

# EMPOWERED AID

RESEARCH REFLECTION WORKSHOPS

---

FACILITATION GUIDE

The Global  
Women's Institute

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Empowered Aid is conducted by the Global Women's Institute  
in partnership with CARE in Lebanon and the IRC in Uganda.



## Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	2
WHAT IS THIS TOOL & HOW DID WE USE IT?.....	3
FACILITATOR AGENDA for workshop with NGO & WOMEN’S ORGANIZATIONS RESEARCH PARTNER STAFF:.....	5
FACILITATOR AGENDA for workshop with WOMEN & GIRL RESEARCHERS FROM THE REFUGEE COMMUNITY:.....	6
WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES & PREPARATION .....	7
WORKSHOP FACILITATION GUIDE .....	8
ANNEX 1: EMPOWERED AID FIELD NOTES FORM.....	15

EMPOWERED AID’S LEBANON AND UGANDA RESEARCH REPORTS, FULL SET OF POLICY BRIEFS, AND ACCOMPANYING TOOLS AND RESOURCES, CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT: [HTTPS://GLOBALWOMENSINSTITUTE.GWU.EDU/EMPOWERED-AID-RESOURCES](https://globalwomensinstitute.gwu.edu/empowered-aid-resources)

*This guide was drafted by Alina Potts, Harriet Kolli, Loujine Fattal, Farah Hallak and Elizabeth Hedge. Special thanks to Robyn Yaker, Amelia Reese, and Khadidiatou Ndiaye for their input and support in developing a participatory data analysis process.*

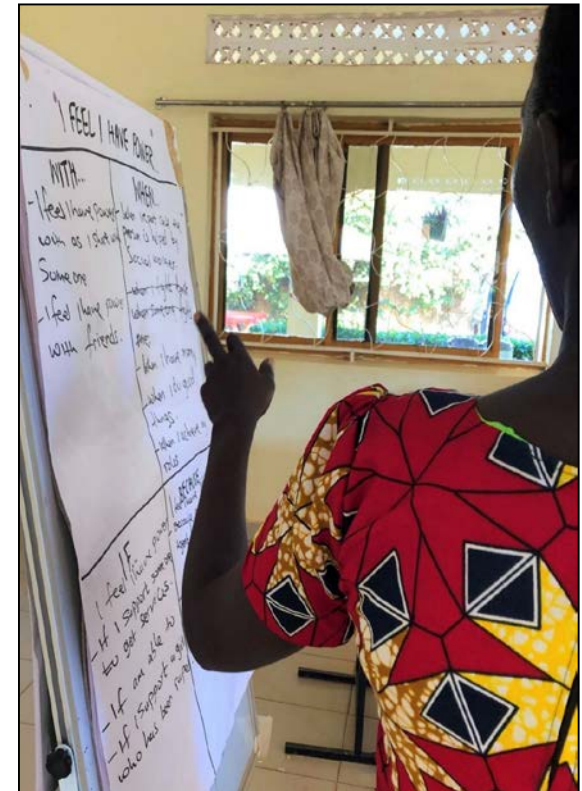
**Suggested Citation:** *The Global Women’s Institute (GWI). (2020). Empowered Aid: Research Reflection Workshop Facilitation Guide. Washington, DC: The Global Women's Institute at The George Washington University.*

## INTRODUCTION

Empowered Aid is feminist, participatory action research (PAR) that recognizes women and girls as contextual safeguarding experts and engages them as co-producers of knowledge, supported to safely take an active role in asking and answering questions about their own lives. PAR proactively acknowledges and addresses power imbalances—in this case, between men and women; aid workers and those receiving aid; and researchers and those being researched. Just as participation lies at the center of accountable humanitarian response, it is a critical element for research that seeks to shift power imbalances.

Empowered Aid is organized in three phases. This guide is part of a set of resources used during the first phase, which was grounded in ethnographic work in which women and girls documented their observations of SEA risks in relation to accessing four different types of aid, which they selected: food, shelter, WASH, cash (in Lebanon), and fuel & firewood (in Uganda). This phase was conducted in partnership with the International Rescue Committee in Uganda and CARE International in Lebanon, over one year. In both Lebanon and Uganda, SEA was reported as occurring across all types of aid explored, in all stages of the distribution cycle—from communicating and receiving information; to registering or being verified for aid; at the distribution site; traveling to and transporting aid from these sites; and safely storing aid. In addition, women and girls reported multiple barriers to reporting cases of SEA, including lack of knowledge or faith in reporting mechanisms, stigma and other negative repercussions from community and family members, and the normalization of SEA meaning that for many, they and their families and communities see it as the cost of receiving life-saving assistance.

In the second phase (currently underway) their observations guide the identification and prioritization of ways to improve aid distributions, which are then piloted with NGO operational partners using an implementation science approach. The third phase, slated to begin in late 2020, will focus on research uptake and peer-to-peer capacity building in a third country, tentatively Bangladesh. In



*A South Sudanese adolescent girl living as a refugee in Uganda involved in the research presents her group's discussion on power, during the Research Reflection Workshops in Uganda. All photos taken & used with informed consent.*

this phase, women and girls and other research team members in Uganda and Lebanon will share what they've learned and build networks around women and girl-led, participatory action research in refugee settings.

## WHAT IS THIS TOOL & HOW DID WE USE IT?

We developed this series of Reflection Workshops as part of the iterative, participatory action process of Empowered Aid. These workshops were central to maintaining space for proactively reflecting on power imbalances, both within the team as well as without. Like other aspects of the study, the process of developing these workshops allowed for co-creation and capacity-sharing with women NGO research partner staff largely new to formal research, as well as with women and girls from the refugee community and part of the research team. Their sharing of lived experiences and programmatic expertise was essential to developing and undertaking these workshops.

Specifically, the Empowered Aid Research Reflection Workshops were designed to bring research team members—from GWI, partner organizations, and the refugee community—together midway through the data collection process to pause and reflect on how the research was going and on their experiences of being part of the research team. Such reflection practices are critical to qualitative, ethnographic, and feminist research methods and to participatory action research.

The workshop materials were first developed in collaboration with Empowered Aid Research Managers in each country, who are from the country of study and based within NGO partners. Workshops were then cascaded, first holding space between GWI staff and research partner staff from CARE Lebanon and IRC Uganda, respectively, to reflect on their own experience of participating in the research process including power dynamics within it. These workshops also supported staff team members in preparing to co-facilitate the same process with women and girl research team members.

The workshop curriculum focuses on three main components: 1) a reflection on the research process so far, 2) what has been enjoyable and what has been challenging within the process, 3) and a reflection on power and power dynamics both within the study and in relation to aid distribution (the subject of study). To allow for participation regardless of literacy level, there is an emphasis on visual and movement-based activities, and small group exercises.

The Research Reflection Workshops are designed to take place in the middle of the data collection schedule, allowing for all research team members to give inputs and share feedback with other members. Following the workshop, time should be allotted for the research team to discuss and agree specific plans for how to incorporate this feedback into remaining data collection activities.

We encourage you to use and adapt it further for your research and programming needs.

**For questions, or to share how you are using these materials, contact Alina Potts, Principal Investigator, at [apotts \(at\) gwu.edu](mailto:apotts@gwu.edu).**

---

*ALL EMPOWERED AID* MANUALS, TOOLS, RESEARCH REPORTS, & POLICY BRIEFS, CAN BE FOUND AT:  
[HTTPS://GLOBALWOMENSINSTITUTE.GWU.EDU/EMPOWERED-AID-RESOURCES](https://globalwomensinstitute.gwu.edu/empowered-aid-resources)

---

FACILITATOR AGENDA for workshop with NGO & WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS RESEARCH PARTNER STAFF:

Time	Focus of session	Facilitator(s)	Supplies / materials	PowerPoint (Y/N)	Printing / Preparation
9:00 – 9:10AM	Welcome & Introduction				
9:10 – 9:55AM	1A. "Our Experiences with Power" <u>SASA!</u> <sup>1</sup> Exercise		Flipchart paper; post-its; markers	Exercise instructions	Power flipcharts for exercise
9:55 – 10:55AM	2A. Field Notes Analysis			Exercise instructions Reflection questions	Each person's written field notes reflections
10:55 – 11:10AM	Tea Break				
11:10 – 11:55AM	3A. Power Dynamics Exercise		Flipchart paper; post-its; markers	Exercise instructions	Power continuum flipchart for exercise
11:55AM – 12:15PM	4A. Prepare for Women and Girls Researchers' Workshop		Flipchart paper and markers for prep; pens		Women & Girls' workshop agendas on flipchart paper  Women & Girls workshop facilitation guide (1 per person)
12:15 – 12:30PM	5A. Closing Journal Exercise		Notebooks; pens	Reflection questions	

<sup>1</sup> This exercise is drawn from Raising Voices' SASA! Toolkit. SASA! is a community mobilization approach developed by the non-profit organization Raising Voices for preventing violence against women and HIV. To access this exercise and the full SASA! Activist Kit, visit <http://raisingvoices.org/sasa/>.

FACILITATOR AGENDA for workshop with WOMEN & GIRL RESEARCHERS FROM THE REFUGEE COMMUNITY:

Time	Focus of session	Facilitator(s)	Translator(s)	Supplies / materials	PPT (Y/N)	Printing / Prep
10:00 – 10:15AM	Welcome & Icebreaker					
10:15 – 11:15AM	1B. Power Reflection Exercise: “Our Experiences of Power” from <u>SASA!</u> <sup>2</sup>			Flipchart, markers		
11:15AM – 12:15PM	2B. Visual Exercise & Research Reflection			Paper, pens, pencils, paints, markers, post-it notes		Power flipcharts for exercise
12:15 – 12:30PM	5B. Closing Exercise					

<sup>2</sup> This exercise is drawn from Raising Voices’ SASA! Toolkit. SASA! is a community mobilization approach developed by the non-profit organization Raising Voices for preventing violence against women and HIV. To access this exercise and the full SASA! Activist Kit, visit <http://raisingvoices.org/sasa/>.

## WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES & PREPARATION

**Objectives of the Research Reflection Workshops** *(to share and invite discussion around during the welcome, adding additions or clarifications as relevant)*

1. An opportunity to reflect on the data collection process thus far, share, and check in, rather than focus on gathering new data
2. Revisit issues of power and imbalance of power as central to SEA, including time for self-reflection on one's own power in the research process, and actions that can enhance or reduce power imbalance

**Preparation for RESEARCH PARTNER STAFF workshop ONLY\*** *(to be sent to participants about one week before the workshop begins)*

- Ask staff to review their field notes and prepare a read-out to the group on what they are seeing in the participatory group discussions/qualitative interviews. This can be done using the same "Field Notes" form (see Annex 1), although responses will be longer.
- Their read-out will follow the same structure as the field notes form but instead of observations about a *single* interview or group discussion, each section should summarize their reflections (as captured in their Field Notes) across *all* the interviews/group discussions they have facilitated thus far.
- For each section, answer the following questions:
  - 1. Reflect on the process**
    - How has it gone thus far? Any changes to the process or tools? How have you evolved as a facilitator or interviewer / what have you learned or do you feel more confident in doing now?
    - What is most commonly repeated (in terms of the observations by women and girls?) What is standing out to you? What surprised you?
  - 2. Share observations around engagement / disengagement**
    - Do the women and girls seem interested, or disinterested? About which parts?
    - Do certain questions solicit more detailed responses than others? Which ones?
  - 3. Reflect on power dynamics**
    - Deepen your analysis of your own power in this process. In what ways do you feel you have power in these interactions? In what ways do you lack power?
    - In what ways do you seek to share or balance power?



## WORKSHOP FACILITATION GUIDE

**NOTE:** *Italicized text* is used throughout this guide to highlight certain actions or text that should be read aloud.

### 1A. FOR RESEARCH PARTNER STAFF: Power Reflection Exercise “Our Experiences with Power” from SASA!<sup>3</sup> (45 minutes)

#### **Our Experiences with Power Exercise**

##### **Objectives:**

- Identify the conditions when we feel we have power.
- Identify the conditions when we feel we lack power.

##### **Preparation:**

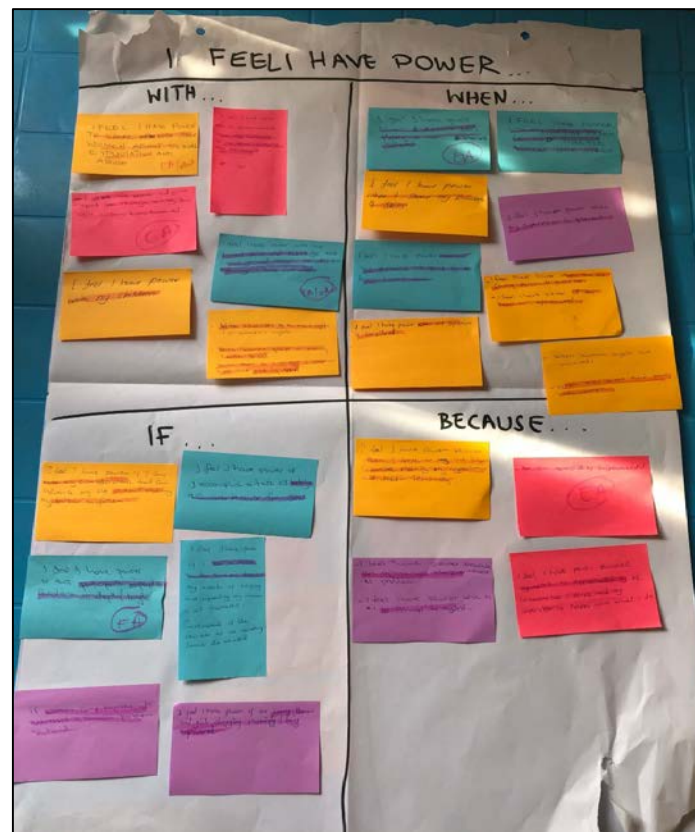
- On a large square of flipchart paper write the title: “*I feel I have power . . .*” Divide the page into four equal sections, write one of the following words in each section: *with, if, when, because*. Hang the flipchart on the wall.
- On a large square of flipchart paper write the title: “*I feel I lack power . . .*” Divide the page into four equal sections, write one of the following words in each section: *with, if, when, because*. Hang the flipchart on the wall.

##### **Steps:**

*Explain to participants:* This exercise will give us a chance to think about our own power. We will use the two flipcharts as guides. Make sure you have 2 post-its in 1 color, and 2 more in another color. You should have 4 post-its total.

Describe the exercise to the participants, reading from and referring to the flipcharts while explaining the following:

*“This is an individual exercise. Each of the flipcharts starts with a statement, and then includes four conditions for thinking about that statement.*



*Flipchart from “Our Experiences with Power” Exercise with IRC Staff Reflection Workshop in Yumbe, Uganda.*

<sup>3</sup> This exercise is drawn from Raising Voices’ SASA! Toolkit. SASA! is a community mobilization approach developed by the non-profit organization Raising Voices for preventing violence against women and HIV. To access this exercise and the full SASA! Activist Kit, visit <http://raisingvoices.org/sasa/>.

*“The first flipchart asks you to think about the situations and experiences in which you feel you **have** power. The second flipchart asks you to think about the situations and experiences in which you feel you **lack** power. First, we will discuss **“have power.”**”*

“Choose 2 sticky notes of the same color and on each post-it write 1 sentence that completes one of the 4 squares on the flipchart [I feel I have power with, I feel I have power if, I feel I have power when, I feel I have power because]. Stick your sticky notes in the respective boxes on the flipchart.”

Bring the group back together to discuss the responses on the post-its.

Repeat these steps for “I feel I lack power...”

After ~10-15 minutes, check in with the group. When everyone has their examples written, ask if anyone wants to share with the group emphasizing there is no need to do so if they do not want to. Write any examples from the plenary on the flipcharts.

### **1B. FOR WOMEN & GIRL RESEARCHERS: Power reflection exercise: “Our Experiences of Power” from SASA!<sup>4</sup> (1 hour)**

Note: This is the same power reflection exercise as in the NGO PARTNER STAFF workshop, but instead of completing the sentences individually in writing and then plenary discussion, it should be done in small groups with report-backs. One facilitator should join each group to support note taking.

- a) **Set-up:** Divide the participants into two groups, and ask each group to choose a note taker and presenter.
  - Give one group the “I feel I have power” flipcharts: write, *“I feel I have power...”* at the top and divide the page into four equal sections, write one of the following words in each section: *with, if, when, because*.
  - Give the other group the “I feel I lack power” flipcharts: write, *“I feel I lack power...”* at the top divide the page into four equal sections, write one of the following words in each section: *with, if, when, because*.
- b) 1-2 staff should remain with each group to help facilitate the exercise. Can say:
  - *“This flipchart asks you to think about the situations and experiences in which you feel you [**have/lack**] power. Please think of **at least two examples** for each of the four conditions shown in each scenario, and we will record them on the flipcharts.”*
- c) Allow **~20 minutes** for groups to reflect on the statements. The note takers should be writing responses down onto the flipcharts.

---

<sup>4</sup> This exercise is drawn from Raising Voices' SASA! Toolkit. SASA! is a community mobilization approach developed by the non-profit organization Raising Voices for preventing violence against women and HIV. To access this exercise and the full SASA! Activist Kit, visit <http://raisingvoices.org/sasa/>.

- d) Next, the main facilitator will call everyone back into plenary. The presenter from the “have power” group can go first. After presenting, the main facilitator will ask the other group if they have anything to add, or what most resonates with them. Repeat process for the “lack power” group.
  - o Give the other group the “I feel I lack power” flipcharts: write, “*I feel I lack power...*” at the top divide the page into four equal sections, write one of the following words in each section: *with, if, when, because*.
- e) 1-2 research partner staff should remain with each group to help facilitate the exercise. Can say:
  - o “This flipchart asks you to think about the situations and experiences in which you feel you [have/lack] power. Please think of at least two examples for each of the four conditions shown in each scenario, and we will record them on the flipcharts.”
- f) Allow ~20 minutes for groups to reflect on the statements. The note takers should be writing responses down onto the flipcharts.
- g) Next, the main facilitator will call everyone back into plenary. The presenter from the “have power” group can go first. After presenting, the main facilitator will ask the other group if they have anything to add, or what most resonates with them. Repeat process for the “lack power” group.



Empowered Aid Lebanon Research Manager Loujine Fattal explains the “Our Experiences with Power” SASA! exercise during the Girls Researchers Reflection Workshop in Tripoli, Lebanon (left) and women fill out their flipchart during the Women Researchers Reflection Workshop in Yumbe, Uganda (right).

2A. FOR RESEARCH PARTNER STAFF: Research Reflection: Field Notes Analysis (1 hour)<sup>5</sup>

1. Go through the questions below from the field notes form and ask staff to share their reflections
2. Facilitate a discussion on these reflections, using the same 3 categories on the form (below in gray box)
  - *Ideally with one person facilitating and writing down some general notes on flipchart paper for the group while another member of the facilitation team takes notes on a laptop*

**1. Reflect on the process**

- *How has it gone thus far? Any changes to the process or tools? How have you evolved as a facilitator or interviewer / what have you learned or do you feel more confident in doing now?*
- *What is most commonly repeated (in terms of the observations by women and girls?) What is standing out to you? What surprised you?*

**2. Share observations around engagement / disengagement**

- *Do the women and girls seem interested, or disinterested? About which parts?*
- *Do certain questions solicit more detailed responses than others? Which ones?*

**3. Review power dynamics**

- *Deepen your analysis of your own power in this process. In what ways do you feel you have power in these interactions? In what ways do you lack power?*
- *In what ways do you seek to share or balance power?*

Field Notes	
Settlement	
Date	
Interviewer	
Activist Code	
Activist Age	
Session Code	

**Observations:**

**Analysis (how has this session helped address the research questions?):**

**Relevance (the degree to which this session addressed the research questions):**

1 = Very relevant  
 2 = Somewhat relevant  
 3 = Not relevant

**Ethical reflection – here please note any problems you encountered, as well as any reflections on power dynamics within the interview:**

*Empowered Aid sample field notes form (blank)*

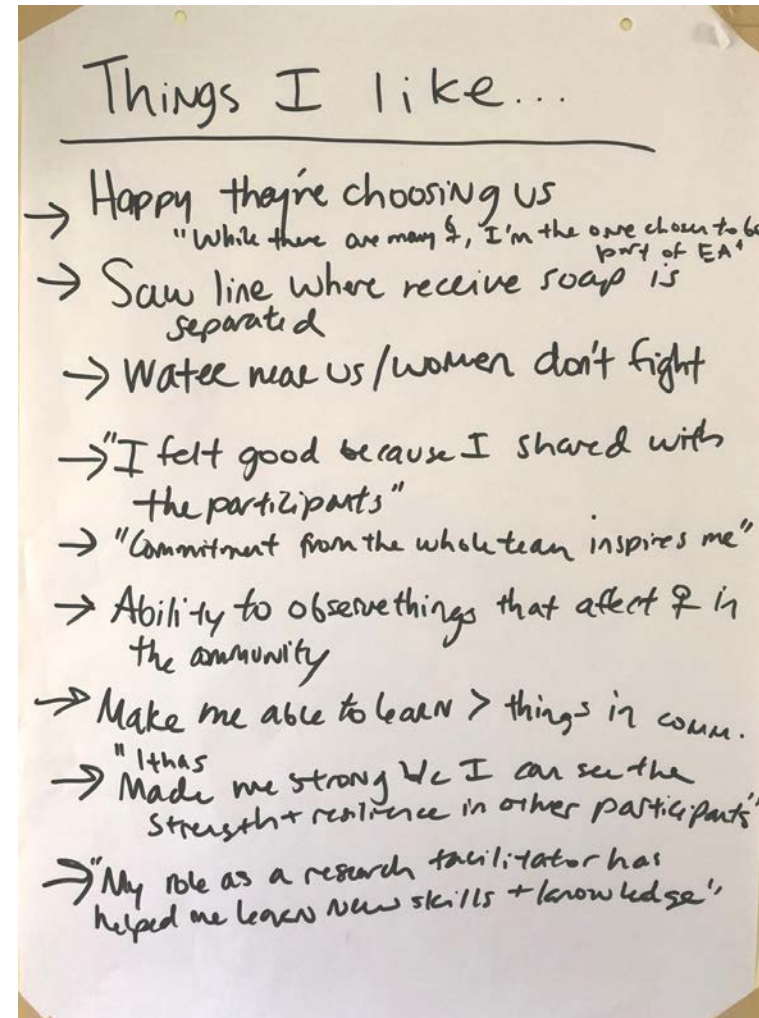
<sup>5</sup> See Annex 1 for the field notes form.

## 2B. FOR WOMEN & GIRL RESEARCHERS: Research Reflection and Visual Activity (1 hour)

[NOTE: In this exercise, the terms “Community Activist” and “Changemaker” refer to how women and girls collectively decided to refer to themselves and their role of bringing about change in their communities through action-oriented, participatory action research.]

- a) Prompts for visual reflection (~20 minutes)
  - What has **felt good** about your role as a [Community Activist / Changemaker]? Draw, write, or paint these reflections.
  - What has **felt challenging or confusing** about your role as a [Community Activist / Changemaker]? Draw, write, or paint these reflections.
- b) Ask participants to get into groups of 3-4 (count off) and share their reflections in these smaller groups. Divide staff among the groups, too. (20 minutes)
- c) Main facilitator asks if any groups would like to share in the plenary. (20 minutes)

*Facilitator Note: If hasn't come up organically, ask participants if they have any safety concerns related to their participation as [Community Activists / Changemakers]. \*Ensure these are captured in the notes and shared with Principal Investigator and rest of team.*

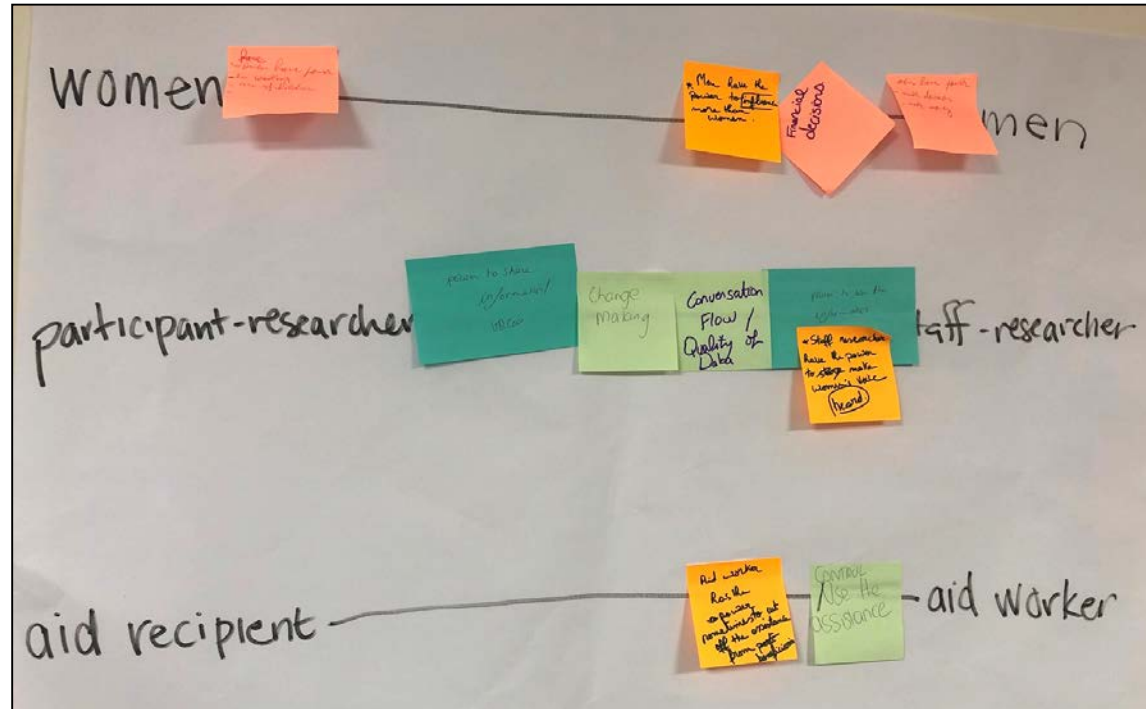


3A. FOR RESEARCH PARTNER STAFF: Power Dynamics Exercise (45 minutes)

Hang up flipchart with 3 continuums drawn on it. The three continuums represent power between the two groups.

Drawing on the discussion, ask research partner staff for which reflections speak to power between these groups and write their reflections down on post-it notes. These statements should reflect the power dynamics between the two groups. For example, “men have more decision-making power” should be placed toward the right of the continuum next to Men.

- Women ----- Men
- Participant-Researcher----- Staff-Researcher
- Aid Recipient----- Aid Worker



Completed power continuum from CARE Staff Reflection Workshop in Tripoli, Lebanon.

Pointing to the second continuum (about research), ask:

*Now that the research partner staff are conducting the participatory group discussions and interviews, has there been a shift in their power? How does this new role feel?*

*In what ways can we seek to further balance/share power along this continuum in our upcoming activities (i.e. Upcoming qualitative interviews or participatory group discussions)?*

#### 4A. FOR RESEARCH PARTNER STAFF: Prep for WOMEN & GIRLS workshops (10 minutes)

- Review facilitation plan (*handout*)
- Identify facilitators for each section (*on flipchart facilitation schedules*)

#### 5A. FOR RESEARCH PARTNER STAFF Closing: Journaling Exercise (20 minutes OR as a homework exercise if time is limited)

- Even when trying our best to listen actively and openly, we may also judge women and girls when they share experiences of disempowerment and abuse with us. Reflect on times when you may have felt judgment about something shared in the research process. Be honest with yourself (no one else will read these notes).
- We will spend about 10 minutes journaling, with the following prompts:
  - How can you hold space to listen with less judgment in future?
  - What kinds of support would help you?
- After about 10 minutes (or longer if you notice the team needs more time), ask if anyone wants to share either an example, or helpful reports. Emphasize there is no obligation to share.

#### 5B. FOR WOMEN & GIRL RESEARCHERS Closing (15 minutes)

- Ask participants if they have any final questions, and discuss next meeting (*qualitative interview 3*)

**Closing Exercise:** Ask participants to stand in a circle, one person makes a sound or gesture and the next person has to repeat the first person's sound/gesture, then add her own. It continues like this around the circle – a fun game around active listening and reflecting back what you hear!

**END OF GUIDE**

## ANNEX 1: EMPOWERED AID FIELD NOTES FORM

Field Notes	
<b>Location/Settlement</b>	
<b>Date</b>	
<b>Interviewer</b>	
<b>Activist Code</b>	
<b>Activist Age</b>	
<b>Session Code</b>	

**Observations:**

**Analysis (how has this session helped address the research questions?):**

**Relevance (the degree to which this session addressed the research questions):**

1 = Very relevant

2 = Somewhat relevant

3 = Not relevant

**Ethical reflection – here please note any problems you encountered, as well as any reflections on power dynamics within the interview:**