

# Expressive and receptive communication strategies when conducting remote research with people who are deafblind

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# Overall context of the study

- People with deafblindness face **major barriers** to education, employment, and services.
- Barriers are more prevalent and severe in **low- and middle-income countries** with existing research dominated by perspectives in high-income countries, limiting **global relevance**.
- The study explored how deafblind individuals across high- and low-income countries access and navigate education, employment, healthcare, and social services across their life pathways.

**Remote qualitative research offers a way to include deafblind voices across varied, global contexts, with flexible and accessible methods.**

# Methodology



## Participants

- 18+ years old
- 40 from Global South & 17 from Global North
- Living with congenital or early-onset deafblindness

## Data collection

- Semi-structured face-to-face interviews (in-person or remote)



## Recruitment

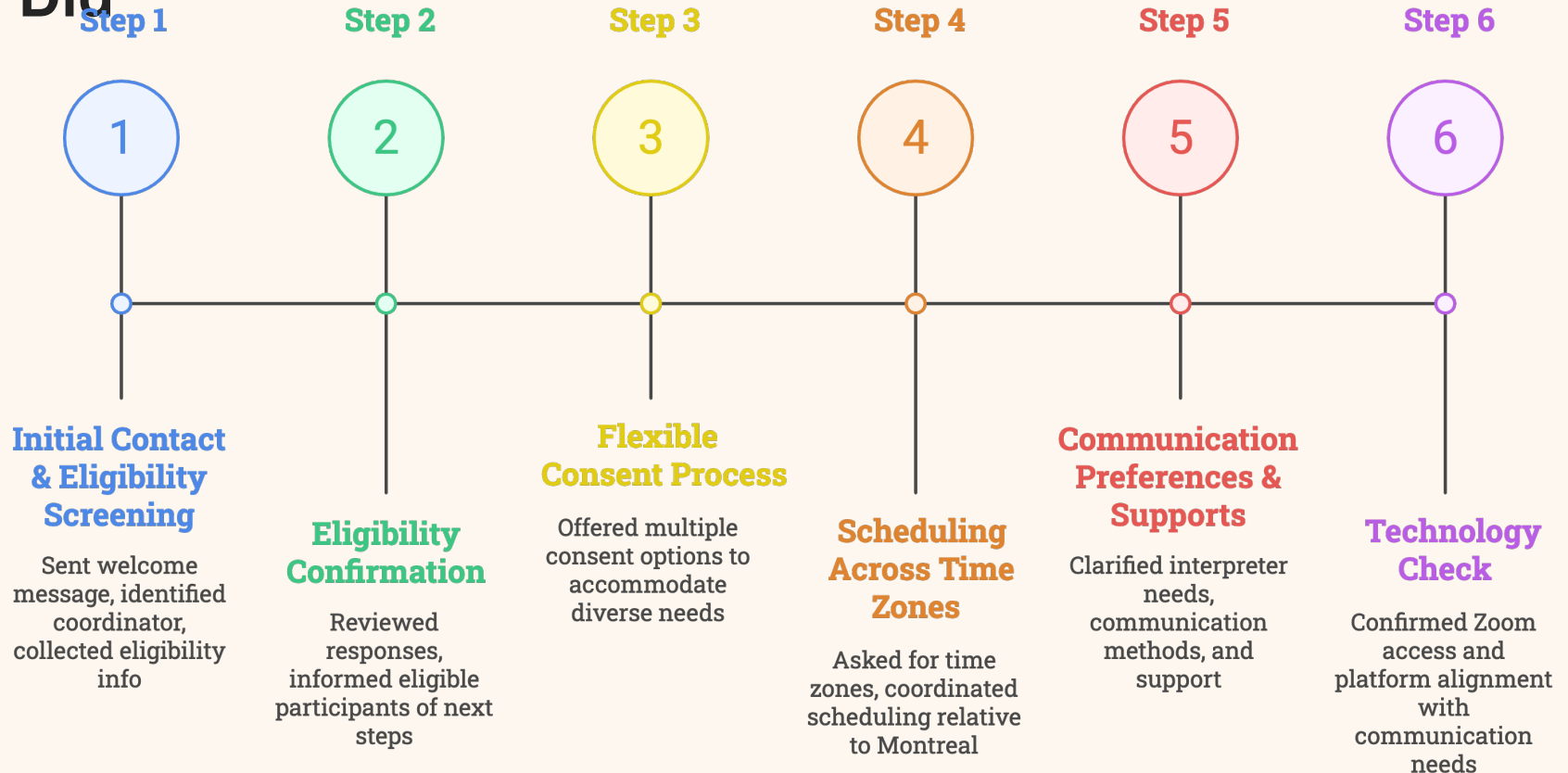
- International partners and organizations of and for the deafblind

## Qualitative analyses

- Audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim
- Framework Analysis



# Pre-Interview Outreach and Preparation: What We Did
















A group of people are seated around a white table in a meeting. One person is holding a tablet, another is gesturing with their hands. There are papers, a coffee cup, and a pen on the table. The image is overlaid with several communication-related icons: a lightbulb in a speech bubble, a list in a speech bubble, a pie chart in a speech bubble, a circular arrow in a speech bubble, a target with an arrow, and a bar chart in a speech bubble.

**Variations in communication modalities facilitate interaction and data collection during qualitative interviews with deafblind participants.**



# Lessons learned

- Take your time.** → Slowing down helped with interpretation, clarification, and switching between ways of communicating.
- Be ready for anything. Adaptability is essential** → Being flexible was key for handling tech glitches and changing communication needs on the spot.
- Be patient. Silence can be part of the dialogue** → Pauses often meant people were processing or interpreting, and they were part of the conversation.
- Center the person. Let their preferences guide the process.** → Following participants' preferences made them more comfortable and improved the quality of data. Trust made communication more genuine.
- Family and close circle play important role as informal communication support** → Trust made communication more genuine.
- Include interpreters as collaborators** → Treating interpreters as part of the team made communication smoother and ethical.

# Acknowledgements

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