



Ari Kopycinski, M.A.

Associate Consultant, The Improve Group

Ari is inspired by the power of collective action and collaboration to stimulate change and address social issues. As an Associate Consultant, Ari brings her expertise in qualitative research and project management, all hinging on human rights and social justice frameworks. Her background working directly with impacted communities on participatory research lends itself to IG's vision to ensure mission-driven organizations effectively develop a more resilient, equitable, and thriving world. Outside of work, Ari enjoys traveling, crocheting, and petting local neighborhood cats.

Expertise

Qualitative research & data analysis

Ari collaborates with community, institutional, and government stakeholders via interviews, focus groups, and town halls to co-design and utilize data collection tools. Using these tools and drawing on her academic and professional background, Ari analyzes data, synthesizes research results, and makes informed recommendations based on stakeholders' needs.

Facilitation

When designing and executing facilitation, Ari prioritizes creating an environment in which participants feel comfortable sharing and collaborating. Whether virtually or in person, Ari builds rapport with participants to ensure facilitations feel conversational and engaging in order to grow and achieve a shared vision or set of goals.

Gender justice issues

Ari has a deep passion and developing expertise in issues related to gender justice. Prior to joining the Improve Group, she had multiple academic and professional experiences focusing on engaging with gender justice issues and projects. For instance, during her time working with Trust Women, an organization based in Wichita, KS, that opens clinics that provide abortion care in underserved communities, Ari dialogued directly with community members on their attitudes about abortion care and other women's health issues for the purpose of engaging about restrictive local and statewide abortion legislation. In her graduate studies, Ari collaborated with the Advocates for Human Rights to conduct research on local and international legal practices and social movements around domestic violence and sexual assault. These issues inform the professional projects and personal volunteering that Ari seeks to pursue now and in the future.

Professional Experience

The Improve Group | St. Paul, MN | Associate Consultant | 2024-present | Works collaboratively with project teams to gather and make meaning of information, navigate complexity, and ensure clients' investments of time and money lead to meaningful, sustained impact.

Research in Action | Minneapolis, MN | Junior Research Associate & Project Manager | 2022-2024 | Managed multiple mixed-methods participatory action research projects co-designed with institutional stakeholders and community advisory councils to advance concrete policy and practice solutions.

Future Services Institute, Humphrey School of Public Affairs | Minneapolis, MN | Research Assistant | 2021-2022 | Led and contributed to multiple research projects on systems change, human services, tribal-state relations, and native North American language revitalization and sustainability.

The Advocates for Human Rights | Minneapolis, MN | Women's Human Rights Intern | 2021 | Conducted qualitative research on gender-based legal practices and analyzed data related to domestic violence and sexual assault judicial proceedings.

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society | Wichita, KS | Outreach Account Lead | 2018-2020 | Recruited and trained fundraising directors on the implementation of fundraising programs across K-12 school districts.

Kansas Appleseed Center for Law & Justice | Wichita, KS | Lead Canvasser | 2018 | Oversaw canvassing team who surveyed 1,000+ participants on local food insecurity issues, food assistance programs, and statewide legislation regarding food deserts.

Trust Women Foundation | Wichita, KS | Lead Canvasser & Advocacy Assistant | 2017-2018 | Supervised canvassing team who surveyed 38,000+ participants on statewide reproductive health legislation and fundraising.

Education

University of Minnesota, Humphrey School of Public Affairs | Master of Arts in Human Rights, International Development (concentration)

Wichita State University | Bachelor of Arts in Sociology (major), Political Science (minor), Gender Studies (minor), and Global Studies (undergraduate certificate)

Training

Technology of Participation® Facilitation Methods | Institute of Cultural Affairs in the U.S.A.

Professional Affiliations

American Evaluation Association