

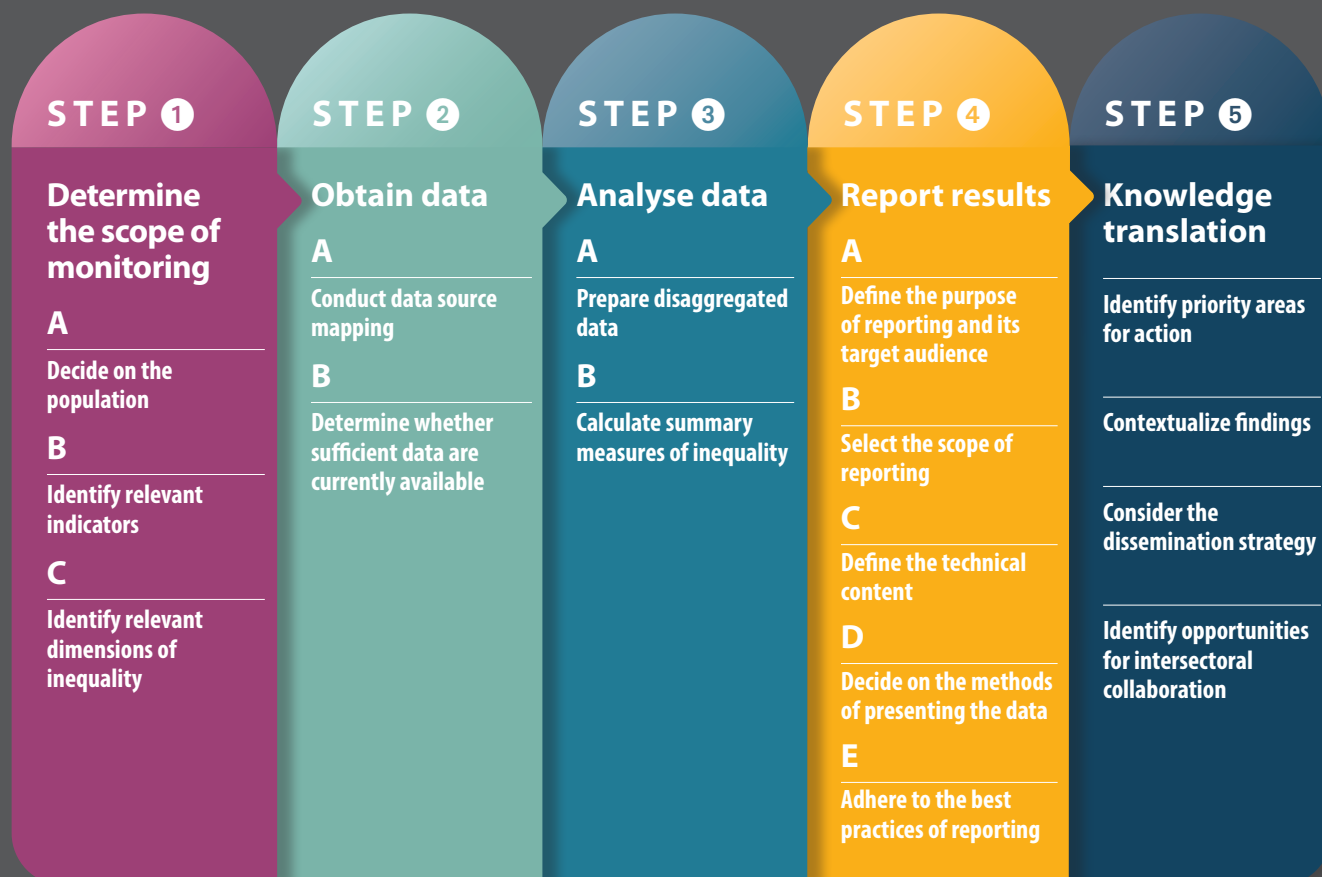
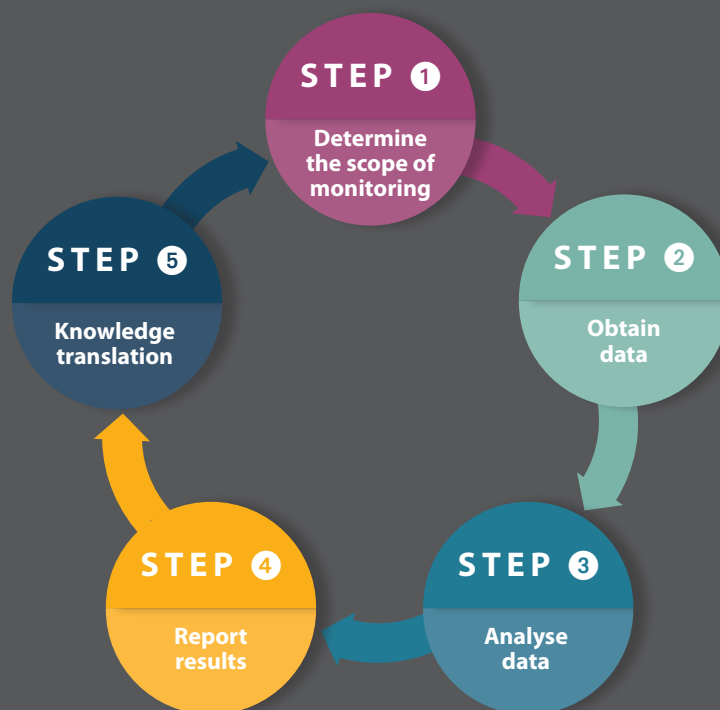
INEQUALITY MONITORING IN SEXUAL, REPRODUCTIVE, MATERNAL, NEWBORN, CHILD AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH

A STEP-BY-STEP MANUAL



**World Health
Organization**

The cycle of health inequality monitoring



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A STEP-BY-STEP MANUAL

Inequality monitoring in sexual, reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health: a step-by-step manual

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Foreword

The Constitution of the World Health Organization (WHO) states that the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is a fundamental right for every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, or economic or social condition. Accordingly, every person should have access to the high-quality health services and care they need throughout their life without facing any discrimination or hardship.

As part of a rights-based approach to improve sexual, reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health (SRMNCAH), health policies and programmes must prioritize measures that ensure the needs of the most vulnerable are fully and equitably met, while upholding the core human rights principles of accountability, equality and non-discrimination, and participation. These are the basis of the WHO Thirteenth General Programme of Work, which promotes gender equality, human rights and equity. Inequalities affecting access to SRMNCAH services remain a particularly pressing concern as the world continues to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and other health emergencies. While these crises have restricted access to and the provision of vital SRMNCAH services and psychosocial support, they have also resulted in increased exposure of women and children to violence, mental health and well-being issues, reduced nutritional status and impaired social development. The recent crisis has stretched health systems and compromised the livelihoods of people worldwide. Amid widespread uncertainty, WHO calls on countries to commit to “build back better” for a fairer and healthier world. WHO remains committed to developing tools and resources that will help countries and partners to be better prepared, including strengthening universal health coverage and people-centred primary health care.

Monitoring inequalities provides critically important evidence to drive SRMNCAH policies and programmes that are oriented to equity and rights, while contributing key inputs to programme reviews and planning activities. The findings of these monitoring exercises provide insights into who is being left behind and which health systems and services can be improved and targeted for accelerated impact.

This step-by-step manual describes the process of health inequality monitoring for SRMNCAH using a five-step cycle. This manual and its companion workbook are valuable resources to guide the work of people undertaking monitoring and evaluation, programme planning and/or policy development. Through technical guidance, examples, links to additional resources, and application exercises, this resource clearly explains the key concepts of inequality monitoring with a special consideration of how they apply to SRMNCAH topics.

Strong health information systems, and the data they generate, are the backbone of robust and comprehensive health inequality monitoring. To improve the quality and impact of health inequality monitoring, countries, provinces and districts need to be ambitious in building capacity and strengthening systems across all the steps involved. Through these processes, we can promote the meaningful participation and improved health of all affected populations and ensure that health systems are prepared to respond to their needs.



A blue ink signature of Dr Zsuzsanna Jakab.

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