

Qualitative Data

Last Modified on 09/05/2025 5:15 pm EDT

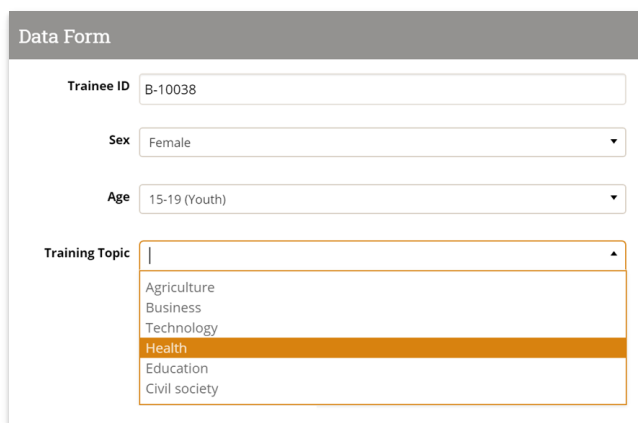
"Qualitative data" means many things to many people. In general, the term "qualitative data" covers information that is non-numerical in nature, usually collected through surveys, focus groups, interviews, written comments, etc. Depending on your needs, qualitative data can be analyzed quantitatively (such as with indicators that group and count responses by categories) or qualitative data might be read, interpreted, or summarized by a person.

We've developed more specific in-app terms to promote a common understanding of the kinds of qualitative data that we encounter in international development and that DevResults supports.

- **Categorical data:** Qualitative data grouped into categories for analysis
- **Ordinal data:** Qualitative data grouped into categories with a meaningful order (e.g. strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)
- **Free response:** Open-ended text responses (e.g. survey participants responding to questions in their own words)
- **Narrative context:** Comments that explain or contextualize quantitative data, categorical data, or indicator results
- **Qualitative indicator:** An indicator that stores narrative, descriptive, or explanatory text that is defined by which project generated the information, in which area or location, and during what reporting period
- **Narrative reporting:** Questions posed to partners (or teams working on a project) each reporting period to be answered in paragraph format alongside a set of indicator results
- **Discussion:** Written conversations, questions, and comments about projects and reporting period data submissions
- **Documents:** Files stored alongside projects or indicators
- **Photos and captions:** Photos stored in DevResults with explanatory text for data quality assurance or additional context
- **Tags and sectors:** User-defined fields that provide additional information about projects , indicators, organizations, locations, and photos
- **Descriptive dashboards:** Text added to dashboards to provide additional context

Categorical data

Data collection: Categorical data refers to data that is grouped into "buckets" based on shared features. For example, when keeping records of beneficiary trainings, you may want to group attendees based on the training topic. DevResults allows you to define these categories as **disaggregations**, and then lets you categorize a single log, record, or survey response in a **data table** by selecting a category from a dropdown menu.



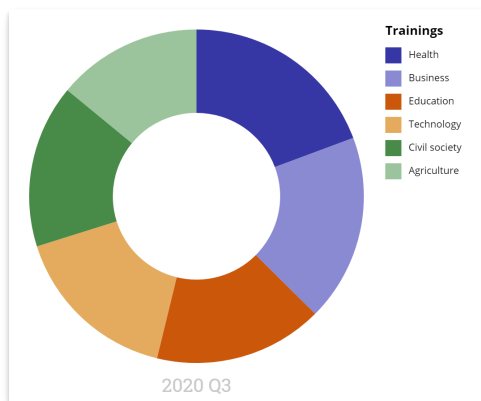
The screenshot shows a 'Data Form' with the following fields:

- Trainee ID:** A text input field containing 'B-10038'.
- Sex:** A dropdown menu with 'Female' selected.
- Age:** A dropdown menu with '15-19 (Youth)' selected.
- Training Topic:** A dropdown menu that is open, showing a list of options: Agriculture, Business, Technology, Health (highlighted in orange), Education, and Civil society.

Alternatively, numerical results could be reported directly for a category.

Region	Sex			Training Topic						Total	Comment
	Male	Female	Total	Agriculture	Business	Technology	Health	Education	Civil society		
Boké	256	198	454	50	95	0	74			217	
Conakry											
Kankan											
Kindia											
Labé											
	256	198	454	50	95	0	72			217	

Data analysis: Our [indicator analysis tools](#) can calculate disaggregated indicator results automatically from data tables and enable you to visualize categorical data.



Ordinal data

Data collection: Ordinal data is similar to categorical data in that it is also grouped into "buckets". The difference between the two is that the buckets in ordinal data have a meaningful order: from low to high, bad to good, small to large, etc. Examples of ordinal data include Likert scales, interval scales, beneficiary satisfaction survey responses, etc. Users can create a set of responses as a [disaggregation](#) in DevResults and assign responses ordinal values in a [data table](#). When a category is selected from a dropdown in a [linked](#) log, record, or survey table, the value is populated automatically and is ready for quantitative analysis.

Respondent ID	Sex	Age	My local government works to improve the lives of those in my community	My local government works to improve the lives of those in my community: Ordinal Value
R-9039	Male	65+ (Senior)	Strongly Agree	5
J-3258	Female	65+ (Senior)	Strongly Agree	5
W-5188	Female	20-24 (Young Adult)	Disagree	2
F-2741	Male	25-64 (Adult)	Neutral	3
E-3753	Male	25-64 (Adult)	Neutral	3
G-6662	Female	25-64 (Adult)	Strongly Agree	5
D-1569	Male	20-24 (Young Adult)	Strongly Disagree	1
E-8255	Male	65+ (Senior)	Agree	4
X-3478	Female	20-24 (Young Adult)	Neutral	3
C-3960	Female	25-64 (Adult)	Strongly Disagree	1
A-1303	Female	20-24 (Young Adult)	Disagree	2
Y-4694	Male	25-64 (Adult)	Agree	4
P-4836	Female	25-64 (Adult)	Neutral	3
K-2351	Male	25-64 (Adult)	Neutral	3
J-6701	Male	20-24 (Young Adult)	Disagree	2

Data analysis: Our [indicator analysis tools](#) can calculate disaggregated indicator results automatically from data tables.

	Male	Female	Total
20-24 (Young Adult)	1.5	2.3	2.0
25-64 (Adult)	3.3	3.0	3.1
65+ (Senior)	4.5	4.0	4.3
Total	3.1	2.9	3.0

Users can also configure **data table indicator filters** to count records only if they fulfill certain requirements (e.g. # participants who scored more than 5 in the post-training survey).

Free response

Data collection: DevResults **data tables** let you record any amount of text in response to survey questions, written tests, or descriptions in logs and records.

Data Form

Date

4 Aug 2020

Region

Conakry

CSO Name

Council of School Officers

CSO Description

Well-organized volunteer operation with strong leadership. Technically astute

Cancel

Save

Data analysis: Natural language processing and sentiment analysis are two forms of analysis performed on free response data. The option to automate these is not built into DevResults, but you can reach out to us about projects like this and we'd be glad to help. If you are using an external tool to perform natural language processing on your free response data, you can still log the results of that analysis in a data table and create categorical indicators that automatically calculate indicator results from them.

Narrative context

Data collection: Users can add comments and explanations for their **indicator results** with a high degree of precision in DevResults. Comments can be added per indicator, per reporting period, per project, and per geographic place. All comments can be exported with a single click and are displayed alongside data when submitted for a reporting period.

Region	Training Topic							Comment
	Agriculture	Business	Technology	Health	Education	Civil society	Total	
Boké	50	95	0	72	37	200	454	The technology training was cancelled this quarter due to flooding in the conference center. It's been rescheduled for the next quarter
Conakry								
Kankan								
Kindia								
Labé								
	50	95	0	72	37	200	454	

Users can also add summary comments per indicator, per reporting period, per project (instead of adding comments for each geographic place).

	Code ↑	Indicator	Data Source	Geographic Disaggregation	Previous Results	Current Results	Summary Comment
→ Open	4.1-a	# person-trainings in post-secondary certification areas	Data Table	Location	74	203	We have achieved a hig...
→ Open	4.1-b	# unique trainees per reporting period per post-secondary certification areas	Data Table	Location	74	203	Compared to last quart...
→ Open	4.1-c	Cumulative # unique trainees per training topic in post-secondary certification areas	Data Table	Location			Unique trainees have in...
→ Open	4.1-d	# trainees to improve their test score from pre-test to post-test	Data Table	Location	34	122	This quarter...
→ Open	4.1-e	Average % improvement from pre-test to post-test	Data Table	Location			This quarter...
→ Open	4.1-f	# trainings per topic in post-secondary certification areas	Data Table	Location			
→ Open	F-3.1.1-g-D	# pregnant women in households surveyed about insecticide-treated nets (ITN)	Direct Entry	Location			
→ Open	F-3.1.1-g-N	# pregnant women who slept under an insecticide-treated net (ITN) the previous ni...	Direct Entry	Location			
→ Open	F-3.1.2-c	# eligible clients who received nutrition or health services	Direct Entry	Location			
→ Open	F-3.2.2-c	# community health and para-social workers who successfully completed a pre-serv...	Direct Entry	Region			
→ Open	F-3.3-f	# children under five who received Vitamin A from USG-supported programs	Direct Entry	Location			
→ Open	F-4.1.3-a-D	# USG-funded nutrition education and workforce development programs	Direct Entry	Performance			

Data analysis: Narrative context often supplements quantitative or categorical data, and provides additional context to indicator results. If you need additional analysis performed on narrative context information, please reach out to us and we'd be happy to help.

Qualitative indicator

Data collection: Both numerical indicator results and qualitative indicator results are defined by:

1. Which (if any) project generated the data
2. In which area or location
3. During which reporting period

Qualitative indicator results consist of narrative, descriptive, or explanatory text. In DevResults, defining a Yes/No type indicator creates the structure to record text per project, location, and reporting period. The Yes/No format incidentally enables a percentage metric for the proportion of comments that were filled out, polling stations visited, facilities assessed, etc., for any topic for which you're reporting qualitative indicator results.

Home
Results
Reporting Periods
2020 Q4
Establishing Community-Led Health Clinics
Qualitative Indicator: Facility assessment
STATUS In Progress

Establishing Community-Led Health Clinics

2020 Q4 | Kunkle Associates

Indicators
Data Tables
Narrative
Discussion
Forms

N-3.4.1 Qualitative Indicator: Facility assessment

Disaggregation: None

Location	Result	Comment
Faranah / Dinguiraye / Dounkimayo Hospital	✓ Yes	Our teams have conducted a comprehensive assessment of the laboratory network in these areas, which includes a...
Faranah / Dinguiraye / Health Facility of Tatahon	✓ Yes	We identified brucellosis as a particularly neglected condition. Past efforts to build avian influenza capabilities, whic...
Kankan / Kouroussa / Clinic of Balan	✓ Yes	Since SOH deficiencies are uncovered during facility reviews following facility review guidance, the Team believes t...
Kindia / Forécariah / Hospital of Fossi	✗ No	Facility assessment was delayed in Fossi due to funding shortfall from provincial health administration.
Kindia / Forécariah / Konta Health Center	✓ Yes	After analyzing the proposed modification to facility review P&Cs, in order to consider adding an AVR individual to ...
Nzérékoré / Guéckédou / Konkèssé Clinic	✓ Yes	Facility rated satisf... After analyzing the proposed modification to facility review P&Cs, in order to consider adding an AVR individual to the facility review roster, the team concluded while the overlap of the two inspection programs appears to be duplicative; the formal participation of an AVR individual would be instrumental in the development of adequate guidance for the AVR program.
	83.33%	

Data analysis: A percent completion metric supplements narrative indicator results and provides an additional tool for review and approval. These metrics can be visualized as with any other numerical indicator data in DevResults. All qualitative indicator text can be exported and sorted by project, place, and reporting period for development of highly textured understanding, insight, and through-line narratives. If you need additional analysis performed on qualitative indicator responses, please reach out to us and we'd be happy to help.

Narrative reporting

Data collection: Admin users can create a fixed set of **questions** for a project to **answer** each reporting period alongside their indicator results. These responses can vary from **bullet points to paragraph form**.

Capable Local Governance

2022 Q4 | Limitless, Ltd.

Indicators Data Tables Narrative Discussion Forms

Activity Narrative

Implementation is going well. We have trained many local activities in advocacy and fundraising.

Issues

Implementation is going well but we are encountering more resistance than expected from local government officials.

Recommendations

We should encourage local partners to do more to get buy-in from local officials.

Upcoming Actions

We will follow up with our HQ colleagues in Q1.

Performance Management Actions

We should extend the contract with our enumerator; they do great work.

Data analysis: Narrative reporting often supplements quantitative or categorical data and provides additional context for a project's work through a reporting period. If you need additional analysis performed on narrative reports, please reach out to us and we'd be happy to help.

Discussion

Data collection: Every project in DevResults comes with its own discussion page to allow questions, comments, and conversation, including threaded replies. Additional discussion pages exist for each reporting period for each project. These pages keep a record of the submission process and support communication about reporting data.

Home > Community Health Services Strengthening

Community Health Services Strengthening

2020 Q4 | Caudill Associates

Indicators Data Tables Narrative Discussion Forms

STATUS Approved

These users will be notified of comments

AC Adriana Campbell AD Aboubacar Diallo
MF Marie Fantouré TK Thierno Konté
IM Isabelle Mbagbouée

IN Ibrahim Ndao says

Post

TK Thierno Konté 1 minute ago

Activity data approved.

Received and reviewed by HQ with no changes needed. Thank you for your hard work on this.

IN

No problem and thanks for the speedy review. |

Comment

IN Ibrahim Ndao 5 minutes ago

Activity data submitted for review.

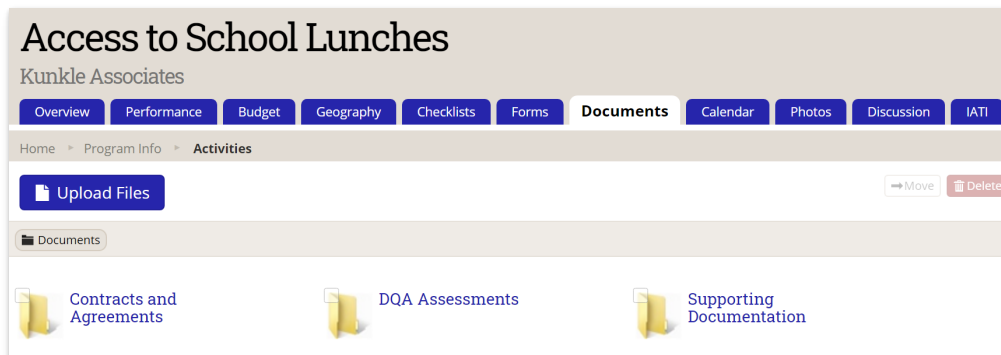
Our team completed reporting for all PMP indicators this quarter. Please have a look and let me know if any additional supporting documentation is required.

AC Adriana Campbell Thanks Ibrahim -- this looks great to me! 3 minutes ago

Data analysis: Discussion data supplements indicator results information. If you need additional analysis performed on discussion responses, please reach out to us and we'd be happy to help.

Documents



Data collection: Every project in DevResults comes with its own document storage area and nested folders that let you keep things organized. Users can store documents of any file type that tell a story about quarterly or annual results. DevResults also comes with a global document area not associated with particular projects.



For Dropbox users, our **integration** allows for a seamless experience between your desktop and DevResults documents.

Photos and captions

Data collection: DevResults enables unlimited **photo storage** to capture hand-written logs, beneficiary events, or any other supporting evidence for progress toward objectives or deliverables achieved. Photos themselves are a kind of qualitative data, but we also enable text captions to explain and record the context for any photo and the coordinates if taken with a location-enabled device.

Description	Photo
<p>Caption <input type="text" value="This photo was taken following the WASH presentation at one of our participating secondary schools."/></p> <p>ALT text <input type="text" value="Image shows school children raising their hands in class near Dabola, Guinea."/></p> <p>Photo credit <input type="text" value="Aissatou Devers of Caudill Associates"/></p> <p>Date <input type="text" value="11 Aug 2020"/></p> <p>Tags <input type="text" value="Education"/> <input type="text" value="Add a tag..."/></p>	 <p>Download full size: AF-education-3.jpg (1500x1000, 772 Kb)</p>
<p>Location</p> <p></p> <p>Latitude <input type="text" value="10.690972"/></p> <p>Longitude <input type="text" value="-11.138291"/></p>	

Data analysis: Photos in DevResults can be **tagged** with user-defined fields. This helps users sort, filter, and group photos for additional context or analysis.

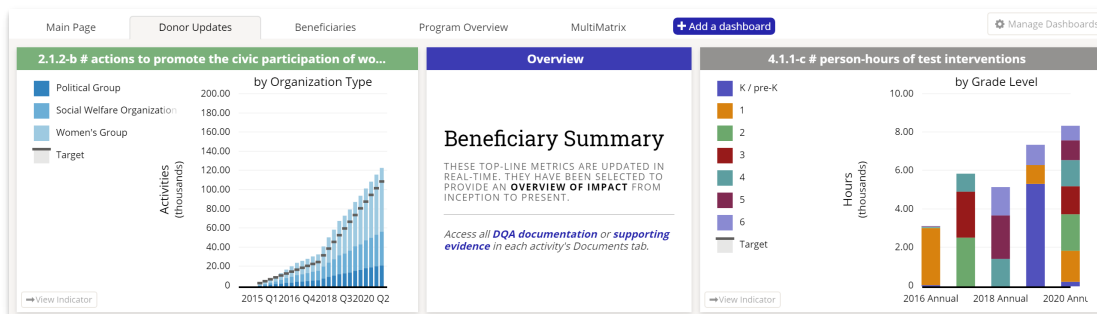
Tags and sectors

Data collection: DevResults enables the organization, sorting, and filtering of indicators, projects, organizations, photos, and locations with user-defined **tags and sectors**. These fields also help provide additional context to data in DevResults.

Data	Program Info	Tools	Administration	Bookmarks
Home	Administration	Tags		
Activity Tags	Indicator Tags	Location Tags	Organization Tags	Photo Tags
Name				
Capacity Building				
Children				
Climate				
Data				
Gender				
Infrastructure				
Rural				
Click to add...				

Descriptive dashboards

Data collection: When you design a **dashboard** in DevResults with maps, graphs, and numbers, you can also add unlimited "markdown" tiles with formatted, explanatory text, success stories, beneficiary highlights, or program summaries (including links). This helps you tell a story, or add additional context to, a group of indicators and / or projects.



Didn't answer your question? Please email us at help@devresults.com.

Related Articles