



**LISTENING
THROUGH STORY:
AN INTRODUCTION
AND THE STORY OF
THE PAKISTAN PILOT.**

The Listening Through Story project was developed with Trócaire Ireland in collaboration with Trócaire Pakistan and piloted in 2020 in Trócaire Pakistan.

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FOREWORD

'Grounded in our belief that the simple act of listening can not only change the individual but can change the world, we set ourselves the simple aim of listening'

In our programmes to address women's empowerment we are striving to support and create transformational change. Our aim is to end the historic and systemic gender inequality that creates discrimination, injustice and violence against women and girls; a system in which women, their voices and their needs are under-represented at best, and at worst, absent. As we work towards this transformational and long overdue change we must look to dismantle and recreate the institutions and the socio-cultural systems that maintain the inequality.

A core focus of this work is on supporting individuals, families, communities, and institutions to examine and question the socio-cultural beliefs and practices that create, sustain, and perpetuate gender inequality. We call this work social norms change. In this work we are seeking not to simply take power from one group and transfer it to another, but to create a balancing of power that respects all persons. While we use different methodologies in different contexts, in all social norms change programming we are working to guide reflection and dialogue within individuals and between groups. We are challenging ourselves and others to question, reflect, unlearn, and re-learn new ways of being that embody our shared values of fairness, justice and equality. We seek to embody our desire to live in a world of respect for all, women, men, girls and boys.

Core to this work is the cultivation of empathy. Through conversation and deep listening we allow the perspectives and feelings of others to be heard and to penetrate us. In this process we invite deep personal change, shifts in our attitudes, beliefs, and practices, and then we work towards a collective sharing of this change in the systems in which we live.

This work changes us, and it is a privilege to be changed in this way, to deepen our self-awareness and our concern for humanity. Alongside the personal

privilege of this work is the honour of seeing and sharing the change with others. To journey with others and to hear them speak to the power of this change process for them personally, for their families and their communities as they navigate the change process, has been one of my roles' greatest gifts. Yet often as we read programme case studies and evaluations, we fail to hear the richness of the testimonies of change and what it has truly meant in the lives of the people involved. The testimonies that describe the power of voice and listening to create change are countless. We have sat together as programme teams and questioned this, and we have wondered why we don't see the complexity and change that we hear about as we accompany the programme in these processes. As a team these testimonies stay with us, reconnecting us with our passion and drive for the work that we do. It is our deep belief, our hope, that if we can create processes of deep listening in our programme learning and evaluation that center our participants, their experiences of change and its meaning in their lives, we can create the lasting and long overdue change we strive for, while also supporting the passion of others to work with us.

It was with this hope that we embarked upon the "Listening Through Story" Project. Our intention was to facilitate a process that harnessed the skills of women's empowerment programme teams in creating and holding safe space for deep listening conversations to support the voice of programme participants, particularly women to be expressed, heard and understood. *Grounded in our belief that the simple act of listening can not only change the individual but can change the world, we set ourselves the simple aim of listening.* There would be two key actors in our project, the storyteller and the story harvester, and we would work to support safe spaces where the simple act of listening could be practiced.

The listening would in essence anchor around three listening practices.

Just listen; don't think of responses, don't judge, or counter the storyteller's ideas in your mind.

Listen deeply; listen not only to the words of the storyteller, but to the tone, the pitch, the pace, their expression.

Listen with our whole selves; listening not only with our ears but with our hearts, listening to the storyteller's body language, their hands, their facial expression, their breathing, listening for the felt meaning in their words.

As we now look at the outcome of this project, as we listen to the stories of the storytellers, to the experiences of the story harvesters we can see and feel the power of this process. Alongside this we can learn from the process as it was carried out in Pakistan and aim to recreate it within all of our programming so that we can continue to honour the complexity and richness of people's lives and the personal meaning of change in their lives.

The reaffirmation of the power of listening that I received through connecting with this project and those involved in it, has reconnected me with my passion for listening as a transformative tool. It has motivated me to work with our teams globally to support us to truly listen to each other, to allow our diversity of selves flourish and to create safe and transformative programme strategies and spaces.

We hope that you enjoy this reflection document as much as we enjoyed the journey of this listening project.

Deirdre Campbell

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INTRODUCTION

'Conversation is a way of learning. When we talk, we learn from each other and take things forward' - Kashifa, Pakistan pilot participant.

Welcome to the Listening Through Story project.

This resource documents the process, stories and learning from the listening through story project conducted in Pakistan. **The aim of this resource** is to support the development of the Listening Through Story within women's empowerment programming by providing context, inspiration, ideas, and resources to promote a culture of listening to support learning and reflection.

The listening through story project was located within the context of the Trócaire Pakistan comprehensive programme to end GBV. The aim of this programme was to increase women's control over their lives and empower individuals, communities and institutions to respond safely to SGBV and to work together to prevent SGBV. The SGBV prevention element of programming employed the SASA methodology¹. Through using SASA! the programme aimed to support a transformation of social norms that produce, drive and maintain a power imbalance between women and men, girls and boys, which results in the use of power over women and girls, not allowing them to participate equally in decision-making and frequently resulting in experiences of SGBV, particularly within the home.

Stories from the project are interwoven through this document. The story tellers of this project were from two provinces of Pakistan: Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Both these regions not only vary geographically with Sindh being placed in a coastal region whereas KP is primarily home to the most beautiful mountainous ranges and lies at the border of Afghanistan and China. The cultural history, traits and social norms also vary at large and so does the gender socialisation. An important aspect in this regard is "position and condition" of women in both

regions. KP society is comparatively more restrictive in terms of women's mobility and right to make their decisions as compared to Sindh, though the situation for women is far from ideal in Sindh also. The story tellers were individuals from the rural areas of both the regions who had participated in the programme as staff, activists and participants.

As the aim of programming was to empower women, to support a balancing of power between women and men and to reduce SGBV experienced by women, therefore, we sought to capture predominately the experiences of women and the meaning of the programming in their lives. To this end we had a bias in our participant selection towards listening to women's stories, however recognizing that in working to create equality and prevent SGBV we also engage men, some male programme actors and participants were also included.

Section One outlines the Listening Through Story project and gives some context as to why this approach was taken and how it was integrated into a women's centered framework. It includes some details on the art of listening and why it is integral to women's centered approaches.

Section Two outlines the processes of the Pakistan Pilot project, shares the themes and patterns which emerged from the collected stories and offers insights gleaned from the story harvesters.

Section Three brings together recommendations and next steps.

Annexes: Further project background, and resources.

How this resource has been developed

This document was written following the completion of the Pakistan pilot Listening Through Story project in October 2020. The core learnings from the pilot programme have been integrated into this resource, in consultation with the core team involved: the story harvesters, project consultant, and main Trócaire team.

A Reflective Learning Model

The project has taken a 'Learning through Action' approach, applying a reflective learning process to develop the project as learnings were captured. At each phase of the project the core team met,

¹. SASA! is a community mobilization approach for the prevention of Violence Against Women and HIV. The methodology was developed by Raising Voices and implemented in the Trócaire Pakistan programme with technical support and guidance from Raising Voices.

reflected and applied the insights to the next steps of the development of the process. Applying a reflective learning method has meant that the project has been non-linear, adapting and responding as the project evolved and simultaneously responding to the needs, challenges and learnings which were arising as the project developed. The story of the project development is woven into this resource.

Who do we hope will benefit from this resource?

During the design phase of the Listening Through Story project, two core audiences were identified for this resource.

Core audience

This resource is initially intended as a programme support tool which can be embedded into transformational change programming in women's empowerment work. It is designed to be used by women's empowerment programme teams in-country, specifically targeting people who already have a good base with the core skills of listening*. For example, these may be Trócaire programme teams, partner staff implementing women's empowerment programming, or community networks and activists.

Associated audience

Associated audiences are those who can draw knowledge and learning from the project.

These have been identified as follows: global technical advisors across all programme areas, programme impact and learning technical advisors and associated colleagues in country teams.

** For teams where there is a low level of listening skills, there would need to be more training provided if this Listening Through Story method is to be used as a methodology.*

SECTION ONE: THE LISTENING THROUGH STORY PROJECT

What is the Listening Through Story Project?

'I like to share my story. I like to think of it as my success story. I want to be a role model if I can be. I want other girls and women to learn to fight and be hopeful. I feel quite satisfied having shared this with you' - Rabbiya, Pakistan 2020.

Every word in the title of the Listening Through Story project is significant and took on a certain power too:

Listening: An active process of engagement with the potential to support meaning making and deepen understanding of another person.

Through: A way, a process, a methodology.

Story: Weaving narrative to provide insights and build empathy.

The Listening Through Story project is an experiment in harnessing the power of all three of these aspects (listening, methodology or process, and storytelling). The intention was to listen to and understand women's centered stories of change and their lived experience, and then embed these learnings into Trócaire programming while simultaneously supporting the development of a listening culture within programme design and delivery.

The project took place within the context of transformational change to end gender-based violence. It includes a methodology designed to promote deeper listening and empathy called 'story harvesting', which is adapted from the field of narrative theory and traditional storytelling. The method seeks to open a space where storytelling can occur. Unlike in qualitative methods, the story harvesting method does not seek to compare the stories for data analysis. Instead, the story itself stands alone.

The Listening Through Story project, story harvesting specifically seeks to create safe spaces for listening to the voices of women and others involved in and impacted by the programme. In the context of this

pilot, story harvesting became a way of listening to individual stories of inner personal change, courage and resilience (the selected story harvesting themes), alongside stories of social transformation as a result of a person's participation in SASA! (a programme for transformational change towards ending gender inequality)

Why story?

'Story opens up a space between people that is unbound from the reality we are standing in. Our imaginative ability to tell story, and our empathic ability to receive story, can take us anywhere and make it real. In the act of telling a story, we create a world we invite others into. And in the act of listening to story, we accept an invitation into experiences that are not our own, although they seem to be. Story weaves a sense of familiarity.' - Christina Baldwin, Story catcher

Stories are ancient tools. From the time of cave dwelling, we have been telling stories to make meaning, leave a mark, share a message or a mission. Stories hold cultural cues and codes. Whether they be myth, folklore, urban legends or the re-telling of personal memories, the types of stories we choose to tell, and how we tell them, shape the world around us. What stories we choose to listen to, creates the world we live into. Creating a context and environment in which every person's story counts, is a ground for a fair, more just, more equitable world.

The story can be viewed as a unit of empathy and engagement. When you listen to another story and take time to let that person share your own world view, the exchange has a humanising effect. The story is a way to move past the external label which may stereotype individuals into categories. To listen at the individual story level is to listen at the level of humanity. Participants in projects, stakeholders, programme participants, advocates or activists are recast not as numbers or collectives, but as having complex, dynamic lives of meaning,

hurt, struggle, courage, resilience and change. They are made real again; real people, with real lives, with real consequences when that story is spoken, documented and shared.

The role of women's stories

'Silence encourages the tormentor, not never the tormented' - Elie Weisel

For far too long women's stories and lived experience have been sidelined in Western and patriarchal narratives. It is not just that they have been overlooked or dismissed, but the content in which the storytelling and listening happens- the stories which create society- are often unsafe or unsuitable for women to share their real lived experience. 'Is it safe to tell my story? What impact might that have on my family life? Does my story even matter?' are questions which are commonly asked by women.

And yet, when women's stories remain untold, unheard and unvalued, and when the silence continues, the systems of patriarchy which uphold the gender inequality that defines women's lives are maintained. The discrimination, injustices and gender-based violence experienced by women as a result of gender inequality is also maintained. So how to actively create women centered listening spaces, how to do so in safe, supportive and strategic ways and how might barriers to hearing women's voices be removed, not just the voices of survivors but also of the activists, women centered organisations, service providers and anyone whose life have been touched by gender inequality and the programmes that seek to address it.

At the heart of storytelling is also vulnerability. Storytellers are opening up their lives for examination. How that opening is invited and held, especially in the context of lived experiences of gender inequality and discrimination, is of such importance. If not held with compassion and trust, the storytelling and sharing process could do more harm than good, with old wounds unsealed, past hurts triggered, and distress created. And so, key questions arise on how to care for the stories which are shared, and most importantly, the lives of the real people contained in them.

Very often, storytelling in the context of NGO and development work is an afterthought- tacked on at the end of projects as a way to 'tell the story' of the results of the project. Stories of course, whether

THE LISTENING THROUGH STORY PAKISTAN PROJECT STORIES



In total, ten stories were harvested. Below are the edited versions of each. Some names have been changed to protect privacy.

SAJEELA' STORY

Sajeela* is a SASA Community Development Officer
* name has been changed

ON COURAGE

Sajeela believes strongly in education for women, including herself. Despite opposition from her paternal grandmother, she started negotiating with her family to allow her to get a university education. From a completely rural and religious background, Sajeela managed to gain admission to the nearest university, six hours from home, returning to visit her family twice a month. Because of her courage and persistence, Sajeela became the first female in her family to obtain a university education. She has since become the first female to be employed, in an office job.

ON CHANGE

Given her belief in education, Sajeela also helped her sister to be admitted into medical school. Exerting influence, through her father, she also intervened to stop her younger cousins (underage at 16 or 17 years) from getting married before turning 18 and instead, continue their education.

Sajeela also intervened with her father on the matter of her aunt's inheritance, something she attributes to her journey with SASA. It was through her SASA experience, she explains, she had the knowledge, understanding and tools to continue, while also having the courage to consult a male colleague in SASA to tackle this sensitive topic.

Feeling extremely nervous before approaching her father, Sajeela said. "I waited for the right moment.

When he was walking in the yard after dinner, I joined him. He is usually relaxed when he walks in the evening. I remember my palms were sweating. Most of all, I remember thinking what if he does not agree, would I be able to trust him again, would I be able to respect him, I would be so disheartened? That prospect made me more nervous and scared than any other thought."

She did talk to her father. 'I used myself as an example', she explained, 'He loves me, so I asked him would he want me to be left without my rightful inheritance? How would he expect my brother to treat me?'"

Not only did she convince her father, but she also convinced him to talk to his other brothers, as the inheritance had to be decided by all of them. In a ground-breaking act for her family, Sajeela's father spoke with his brothers and they agreed to give her aunt her share of the inheritance.

Sajeela shared how she felt truly empowered and could actually feel that her voice counted for something in her family. 'My aunt called me especially to thank me. It made me feel very good and in that moment, I felt my work can mean something, for my family is moving towards the ideas of justice and fairness which I learned mostly through SASA'"

ON RESILIENCE

Sajeela asserted that her true moment of resilience was when her mother wanted her to get married to her nephew (sister's son). 'My mother had been my ally in my goal for getting to university and she also supported me to raise my concerns with my father over the inheritance issue. But now, my ally was the one forcing me to consider her nephew for marriage. I was not convinced but I was also emotionally alone without my mother."

Sajeela was not attracted to her cousin and wanted to say no. She was also disappointed that she was not supported by her aunt, the one who she had supported in getting her the right of inheritance. Sajeela's aunt thought Sajeela was being unreasonable, since the man in question had good economic and social standing.

Sajeela realised she had to communicate all this to her father, without her mother's support. "My mother went as far as to say it is all because of my work with the NGOs'. I left my job and stayed at home for nearly

six months as I had to show my family that it is not any NGO, this who I am. This is me", said Sajeela

Throughout her time at her home, however, her father listened to her. "My father told my mother that he values what I have to say. He said that if he is thankful to me for intervening with my aunt's inheritance issue, as if I had not done that, his sister would not have been here with him in closeness and relations continuing positively."

In the end, the marriage proposal was rejected. Sajeela felt that this was the moment she realized her self-worth.

And what differences did she see between the Sajeela before SASA and after, she replied, 'Speaking up; distinguish between right and wrong, self-worth and decision making, "Sajeela from 2016 was tentative in making decisions. Today Sajeela does not only make her own decisions, she has the ability to choose the life she wants to live" ■

visual narratives or written, are powerful drivers of change. They can help to raise money, or used as tools to communicate an organisation's mission, which is why the principles and practices of ethical storytelling are so vital. However, there are no clear-cut answers to some of the complex questions which ethical storytelling raises:- Who owns the story? What happens to the story? What are some of the responsibilities of the story gatherers?

Empathic Listening and Ethical Storytelling

The Listening through Story project is an experiment weaving these strands of empathic listening and ethical storytelling together. It is about listening to women centered stories in nuanced ways, listening to what is said and what is not said, listening for themes and patterns, and engaging in listening as a practice of empathy building and awareness. It takes into consideration the space in which the storytelling is taking place, asking questions around safety, confidentiality and support, and then it considers the 'after life' of that story- how it is held and cared for, documented and treated. In the Listening Through Story pilot project, a range of voices were incorporated, with an intentional focus on promoting the participation of women, including community activists, survivors and religious leaders, teachers and community development officers. All of this was conducted with ethical storytelling and women centered principles as central guides.

TASNEEM'S STORY

* name has been changed

Tasneem is a young woman (around 20 years) who lives in Hyderabad and was encouraged by her uncle to get involved in social work activities from a young age.

ON COURAGE

Tasneem came across as a very confident young woman, and despite her Thalassaemia condition, she was doing a lot to help the people in her community.

ON CHANGE

Tasneem was most proud of getting a young girl, around 14 years old, who had discontinued her education in grade 8, back to school. Both the girl and her mother were unconvinced that there was any value in her continuing her education. However, Tasneem counseled the girl and her mother and convinced them of the importance of continuing school. "I told the mother did she want the same life for her daughter as hers or a better life. I told her times are changing and without an education her daughter might have even lesser life opportunities than her mother. Similarly, I asked the daughter if she wanted to have the same kind of life that her mother does where so many opportunities and simple avenues are closed to her because she is not educated."

Tasneem also shared a story of helping a girl get enrolled in school with the support of her father. A family in their neighbourhood was sending their sons to schools but not their daughter. Tasneem intervened and convinced the family to send their daughter to school also.

Tasneem now does trainings for her community. "I feel most alive when I am conducting these trainings. When I am able to answer questions that women ask me during these sessions, I feel quite good about myself as I think I might have given someone a way to come out of a previous confusion they might have had about their rights or their position or their role in society"

Aside from the trainings, Tasneem is also involved in Nari Mela (a women's festival) where there are street theatre performances by SASA community activists and other community members from SASA communities. Tasneem has participated in these as MC and/or performer. "When I perform at these events, with so many people, my friends are really impressed. They are quite surprised at my confidence... I always tell

them that they can do this too. A few of my friends seeing my participation have also started participating regularly in SASA events. Since I was a part of these and their families know my family, there was little or no resistance from them"

ON RESILIENCE

Tasneem wanted to learn to drive, so as to be independent, "I knew that I cannot ask my brother to drop me places. To be truly independent, I should be able to drive a car", she said. And so, she asked her brother to teach her how to drive. He refused saying, 'what will our friends and neighbours and those who know us say when they see you driving around learning to drive?'"

Tasneem however, refused to give up. "I was very disappointed. Everything that I discussed with other people in the community. All things I have learnt from my SASA experience, it seemed didn't matter. All of the same attitudes had come around and were looking at me. I felt a heaviness at this thought"

Tasneem discussed the issue with her father. He intervened with the suggestion of the brother taking her at night- and thus that was the compromise struck for Tasneem to learn to drive. 'This way', Tasneem said, 'I maintain the trust of my brother for the future as well.' ■

At a wider level the project seeks to encourage listening and ethical storytelling as core tools in organisational programming. It is hoped that this may ripple through the ways in which Trócaire can enhance empathy as a practice across programme design and delivery to enhance learning and support adaptation.

A Story Gap

'Conversation is a way of learning. When we talk, we learn from each other and take things forward' - Pakistan Listening Through Story, pilot participant, 2020.

The Listening Through Story project arose out of a sense that the ways in which women's stories and experiences are listened to, incorporated, and responded to within programming could be improved. There was a sense that by following the often highly quantitative approach to programme monitoring

and evaluation embedded within transformational change programmes, the real meaning of individual's stories, particularly women's stories, were not being fully captured or represented. While qualitative data is also sought, in practice an emphasis on quantitative data and analysis and an overweighting on its value in reporting was missing the nuance and deeper experiences that the participants engaged in transformational change programming were reporting. In a sense, there was a 'story gap'.

In thinking about what might have contributed to the story gap, a few contributing factors were seen to be important:

- systemic obstacles and barriers to hearing women's voices, particularly in the context of Pakistan where often women face challenges to speaking out in male dominated culture.
- the space and context in which women centered stories could be shared, for example, whether it would be safe to have conversations in the home, and within these spaces if women truly feel able to speak without being overheard or judged.
- the process used to listen to and document the stories

Setting the Design Question and Challenge.

The Listening Through Story project formed around the principles and practices of women-centered research and learning, and the practices of ethical storytelling. It was important that the ways in which the stories were captured sought to challenge and transform gender inequality which produces and reproduces violence against women. The method itself, it was felt, should be supportive, and safe, while helping to create a sense of connection which creates the conditions for the storyteller to feel seen, heard, understood and accepted.

Taking inspiration from the project sources (see annex 1), and specifically methods from Human Centered Design Thinking, a core design question was set from which the design challenge was framed.

Original Design Question

How might we design a behavioural change story harvest process which is adopted and implemented by Trócaire and is a tool for our partner programmes?

And from this question, we framed the *design challenge*:

Design a story harvesting process which captures transformational change learning on gender inequality, and which can become a learning model to enable Trócaire to become a better authentic listener in all its women's empowerment programmes.

This design challenge helped develop the initial project design, and later in the project was a support to refocus when the design elements became unclear. It acted as a guide-rope, to help bring the intention of the process back to the core aim.

What is Story Harvesting

Story harvesting is a methodology which captures systemic learning from groups. It is a process in which a 'story harvester' listens to a 'storyteller' share their story. While a story is being shared, a story harvester is listening out for key, pre-identified themes. When the storyteller finishes sharing the story, the story harvester reports back what they heard under each of the themes. Using this method, the storyteller feels witnessed and validated, while having a chance to correct any misinterpretations in the story. It is a two-way listening process, where both the storyteller and the story harvester hold the power in the process.

Terminology

Key participants:

Story harvester: A person who listens to and collects/writes the story

Storyteller: A person telling the story

The collection or set of stories gathered is called 'The Story Harvest'

Unlike conventional data gathering, the 'story harvesting' template is kept intentionally simple, with as few structured questions as possible. The aim is to follow a loose set of themes or guidelines which help to shape the conversation.

Checking for Themes and Patterns

Following the collection of individual stories, the full set of stories is examined for themes, patterns and learning across the context. In this way, it helps programme designers to see systemic change, or patterns of change. Listening for themes helps to give a focus and shape to the conversation.

In the case of the Listening Through Story project, the story harvesters were listening out for the themes of courage, change and resilience, as they were felt to be of particular relevance to SASA! in capturing women centered narratives.

Why the themes of courage, change and resilience?

In the area of gender inequality and gender-based violence, it takes huge courage to stand up and speak out, whether a man or a woman, but particularly for women. Speaking out is not a one-off incident, but requires resilience to keep going, as the stories in the Pakistan pilot so clearly demonstrate. Storytellers spoke of opposition within their close family, their communities and in the culture at large, and spoke of the inner struggles and courage it took to break taboos and challenge patriarchal culture.

The heart of the social norms change methodologies is transformation, and so the pilot sought to listen to narratives of the inner and outer changes taking place. It is not always possible to directly attribute a personal or social change to a programme intervention, but the collection of stories does show both the overall themes and patterns of change which are reflected in the set of experiences of the storytellers, and the context in which those changes were happening.

For more background to the project, see annex 1

ASIF'S STORY

* name has been changed

Born in Jamshoro, Asif is a local religious leader. Growing up, he believed in education. His family had a low income, and so he decided his best route into education was through religious studies. He completed 8 years of Islamic education. Inspired by the former chief executive of one of the implementing partners of SASA! Asif has started looking more into the issue of men and women's relationships, especially where there is conflict or disparities in the marriage.

ON CHANGE

'I was introduced to SASA! through a friend of mine', he explained, 'I used to hit children. I was jealous of my younger sister, she was good at studies, better than I was. After the 6th grade she had to stay at home since she was a girl. I was quite happy about that since it meant that she would not be able to beat me in studies. However, with SASA! intervention, Asif's behaviour and attitudes began to shift, 'When I was part of SASA! the message which stayed with me was equality between men and women on the basis of being women. That is the same message as Islam. Islam prohibits violence for men and women both.' It was here that SASA! and Islam messages started converging for him. "This made me rethink and re-evaluate my approach. SASA! made me realise that women's problems are my problem as well. You cannot hope to solve a problem till you own it. I own the problem of VAW now"

Asif's attitudes towards the concept of restricted mobility (chaddar and chardewari), stopping education, and the inability to work are not Islamic but rather forms of gender-based violence. 'The first thing I did was to take a stand for my sister to go back to school. I overcame my jealousy once I accepted her equality as a human being'

His sister, now 15, has resumed school.

ON RESILIENCE

Asif is part of a neighbourhood self-help group which resolves personal issues including issues of marital violence and abuse. 'Before SASA! I would talk about female education, but I never took on the issue of violence against women', he explained, 'Now the issue of violence against women is a regular part of my sermon. Asif now travels to several villages to give sermons in different mosques, helping to spread the SASA! message. 'People complain to my father about my sermons at times', he said, 'I wanted to film my Friday sermon, but the congregation stopped me as they knew what I was going to say.

It is his dream that every child in his area is able to go to school. 'I want to empower all girls and women to be able to get an education and work and fulfil their potential'.

At the end of the story harvest, he said, 'Conversation is a way of learning. When we talk, we learn from each other and take things forward'. ■

On the Art of Listening

“If we can share our story with someone who responds with empathy and understanding, shame can’t survive.” - Brene Brown

Good listening takes time. It can be challenging and demanding. But, like any art, it involves skill which can be learned and refined with practice and intention.

In a world of noise and distraction we may be hearing a lot, but are we really listening? Listening involves going deeper than the noise to create meaning and increase understanding. It is an active rather than a passive process, and when done well can have a transformative effect on all those involved.

At an individual level, to be listened to well, can create feelings of relief, solidarity, support and trust. When the listening is done with the intention to build understanding and congruence, it can have a unifying effect, generating empathy and connection. The same goes at a programme or community level. Listening for understanding can help to increase cultural and contextual knowledge, and help deepen awareness of the real need, and opportunities present.

What do we mean as a practice?

A practice is a skill and competency which is developed and refined over time, through continual use and on-going reflective engagement. It is through the approach to the development skills in this way, we come to understand them as requiring on-going attention, refinement and learning. Attending a one-off training on listening or empathy is not enough, but approaching each encounter or, in this case, story harvest, as listening and empathy building *practice*, embeds an intentional and focused approach to story gathering. Practice does not make perfect, it makes progress.

In the context of the on-going development of the Listening Through Story Project, the hope is to harness the listening and communication skills which are already developed in the teams supporting and implementing the programme. With further refinement, intention and practice, their current level of skill can be enhanced and deepened. This is not about starting from scratch but building on current competencies and skill level.

Read more about the Art of Listening within the Listening Through Story Project in Annex 2.

Using the Women Centered Approach- Some of Core Principles.

Why use a women’s centered approach?

A women centered approach takes into special consideration the experiences, context and lives of women. It seeks to challenge patriarchal power structures and is sensitive to the cultural and social spaces women inhabit. Taking a women’s centered approach is particularly important at the design phase of projects, as women centered principles (see below) can be woven into the structure, approach and development of the project from conception to execution.

Principles of a Women Centered Approach

Safety: Taking into account the context or space in which the story is told.

Confidentiality: Taking into account issues of on-going informed consent, and how data and stories are held.

Solidarity: Taking into account power dynamics among storytellers and story harvesters and allowing for an emotional connection to be fostered between participants.

What we are seeking to do by adopting a women’s centered approach

In the context of the Listening Through Story project, a women’s centered approach was adopted because it seeks to do the following:

Amplify women’s voice: the approach seeks to contribute to removing barriers of hearing women as the experts and authors of their own lives and how this translates into policy decisions and programming. It strategically places women as researchers and experts and promotes them into policy dialogue.

Takes an intersectional approach to identity and experiences of discrimination, exclusion and marginalisation: it seeks to recognise the diversity of women’s experiences, identities and power.

Aims to shift power: the approach seeks to reconstruct traditional power imbalances such as researcher / subject and aims to challenge and shift gendered sources of personal, political and structural power.

SECTION TWO: LISTENING THROUGH STORY IN PAKISTAN

Introduction to the Listening Through Story Pakistan pilot.

'Conversation is a way of learning. When we talk, we learn from each other and take things forward' - Kashifa, Pakistan pilot participant.

The Listening Through Story project Pakistan was conducted from March 2020- October 2020. It involved bringing on board two local female story harvesters, gathering ten local stories, and had the support of the story consultant and a core project team.

The Storytellers

Those who shared their stories are the central actors in this project. Ensuring that they were informed about the project, its purpose, the expectations of participants, who would conduct the story harvest and that they were given time and space to consider their participation was of paramount importance. This was supported by local GBV programme partner organisations who worked within the communities. A range of people were selected who had each participated in the SGBV prevention programming at some level. Community activists, a local religious leader, a programme manager (looking after CGBV Programme), a SASA! community development officer. Along with a selection of community women and men who were programme participants.

The Story Harvesters

Story harvesters were selected based on their experience of working in support of women's empowerment, applying a women's centered approach and sensitivity to context and gender inequality. Additionally, pre-existing listening and communicating skills were essential. The Story harvesters were from Pakistan, embedded within programming and had local knowledge, insight and language skills.

Training and Support to Story harvesters

In advance of the Story harvest, a half-day training workshop was conducted online. Participants included

the story harvesters, core team and several SASA! community activities, and field staff.

The aims of the workshop were as follows:

- Increase **understanding** of the Listening Through Story project
- Give participants an experience of a participatory **listening** and increased understanding of how to create safe listening spaces.
- Provide an experience of a **story harvest** and a review of the process
- And to offer a roadmap for how the Listening through Story process would be **implemented**.

The workshop included a discussion on 'how to create safe listening spaces' and offered some basic deep listening modules such as Otto Scharmer's 'levels of listening, and then included a practice story harvest process using the story harvesting template (see appendix for overview of training and story harvesting template).

Following the training workshop, a model of mentorship and accompaniment was used to support the story harvesters in their preparation for the project. The story consultant was in regular contact with the story harvesters, hosting several follow up conversations, planning discussions and training through mentorship to ensure they felt ready to conduct the harvests. After three harvests were completed, there was a review of the process to learn from the experience and to adapt the process as necessary for further story harvests.

What did use of a women centered approach look like in practice?

As the listening through story project was grounded in women's empowerment programming where we are working to transform gender inequality and end GBV, it was important that the project itself was shaped by this commitment. To support this, we looked to ethical and safety best practice on research and learning on GBV and feminist principles for research

GULL BIBI'S STORY

Gull Bibi, living in Swat, has never been to school and got married as a teenager and now volunteers with SASA! She is motivated to work with SASA! because it has given her the ability to call out unfairness and injustice faced by girls and women.

ON COURAGE

Gull Bibi has a strong belief in the power of education, especially for girls, and with the help of a local legal aid center and SASA! has been active in preventing early child marriage in her community. "In our society, we think that women do not have the ability to think on their own as they are not as clever or as intelligent as men". It is this attitude, believes Gull, that is at the heart of a lot of discrimination that women face, and its consequence.

She is determined that it will be different for her daughter. "I have a 13-year-old daughter, there is a lot of pressure on me to get her married. I am convinced she must study so she has a better life and more choices than I did". Gull Bibi went on to explain some of the challenges of her decision, "There are those who don't want to meet me anymore because they feel insulted when I refused their sons or brothers' proposal for my daughter.... I always felt these practices were wrong. SASA! Gave me a way to help stop the injustice"

ON RESILIENCE

Gull Bibi has since helped women and girls get their share in their inheritance and has been working to help prevent women to be forced into a marriage not of their choosing, or against their will, "It makes me unpopular with a lot of quite influential people, I know that, but calling it out as unfair is the least we can do."

Gull's Bibi's husband, she explained, has been quite supportive of her work, "I spoke with him in confidence the day I decided to do this. He has supported my work as I made him see how by helping others not only are we alleviating their problems, we are collecting good karma for us and our daughter too-what goes around comes around" ■

and learning on gender inequality. We then sought to embed these core principles within the project. Below is an outline of the ethical and safety principles employed within the project.

At the outset the core project team took into consideration our commitment to addressing gender inequality by considering what we wished to examine, whose stories would be represented, who would collect them, how a process of active informed consent would be maintained, and what change we wanted to see. It was at this stage that we identified the importance of amplifying women's voices. To do this we needed to strategically seek to remove barriers to hearing women's voices and specifically seek female storytellers. We also sought to be aware of and mitigate the power imbalances that might impact on the stories we would hear. This was addressed by the identification of local story harvesters, support from programme implementing partners to identify storytellers, and a keen contextual awareness of the cultural, social and systemic obstacles to women sharing their lived experiences.

The following describes the ethical and safety principles that underpinned all steps in the project and describes how they were practiced within the project.

Safety: In line with our work towards 'do no harm' and being women and survivor-centered in all our work on women's empowerment we identified safety as a core principle. Safety involves many core aspects and ethical practices for both the storytellers and the story harvesters and was realised in the project by using the following principles and practices.

Storytellers:

- **Confidentiality:** This reflects the belief that people have the right to choose to whom they will or will not tell their story, the parts of their story that they will share and to choose the purposes for which the story will be used/ parameters of sharing the story beyond the space in which it is shared between the storyteller and story harvester. The project purpose and aim were shared with all storytellers at the point that they were identified as potential participants, as well as a description of the process, including noting who the story harvesters were, and how the stories would be captured and shared. This aimed to support them to consider their participation.

- **Anonymity:** This reflects the belief or understanding that sharing personal stories may have potential impacts beyond the space in which they are shared, and therefore the option of anonymity can mitigate against the risk of negative impacts being experienced by the storyteller after the process has completed. The option for anonymity was afforded to all storytellers and they were supported to consider this and assess what felt right for them in their given situation. The result of this step was that for all but one of the stories the identity of the storyteller is protected by changing their name and offering no identifiable details.
- **Privacy:** This reflects the understanding that a safe space supports storytellers to be more confident in sharing their story, and to hold the parameters of confidentiality. Supporting storytellers to participate in a space that afforded them the privacy to tell their story without concern of being overheard, being noticed as participating in a process whereby they might later be questioned as to what the process was about was supported by the partners who identified and engaged the storyteller. This was made somewhat more challenging by the context of COVID 19 whereby the conversations were hosted not in-person but remotely. However, partner teams did spend time with the storyteller and supported them to give consideration to the space they would be in, the time of day that would be most suitable, and the technology that they required to support the conversation in a private manner.
- **Care and Wellbeing:** Participating in personal change programming that challenges gender inequality, and the discriminations and violence that occur as a result of it, comes with the challenge of noticing how these discriminations have impacted individuals in their lives. As a result, talking about these issues can at times be challenging and can become distressing for individuals. The team were cognisant of this throughout and it was taken into consideration at the point of identifying potential storytellers and throughout the conversations, whereby the programme partners and the story harvesters were alert to any potential or actual distress. Only persons who were directly involved in the programming and therefore linked to partner organisations and supports were selected for participation. This allows for them to be cared for

before, during and after the process. Additionally, clear referral pathways were ensured so that referrals for support could be supported if required.

Respect: Respect is core to our work, and in this project, respect included the following principles

- **Informed voluntary participation and consent:** A voluntary, active and ongoing process of consent was built into the project. Partner staff identified potential storytellers who were involved in the programme as either implementers or programme participants and explained the project to them and how their stories would be used and sought their voluntary and informed consent to participate. At the outset of each story harvest session the story harvesters also took time to check with each storyteller about their comfort to participate and reiterated their right to stop the process or withdraw at any time without any consequence.

Understanding Active and Informed Consent



Active Consent is not a once off signing of a consent form, but rather it is a process that accompanies all interactions with the storyteller. It seeks to explain the following and negotiate the parameters of the story harvest and use of the story:

- What we are seeking to do/achieve.
- How we will gather information - what is involved for the person if they choose to participate and that they are under no obligation to participate as a condition of participating in the programming and/or services.
- How we will use the story beyond the space where it is shared, and a negotiation on what use of the story feels comfortable for them.
- That they can remove themselves from the process at any time, and without any negative impacts of consequences on their interaction with the programme.
- That they maintain the right to withdraw consent for continued use of their story at any time or to assign an expiry date for the use of the story. The story always remains that of the storyteller.

- **Awareness and mitigation of power imbalances:** the core team were aware of the traditional power imbalance of interviewer and subject and how this can impact on a participant's sense of autonomy and control in participating. Key steps taken to mitigate against this was the identification and selection of participants by partner staff and the selection of local story harvesters.

Story Harvesters

- **Training and accompaniment:** The story harvesters were specifically selected for their experience in supporting and working in programming to address gender inequality and GBV, as well as having good baseline listening and communication skills. This was intentional, as it meant that they came to the project with the core knowledge and competencies that supported a safe project. Additionally, further training on empathic listening, identifying themes, documenting stories, and a process of accompaniment and mentorship whereby the story harvesters met with the core team throughout to speak to progress, challenges and to collectively problem solve supported ongoing safety.
- **Care and Wellbeing:** Listening to stories of gender inequality and discriminations can take a toll on the listener. The potential for this was discussed in the planning, and mitigating factors included the story harvesters conducting the story harvests jointly so that they could support each other and debrief on the story. Also, the accompaniment and mentorship by the core team allowed for regular check ins on how things were proceeding and allowed the story harvesters a space to raise any concerns.

SHAHZADI'S STORY

Shahzadi, living in SWAT, has completed a private B.A degree. She also writes poetry and has been involved in community work. Her motivation in her own words is "I can't remain quiet when I see something which is clearly unfair or unjust"

ON COURAGE

Despite setbacks, Shahzadi has continued in her commitment to human rights. She explained that when she first became involved in these issues, there was an unfortunate case of fraud. A man had asked

her to collect money from ten other women to start a human rights organisation. However, he turned out to be a serial con-artist and defrauded her of the money. Shahzadi was determined not to let this stop her, and continued to work for human rights, as she believed they are important and continue to need attention.

Shahzadi went on to share stories surrounding her two engagements, each with their challenges too.

At one stage, Shahzadi was engaged to her cousin, four years younger to her, who joined the Taliban at the height of the conflict. She waited 13 years before it was confirmed that he had been apprehended and was serving time in jail. It was only at this point her family called off the engagement. About 2-3 years later, Shahzadi became engaged again. 'This time I took matters into my own hands' she explained, 'as far as knowing my marriage contract (nikahnama) and agreeing to a prenuptial as part of the marriage contract'. Shahzadi had agreed in the prenuptial that in the case of a divorce, her husband would have to give her an amount of gold jewelry.

However, that relationship was also called off, she explained, "As it turned out, my husband-to-be and his family lied to us. It wasn't a big deal, but it was an unnecessary lie which put me off. I asked him for a divorce." Shahzadi explained that she had wanted to go for umrah (paying homage at Makkah- unlike the pilgrimage of hajj, umrah can be performed throughout the year). He then fiancé had at first agreed to finance it but later refused. "The reason he cited was that his father was not willing." This then escalated into more serious allegations against her and her family, "They started spreading rumours about my brother and mother; that they never wanted me to be married but just wanted this as a means to get money. I was upset. I confronted my fiancé, but he did not support me and that is when I decided to get a divorce... I am now that woman who has failed at getting married twice. This is not an enviable position to be in, but I believe that what I did was right, and I will carry on with my work too"

ON CHANGE

Shahzadi spoke about how the SASA! Trainings were key elements of the change for her regarding her decision to leave her relationship, "These trainings gave me and others the ability to understand that husbands cannot restrict their wives from that which is their legal and religious right, that women should have a share in inheritance too". ■

How a women's centered approach was applied

The following table shows how a women's centered approach was taken in the Pakistan pilot, and embedding the learnings from the project, what might be improved going forward.

	<i>How this was approached in the Pilot</i>	How this might have been improved in the pilot
Design Question	<p><i>We set the design question as:</i></p> <p><i>Design a story harvesting process which captures transformational change learning on gender inequality, and which can become a learning model to enable Trócaire to become a better authentic listener in all its women's empowerment programmes.</i></p>	<p>Should have been even more explicit about what strategies support us to amplify women's voices in the design question.</p> <p>We should have been more explicit about looking for the impact of behaviour change on women's lived experience of gender inequality.</p> <p>Involving story tellers in the design phase would also be a way of breaking with the story harvest / storyteller dichotomy</p>
Partner with local women centered organisations and civil society groups	<p>We partnered with local organisations who identified the stories to be gathered, and selected two story harvesters</p>	<p>Be more explicit with the story harvesters that we want to amplify women's voices and women's lived experience.</p> <p>Seek to find more women's organisations to work with.</p>
Prioritise women's safety and respect their time:	<p>Design conversations took place with the story harvesters about how best to set up the place and conversations with the story tellers. Considerations of safety were explicitly mentioned, such as, privacy of the space, check in at start of story harvest to ensure it is still a good time and place.</p>	<p>Integrate a follow up call/ thank you call with the story tellers.</p> <p>Ensure awareness of time women may have available (length and time of day)</p> <p>Remind storytellers of active and on-going consent principles.</p>
Evaluate and re-evaluate the study's progress	<p>After design, training, pre-story gathering, mid-way through the core team gathered and reviewed progress, making adaptations and additions to respond to the emerging learning.</p>	<p>Share emerging themes with partners and participants to check for familiarity and surprises</p>
Consider multiple ways to collect data:		<p>If circumstances permitted, it would have been good to conduct individual story harvests and a group story harvest. This would require some additional guidance and support. COVID context did not permit the group story harvest</p>
Consider what change we want to see:	<p>Woven into the design question was the hope that this women's centered approach would be adopted by Trocaire, so that we can strategically challenge obstacles and foster opportunities for women's voices to be heard within our learning, and then to inform programming.</p>	

Challenges

Every project or programme brings its own set of learnings and challenges. The project was initially designed in late 2019 and early 2020 and the intention was to use processes to sensitize the communities about the project, allow for identification of potential participants and then to conduct story harvests in person within the programme communities. However, the emerging and continued context of COVID 19 and resultant restrictions meant that in-person processes had to be adapted. Here are a few of the challenges that this new context gave rise to in the Listening Through Story project:

Contextual Challenges: The project was being developed as COVID-19 was spreading globally. Both Ireland and Pakistan were in lockdown at the start of the programme, which made it difficult to plan how the story harvesters should work. It was decided that stories would have to be harvested digitally/ online, and not in person. The constraints curtailed the initial ambition of the project, where initially it was through 30 stories could be gathered, which was then reduced to 10.

Technical challenges: Given that stories would be harvested online, storytellers would have to have connectivity- phone and internet. Access to these was facilitated and supported by partner organisations in advance of the story harvest, where needed.

Safety challenges: Particular consideration would be needed when thinking about the spaces where women were to share their story. Since stories had to be harvested remotely, there was less scope for the story harvester to assess whether the storyteller was in a safe space and had less control of the context/ surroundings in which the story harvesting would take place. However, story harvesters worked with partners to identify suitable times and places, and also what equipment may be needed. At the beginning of the story session, story harvesters checked with the storyteller to see if they still felt safe to share their story in that context.

Language Barriers: In two of the stories harvested, only one of the story harvesters spoke that local language. By conducting the harvest in the local language (where one only one rather than two story harvesters were present), it meant that only one harvester could attend that story telling session. However, conducting in the local language did help to build trust and confidence between the story harvester and the storyteller.

Time Constraints and timing:

Having enough time and not rushing the storytellers was an important factor, often challenged with the demands on the participants and also the time of the day when the stories could be gathered. It was noted that many of the storytellers had access to mobile phone or devices in the evening, but this was not always the time when they could create the safest listening environment as there were other family members around.

The Journey of the Story - working with the stories collected.

The following is how the story travels from the storytellers to the documentation process, while following a women's centered and ethical storytelling approach.

1. Story harvesting template is designed and story themes agreed
2. Story harvesting session is arranged and terms of consent agreed
3. Story session is recorded/ ideally two-story harvesters per story
4. Close out of session and follow up thank you email
5. Story harvesting template is completed by each individual story harvesters
6. Story harvesters compare notes
7. A single story on the themes is written up
8. Stories are gathered and edited by main story consultant
9. Themes and patterns in the stories identified
10. Final version of the story is written up
11. Final version of the story is shared, via the story harvested with the storyteller for approval
12. Confidentiality notes and other storage and consent details are kept with the story

Themes and Pattern emerging from the Stories

The following are some of the themes and patterns on challenging the socio-cultural norms that limit women's participation in decision making, create and sustain a power imbalance between women and men and perpetuate violence against women and girls which could be seen across the stories harvested.

RABBIYA'S STORY

Rabbiya Sama is a SASA Coordinator in Jamboro

ON COURAGE

'I have been vocal before this project. SASA! made me realise my power within more', said Rabbiya. At 17, Rabbiya had gained admission to Veterinary Science in a nearby university. However, she had withdrawn when she was married by her family to an older man who was "well settled" and owned his own prosperous business.

Rabbiya shared that in 2010, the stress of her marriage triggered a breakdown, which she described as going into a coma which she came out of 15 days later, "I considered it a second chance at life and was determined to finish my education and be economically independent", said Rabbiya. 'My elder brother and my parents supported me through this'. Rabbiya went on to get her master's degree in English literature. She also decided she wanted to bring up her son herself, which required her to be economically independent and 'ready to face the world'.

She is currently separated from her husband and lives independently with her son.

ON CHANGE

Due to a sexually restrictive environment, Rabbiya believes girls are at a higher risk of exploitation by men if they choose to have sexual relations with men out of (or before) marriage. Witnessing women in this and similar compromising situations, who do not understand their legal rights and legal processes, compelled her to pursue a degree in law. She is currently enrolled in the local university which she believes will help give her better support to other women facing SGBV.

Rabiya travelled alone to Uganda for the SASA! training. "It was my first journey out of the country", she said, 'I was the only woman traveling from Pakistan. All other trainees from Pakistan were men. Living on my own away from the support networks of family and friends, I realised I can do things on my own. I can be more independent."

She also shared that she used this newfound confidence to protect herself from a young man who had begun to cyberstalk and harass her. 'For a moment, I did feel vulnerable and even feared the stigma if I were to report it. Then I realised within me that I have the courage to face any criticism and that reporting it is the right thing

to do. Protecting myself is my right'. Rabbiya reported the crime to the police, which brought an end to the harassment.

ON RESILIENCE

'I am the first woman from the Samo family to be working and that too with an office job', said Rabbiya, which was not without opposition, 'My sisters in law (brother's wife) criticised my working and wearing jeans. But it was through my work she also came to respect me. My sister in law's brother was named in a police report (FIR). I knew how the police work because of SASA! trainings so was able to guide them. I also knew people in the police department because of my work with SASA! so I was able to ensure that the issue was investigated in a fair manner. As it turned out, my sister in law's brother was innocent and the issue was resolved'.

'I want to share my story with everyone', said Rabbiya. 'If I can inspire other girls and women, I would want nothing better. I want them to know it is possible to heal and it is possible to succeed after being hurt. I don't want other girls and women to go through what I went through. My teenage years my youth was sacrificed for maintaining social appearances and adhering to social norms. It almost killed me. I want my story to go out to everyone. Everyone should know not to marry off their daughters as teenagers and kill their potential. In Uganda, we were given an analogy of climbing a rocky mountain. While one is climbing up, nobody helps but everybody has an opinion about your shirt blowing or your pants tugging. They will never help you though. We were told that if we want to reach the top of that mountain and not remain stuck at the craggy part, we need to ignore all those opinions. So, I ignore all those opinions now. To move ahead, you have to ignore this noise.'

Following her engagement with SASA! Rabbiya said she now is 'fearless', but this has economic compromises as she has to work to keep her son independently.

'I have realised that people are in pain. This is what SASA! does, it brings out the inner you. It also equips people like me to help the people in pain which I am happy to do.'

At the end of the story harvest, Rabbiya said, feeling happy, 'I like to share my story. I like to think of it as my success story. I want to be a role model if I can be. I want other girls and women to learn to fight and be hopeful. I feel quite satisfied having shared this with you and you should share it with my name and details. ■

Strong Belief in Education: Access to education for all emerged as a strong theme. Storytellers shared examples of family and community interventions to gain access to education for girls, eliminate child marriage and establish patterns where girls were automatically afforded the right to education. Often once one female in a family had gained access to education, they became advocates for younger women in their family and wider community.

Aspiring to more than previous generations: There was a strong theme of aspiration in the stories harvested, with storytellers seeking more opportunities in education, economy and lifestyle than the previous generation. There was also a theme of seeking to improve conditions from successive generations.

Awareness of Rights. There was a theme of overcoming barriers within families to access more rights for women. This included the right to education, and also to independent economic means and land. There was one particularly strong story shared from a woman who advocated for land and inheritance rights in her family, intervening on behalf of a relative who was going to be denied access to her inheritance.

Seeking Independence: A theme across the female storyteller was a desire for more independence. This included having more say in marriage decisions, finances and career opportunities, and mobility, like learning to drive or to travel independently. A theme also emerged in the male storytellers of supporting women in their aspirations for more independence.

Overcoming stigma: Many of the storytellers had to overcome stigma or stereotypes in order to pursue women's centered values and attitudes. Several experienced kick-back from family and community when they were vocal about their desires or for standing up for women's rights.

Inspiration for Change in the local community: Having encountered and overcome challenges, gaining education despite setbacks and speaking out for women's rights, many of the storytellers now became inspirations for change within their family and local community.

Change takes time. The stories of change are also those of resilience and patience. Changes in attitudes take time, and this emerged in the stories. It may take some time, for instance, for family members to change attitudes towards access to education for girls, or for more say in family and marriage affairs.

However, it was also seen that change has a ripple effect. If one girl gains access to education, for example, it is likely that other girls in the family and community would too.

Themes and Patterns Emerging from the Story Harvest Process

The following themes and patterns emerged from the post-harvest review with the story harvesters. These show the power and impact of story not only to show the spirit and impact of programming and its meaning for programme participants, but also the power of story to connect us with our values and the meaning of our work in our own lives.

Emotional connection: The story harvesting process elicited strong emotional connection between the storytellers and the harvesters. When listening to the personal stories, harvesters experienced empathic connection, which carried beyond the scope of the story itself. They found themselves feeling connected to and concerned about the storytellers lives and wellbeing.

Connect with Why/ tool for combating cynicism: The story harvesting process helped story harvesters connect with the 'Why' of their own work, helping them feel more connected to their original ideals, values and vision. They suggested the process helps to defeat cynicism and burnout and helped them reconnect with the hope within their work.

Helps to create a habit of listening: The process was said to help create a practice or habit of listening. 'If you are listening, people start taking', said one of the story harvesters, referring to the deep state of focused listening which was generated in the story harvesting process.

Helps to listen to real issues: The deeper space for listening helped to build trust and confidence with the storytellers, and as a result created a safe space for the 'real issues' and concerns to emerge.

Unlearn rigid methodologies of data collection: The harvesters spoke of needing to 'unlearn' some of the means of data collection that they are used to and settle into a mode of receptive learning and listening.

Storytelling as a learning tool. The harvesters spoke of the potential of the process as a learning tool to be incorporated across the programme design and development.

Role of time. It was seen that the listening should happen at a 'human' pace, meaning enough time should be given and storytellers should feel relaxed. This was not a process to be rushed or squeezed. The spaciousness in listening gave rise to deeper connection and insights. Harvesters also need time and space to 'digest' and process the story, letting the emotions and feelings generated move them and integrate with them.

Humanising effect: The process was seen as a way to gain cultural insights into the context of storytellers. Overall, it had a humanising effect, bringing in feeling, emotions and connection between storytellers and story harvesters, and validating the lived experiences of both. It was experienced as heart-centered work.

Some learning from review with story harvesters:

The following were some of the learnings emerging out of the story harvester's review:

Not knowing people in advance can be an edge.

This means storytellers and story harvesters are meeting as strangers. In that sense, they are listening with fresh ears, hearing the story for the first time.

Use of local language builds trust. Even a few words can make a difference.

Need for closeout. Following the story harvest, both the storyteller and the story harvesters require some close out. For the storyteller, a thank you/ gratitude call from the partner and a check in to ensure they are feeling okay after the process. For the story harvester, some time to integrate and process the story. It is useful for story harvesters to work in pairs and debrief the story afterwards. There is also a need for a close out for the storyteller, a post-harvest phone call to check in afterwards, and also later, when the stories are edited, a validation of the written documented story, including any images or visual narrative details. The storyteller has a chance to amend or withdraw consent at this stage.

Keep the harvesting template simple. Too many questions detract from the listening experience. Listening for themes aid the flow of the story and focuses the listening. Checking the validity of themes after a couple of story harvests is good practice- are other themes emerging and if so, do we need to modify the template.

Record interviews if possible. While recording may not always be possible due to safety concerns, it does help with writing up the story. Delete recordings after the write up if necessary.

Listen at a human pace. Deep attentive listening requires time and spaciousness. Maximum two stories should be harvested per day, per story harvester.

What some of the participants said after completing the harvest?

1. 'It (the story sharing), is giving me energy to share this with you.'
2. 'I feel very good as I felt that there are other crazy people who think in the same way that I think, and I am not the only crazy one out there. It gives me more strength to know that. (also mentioned feeling of connectedness and solidarity'
3. 'I like to share my story. I like to think of it as my success story. I want to be a role model if I can, and I want other girls and women to learn to fight and be hopeful'.

Recommendations from the Listening Through Story Pilot

Below are some of the recommendations which emerged through the project.

On the Story Harvesting Process

- Make sure there is enough time for the process. Each story took on average 1.5 hours of listening.
- Write up listening notes and the story soon afterwards
- Record interviews if possible (there are pros and cons to this, but in general it was felt that recording interviews would make the story harvesting and writing process afterwards easier as the stories could be checked for accuracy.
- Two story harvesters per storyteller was a good ratio. This is to check for accuracy of listening. Did they both hear the same thing?

- Ensure that there is a follow up conversation/ close out with the storyteller from the partner organisation as a duty of care towards the storyteller. This close out is to thank the storyteller and explain the next steps in the process.
- Include a close-out session with storyteller once final story is written/ documented where they have a chance to amend, withdraw or re-validate consent.

Overall recommendations

- That the process should be integrated throughout the design and delivery of transformational change programmes in our women's empowerment work.
- That the process should be used as a programme learning tool, helping to create a culture of listening and learning
- Integrate women centered principles into the whole process. A women's centered approach is a prerequisite for story harvesters and core team.
- That there is potential to use story harvesting at a group/ community level, depending on the subject, participants and social context.
- That the process of how the stories is gathered remains central and includes on-going reflection and the integration of learning from the programme. This is to ensure the programme has the ability to respond in real time and adapt the processes as necessary.

SABA'S STORY

*Saba is a pseudonym

Saba is a housewife in Mardan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. She is approximately 37 years of age and has two children – a daughter and a son. Her husband is a labourer.

ON COURAGE

Saba grew up in a comparatively better household than others in her community. However, due to some unfortunate events in her in-law's house, now she lives in a financially compromised situation. She used to feel alone and desperate, but said, "I never

gave up, and made sure that my children are going to school". Her main challenge in life is to make the two ends meet, "our situation really worsened during COVID; however, I encourage my husband and always try to ensure that my home is running smoothly, even in the limited resources". She talked about her daily struggles like paying bills, school fees and medical fees.

ON CHANGE

In 2017 Saba attended a community theatre in Takhat Bai, Mardan with the CA of her locality where she met other women also from the same community. "It was a fun trip for us, an outing, a chance to do something different". The play that day was about preventing early girl marriage and involved a story about a husband who was threatening his wife with divorce if she did not allow the marriage of her young daughter to an older man. Saba commented on how real the play seemed, saying, "I have seen and heard such stories – so many times in my life"! The play's content and the discussion were so real that I thought of SASA! as something different. From that occasion onwards, I always tried to participate in the community events and gradually taking small actions within my community'. Saba continued with an example, 'My neighbour used to beat his wife on the pretext of "not keeping my mother happy". I started engaging with the mother-in law of that woman and talked about her role to stop this violence'. Saba explained that she used religious teachings and arguments to convince the mother-in-law while also helping the survivor to step-up and use her "power" to change her life. Saba said that it took time and effort but eventually her neighbours' house is peaceful now.

ON RESILIENCE

Saba shared that now she is known in her community as someone who can "sort" out peoples' issues. She helps people to resolve family conflicts, and speaks for girls' education. 'Before that I used to think that it is a private issue but SASA! has given me strength and confidence. I used to feel scared but now I think that I have the capacity to respond to the peoples' issues". When asked about how she explains the change in herself, she said "I feel confident and productive – as if I can help others, and this thought gives me happiness." ■

SECTION THREE: REVIEW AND CONCLUSION

Conversation, the art of one person talking while another or other's listen and receive, holds great power to develop shared understanding and to deepen relationships. Conversation is the cornerstone for personal and social change and the basis of much of our work to create a fairer, more equal world for women and girls across our women's empowerment programming.

We know, however, that depending on the subject, some conversations can be difficult. When we are talking about race, gender, or politics, we can easily become caught up in our differences, in our patterns of beliefs and practices, in our cultural expectations and norms. We can easily become entrenched or move into greater opposition. However, with practice, we are capable of coming into presence with ourselves and others in an open and receptive way, leaving behind judgement and blame, and deepening the quality of our speaking and listening. When we do this, we harness the opportunity to learn and grow together, to change together.

The Listening through Story project brought together storytellers and story harvesters, in a process grounded in honesty, openness, and respect. Much of the power of this work lies in the principles that underpin it, that of respect and safety, and these are added to by the spirit of whole listening, where we offer our whole selves to the act of listening, listening not just with our minds but our hearts, and our whole bodies. While this approach has not been widely implemented in our Women's Empowerment programmes, in a formal way, the pilot in Pakistan shows us that we have the opportunity to embed listening through story work into our programme activities on an ongoing basis. Women's empowerment programme teams, with support from monitoring, evaluation and learning team members, are uniquely placed to gather women centered narratives of change. With support to build upon their already existing skills of reflection, listening and learning, and their keen ability to create safe and respectful spaces, they can utilise the spaces and activities that they accompany in the programmes to do so with minimal additional effort.

The art of storytelling with vulnerable populations and on complex issues such as gender inequality and

GBV can raise complex ethical concerns. These can be intensified when the storytellers are people who have experienced discrimination, oppression, and violence and who may be working through challenges and trauma. While we cannot eliminate these concerns, this project shows us that we can mitigate them hugely by raising awareness of the challenges, providing training and accompaniment, and engaging in an ongoing reflective learning process whereby we preserve dignity, power and wellbeing for the storytellers and the story harvesters.

Recommendations

Based on our experience and learning from our journey with the Listening through story project, in Pakistan, we see some key points that can support us to build ethical story harvesting into our work.

- 1. Engage and connect learning processes with programme spaces and activities:** Engage in gathering stories of change in programme spaces and activities, in real time, to support deeper programme learning, cultivate effective working relationship and promote dialogue between partners and communities on programme impact and learning. Additionally, this will maximise the story harvesting approach and minimise costs (personnel; time; financial) associated with separate moment-in-time processes.
- 2. Amplify Women's Voices:** In keeping with our aim to challenge the historic and systemic discrimination of women and girls, work to ensure that women and girls voices, where appropriate, are brought to the fore and center of our programming, learning and evaluation. This does not mean only speaking to women, but it does mean creating safe spaces where we can hear from more women. Nor does this mean ignoring male actors involved in our programming, but it does mean when we listen to men's stories of change, we are analysing them for the impact this has on women and girls as well as on them personally, and we are keeping them accountable to women and girls needs and priorities.

3. **Keep Learning and building skills:** To better understand the nature and meaning of transformational change in the lives of individuals, learning, reflecting, adapting and growing our interventions based on programme participants experiences is key. This process requires highly developed listening and reflection skills, and time to create safe and respectful spaces that allow a conversation to unfold, as well as deepening our analysis skills so that we are not analysing information based on our own biases. Therefore, investing in and committing to learning and skills building for all staff, with a particular emphasis on listening, self-awareness and reflection is essential.
4. **Trust is central:** Sharing personal experiences and reflections on change requires trust. Developing trust necessitates time and building of rapport. This is why the process by which we gather stories is key, embedding it within day-to-day programme activities and supporting programme teams to be that story harvesters supports trust that is developed through programming to be maintained and brought to the story harvest process.
5. **Safety and Respect are key:** Ensure integrity to the process and principles utilised in the Pakistan pilot project, so that safety and respect are maximised. Maintain confidentiality and ensure anonymity for those who wish it. As we can see from the Pakistan pilot, of 10 stories shared, 9 persons wished for anonymity that protects their stories from being identified by others known to them.
6. **Deepen into Story:** Move beyond the 'case study' model as it can oversimplify the complexity of gender power dynamics, as it can present individuals as unidimensional rather than in their full multidimensional selves combined with the complexity of the context in which their reality is lived out.
7. **Use story to challenge gender inequality:** Using the storytelling from our women's empowerment programming to build upon the change to gender dynamics, norms, and hierarchies that is occurring within programming brings power to our collective struggle to end gender inequality. We can achieve this by recognising the many challenges and obstacles that women face in the context, and by seeking to address these and support women's

voices to be fully heard and presented in a way that is uplifting and empowering.

8. **Move beyond sympathy to empathy:** Storytelling, particularly on the issue of gender-based violence has often focused on the acts of violence within incidents, the horror and distress, seeking to evoke sympathy and action in the audience. While it may be effective at times, for example, to spotlight atrocities, to mobilise funding, it is exhausting for the storyteller to tell their story in this way, for the story harvester to listen and ultimately for our audience to have sustained engagement. Emphasising empathy, building understanding and sharing stories of hope serve to uplift the storyteller and the listeners.
9. **Emphasise resilience:** For too long, women have been portrayed as passive victims of gender discrimination and violence. Emphasising resilience and building stories of hope and progress serves as a supportive and transformative process in and off itself, as we have seen through the stories in this process.
10. **Move beyond the obvious storyteller:** Beyond programme participants ask what other stories we can tell, that capture the spirit and impact of our work. In women's empowerment programming, we know that the change we seek in the world around us, starts within each of us. What stories of change do we each hold, those of us who work within Trócaire, within our partner organisations, within the community structures?

Thanks, and acknowledgements.

Thanks, must primarily go to the storytellers and their families for participation in the project.

To the wonderful story harvesters, Uzma Latif and Shirin Gulsadozai

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To the SASA! Team and Pakistan partner organisations.

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To Jean McGrath.

This report was written by Clare Mulvany, Story Consultant, in collaboration with Deirdre Campbell.

ANNEX 1: FURTHER BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT.

How this project came about.

The seeds of the project were sown at an Ethical Photography workshop in Trócaire (Beyond the Snapshot) in January 2020.

During that training, visual and narrative storytelling processes were examined, and important questions around power-dynamics between photographers/writers and participants or photographic subjects were raised. These were questions and topics seen to be of relevance to how the learnings from SASA! may be captured and shared too.

At the time Trocaire was closing out its operations in Pakistan and was seeking to capture some of the stories of the changes which had occurred as a result of the social norms change component of the programme working to end gender-based violence. This element of the programme utilised SASA! as the methodology to support transformational change in gender unequal norms at the level of individuals, families, and communities. A huge amount of learning and change had happened throughout the programme. A formal evaluation was underway, capturing some of the changes in more traditional data driven formats, but it was sensed other forms and ways to capture the human stories would both honour the depth of the change, and also support the replication of the process in similar programmes.

In March 2020, the core Trócaire team gathered and called in the support of a story consultant (who also had facilitated the initial ethical photography workshop). Some initial design questions were posed around how best to capture these stories, and what might be some creative approaches to take. After a few conversations, a new idea emerged- rather than focusing on capturing stories as a 'product or outcome', what if the process was just as important as the story. The question was then raised: what if the documentation process itself could be considered a creative process.

It was agreed that SASA! Pakistan would act as the pilot project, and 'Story Harvesting' as the main method used.

Funding for the pilot was secured internally in Trócaire from the Pakistan Country Programme, Programmes Team and the Programme Impact and Learning Unit.

Who is involved?

Core Team

In Ireland:

- Deirdre Cambell: Gender Based Violence and HIV Advisor, Trócaire, Project Advisor
- Clare Mulvany: Independent Consultant, Project Lead designer

Pakistan:

- Nargis Khan: Country Director, Pakistan, Project Manager/ Advisor
- Shirin Gulsadozai: Independent Consultant- Story Harvester
- Uzma Latif: Beyond Solutions- Story Harvester

In Uganda:

- Angella Agado: Trócaire Regional SASA! Faith Advisor

RIAZ' STORY

* Riaz is a pseudonym

Riaz is a male teacher in Swat, teaching English and Pakistan Studies. He did his M.Phil. in Agriculture & applied Environmental Studies. He was less than 30 years old.

ON COURAGE

Riaz explained that he felt restricted while growing up – from his father who was a teacher and his elder brothers. *"Growing up I did not have time for my personal being. I was at everyone's beck and call – my life was not for me"*. Now, in conversation, Riaz came across very aware of his own masculinity and the

power given to him by the society; and at the same time was challenging it, believing that masculinity also has a negative side and demands from him to play his role in a “prescribed manner”. *“SASA! says you cannot misuse power; power is a responsibility. In our milieu, men are privileged. Women work more yet have less or sometimes no privilege. Everyone likes balance in their lives. I get uncomfortable with the imbalance as this creates certain expectations of me as a ‘man’ which are against my grain somehow”*

ON CHANGE

The realisation that the (misuse) power has such grave effects on him, so, he wondered, “how women in our culture are surviving this for centuries now”? He pointed out that violence in homes does not only pertain to women; that children in homes also face violence against their personal freedoms and choices. *“I support younger ones in my family to go explore, be free”*.

Riaz explained that though the system is changing, it is at a very slow pace, ‘Still 50% women from our area think that they cannot even talk to their parents about marriage of personal choice’. He shared that his cousin’s daughter refused to marry, he supported her, and the family has now accepted her decision.

ON RESILIENCE

Because of inherent discomfort with the existing social system, Riaz has a strong belief in freedom, “I do not compromise on my personal freedom”. He is fond of camping in the woods and every few weeks goes to “spend time with himself”. His family initially did not understand his desire to be alone and instead tried to align him with the existing masculine norms - i.e., men taking control of the responsibilities/ household from the very early age [at time 14-16 years plus].

Change was gradual, happening over a 2–3-year period. The turning point was when Riaz took the decision to undertake a journey to Karachi (Karachi is 1600 kms from Swat) despite opposition from his family. He was still in university at that point and had been in contact with PVDP. “I was told I was not to go and that was final. However, I went to down to the district Centre and bought a ticket with some money I had saved for the journey. My friends and I had decided to go, we were all to meet in Karachi” He went on to share a little more about the journey,

“I was scared most of the journey as I kept thinking that if this bus were to meet with an accident or some mishap, even if I survive my ability to lead my life according to my decisions would be lost forever. My family would’ve been proven right, and I would’ve been proven wrong”. However, this became a turning point: his family realised that whatever their own belief or will, Riaz would act without their agreement. Riaz felt this was his aha moment of being free to do what he chose.

The timing of SASA! felt opportune. Riaz said it gave him the tools and language to understand and pursue using his power within. He felt he was in a community where he was understood, not reprimanded for thinking on his own and not accepting societal norms as they were.

His past, however, was still impacting him. During his school time he was beaten up by his father and elder brothers which continued to affect his relationship with his father. ‘I did not give up and have now managed to push back that pressure from my family and even when my family was asking him to marry, he refused. *“I want to do my PHD, enjoy life”*

During the conversation Riaz shared that, according to his estimates, only 60% of males have the space and freedom to voice their opinions about marriage, and women have far less space and power, and made a distinction between women not having the space to voice their opinions on marriage. Parents in a majority of cases, he explained, do not seek the daughter’s opinion before agreeing to match. However, in cases where parents do seek their daughter’s opinion on a match, daughters do not take that option of giving their opinion due to what they consider is expected (or accepted behaviour) of a good daughter.

Overall, Riaz explained that four years of SASA has transformed him into a more “self-satisfied” person – happy with himself. This he said, has helped him immensely in becoming “light” as he has off-loaded his childhood/social burdens. *“I do not compromise on personal freedom anymore, I used to do it before”*

When asked how he felt after this conversation he laughed and said *“I felt very good as I felt that there are other crazy people who think in the same way that I think, and I am not the only crazy one out there. It gives me more strength to know that”*; he also mentioned *“feeling of connectedness and solidarity”*. ■

Timeline of project

Jan 2020:	Initial Ethical Photography Training
March 2020:	Initial Conversations and project set up
April 2020:	Proposal development
May 2020:	Planning meetings and project development with the Story consultant.
June 2020:	Contact of engagement agreed. Story Harvesters recruited. Initial Training Session with project team
July 2020:	Initial Story Harvesting planning session
August 2020:	Story Harvesting, plus mid-way review between harvesters and story consultant
Sept 2020:	Story Harvesting completed
Oct 2020:	Stories gathered, review and resource development. Learnings from programme gathered.
Nov 2020:	Final Resource development and close of pilot.

Project Inspirations.

Inspiration for the design of the Listening Through Story project was gleaned from a number of sources, practice and story methods. Below outlines some of these inspirations: Human Centered Design Thinking, Art of Hosting, Story Exchange and Ethical Storytelling.

Human Centered Design Thinking:

Human-centered design is a creative approach to problem solving.... It is a process that starts with the people you're designing for and ends with new solutions that are tailor made to suit their needs. Human-centered design is all about building a deep empathy with the people you are designing for; generating tons of ideas; building a bunch of prototypes; sharing what you've made with the people you're designing for; and eventually putting your innovative new solution out in the world. -From Ideo.org

Human Centered Design Thinking is an invitation, particularly to the social or development sector, to integrate design methods into problem solving.

Each of the design phases comes with a set of methods, some of which were of particular relevance to this project, including empathy and empathy tools, story mapping, framing design questions, asking good questions. (More details of these can be found in the IDEO Design Kit Ref Design Kit from IDEO- see resource section)

Art of Hosting

A Collective Story Harvest enables us to deeply connect with and learn from the experience of our community, team or organization. A number of stories are shared in small groups and we work with a set of specific themes to harvest each story. Each of the participants either harvests one of the themes or is a witness during the storytelling and then shares back to the storyteller and small group. Finally, we come together to converge our learnings across all the stories. - Introduction to Story Harvesting, Art of Hosting collective.

The Art of Hosting is a series of participatory design and leadership practices. The methods can be used in many ways, from systemic system change design, to hosting large scale group learning processes. Of particular relevance to this project was a version of story harvesting, in which story gathering can be used as a collective 'sense-making tool' to see themes, patterns across the stories and to discover new insights and meanings.

Story Exchange

'To step into the shoes of others in order to be able to step back into our own'-Colum McCann

Story Exchange is a simple empathy building device used by the organisation Narrative4, founded by Irish writer Colum McCann. In a story exchange individuals are invited to listen to a story shared by a listening partner, who then tells it to a group, as if embodying the original storyteller. The stories are held with intentional listening practices.

Ethical Storytelling

Ethical Storytelling is an approach to narrative and visual storytelling which takes into consideration the ethical dimensions of how stories are researched, captured, distributed and stored. It seeks to raise standards in the international development sector around the use of storytelling within organisations and it asks questions around issues such as consent, voice, narrative power and story legacy.

APPENDIX II: LISTENING SKILLS RESOURCES

The Art of Listening within the Listening Through Story Project

Listening well is a whole-bodied experience. As a quick guide or checklist, the following three considerations were offered to help the storyteller listen with more nuance and care.

Just listen; do not think of responses, don't judge, or counter the storyteller's ideas in your mind.

Listen deeply; listen not only to the words of the storyteller, but to the tone, the pitch, the pace, their expression.

Listen with our whole selves; listening not only with our ears but with our hearts, listening to the storyteller's body language, their hands, their facial expression, their breathing, listening for the felt meaning in their words.

Alongside these, a few further considerations give more depth and guidance to the Storytelling and Story harvest experience and can be incorporated into future Listening Through Story training.

Listening at a human pace

Deep listening takes time. The story harvest needs room around, so all those involved do not feel rushed or under time pressure. Each story will have its own rhythm and time requirements. The story unfolds over the duration of the conversation and is often told in a non-linear way. It helps to listen in a non-linear way too, taking in the circuitous route a storyteller may take to get to the essence of what it is they want to say. Giving time helps to build trust and patience. Story harvesters should try to leave some time afterwards for wind-down and personal reflection.

Cultivating a conversation space- equalising power dynamics.

Story harvests take place within a conversational space. This is a place where all those involved meet in as safe a space as possible. At the end of the session, story harvesters feed back to the storyteller what they heard.

TARIQ'S STORY

Tariq is a pseudonym

Tariq is a male community development office in ACT, based in Mardan. He was a private teacher for two years and started his career in NGOs a few years ago.

ON COURAGE

Tariq explained that he attended many trainings prior to SASA when his understanding of gender was only about "gender segregated participant list". However, it was only after he attended a training on birth registration that he started grasping the concept. It was only during SASA! trainings that he began to understand power and how it interacts with human relationships. "Change yourself- only then you can change others", he said, sharing what he felt was his major learning from SASA! which he tries to practice now in his personal and professional life.

Tariq got married in 2013 and was the first male in his family who permitted his wife to work despite there being a lot of pressure from his immediate family. SASA! had opened him up to the idea of financial autonomy for his wife. "I had always thought that I would not have a typical relationship with my wife, this was one way I knew how to change that typical relationship" He recognised his wife's "financial autonomy" as the key factor in the empowerment of women and hence all the decisions related to finances and money are now taken mutually by him and his wife. "I told my wife that her earnings were for her to use. Moreover, I agreed with her that she would be in-charge of household expenses and when I go out to buy any grocery, she will give me the money and I will give her back the remaining amount as she remains in-charge. For all major budget decisions, we usually discuss and have mutual decisions."

ON CHANGE

Tariq explained that changing a mindset takes time. While there was no one pivotal moment for him, he realised that there have been multiple changes in his personal household which in turn rippled out into his circle of influence. For example, his father was very conservative and strict, and so since his childhood Tariq had promised that he would not be like him if he ever had children himself. Now, when he takes his kids shopping, for instance, he asks about them and their preferences.

Tariq shared another family story. One of his uncle's had four daughters and when the fifth was born, the whole family was paying condolences. Tariq shared that tried to convince his uncle and other family members to change their attitude. *"I was not able to convince them a lot, but I do go there often and make sure that every now and then I take the girls shopping so that they can buy things that they like. It just makes me happy to be able to do that even though I have not been able to change my uncle too much"*

ON RESILIENCE

Tariq explained that in his family and the wider community there is a tradition of sending boys to private fee-paying schools. However, girls are sent to government schools where the standard and investment is lower. He has been convincing his extended family, friends and community members that this practice is unjust to the girls and they should be given equal opportunities. The trend is slowly changing. 'Also, in our community,' he said, 'girls are not taken to markets but I take my wife and my daughter so that they can choose for themselves'. He also takes his uncle's daughters as mentioned to help them have some level of mobility.

When asked how Tariq of today is different from the Tariq of four years ago, he mentioned that he now understands that culture has overpowered our nature. 'I will never be the same Tariq as I have learnt to recognise my nature and discern that I can't let my culture take over my natural love for my children, my wife and others just because of the power relations.' ■

Here the storyteller has a chance to amend or change their narrative. Consent throughout the process remains with the storyteller, who can retract it at any stage.

Range of Skills

Listening well involves a range of skills which should be utilised accordingly. It is good for story harvesters to be practiced in this skill set in advance. Skills include: summarising, clarifying, reflecting, paraphrasing, asking open ended questions, explaining, silence and linking. (See appendix for further details)

Body Language

Body language and tone all have a role to play in listening. Open body language (not crossing arms, eye contact), invite open responses and a more relaxed atmosphere.

Tone and Omissions

It is important to listen for what is said, and what is not said. Think about tone - what is the emotional tone of what is being said? Silences and pauses can mean many things, giving space for reflection, thinking and processing during the story are important.

Listening Skills Checklist

The following is a check list of listening skills, which story harvesters should be familiar and competent in, and which can be incorporated into future Listening Through Story training.

SKILL	EXPLANATION
Summarising	Drawing together several things a speaker said to make one statement. Check that the summary is accurate. Example - "So, the three things you are saying are one..., two...and three? Is that correct"
Clarifying	Checking that what was said is understood. Such as facts, opinions, decisions, order of events. Example - "So what you're saying is that you won't be available until....."
Reflecting	Picking up on the explicit or implicit feelings expressed by a speaker and demonstrating an understanding and acceptance of these. Example - "It sounds like that was a very difficult time."
Paraphrasing	Repeating back to the speaker a little of what was said either in his/her own or similar words. This 'prompt' encourages people to continue. Example - "So, what was happening at work was confusing"
Open ended Questioning	Asking questions which will encourage the speaker to continue (Note: Be mindful of the remit of the listener, in relation to disclosures of GBV do not ask open questions that seek to deepen a disclosure or elicit facts about types of violence) Example- "What happened then?" Differentiate from questions requiring only a yes or no, such as: "Were you frightened?" "Did you leave then?"

Encouraging	Includes thanking the person for her/his contribution and offering praise. Example: "That was a really useful contribution, thank you." Or Using sub-speech to indicate an ongoing understanding and interest in what is said. Example: - "Mmm...uhuh..um.hm...yeah...yes..."
Explaining	Giving an interpretation of previous statements. This is helpful if someone is unclear about the meaning of what s/he is expressing. Example - It could be that what happened was.....?"
Silence	Allowing sometime between what a person says before the facilitator speaks. Silence can encourage a speaker to continue and allow for absorption of what was said.
Linking	Statements/questions/comments can be linked using short sentences indicating interest, support and encouragement to continue. Example: "And then?"

REHMAN'S STORY

Rehman is Programme Manager in Pakistan Village Development Program (PVDP)

ON COURAGE

Rehman has been with SASA! and join the project in the middle of the start phase of the GBV Project. Prior to this he was looking for WASH, Child Protection and DRR Projects in PVDP. After resignation of GBV Project Manager in Start Phase PVDP management decided to fill the vacant position with competent and experienced person who should be already in touch with project activities. So, Rehman was asked to move to Swat to lead the project with consultation of the Trocaire. Rehman was not feeling happy to lead the CGBV project as he always makes fun of CGBV program "that there is only talking and nothing substantial happening on ground as compared to other projects. He thought that it was a means of building women to be rebellious against their husbands and the system. Initially he took the job as a challenge but later he realized how much it is changing his life.

ON CHANGE

It was only when Rehman started visiting and meeting the community activists that he began questioning his own intentions and thinking. He was inspired by the CAs who were selflessly working for the cause and believed in SASA! in its true letter and spirit.

Change happened gradually for him. A significant moment was when he realized that "male CAs were working on SASA! because they wanted to end violence against women" as compared to his previous and completely opposite belief that "female CAs can work only because males allow them".

'I was embarrassed by myself', he said, 'as compared to male CAs. When I think of my daughter, I want to empower her the way it is envisioned in SASA! She should be able to make her own decisions and lead an independent life under Islam as Religion Islam gave her all the rights, but our culture and society set taboos'. I feel that I am much lighted on GBV However, at one point I still did not feel like this about my wife. So, there is still working that needs to be done inside me".

ON RESILIENCE

Rehman has been married for 15 years and has two children – a girl, 8 years and boy, 14 years. Two years ago, he transferred the land to his wife, which was given to her at the time of their marriage – as per the Nikkah [marriage contract] agreement. He also welcomes her sisters for their inheritance right whenever they want their share. After working with SASA! and talking about power and equality, he realised something needed to change in his own life, "my conscious was pricking me" as now "I was only talking about but not taking real steps to change my own life', going on to explain some of the opposition to his decision, 'My brother was against my decision as his wife had some land on her name which was giving her power over her husband.

He realises there is still work to do, explaining that one of his female relative got divorce and later married someone 'from her own will' against the well of her family. Rehman had been avoiding her for many years but very recently realised that he wanted things to heal, "I am thinking and trying to mend my relations with her". As being Muslims Islam allow her to take decision for her marriage but culture and society, but taboos are main hurdles.

'When I practiced all these concepts I feel at peace as if I have addressed my own conflicts".

At the end of the story harvest, having been asked how he feels now, Rehman said, "I feel happy to work on SASA! It has given me energy to change my thoughts and actions. ■

ANNEX 2: STORY HARVESTING TEMPLATE

Listening Through Story: Story Harvesting Template

Name of Storyteller:

Location:

Date of Story harvest:

Please attach photo of storyteller (can be a screen grab)

Story Harvest:

Theme 1: Courage (stories of courage)

Theme 2: Change. (Pivotal moments of change in the SASA! journey)

Theme 3: Resilience (stories of endurance, strength)

Following the listening process, ask storyteller: What was it like to be listened to in this way?

Prompt questions for Story Harvesters

Alongside the story harvesting template, below are some prompt questions which can be used to guide the storyteller in sharing and shaping their story, where appropriate.

- Tell me more about...
- Can you give me a better picture of that?
- What did that look like for you?
- What else did you notice?
- How would you paint a picture of that for us?
- What other details might bring your story to life?
- How did that make you feel?

ANNEX 3: RESOURCES

On Storytelling/ Ethical Storytelling

On Ethical Storytelling: Guidelines and resources- a community of practitioners.

<http://ethicalstorytelling.com/resources/>

On Communication without Exploitation.

<https://www.idealists.org/en/careers/ethical-storytelling>

Ted Talk on Ethical Storytelling with Pip Desmond.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHR8fWAr43k>

Storycatcher: Making Sense of our Lives through the Power and Practice of Story, Christina Baldwin, New World Library, 2005.

On Human Centered Design Thinking

IDEO Design Kit and Methods

<https://www.designkit.org/methods>

Tim Brown, Change by Design, How Design Thinking transforms Organisations and Inspires Innovation, Harper Collins Press,

<https://www.ideo.com/post/change-by-design>

Art of Story Harvesting

From the Art of Hosting community

<https://amandafenton.com/core-methods/what-is-the-collective-story-harvest/>

On Listening

Introduction to 'Layers of Listening' by Otto Scharmer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eLfXpRkVZal>

Bobetter Buster, Do Listen

<https://thedobook.co/products/do-listen-understand-whats-really-being-said-find-a-new-way-forward>

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