

SELF-REFLECTION GUIDE HANDOUT



Name of Workshop:

Location of Workshop:

Dates of Workshop:

SELF-REFLECTION WORKSHEET¹

Strengthening your capacities for effective community engagement requires you to develop foundational skills such as listening, asking probing questions, managing conflict, and so on. These are built through a practice of reflection and application.

Throughout this workshop, we will be discussing and exploring the soft skills needed for being a strong facilitator. We will also ask you to do a lot of self-reflection on your strengths, as well as areas you feel could use improvement to make you a stronger facilitator.

Please use this worksheet to guide you in a self-reflection over the course of the workshop, considering the topics covered each day. This is only for you, and you are encouraged to fully engage in this process while you are away from your daily routine and exposed to new ideas and approaches. You may write your thoughts and reflections in a notebook.

On an ongoing basis, it is useful to think about which skills you need additional practice on, which challenges (internal or external) make it difficult for you to use a particular skill, and how you will take steps to improve.

What do I bring?

- Please picture yourself in your role as a child protection worker. Assume that your organization or agency has asked you to work in a country or area that is new to you and to help to address violence against children. Using the prompts below, write in a couple of points for each item:
 - Your origin and background that influences your community engagement and involvement in child protection (e.g., education, professional experience, life experience)
 - Your beliefs and values in relation to how you see children, work with community members, work with children, etc.
 - Assumptions you have about child protection, community engagement, etc.
 - Knowledge and skills you possess

¹ This content is adapted from Child Resilience Alliance. *Toolkit Section 1: Facilitation Tools. Supporting community-led child protection: An online guide and toolkit.* 2019. <https://communityledcp.org/toolkit/section-1-facilitation-tools>

- What might be some of the power dynamics you should be aware of, or will see when you enter into a new area to work?
- What is your position of power relative to the local people?
- How are the local people positioned relative to you?
- Please reflect for a few minutes on how well or poorly what you bring to the community might be aligned with the views of local people of another culture. What might be some key areas of possible overlap, and also of possible disconnects?
- Consider some key ideas about how what you bring to the community may affect (positively or negatively) efforts to build trust and a strong relationship with the community.
- Consider some things that your organization brings to your work in the community that may be beyond you.
- Reflect on and write down some of the things you could do to reduce the negative effects of what you bring to communities.

Humility

Developing a humble approach is not a one-step process but is part of a longer journey of self-awareness and transformation. On an ongoing basis, it pays to reflect on the humility of your current approach:

- Consider the knowledge that local communities may have. Think what things local people know that we do not know and jot down a few ideas.
- What are some words or concepts that you associate with humility, or a humble approach to community engagement?
- Thinking about your work as a facilitator or a non-governmental organization worker, please take a few minutes to write down several ideas about the value of a humble approach in enabling community-led work on child protection. In other words, why is humility important with regard to community-led work?
- Reflect on the following questions:
 - What are my motives for doing child protection work? Aside from wanting to help children, are there personal benefits that I derive from this work and being an “expert”?
 - In what ways are my personal approach and work with communities respectful and humble? In what ways are they less than respectful and humble?
 - When I’m in the community, does my mode of dress, introduction, speaking, and even travel put me in an elevated position relative to community people?
 - How trustful am I of community processes with regard to supporting vulnerable children?
 - How willing am I to share power with communities? Do I or my agency make the key decisions, or do communities make the key decisions?
 - When I talk with communities, is the focus on me and my agency, or on the community?
 - Are there ways in which I may be putting myself too much at the center?
 - How do I bring myself back to humility when I think the community sees the dominance of the organization in the community?

Empathy

Empathy differs from sympathy, in which we accept or support another person's feelings as our own. In empathizing, we do not agree or disagree with the other person's feelings, ideas, or views. Instead, we try to put ourselves in the other person's position and understand fully how they see things.

Being able to empathize with someone requires that we be curious about another person's perspective and seek to learn as much as we can about it, without judging. This requires being open to new perspectives so that we do not see things through our own lenses. In a significant way, we have to background our own ways of understanding, adopting instead the viewpoint of the other person as closely as we can.

- How am I taking an empathic approach in my interactions?
- Am I asking questions or saying things that reflect my agenda and values that may create obstacles to empathy?
- When I hear things that are troubling or that anger me, am I able to move those feelings into the background so that I am not focusing on them and focus instead on the tasks of empathizing and learning?
- What are my personal obstacles to empathizing, and what steps am I taking to improve my ability to empathize more fully with other people?

Deep listening

We all have the capacity to learn to listen in a deeper, more engaged manner, although this requires both effort and practice. The purpose of this is to stimulate reflection on what is good listening, its importance in the community facilitation process, and the obstacles to it. Also, this can help you to identify steps or practices that will enable you to listen more deeply and to use these skills in your work as a facilitator.

- Thinking about yourself, your friends and family, and your daily activities, what do you think good listening is and why is it important?
- How does deep listening contribute to the community facilitation process?
- What disrupts, hinders, or affects your ability to listen deeply?
- Deep listening is not just something that happens—it is a product of intentional steps and processes of self-awareness and self-management. Please think for a couple of minutes and then write down three key steps that you could take to listen more deeply.

Developing a reflective practice

As the contexts in which we work change, we might find that something that had worked well previously no longer works very well. Or, doing things in the old way is suddenly seen by local people as not helpful. In this respect, the facilitator is on an ongoing journey of learning and can never sit back and rest assured that everything is going fine.

One of the most important skills of facilitation is that of critical thinking, which aims to help strengthen practice. This consists of two important processes: 1) critical reflection and 2) using what is learned through reflection to strengthen one's practice.

Critical reflection means stepping back from a task and taking stock of how it is going and what might need adjustment. An important step toward developing a reflective practice is to create space for reflection each day in a context that is relatively quiet and conducive to looking back and thinking how to improve.

- What are one or two things that went well today? Why did these happen?
- What are one or two things that did not go so well? Why is this? What could I do differently?

In reflecting, it is useful to think about important questions, looking back over a time period of several days or weeks. Some useful questions that relate to you, your role, and your relationships with community people:²

- How do community people see me? Do females see me differently than do males, and why?
- Is my behavior, dress, and demeanor appropriate for different people in the community—elders, girls, women, men, boys?
- How do children see me? Am I enabling enough participation by girls and by boys? Is that upsetting the power balance in the community?
- Who is doing the organizing at community level and the center of action—is it community people or me?
- How am I as a facilitator? What are my strengths and weaknesses as a facilitator? Am I more like a guide and is that appropriate?
- As a facilitator, am I different from who I am personally? If yes, why might this be?
- Thinking back to the ethical issues discussed in the training workshop, how am I doing?
- What are the challenges and what do I need to do differently?
- Is the community process inclusive enough? What could I do to enable people to take an even more inclusive approach?

Take some time to consider other important questions for you to reflect on!

2 These are not exhaustive and may not be applicable to all contexts.