform the development and implementation of our INCLUDE+ Process, which is central to our work as a network. These core principles are meant to guide us when designing and implementing community-centred projects in ethical and inclusive ways.

The INCLUDE+ Process is a mindful and anti-disciplinary [co]navigation of digital inequality landscapes.

We acknowledge the unpredictability and messiness of participatory processes. We know that our definitions of what it means to do things in a sustainable, inclusive, and responsive way might differ depending on the specific context.

Despite our best intentions, things do not go according to plan. At INCLUDE+, we celebrate divergent ideas and practice co-creation, emphasising the importance of critical reflection and responsiveness.

## IN+ Principles

### **Holistic Approach**

A holistic approach in the context of IN+ projects means addressing the multiple, interconnected factors that affect digital inclusion, rather than just focusing on one aspect like access to technology. It involves considering the broader social, cultural, economic, and educational contexts that shape how communities engage with digital tools and platforms.

A holistic approach also means examining the same question from a range of perspectives and employing diverse approaches. Projects that start by working with communities to ask questions and exploring varied responses are often the most successful.

**Holistic Approach across IN+ Projects**

* Exploring Power Dynamics: How does your project recognise and address existing power structures (e.g., economic inequality, racial discrimination, gender biases) that shape who can access and benefit from digital tools?
* Embodied Experiences of Digital Equity: In what ways does your project acknowledge and respond to the physical, mental, and emotional impacts of digital engagement, particularly for marginalised communities?
* Community-Driven Direction: How could the project empower communities to shape its outputs and direction, ensuring alignment with their needs?

### **Sustainability**

Sustainability is a mindset in digital equity work, focused on long-term habits, skills, and practices that empower communities to keep using digital tools effectively. It involves fostering a culture of continuous learning, adaptability, and resilience, so the benefits of digital access and inclusion remain strong beyond specific projects.

**Sustainability across IN+ Projects**

* Building Long-Term Impact: How can the project foster habits, skills, and practices that enable communities to continue engaging with digital equity topics or tools effectively after the project ends?
* Equity and Collaboration: How can the project be co-designed with local organisations and community members to ensure it is structurally equitable and avoids placing unseen or invisible labour demands on participants?
* Resource Management: Can the project make use of recycled or repurposed technologies, or adopt slower, more deliberate approaches to ensure comfortable participation?
* Community-Led Sustainability: How can the project empower community members to take ownership of activities to sustain digital engagement and skills development beyond the project’s lifespan?

### **Diversity**

Diversity in INCLUDE+ involves including and representing individuals from diverse backgrounds (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, age, socioeconomic status, abilities). It is essential in digital equity work to ensure that solutions are relevant, accessible, and responsive to unique community needs.

**Diversity across IN+ Projects**

* Recognising Expertise and Local Understanding: How does your project ensure that all forms of expertise, including lived experiences, are recognised and integrated into the project design and delivery?
* Building Collaborative Structures: What structures and processes encourage regular reflection, shared planning, and collective decision-making, ensuring diverse perspectives are included throughout the project?
* Embracing Participatory Methods: How do you plan to explore the issues within your project using participatory methods, building on or integrating existing local practices?
* Listening and Learning from Diversity (and Its Limitations): In what ways does your project aim to listen to and learn from diverse voices, ensuring these voices influence the direction and outcomes of your digital equity initiatives?

### **Responsiveness**

Responsiveness in digital equity projects refers to the ability to adapt and respond to evolving needs, challenges, and feedback of the communities involved. This principle is about staying relevant and supportive through active listening and adjustments.

**Responsiveness across IN+ Projects**

* Adapting to Community Needs: How does your project ensure flexibility to respond to the diverse and evolving needs of the communities you are working with?
* Communication and Feedback: What mechanisms are in place for participants to provide feedback, and how is this feedback used to shape and adjust activities and resources?
* Providing Space for Emerging Challenges: How prepared is your project to respond to unexpected challenges or barriers, such as digital access issues or safety concerns, and what strategies are in place to address these promptly?

### **Collective Care**

Collective care is the practice of individuals coming together to support and nurture each other’s well-being within a community. It involves empathy, compassion, and mutual aid, creating a supportive environment.

**Collective Care across IN+ Projects**

* Capacity and Well-Being: How can we design digital equity initiatives that recognise the existing workload and capacity of everyone involved, ensuring that no one is overwhelmed or overburdened?
* Shared Understanding and Collaboration: In what ways can we check in with all participants and project leaders to foster a shared understanding of the project’s aims and outcomes, ensuring transparency and collective ownership?
* Valuing Expertise and Lived Experience: How do we create a culture that acknowledges and values the expertise of all participants, fostering empathy, compassion, and mutual aid?

### **Meaningful Digital Inclusion**

Meaningful digital inclusion is more than internet access—it involves ensuring individuals and communities have the skills and confidence to use digital tools effectively and critically.

**Meaningful Digital Inclusion across IN+ Projects**

* Understanding of Inclusion: How does your community or project define meaningful digital inclusion, and what steps are being taken to ensure it goes beyond mere connectivity to include critical digital skills and active, equitable participation?
* Skills: How do we address not only basic digital skills but also critical digital literacy, like understanding data privacy, online safety, and information verification?
* Accessibility: How can we make our digital inclusion efforts accessible to people with disabilities, language barriers, or other specific needs?
* Relevance: How can we ensure that the digital tools and content we provide are culturally and linguistically relevant to the communities we serve?