

“Can any society, whatever its stated intentions, claim to fully value women and girls when their ambitions, desires and human potential are curtailed?”

UNFPA, State of the World’s Population 2022

Ipas is excited to introduce a new curriculum, *Exploring Our Power*, that builds understanding and facilitates dialogue about gender and power inequities and sexual and reproductive health barriers in humanitarian settings!

Closely adapted from Ipas’s values clarification for action and transformation (VCAT) model for sexual and reproductive health and abortion, this curriculum also serves as an entry point for discussions about the integration of safe abortion care into crisis settings.

Rationale: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development explicitly recognizes the role of sexual and reproductive health and gender equality in building a more prosperous future for all. But we can’t create transformative change if we’re only treating the consequences of inequitable gender and power relations. This workshop aims to prompt meaningful examination of power and privilege in a world where 23% of all women state that they are unable to say “no” to sex (United Nations, 2022).

Intended audience: The workshop is intended for humanitarian aid actors across the main sectors of humanitarian action (such as protection, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), food security, shelter, and logistics) encourages in-depth exploration of gender, power, prejudice, and collective responsibility. Ipas initially developed the content for humanitarian aid and peacekeeper groups who experience great power disparities with the people they serve and encounter populations dealing with persistent sexual exploitation and transactional sex. However, it could be easily adapted for other audiences as well. The workshop helps participants to:

- Build an understanding of the importance of sexual and reproductive health and rights in humanitarian settings,
- Increase awareness and identification of sexual exploitation and harassment,
- Decrease tolerance of these behaviors for bystanders, and
- Plan concrete steps to create change.

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Image courtesy of Images of Empowerment

Structure: This curriculum is designed as a flexible resource with activities that can be used in a variety of ways to best meet participant needs. It is organized as a structured 1.5-day workshop, but the collection of activities can be used individually or in combination, based on the timing and agenda of individual facilitators and locations. Activities have been arranged to build on each other and support the development of group cohesiveness. This allows participants to foster a level of comfort with each other prior to sharing more deeply held personal beliefs and values.

Activities in detail: Activities adapted from VCAT focus on factors that impact inequality at a systemic or community level and encourage participants to examine their own beliefs and values and the experiences that have shaped them, eliciting more personally driven dialogue. In two new activities, participants reflect on power differentials in humanitarian settings and distinct situations that they might have seen or heard of and potential next steps to elicit action.

We are looking for teams or organizations interested in piloting this workshop with the intended audience in diverse humanitarian settings. Self-funding is required. We will introduce you to the materials virtually. If interested, please contact Bill or Tam at emails below.
