Fieldwork Accessibility Checklist

Assessing accessibility for fieldwork involves evaluating the physical environment, activities, accommodations, communication methods, policies and processes, to ensure they are accessible to individuals with disabilities (seen & unseen). This checklist covers various aspects of accessibility, which may be relevant while engaging in fieldwork.

Physical Accessibility

- Assess the accessibility of field sites, trails, and outdoor facilities. Consider factors such as terrain, pathways, slopes, and accessibility of restrooms and shelter areas.
- Evaluate transportation options to and within field sites, ensuring they are accessible to individuals with mobility impairments.
- Check the availability of accessible parking spaces, ramps, and designated pathways.

International Fieldwork

- Assess the local context in the country where the fieldwork is proposed to be undertaken.
    - **Human Rights Conditions**: Research the human rights situation in the host country, including laws, practice and the general environment for marginalised groups (e.g. women, LGBTQ+ individuals and ethnic minorities).
    - **Cultural Sensitivity**: Understand local customs, traditions and social norms, especially those that may impact vulnerable groups.
- Assess the legal and ethical implications of performing fieldwork in the selected country/region.
    - **Legal Protections**: Determine if there are any local laws that may endanger certain participants or researchers. For instance, some countries have laws against LGBTQ+ individuals that could put them at risk.
    - **Ethical Approval**: Ensure that the research has been reviewed and approved by an ethics board that considers the implications of working in countries with poor human rights records.

Risk Assessment and Emergency Preparedness

- Conduct a risk assessment to identify potential hazards and accessibility barriers during field activities.
- If conducting fieldwork in a country/region with poor human rights laws, consider:
    - The **risks to local participants**, especially marginalized groups, who may face reprisals for engaging with foreign researchers.
    - The **risks to researchers**, particularly those who might be targeted due to their identity (e.g. gender, sexual orientation or ethnicity).
- **Emergency Protocols**: Develop clear protocols for emergency situations, including legal support and evacuation procedures.
- Ensure emergency procedures that consider the needs of participants with disabilities.
- Ensure that staff are trained on emergency protocols and can provide assistance to participants with disabilities during evacuation or emergency situations

Accommodation and Equipment

- Evaluate the availability of accessible accommodation, including lodgings, dining facilities, and sleeping arrangements.
- Assess the accessibility of equipment used during field activities, such as camping gear, field research tools, and recreational equipment.
- Ensure that accommodation and equipment meet the specific needs of participants with disabilities.

Communication and Documentation

- Review communication methods used during the course, including pre-course materials, instructions, and emergency protocols. Ensure they are accessible to participants with disabilities.
- Provide information about accessibility services and accommodation in field course/fieldwork materials and on the programme website.

Policies and Training

- Provide training on cultural sensitivity, local human rights issues and inclusivity to all team members before fieldwork begins.
- Evaluate field course policies related to disability accommodation, including procedures for requesting accommodations, addressing accessibility concerns, and ensuring the safety of all participants.
- Ensure staff are trained on accessibility policies and procedures and can effectively assist participants with disabilities.

Data Collection and Reporting

- **Bias in Data Collection**: Be aware of potential biases in data collection, especially if local participants feel pressured to conform to what they perceive as the expectations of the researchers.
- **Confidentiality**: Ensure that data is collected and stored in a way that protects the identities and safety of participants, particularly in sensitive or oppressive environments.
- **Inclusive Reporting**: When reporting findings, consider the implications for marginalised groups and avoid reinforcing stereotypes or harmful narratives.

Post-fieldwork Considerations

- **Impact on Local Communities**: Assess the long-term impact of the research on local communities, ensuring that it does not exacerbate existing inequalities or human rights abuses.
- **Ongoing Support**: Provide ongoing support or follow-up to participants, especially if the research has the potential to impact their lives significantly.

User Feedback

- Gather feedback from researchers and participants regarding their experiences with accessibility and inclusivity during field courses. Use this feedback to identify areas for improvement.

Review

- Regularly monitor and review accessibility requirements to ensure ongoing compliance with accessibility standards and to address new accessibility issues that may arise.