

GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT MEASUREMENT TOOL: FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Canada

INTRODUCTION



TRAINING GUIDE



FACILITATOR'S GUIDE



REPORTING GUIDE



GEM TOOL



INFORMED CONSENT SCRIPT



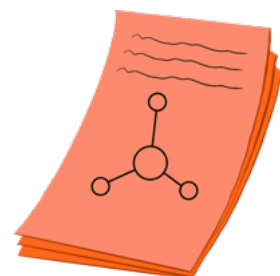
PARTNER STAFF INTERVIEW GUIDE



PROJECT REPORT TEMPLATE



SYNTHESIS REPORT TEMPLATE



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FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Welcome to Part 2 of the Gender Equality and Empowerment Measurement (GEM) Tool: Facilitator's Guide!

In this guide, we provide information and step-by-step instructions for using the GEM Tool. As a facilitator, your objective is to collect and report data on a project's gender equality and empowerment results during one or more guided focus group discussions with project participants (held in person or online). This process can be supplemented by additional data collection through interviews with local project partners.

The GEM Tool can be conducted with women participants and with other genders (e.g., men, transgender, non-binary, etc.) in separate or mixed focus group settings (see Box 2.1). The instructions below have been written with women participants in mind, but

all of the same steps in the GEM Tool process can be followed regardless of the gender of focus group participants. However, you will need to adapt how you frame questions so that, for example, you are not asking men participants to speak about their own feelings and experiences of empowerment resulting from the project, but rather, their observations on the empowerment of women or other genders in their household or community.

Ultimately, the number and composition of focus groups and interviews that you choose to facilitate will depend on the goals of the data collection, the local and project context in which you are applying the tool, and the time and resources that are available. For example, you may wish to conduct 3-5 in-person focus group sessions with 8-10 participants each, plus 3-5 interviews with local project partners.



Box 2.1: Considerations for facilitating separate versus mixed-gender focus groups

Whenever possible, collecting data from different genders is important to effectively apply an intersectional lens. In most cases, when using the GEM Tool we recommend conducting separate focus group discussions for individuals with different genders (i.e. women, men, transgender, non-binary, etc.). This will help to ensure more open, comfortable and safe discussions because of the way that societies are traditionally structured along gendered lines. Having separate focus groups for different genders can also be used to identify and compare gendered views and experiences, and to measure gender gaps in project results.

However, mixed-gender focus groups can make a valuable contribution to understanding and knowledge about a project's gender equality and empowerment results. Diversity among participants can reveal multiple perspectives and ideas, and interactions can lead to richer conversations and insights that might not have emerged otherwise.

Whether you decide to host separate or mixed-gender focus groups, local gendered power dynamics need to be understood and accounted for in the make-up and facilitation of focus group discussions using the GEM Tool.

Ensuring participants' safety, comfort and confidentiality should always be your top priority as a facilitator.

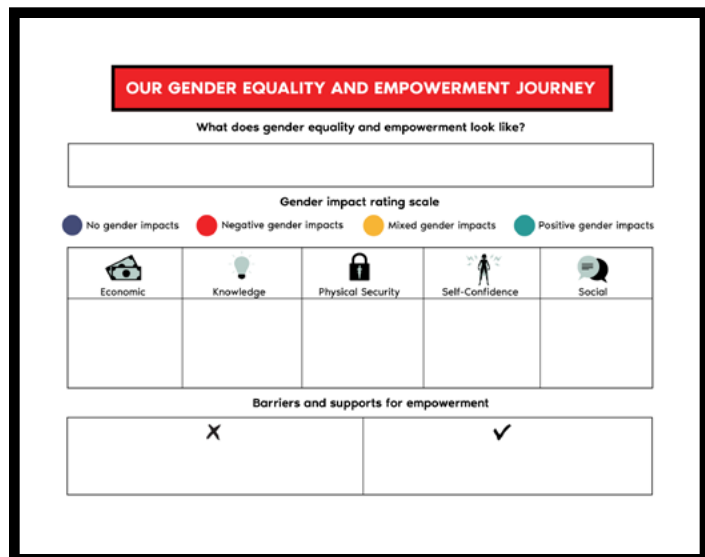


INTRODUCTION TO THE GEM TOOL

As you review the information in this guide, take notes and consider instances where you might need to modify the language or examples used. You can also refer back to the information and resources provided in Part 1: Training Guide to help you apply a feminist methodology and approach for each step of the GEM Tool data collection process.

The GEM Tool (shown in Figure 1 below) is a standardized tool for data collection and information gathering on the gender equality and empowerment results of development projects. It is used to collect data from project participants during one or more focus group discussions held in person or online.

It is focused on five key categories of empowerment: economic, knowledge, physical security, self-confidence and social. These categories cover important and widely recognized aspects of women's empowerment and are provided to offer some standardization in data collection across focus groups and projects using the GEM Tool. The guidance below includes examples and terminology for each category that should be modified to suit the local and project context. These categories can also be replaced with any others that you deem more appropriate for the local and project setting that you're working in.



The figure shows a blank form titled "OUR GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT JOURNEY". The form includes a text box for "What does gender equality and empowerment look like?", a "Gender impact rating scale" with four options: "No gender impacts" (blue), "Negative gender impacts" (red), "Mixed gender impacts" (yellow), and "Positive gender impacts" (teal). Below the scale is a table with five columns: "Economic" (with a house icon), "Knowledge" (with a lightbulb icon), "Physical Security" (with a padlock icon), "Self-Confidence" (with a person icon), and "Social" (with a speech bubble icon). At the bottom, there are two boxes labeled "Barriers and supports for empowerment" with an "X" and a checkmark symbol.

Figure 1: Blank GEM Tool

The information, definitions and examples provided below are meant to serve as a guide and should be modified to fit the socio-cultural context of the focus group participants and setting as needed.



WHAT THIS TOOL CAN DO:

- Capture the gender equality and empowerment outcomes of development programming with project participants using an intersectional lens
- Collect qualitative and descriptive data using participatory focus group discussions and interviews (held virtually or in person)
- Document the perspectives of project participants on the meaning of gender equality and empowerment in their local context, and in relation to their own perspectives and experiences
- Help identify barriers and supports for gender equality and empowerment in the project environment (at the individual, household, community and structural levels)
- Determine project results by collecting information at specific or multiple points in time (i.e., data collection can take place within six months of the project completion and/or for longitudinal data collection after one or more years have passed – this tool could also, in some instances, provide useful information for baseline studies)
- Build the capacity of researchers to conduct feminist data collection, particularly locally-based researchers who can use their contextual knowledge and expertise to inform the data collection process and support reciprocal knowledge mobilization



WHAT THIS TOOL IS NOT DESIGNED TO DO:

- Provide quantitative data (though, some examples of quantitative information are possible in the final reports, especially the synthesis report)
- Demonstrate the overall gender equality and empowerment impacts of projects (though, some insights into a small sample of individual experiences will be revealed)
- Be used to make decisions about future funding (this is not a tool to determine if and what projects should continue, and this should also be made clear to focus group participants during the informed consent process)
- Serve as a substitute for embedding feminist monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning across the project cycle

Therefore, this tool is about capturing the rich details of participants' self-defined experiences of gender equality and empowerment, and tracking the barriers and supports that either hindered or contributed to a particular result.

**IN PERSON OR
ONLINE DATA
COLLECTION**




As mentioned, the GEM Tool can be used for in-person and online data collection. Unless otherwise stated, the facilitator should use all steps in this guide regardless of the data collection approach (online or in person).



LEGEND

Where specific instructions are provided for in-person or online facilitation you will see these icons:

 for in person

 for online

OVERVIEW OF THE GROUP DISCUSSION PROCESS

Focus groups conducted using the GEM Tool are divided into eight steps, each with their own objectives, activities, and time allocation. In total, the focus group session will last approximately 2.5 hours, and will follow this general structure and process



1. Open the discussion (20 minutes)

2. Revisiting the project activities and objectives (5 minutes)

3. Discussion on “what does gender equality and empowerment look like?” (15 minutes)

4. Documenting the project’s gender equality and empowerment results (50 minutes)

BREAK (10 minutes)

5. Rating the gender impact for each category of empowerment (20 minutes)

6. Identifying barriers and supports for empowerment (15 minutes)

7. Validating the findings with participants (10 minutes)

8. Thanking participants and closing the discussion (5 minutes)

SUPPLIES NEEDED



In Person

GEM Tool (a visual board: poster or flip charts)

Tape/tacks to hang the tool on the wall

Post-it notes

Pens or markers

Different coloured stickers or coloured markers (blue, red, yellow and green)

Paper for note-taking

Small ball for ice breaker activity (optional)

Audio recording device (optional)

Camera or mobile phone with a camera function

Refreshments (e.g. water, tea, light snacks)



Online

GEM Tool (a visual board: shareable on screen)

Online video conferencing platform (e.g., Zoom, Skype, WhatsApp, etc.) that is most appropriate and popularly used in a given area

Technology and internet connection that is compatible with video conferencing with capacity for recording the session



TIP

Digital interactive whiteboard tools can be great resources for facilitating online discussions, if you are familiar with how to use them. Many of these tools are also free and participants do not require an account to access them. Consider using one of these tools during your focus group if appropriate for the local context and participants.

PREPARING FOR THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

As you begin to plan for your focus group discussions, be sure to reflect on the composition of your research team (e.g., gender, local expertise, languages spoken) to determine the best way forward for data collection. See Part 1: Training Guide for some considerations on the role of the facilitator and research team in data collection using the GEM Tool.

Once your research team is established, complete the following tasks to prepare for your focus group discussions.



REVIEW PROJECT INFORMATION AND MATERIALS

Take some time to read over available information and materials on the project. Understanding the project activities and objectives will help you to be a more effective facilitator, and enable you to remind focus group participants about their involvement in the project. If a project ended several months ago, or if some participants have been involved in multiple projects by different organizations, you may need to refresh their memory on what this project was about.



COORDINATE WITH LOCAL PROJECT PARTNERS

You will need to work closely with local project partners to identify participants and a suitable location to host the focus group sessions. One of these partners may be able to provide space in their office, or recommend alternative locations that provide the necessary privacy, accessibility and accommodations (e.g. use of washrooms, moveable tables and chairs, etc.).



TIP

In some contexts, requesting contact information for participants may be met with suspicion (especially in areas with histories of surveillance), while in others this may be common practice. Discuss with local project partners what is an appropriate method for communicating with participants.

To ensure a manageable discussion, the ideal number of focus group participants is 8-10 for in person, and 3-5 for online. It can be more difficult and more time consuming to effectively facilitate online focus group discussions, so smaller participant numbers are recommended. However, depending on the specific context and participants, online focus groups might be the best option (e.g., to ensure the safety of participants due to COVID-19 or other health crises, or where participants are spread out across large distances).

Work with local partners to generate a list of project participants who can participate in the focus group sessions, including appropriate contact details (such as phone numbers or email addresses) and any demographic information available (i.e., age, gender, marital status, disability, location, languages spoken, etc.). Request/generate a larger sample of participants than required for completing the focus groups so that you can strive for participants with diverse backgrounds and experiences to ensure intersectional data collection. This includes participants who may have experienced different barriers or forms of marginalization with respect to their participation in the project.

Finally, consult with your research team members and local project partners to tailor the GEM Tool as needed (e.g., empowerment categories, definitions, examples, etc.) to suit the socio-cultural context of the focus group participants and setting, as well as the specific project objectives and activities.



PREPARE YOUR GEM TOOL POSTER OR FLIP CHART

If you are conducting your focus group in person, you will need to prepare your *GEM Tool* using poster board or flipchart paper. Your *GEM Tool* should include all of the components shown in Figure 1 above (modified as needed).

An important part of this process is to review the different categories of empowerment in the *GEM Tool* to make sure that they are appropriate for the local and project context. Think through each category and the types of descriptions and examples that you could use in your discussion with participants. See Step 4 below for more information on this.

IDENTIFY A STRATEGY FOR ONLINE DATA COLLECTION

If you are limited to online data collection for any reason (e.g., COVID-19 travel or gathering restrictions, participants are spread across large distances, etc.), use your knowledge of the local context, or ask research team members or local project partners for help identifying an online video conferencing platform (e.g., Zoom, Skype, WhatsApp, etc.) that is appropriate to use for hosting virtual focus groups. You can also reach out to participants once they have been identified and consult with them on their preferred platform. There is no one platform that can be recommended for all contexts, it depends upon participants' preferences, familiarity, comfort level and access.

Keep in mind that online data collection can increase accessibility and participation for some groups, while excluding others.

The *GEM Tool* is not an inherently feminist tool - it should be applied using a feminist methodology and approach. Refer back to **Part 1: Training Guide** for a reminder of the role of the facilitator and research team in feminist data collection.


REMEMBER YOUR FEMINIST RESEARCH TRAINING

STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THE GEM TOOL

Step 1: Open the Discussion

 TIME ALLOTTED: 20 MINUTES

Taking time to open the focus group session properly is important for establishing rapport and ensuring the comfort and safety of participants. During this step you will have a chance to facilitate introductions, obtain informed consent from participants, co-create ground rules for the discussion, and conduct an icebreaker activity. These four activities should take approximately five minutes each.



For online discussions, take a few minutes at this point to explain to participants how to use the different features of whatever online platform you are using. For example, if applicable: how to turn their microphones on and off, how to turn their video on and off, how to use the chat, how to use the raise hand function, etc. Have participants test these features. Make sure everyone is comfortable using the technology so that they can participate equally and effectively.



Before proceeding further, informed consent should be sought and obtained from all focus group participants. This includes their consent for participating in the focus group, as well as optional protocols like audio recording the discussion.

You can download and modify a copy of the [informed consent script](#), or create your own using this one as a guide.

INTRODUCTION

Begin by introducing yourself and clarifying the purpose and goal of the focus group discussion. If your other research team members are present to work as note-takers or translators, introduce them and their role as well.

1. Briefly introduce the project. You do not need to go into detail about the project activities at this point because there will be time for this in Step 2.
2. Explain why you are collecting information on the gender equality and empowerment results of the project.
3. Explain how the focus group discussion will be structured (i.e., outline steps 1 through 8).

CO-CREATING GROUND RULES FOR THE DISCUSSION

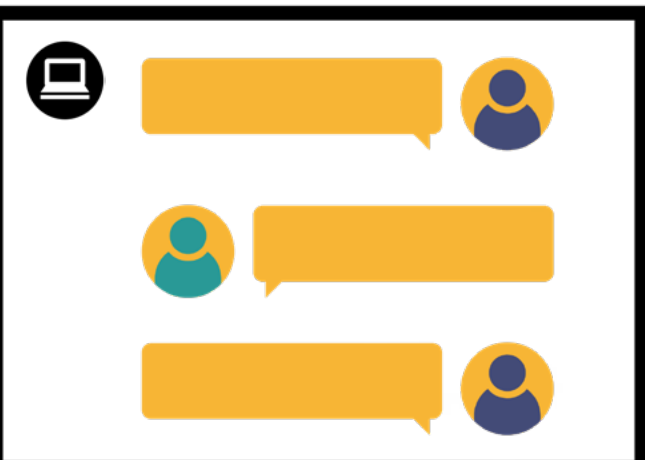


Working with participants, identify and agree together on a list of ground rules to ensure a safe, inclusive and meaningful discussion. Begin by asking the participants what ground rules are important for them. Here are some examples to keep in mind.

- Participation in the discussion is voluntary
- The information shared in this group is private and should remain confidential
- For online discussions, this includes an agreement that participants will not record the session on their devices
- Active listening, free from distractions (i.e., turn cell phone to silent)
- Express your feelings and opinions freely - there are no wrong answers
- This is a safe space for sharing and non-judgement
- Be respectful of each other, even when you disagree



For in-person discussions, write these rules out on a poster or flip chart and hang it on the wall.



For online discussions, type out these rules and paste them into the chat function of the meeting platform (if available).

ICEBREAKER ACTIVITY

After introducing yourself and the purpose of the focus group, facilitate an icebreaker activity to help participants feel more comfortable communicating with each other, to energize the group, and to set-up the discussion. As a facilitator, the secret of a successful icebreaker activity is to keep it simple: design the activity with specific objectives in mind and make sure that the session is appropriate and comfortable for everyone involved.

Some examples of possible icebreaker activities and questions are provided below. You can use these, or come up

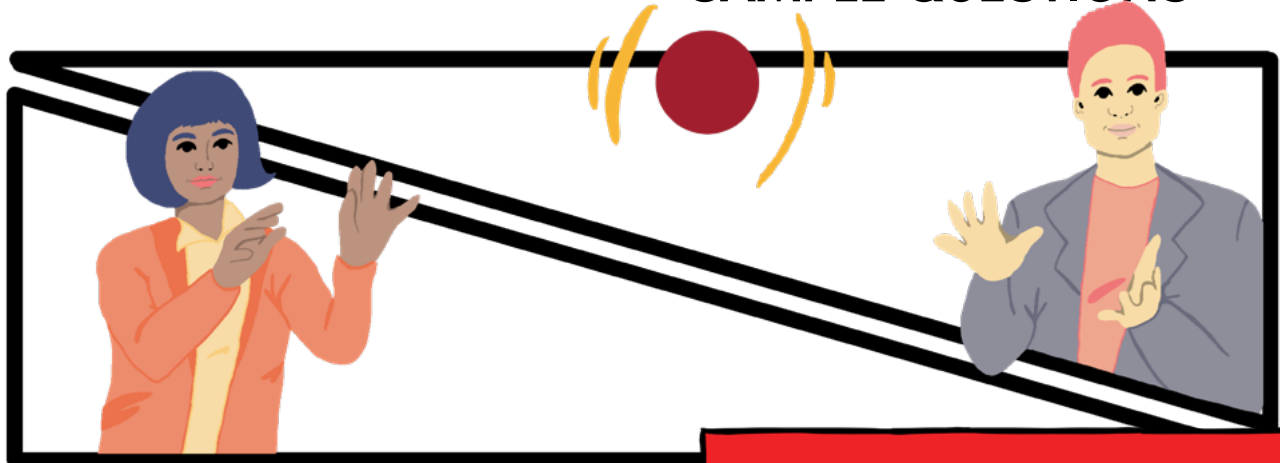
with your own icebreaker that is more appropriate for the local context and participants. Keep timing in mind, and stick to ice breakers that can be completed in about 5 minutes.

Who was your role model as a child and why?

Who in your family or community inspires you and why?

What is one subject that interests you or that you are passionate about?

SAMPLE QUESTIONS



PASS THE BALL!

IN PERSON

If space allows, have the participants come together in a circle. Make sure they are not too far apart or close together.

- Using a ball (or other small object), say your name and then throw the ball to someone else in the group.
- The person who catches it says their name and throws it to another person, until everyone has gone.
- As individuals introduce themselves, check off their names from your participant list (this is for your records; do not include this list in any final reports as this would violate participants' confidentiality and anonymity).

Explain the activity.

- Explain that the goal of the activity is to "break the ice" and get to know one another a bit better.
- Starting with whoever is holding the ball, have them answer a question about themselves, and then throw it to someone else in the group.
- The person who catches it answers the question and throws it to another person, until everyone has gone.
- If there is time, continue this activity for another round using a different question.

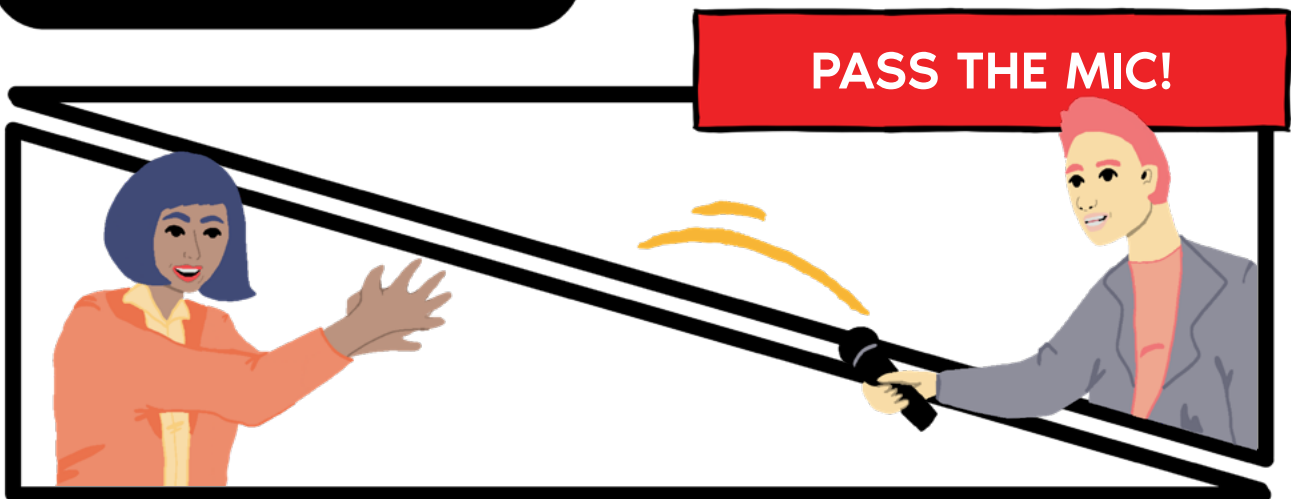
SAMPLE QUESTIONS



ONLINE

Explain the activity.

- The goal of the activity is to “break the ice” and get to know one another a bit better.
- Provide participants with some questions to be used for getting to know each other. Tell participants they can add to the list of questions.
- Start by introducing yourself and responding to any of the questions listed below.
- Then pick a participant to state their name and answer a question about themselves. Whoever is speaking chooses the next person to introduce themselves by “passing the mic” and chooses a question for them to answer.
- When a participant’s name is called (participant’s screen names should appear as text when using online meeting platforms) they say their name and answer the question that was posed to them.
- As individuals introduce themselves, check off their names from your participant list (this is for your records; do not include this list in any final reports as this would violate participants’ confidentiality and anonymity).
- If there is time, continue this activity for another round using a different question.



Step 2: Revisiting the Project Activities and Objectives

 TIME ALLOTTED: 5 MINUTES

Take a moment to remind participants of the project activities and objectives. Briefly describe what their participation in the project involved. Ask if there are any questions before proceeding.

Step 3: Discussion on "What Does Gender Equality and Empowerment Look Like?"

 TIME ALLOTTED: 15 MINUTES

Begin by explaining that you want to talk about the participants' gender equality and empowerment journey during this project. Ask participants to think about "What gender equality and empowerment look like in their household or community?".

Depending on the setting and background of the participants, this question might be unclear and need to be modified or rephrased. Use your knowledge of the local context and participants to ask additional probing questions or frame the question in a more appropriate way.

EXAMPLES

How would you describe an empowered woman?

How can they be equal at home?

What does it mean for men and women to be equal?

How can they be equal in the community?

How can they be equal in business?



What does it mean for women to have equal rights to men?

How are you currently empowered at home?



In what ways are you currently empowered?

How are you currently empowered in your business?

How are you currently empowered in your community?

- Provide participants with post-it notes and pens or markers.
- Ask participants to draw pictures or write their ideas down on the post-it notes and place them in the appropriate section at the top of the GEM Tool poster/flipchart.
- Once everyone has placed their ideas on the poster/flipchart, categorize or group the post-it notes into key themes with the help of participants (see Figure 2).





- Ask participants to share their ideas through the chat, or by raising their hands and being called on to speak.
- You may also collect responses via private chat (if this function is available) and share with the group; this can help address any unrecognized power dynamics within the group that could hinder full and safe participation.
- Depending on the platform you are using (such as Zoom), you may be able to “screen share” and type each response directly into the GEM Tool for participants to see, and so that you can keep track.

Figure 2: GEM Tool Step 3

OUR GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT JOURNEY

What does gender equality and empowerment look like?

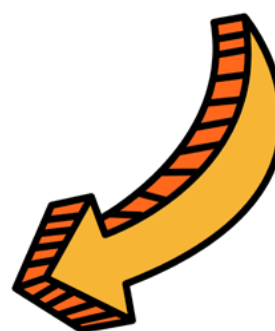


Gender impact rating scale

● No gender impacts
● Negative gender impacts
● Mixed gender impacts
● Positive gender impacts

Barriers and supports for empowerment

X	✓
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Step 4: Documenting the Project's Gender Equality and Empowerment Results

 TIME ALLOTTED: 50 MINUTES

The GEM Tool uses different categories to determine how the project contributed to participants' feelings and experiences of empowerment (positively or negatively). These categories aim to generate discussion on specific pathways for empowerment in the context of participants' lives. They span five different domains or categories: economic, knowledge, physical security, self-confidence and social.

Explain to participants that you will now be discussing how the project may or may not have contributed to their feelings and experiences of empowerment in different areas of their lives. Start by introducing the first category of empowerment that you will be discussing. Provide the definition and some examples of impacts for this category that are appropriate for the local and project context. Ask participants to provide other examples of the types of impacts that might fit under this category.

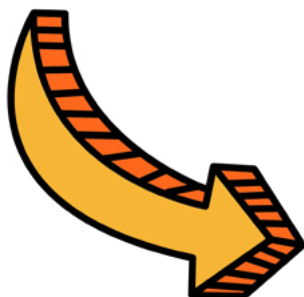


These categories are meant to serve as guides and should be modified to fit the socio-cultural context of the focus group participants and setting, as well as the specific project activities.

See Box 2.2 for a description of these different categories, and for other possible names, concepts, definitions and examples that you can use in your discussion with participants.


Next, ask participants: "Has the project impacted your experiences of empowerment in this category (positively or negatively)? If so, can you provide an example?"



Figure 3: GEM Tool Step 4








OUR GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT JOURNEY

What does gender equality and empowerment look like?





















Gender impact rating scale

● No gender impacts
● Negative gender impacts
● Mixed gender impacts
● Positive gender impacts

 Economic	 Knowledge	 Physical Security	 Self-Confidence	 Social
 	 	 	 	 

Barriers and supports for empowerment

X	✓
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Box 2.2: Categories of empowerment in the GEM Tool

ECONOMIC

Participants have more access to and control over resources like income, credit, land or property. For example, a participant can own the land where her family's house sits, open her own bank account, or make decisions about household spending without consulting her husband/father.

Related terms and concepts include: access to and control over resources, economic agency, financial inclusion and financial security.



KNOWLEDGE

Participants feel that they have new knowledge or skills that can help them achieve their goals. For example, participants attended information sessions or workshops, or took a course at a college or university to improve their knowledge. They are now using this new knowledge or skills and believe this has been beneficial.

Related terms and concepts include: capacity building, and education, knowledge or skills acquisition.



PHYSICAL SECURITY

Participants express having more control over their body and feel secure. They control where they go and what happens to them. They have access to the resources and services they need to take care of their health and wellbeing. For example, participants feel that they can choose to wear certain clothes, travel to certain places on their own, or decide on the number of children they want.

Related terms and concepts include: bodily autonomy, freedom from violence, human security, mobility, safety, wellbeing and wellness.



Box 2.2: Categories of empowerment in the GEM Tool



SELF-CONFIDENCE

Participants feel like they have gained self-confidence and trust in their ability to make decisions about their lives. They believe in themselves and feel more capable of expressing their views and concerns with others. For example, participants believe they can achieve a personal goal, or feel better able to voice their opinions with others in their household or community, or when running their business.

Related terms and concepts include: agency, assertiveness, autonomy, self-efficacy, self-esteem, speaking up and voice.

SOCIAL

Participants observe positive changes in their relationships and networks. They feel more connected in their community, and experience more respect with and for others. For example, participants have become members of a network, organization, or group, or they feel as though they are recognized and respected by their neighbours.

Related terms and concepts include: collaboration, networks, relationship building, reputation, respect from others, social capital, social status and social standing.





- Have participants draw pictures or write down their reflections on post-it notes.
- Remind participants that it is acceptable to say that the project did not impact their empowerment in the area being discussed, or that it had a negative impact. Create space for participants to share both positive and negative impacts.
- Ask participants to share their reflections with the group (if they are comfortable) before placing their post-it note within the appropriate category on the GEM Tool poster/flipchart.
- Once everyone has placed their reflections on the poster/flipchart, categorize or group the post-it notes into key themes with the help of participants (see Figure 3).
- Repeat this process for all five categories.

- Ask participants to share their reflections through the chat, or by raising their hands and being called on to speak.
- You may also collect responses via private chat (if this function is available) and share with the group.
- Remind participants that it is acceptable to say that the project did not impact their empowerment in the area being discussed, or that it had a negative impact. Create space for participants to share both positive and negative impacts.
- If available, “screen share” and type each response directly into the GEM Tool.
- Repeat this process for all five categories.

TIP

During this step, some participants may share negative or triggering experiences that resulted from the project. Being prepared with information for local support services and resources to share with participants is a best practice. This could include, for example, gender-based violence services like counseling, health services, legal services, anti-trafficking services, etc. Consulting with local networks, organizations and partners is often the best way to identify these resources.

ADDITIONAL PROBING QUESTIONS

If participants are having trouble understanding any category, or if the discussion is lagging, consider posing some additional probing questions.

Here are some examples of possible questions for each category, which should be modified and tailored for the local and project context.

KNOWLEDGE:

If the project enhanced your education, training or skills, has this created any new opportunities for you?

Did the project activities impact your education, training or skills (positively or negatively)? If so, share an example.

Did your new knowledge or training change the way people treat you? Can you share an example of a particular interaction?

PHYSICAL SECURITY:

For example, control over the number of children that you have, where you can travel to, or what you can wear?

Do you have any more or less control or decision-making power over your own body as a result of the project?

Were there more or less concerns for your safety since the start of the project?

Did the project result in any new safety or security concerns for you?

For example, some projects may require participants to travel long distances or to new markets and using public transportation can be a safety concern. Other projects may provide women with money or credit which can make them vulnerable to theft or physical assault.

ECONOMIC:

Have you experienced new opportunities or challenges regarding child care due to the project? Has this had an impact on your empowerment?

Do you have any more or less control or decision-making power over household spending as a result of the project? If so, share an example.

Has the project impacted your access to income, credit, land, or property (positively or negatively)?

SELF-CONFIDENCE

SOCIAL:

For example, did you experience any jealousy or unsupportive comments from people in your household or community?

Did you encounter any negative attitudes or criticism from others related to your participation in the project? If so, how did you deal with those experiences?

How did the project change your relationships and interactions with others, if at all (e.g. in your family, work, or community)?

Did the project change how others see you or treat you (positively or negatively)?

If applicable, what impact does increased confidence have on your life? On your relationships with others? Share an example.

Did the project impact your self-confidence or self-esteem (positively or negatively)? Share a story or example.

Has your participation in the project changed how you see yourself? If so, how?



IDENTIFYING ANY ADDITIONAL EMPOWERMENT CATEGORIES



Some gender equality and empowerment impacts may not fit neatly within the five predetermined categories of the GEM Tool. Before moving on to the next step, ask participants:

- Are there additional impacts missing from the poster that you've thought about during this discussion but weren't sure where to put them?
- Are there any other categories that we need to add to the poster?

If additional categories and/or examples are identified, add these to the GEM Tool.

	
<p>For in-person discussion, write the name of any newly identified categories on a blank piece of flipchart paper and add it to the wall next to the other categories.</p>	<p>For online discussions, take detailed notes of any new categories or examples.</p>

At the end of this step, allow participants to comment further through an open question: “Would anyone like to add anything else to this before we move on?” Add any final responses to the GEM Tool.

Step 5: Rating the Gender Impact for Each Category of Empowerment

 TIME ALLOTTED: 20 MINUTES

Start by reminding the participants of your discussions before the break about the different categories of empowerment and explain that they are about to be asked to rate how impactful the project was for each category.

Explain that projects might have led to no gender impacts, to negative gender impacts, to mixed gender impacts, or to positive gender impacts in their own lives, and that these are the ratings they will choose from (Figure 4).



Explain the rating scale and what the different colours mean using the following definitions, and by providing examples where possible from earlier discussions (for additional examples see Box 2.3).





 No gender impacts (blue sticker/mark)	No changes to participants' individual empowerment or gender relations in this category.
 Negative gender impacts (red sticker/mark)	Negative or harmful impacts for participants' individual empowerment and gender relations in this category.
 Mixed gender impacts (yellow sticker/mark)	Some positive and some negative changes to participants' individual empowerment and gender relations in this category.
 Positive gender impacts (green sticker/mark)	Positive or beneficial changes to participants' individual empowerment and gender relations in this category.

Figure 4: Gender Impact Rating Options

Box 2.3: Examples of positive, mixed and negative gender impacts

ECONOMIC

Positive gender impacts in the economic empowerment category could include increased access to and control over resources like income, credit, land, or property. For example, a participant can own the land where her family's house sits, open her own bank account, or make decisions about household spending without consulting her husband/father. Mixed impacts in this category could involve examples of both positive and negative experiences. For example, participants may describe having greater access to income but no change to the control over that income and how money is spent. Negative impacts could include examples of failed businesses.



Box 2.3: Examples of positive, mixed and negative gender impacts

KNOWLEDGE

Positive gender impacts in the knowledge category could include participants feeling they have new knowledge or skills that can help them achieve their goals. For example, participants attended information sessions or workshops, or took a course at a college or university to improve their knowledge. They are now using this new knowledge or skills and believe this has been beneficial. Mixed impacts in this category could include examples of increased education which may be valued on its own but few opportunities to use this education to improve their quality of life. Negative impacts could include not having access to the knowledge, skills or education needed to succeed in their projects.



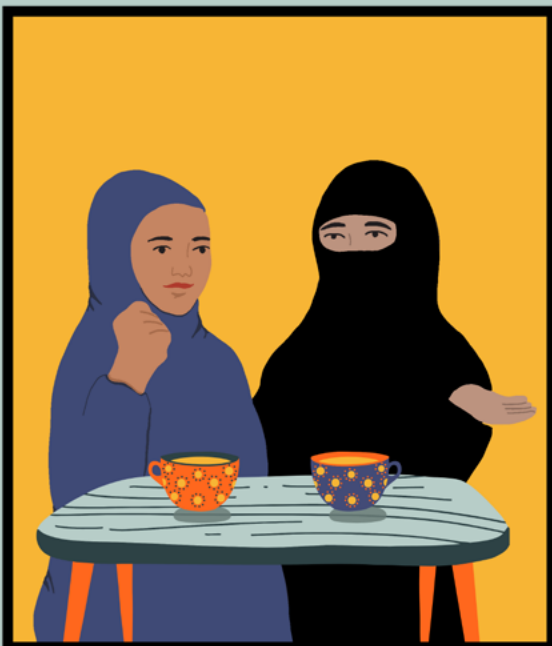
PHYSICAL SECURITY

Positive gender impacts in the physical security category could indicate that participants can have more control over their body and feel more physically secure. For example, they may have greater control over their physical movements or ability to take public transit. Mixed impacts in this category could refer to experiences of increased control, such as their ability to take the bus, but ongoing discrimination when using public transit. Negative impacts could include examples of reduced decision-making power in terms of sexual and reproductive health decisions.

Box 2.3: Examples of positive, mixed and negative gender impacts

SELF-CONFIDENCE

Positive gender impacts in the self-confidence category could include participants feeling like they have gained self-confidence and trust in their ability to make decisions about their lives. They believe in themselves and feel more capable of expressing their views and concerns with others. For example, participants believe they can achieve a personal goal, or feel better able to voice their opinions with others in their household or community, or when running their business. Mixed impacts in this category could include increased self-confidence in their household but ongoing discrimination within their community which limits opportunities. Negative impacts could include feelings of self-doubt or regret for decisions made during the project.



SOCIAL

Positive gender impacts for the social empowerment category could include improved relationships and networks. Participants feel more connected in their community, and experience more respect with and for others. Mixed impacts in this category could include a combination of improved networks among women in the community but ongoing discrimination from men in the community. Negative impacts could include feeling more marginalized in their homes or communities as a result of their participation in a project.

Confirm that participants understand the difference between these different ratings and ask if there are any questions before proceeding.




	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide participants with coloured stickers or markers. • One category at a time, ask participants to provide their ratings by placing the appropriately coloured dot in the corresponding column on the poster (see Figure 5). • After the ratings are in for each category, ask one or two participants to share why they chose the rating that they did. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One category at a time, ask participants to provide their rating through the chat, or by raising their hands and being called on to speak. • You may also collect responses via private chat (if this function is available) and share with the group. • If available, “screen share” and input each rating directly into the GEM Tool.

Figure 5: GEM Tool Step 5








OUR GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT JOURNEY

What does gender equality and empowerment look like?



Gender impact rating scale

● No gender impacts
● Negative gender impacts
● Mixed gender impacts
● Positive gender impacts

Economic	Knowledge	Physical Security	Self-Confidence	Social
				

Barriers and supports for empowerment

X	✓
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Step 6: Identifying Barriers and Supports for Empowerment

 TIME ALLOTTED: 15 MINUTES

In this step, you will have an open discussion with participants to identify barriers and support for their empowerment in the project environment. Even in the context of a development project, changes to participants' feelings and experiences of empowerment do not happen in a vacuum. There are external factors operating at the individual, household, community and structural levels that can either hinder or contribute to those changes.

Start by discussing supportive elements in the project environment that contributed to participants' feelings or experiences of empowerment.

Some supportive elements may have been highlighted in the previous activity so you can remind participants of those examples before turning to these possible discussion questions:

HOUSEHOLD-LEVEL SUPPORTS:

Did you receive any support from your family members (e.g. parents, siblings or spouse)?

COMMUNITY-LEVEL SUPPORTS:

Did you receive support from other women in the community?

Did you receive support from men in the community?

INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL SUPPORTS:

What were the key changes in your life that may have enabled your feelings of empowerment in this project?

WRAP UP QUESTION (ON INTERSECTIONALITY):

Were there other project participants who did not have access to the same supports as you due to their status or position in the community (e.g. due to their age, marital status, religion, disability, etc.), and who may not have experienced the same level of empowerment?

STRUCTURAL SUPPORTS:

Were there discussions taking place in the news or the media that helped to shift perceptions on women's rights or gender equality?

Were there any shifts in social or cultural norms that gave you more control over your life and decision making?

Were there any changes to laws or policies that allowed you to better access your rights?



- Ask participants to draw pictures or write their responses down on post-it notes and place them in the appropriate section at the bottom of the GEM Tool poster/flipchart.
- Once everyone has placed their ideas on the poster/flipchart, categorize or group the post-it notes into key themes with the help of participants (i.e., would these be considered individual, household, community or structural forms of support?) (see Figure 6).



- Ask participants to share their responses through the chat, or by raising their hands and being called on to speak.
- You may also collect responses via private chat (if this function is available) and share with the group.
- If available, “screen share” and type each response directly into the GEM Tool.

OUR GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT JOURNEY

What does gender equality and empowerment look like?



Gender impact rating scale

- No gender impacts ● Negative gender impacts ● Mixed gender impacts ● Positive gender impacts

Economic	Knowledge	Physical Security	Self-Confidence	Social

Barriers and supports for empowerment



Figure 6: GEM Tool Step 6 (Supports Only)

Next, ask about barriers to empowerment in the project environment. Some barriers or challenges may have been highlighted in the previous activity so you can remind participants of those examples before turning to these possible discussion questions:

HOUSEHOLD-LEVEL BARRIERS:

Did you encounter any challenges from family members during your participation in the project (e.g. parents, siblings or spouse)?

COMMUNITY-LEVEL BARRIERS:

Did you encounter any challenges from women or men in your community?

Did you encounter any unique challenges due to your position or social status in the community?

INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL BARRIERS:

Did you face any unique barriers due to, for example, your age, marital status, or where you live in the community, etc.?

What barriers or challenges did you encounter during the project? Were you able to overcome these barriers, and if so how? What still needs to change to reduce these barriers for other women in the future?

STRUCTURAL BARRIERS:

Did any social or cultural norms prevent you from making decisions about your life or your work?

Did any laws or policies prevent you from taking action in your life or work?

Did you encounter any negative attitudes, beliefs or stereotypes about women?

WRAP UP QUESTION (ON RECOMMENDATIONS):

How might this project be improved to provide more benefits to women participants like yourself, or to benefit other women in the community? What would help you to be more empowered in the future?

OUR GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT JOURNEY

What does gender equality and empowerment look like?



Gender impact rating scale

● No gender impacts
 ● Negative gender impacts
 ● Mixed gender impacts
 ● Positive gender impacts

Economic	Knowledge	Physical Security	Self-Confidence	Social

Barriers and supports for empowerment



Figure 7: GEM Tool Step 6 (Supports and Barriers)



- Ask participants to draw pictures or write their responses down on post-it notes and place them in the appropriate section at the bottom of the GEM Tool poster/flipchart.
- Once everyone has placed their ideas on the poster/flipchart, categorize or group the post-it notes into key themes with the help of participants (i.e., individual, household, community or structural barriers) (see Figure 7).



- Ask participants to share their responses through the chat, or by raising their hands and being called on to speak.
- You may also collect responses via private chat (if this function is available) and share with the group.
- If available, “screen share” and type each response directly into the GEM Tool.

Step 7: Validating the Findings with Participants

 TIME ALLOTTED: 10 MINUTES

Validating your findings with the participants serves three valuable roles:

1. It confirms what participants have said and that their perspectives and experiences have been captured accurately.
2. It ensures that participants are actively engaged in the process of identifying broader themes and insights emerging from the discussion.
3. It recognizes the value of participants' contributions to shaping and strengthening development programming in the region.

One way of validating findings with participants is to share what you heard from the discussion, highlighting some of the main points, examples and takeaways, and asking if your observations are accurate or not, and if others wish to add anything. This approach is especially useful if you are short on time.

Another way of validating findings is to facilitate group reflection on the broader themes emerging from the discussion. Ask participants to reflect on the discussion that has taken place and what they see represented on the GEM Tool poster/flipchart.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

Are there any common examples or experiences that came up repeatedly in the discussion that should be highlighted in a report about this project?



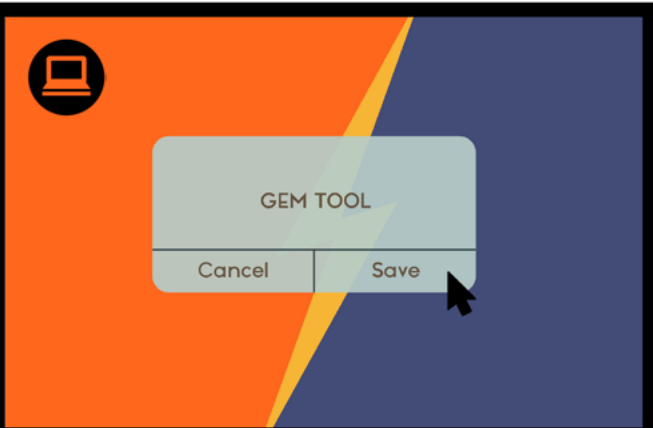
- Ask participants to share their responses through the chat, or by raising their hands and being called on to speak.
- You may also collect responses via private chat (if this function is available) and share with the group.
- Take detailed notes of these responses for your records.

What categories of empowerment were most positively impacted by the project? Why do you think that is?

What information or experiences stand out to you as being the most important to include in a report about this project?

What categories of empowerment were most negatively impacted by the project? Why do you think that is? What could have been done differently?

Is anything missing from the discussion? Is there anything that you would like to add before we close?



- Turn off the audio recorder and save the file.
- Take photos of data generated (such as the poster, sticky notes, or any other information that will help you finalize your report).
- Keep the participant list for your records.
- Roll-up the poster/flipcharts to take with you so you can use it again for data collection for other projects.
- Jot down any final observations or notes about the discussion while they are fresh in your mind.

- Download and save the recording of the meeting.
- Input any final responses into the GEM Tool that you did not have a chance to add earlier.
- Save a copy of the GEM Tool file with all of your typed additions and responses from the session.
- Jot down any final observations or notes about the discussion while they are fresh in your mind.

Step 8: Thanking Participants and Closing the Discussion

 TIME ALLOTTED: 5 MINUTES

Thank the participants for their contributions to the focus group discussion. If you are offering any vouchers for transportation or stipends for participation, let participants know how they can collect them.

If you will be sending a copy of the final report to interested participants, collect any information that you need in order to do so (e.g., email address, physical mailing address).

After the Focus Group Discussion

WRITE-UP YOUR FINDINGS

Transfer the information that you have gathered from the focus group discussions into a final report. You can use the outline provided to you in [Part 3: Reporting Guide](#) as a template or for inspiration.



Additional Data Collection Activity

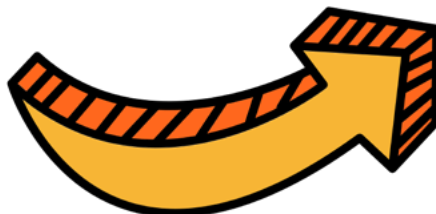
INTERVIEWS WITH LOCAL PROJECT PARTNERS

After the focus group discussions, you may have the opportunity to conduct interviews with local project partners (e.g. implementing partner staff, project managers, etc.). The goal of these interviews is to gain additional information, insight and/or clarification about a project's gender equality and empowerment results. These interviews can also be used to identify barriers and support for those results in the project environment, as well as opportunities or lessons learned for promoting gender equality and empowerment goals.

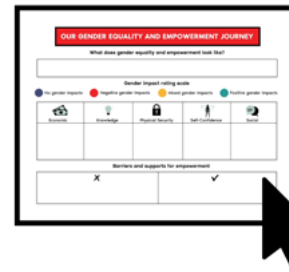
You can download and modify a copy of the [partner staff interview guide](#), or create your own using this one as a guide.

IMPORTANT RESOURCES

Here is a summary list of resources included in this Facilitator's Guide.



EDITABLE GEM TOOL TEMPLATE



INFORMED CONSENT SCRIPT



PARTNER STAFF INTERVIEW GUIDE








OUR GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT JOURNEY



What does gender equality and empowerment look like?

Gender impact rating scale

 No gender impacts  Negative gender impacts  Mixed gender impacts  Positive gender impacts

 Economic	 Knowledge	 Physical Security	 Self-Confidence	 Social

Barriers and supports for empowerment

	
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INFORMED CONSENT SCRIPT

Thank you for being here today. I would like to take a few minutes to ensure that you understand the purpose of this focus group session, what your participation involves, and how we will use the information that you provide today. If you do not understand something, please raise your hand at any point. I welcome all questions.

Your participation today will involve a group discussion lasting two and a half hours. The purpose of this discussion is to learn about your gender equality and empowerment journey during this project, and to understand how [organization] can improve its work promoting gender equality and empowerment in this region.

I am working with [organization] to collect this information. A final report based on this discussion will be developed and shared with [audience]. You will also be provided with a copy of the findings of this report. It will be shared with you by [outline the process]. The information collected will not be used to make decisions about future funding or to determine whether this project should continue.

The information that you share will be kept confidential and your name will not appear in any report or publication produced from this discussion. However, please keep in mind when considering your responses that the other participants in the focus group will know what you have said during the discussion. Similarly, given the group format of this session, I ask that you respect each other's right to privacy by not discussing what is talked about here with people outside of the focus group.

(IF AUDIO RECORDING)

Our discussion today will be audio recorded for accuracy and analysis purposes. I will also take notes, but I will not put names next to comments provided. The recording and any notes that are taken during the session will be kept in a secure location that only I have access to. I will let you know when I start to record.

(FOR ONLINE DISCUSSIONS)

Our discussion today on _____ (Zoom, Skype, Whatsapp, etc.) is a new way of holding conversations of this kind. Please know that I will do everything I can to protect your privacy using this technology. Our discussion will be audio recorded for accuracy and analysis purposes. I will also take notes, but I will not attribute names to any comments. The recording and any notes that are taken during the session will be kept in a secure location that only I have access to. I will let you know when I start to record.

Your participation in this discussion is entirely voluntary. If you feel uncomfortable at any point, please feel free to step outside and take a break, or to withdraw from the session entirely by communicating this to me or one of my team members here today. If you withdraw, we will not include your responses in the report. You can also choose not to respond to any question that you prefer not to answer. Your decision to not answer some questions or to withdraw from the session, for any reason, will have no negative consequences.

(IF PROVIDING A STIPEND OR VOUCHER)

You will receive [amount] for participating in today's session, to help cover any expenses associated with being here today. You will receive this amount even if you choose to leave the session at any point.

Are there any questions?

Based on this information, do you agree to participate in this discussion? If so, please raise your hand.

If anyone wishes not to participate, I invite you to leave at this time, and you will not be judged for this.

(IF AUDIO RECORDING)

I will now start to record the discussion.

PARTNER STAFF INTERVIEW GUIDE

If you are conducting interviews with local project partners, you can use the questions below as a guide or for inspiration to develop your own list of questions that suit the project context and setting.

The suggested length for these interviews, based on the list of questions below, is approximately one hour.

INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for meeting with me today. The objective of this interview is to better understand the women's empowerment and gender equality results of this project, including the associated opportunities and challenges for ensuring long-term gender-transformative impacts. I have some questions for you along these lines.

INFORMED CONSENT

Before we begin. Can I audio record our conversation solely for note taking purposes?

Do you have any questions for me?

Do you agree to participate in this interview?

QUESTIONS

1. Can you start by telling me briefly about your position at [organization] and your role in this project?

Defining Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality

2. What are some of the forms of gender inequality that are prevalent in this region?
3. Can you describe some of the challenges of working to promote women's empowerment and gender equality in this context?

Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Project Results

4. Can you describe whether and how women's empowerment and gender equality goals have been integrated into this project?
5. To what extent were intersectional considerations such as age, ethnicity, religion, etc. incorporated into the project's design and implementation?
6. What have been the most noteworthy women's empowerment and gender equality results of this project? Could you provide examples?

7. Which elements of the project were the most important for achieving these results and why?

8. In your opinion, how sustainable are these results?

9. Did this project have any unintended negative impacts for women's empowerment and gender equality? Could you provide examples? What lessons can be learned from these instances?

Validating and Clarifying Focus Group Information

10. Use this question to gather additional insights about what you heard during the focus groups with project participants, and to seek clarification on any aspects of the project that remain unclear.

CONCLUSION

Is there anything else that you would like to add before we end our conversation?

Thank you for your time.

I will be sure to share a copy of the final report with you once it is available (confirm email address or preferred delivery method).

AFTER THE INTERVIEW IS COMPLETE

- Prepare written notes from the interview, using the list of interview questions as a guide.
- Write succinctly and clearly, using point-form notes, to summarize your main observations and findings from the interview.
- Write-up your notes as soon as possible after the interview to optimize recall of the information and to not confuse comments from this individual with other interviewees.
- Be sure to note any useful insights and recommendations provided by the interviewee for improving the project and for supporting gender equality and empowerment in the region.
- You may choose to include a one-page summary of any partner staff interviews as an appendix in your final project report.