

Legal Empowerment Series

Towards a Community Facilitator Model in Jordan



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1. Introduction

1.1 A Community-Based Approach

In recent years, donors and organizations have begun to shift their focus from top-down, expert-driven approaches towards community inclusive, bottom-up approaches to development. This paradigm shift took the position that beneficiaries not only had the right to participate in their own development, but that their inclusion was the key to success. It was recognised that policy reform must be balanced with empowerment interventions such as legal literacy and social awareness-raising efforts with local decision makers and traditional leaders, as well as the marginalised groups themselves at the community level (UNDP 2014).

The community-based approach in development started to gain interest as early as 1987. In a study by Frances Lund, three rural community projects in Southern Africa that implemented a community-based approach were analysed. These rural community projects sought to establish primary healthcare through auxiliary workers in Southern Africa. Through this approach, the projects gave women the opportunity to participate in development activities and established a foundation for future community organizations to be formed (Lund 1987). It is in the last two decades, however that the importance of community-based approaches has started to gain traction and be increasingly recognised in humanitarian and development frameworks (UNHCR 2008; UNDP 2014) and, most recently, in peacebuilding (Mac Ginty & Richmond 2013).

Alongside this move, there has therefore been an increasing focus on a rights-based approach to development, as it was recognised that one of the major challenges inhibiting vulnerable communities across the global south from taking charge of their own development was a lack of knowledge regarding their rights under the law. A rights-based approach places the law at the foundation of development and social justice initiatives (EU 2014). Moving the focus away from a needs-based approach, whereby citizens are viewed as clients, it thus, in theory, compliments a community-driven approach, as it encompasses the empowerment of individuals and groups to claim their rights (Boeson & Marten 2007). While many rights-based approaches have targeted the policy level and failed to be implemented on the ground (Ferris & Kirisci 2018), legal empowerment is a component of the rights-based approach that can help fill this gap. It arose in the early 2000s as an alternative to the rule of law dogma composed of top-down technical assistance to the justice sector. Rather, a legal empowerment approach is focused on the agency and needs of the marginalised and seeks to work with them to enable them to advance their interests through use of the law (Domingo and O'Neil 2014). Anna Lise Purkey (2013), for instance, argues that an increased focus on legal empowerment for refugees living in protracted exile can help them to overcome the many legal and political barriers they face, while increasing their control of their lives in a way that traditional aid mechanisms fail to do.

1.2 A Definition of Legal Empowerment

The 2009 report of the United Nations Secretary-General to the U.N. General Assembly, *“Legal empowerment of the poor and the eradication of poverty”* defined legal empowerment as:

“the process of systemic change through which the poor are protected and enabled to use the law to advance their rights and their interests as citizens and economic actors,”

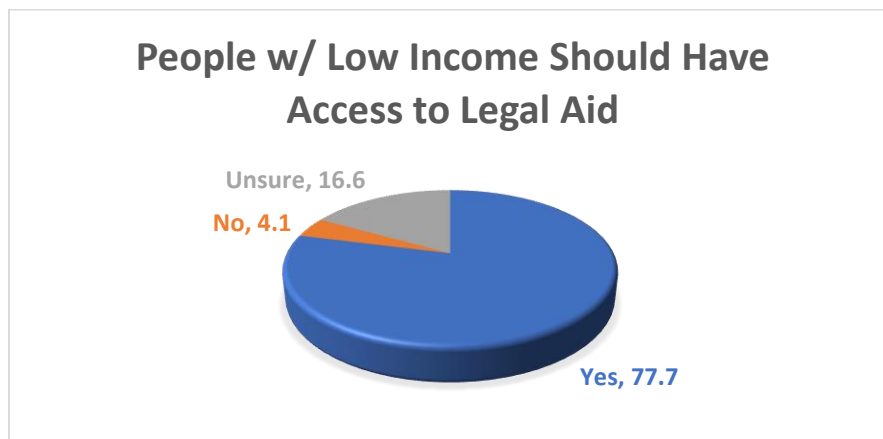
with those who are poor not simply viewed as those lacking material goods and productive assets but also those who lack intangible assets and social goods, such as legal identity, good health, dignity and respect (UN 2009; IDLO 2010) and, in this respect, those commonly considered as ‘vulnerable’ or marginalised.

This definition has significant points that develop the idea of legal empowerment from the previous one. It stresses the importance of a bottom-up approach to legal empowerment with a strong focus on women’s empowerment and gender equity. It adopts a more expansive approach to access to justice that recognises the work of community facilitators and notes the importance of a participatory approach that engages civil society and community-based organisations in order to give vulnerable persons a voice (ibid). It also recognises the importance of a social accountability dimension to legal empowerment, so that citizens themselves have the tools to influence policy and hold governments to account (ibid). However, this definition has two serious shortfalls. Firstly, it reflects the economic bias of the development sector in its emphasis on people’s rights as “economic actors”, when a focus solely on human rights, regardless of other roles, would be preferable. Secondly, it refers specifically to “citizens” and thus fails to include the important issue of legal empowerment for refugee populations (Purkey 2013).

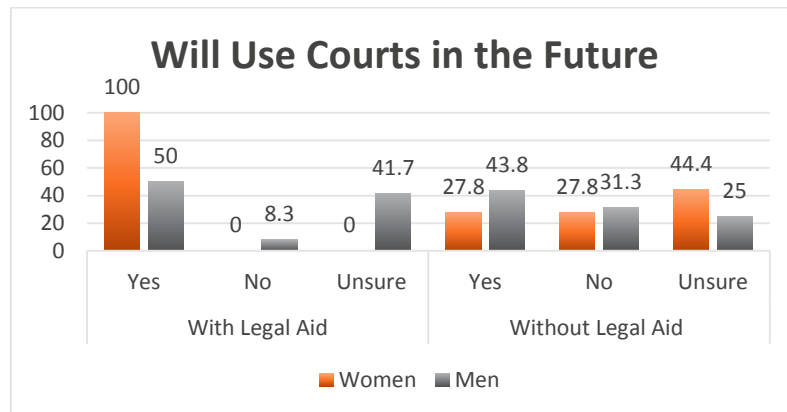
Purkey thus offers a definition of legal empowerment applicable to protracted refugee contexts, which is:

“the process through which protracted refugee populations become able to use the law and legal mechanisms and services to protect and advance their rights and to acquire greater control over their lives, as well as the actual achievement of that increased control.”

Access to legal aid, for instance, has proven to be key to the legal empowerment of Syrian refugees. In a study by Arab Renaissance for Development and Democracy (ARDD) on public perceptions and satisfaction of the Jordanian justice sector, Syrian refugees were found to overwhelmingly support the provision of free or low cost legal aid for those with low income, with 77.7% of respondents (78% of women and 77.1% of men) reporting as much (ARDD 2018a).



Access to legal aid was also greatly found to increase the likelihood of Syrian refugee women utilizing courts in the future. Whereas just 27.8% of Syrian women without legal aid reported being willing to take future legal matters to court, 100% of women with legal aid reported the same. While men with legal aid were much less likely than women with legal aid to be willing to take future legal matters to court, Syrian men with legal aid (50%) were more likely than men without legal aid (43.8%) to take future legal matters to court (ibid)



Legal empowerment is thus an issue vital of support that is gaining increasing traction among donors and international development organisations.

1.3 A Community Facilitator Model

A community-facilitator model (CF model) is one way through which attempts are made to realise a grassroots approach to legal empowerment. Though the term ‘community facilitation’ is infrequently used, it relates to community empowerment, with the focus on facilitation - that is *enabling* people to empower themselves (WHO 2009).

“Community empowerment, therefore, is more than the involvement, participation or engagement of communities. It implies community ownership and action that explicitly aims at social and political change. Community empowerment is a process of re-negotiating power in order to gain more control. It recognizes that if some people are going to be empowered, then others will be sharing their existing power and giving some of it up” (WHO 2009).

Community facilitators (CFs) are the ones assigned to enable empowerment. Broadly, a community facilitator “assist[s] in managing change among marginalised communities” (World Bank 2014). They go directly to the community, instead of waiting for community members to come to them, and their specific roles can vary broadly depending on the project for which they are working, but typically involve: acting as a project representative in the community, implementing the project - turning the project principles into practice, and linking the project management with the community. Specifically, they help organise the community through support, advocacy, social mobilisation (with various stakeholders), training (information dissemination and imparting skills),

problem-solving, and networking with other partners. Their relationship with the community should thus not be hierarchical, with the facilitator as the sole holder of power and knowledge, but communicative and participatory, with the facilitator keen to listen to, and learn from, the community, in order to better understand how they can support their needs (World Bank 2014).

CFs working to enable legal empowerment seek to create local, sustainable solutions to issues of justice. They differ from 'paralegals' as their function is not restricted to providing legal information and support, but extends from this to adopt a holistic approach that considers a variety of methods to enable community empowerment.

1.4 Methodology

This report is a mixed methods study, having adopted a data collection approach that gathered both qualitative and quantitative data.

Qualitative data was collected from a desk review that covered CF models and legal empowerment in Jordan and outside of Jordan, in particular in relation to minority and vulnerable groups, comprised of primary and grey literature. Qualitative data was gathered from the OSF pilot phase of the Syrian Refugee Empowerment Project (SREP), initiated by the Open Society Foundations in Jordan, through focus group discussions with ARDD CFs trained for the pilot, minutes of meetings between ARDD CFs and ARDD employees responsible for the pilot, progress reports produced by ARDD and Tamkeen, 65 session reports produced by ARDD CFs, and 8 observations of community facilitation sessions by ARDD, in both Zarqa and Amman.

Quantitative data was collected from the Monitoring and Evaluation tools employed during the pilot, including pre- and post-evaluation questionnaires and data on ARDD media outputs.

2. A Community Facilitator Model in Jordan

2.1 Opportunities and Challenges in Jordan

With a large population of refugees and disadvantaged groups in Jordan, there is ample opportunity for a CF model to be of benefit to increasing people's access to justice. A report by WANA Institute on the Status of Legal Empowerment in Jordan (2014) found that, although women and those from poorer socio-economic backgrounds were not more likely to be affected by a legal issue than other groups, they were much less likely to take their case to court. Children, refugees and migrant workers were also found to face particular difficulties in accessing the formal justice system (WANA Institute 2014). These findings have been sustained over time. According to a survey conducted by ARDD in 2017 only 24% of Jordanians facing legal matters decided to take their legal matters to court, with no difference between male and female respondents. The percentages were even lower in the case of Syrian refugees, with 18.6% of Syrian refugees (15.4% of women and 22.8% of men) facing legal matters deciding to take their legal matters to court (ARDD 2018).

Jordan's Ministry of Justice made improving access to justice a priority in its 2010–2012 Judicial Reform Strategy, but resource constraints, among other social issues, have inhibited any real change (Riach & James 2016). Institutional issues, such as discrimination from court employees and structural issues such as gender inequality in the laws and lack of protection for non-Jordanians, contribute to many of the problems facing legal empowerment of marginalized groups, while lack of legal rights awareness also presents one of the main obstacles (WANA Institute 2014). Contributing to this, are a lack of legal literacy and the lack of mass dissemination of information on legal rights (ibid). In this regard, a 2017 survey conducted by ARDD on perceptions and experiences of the Jordanian justice sector found that 59.3% of Jordanian respondents were not aware of at least one major reform made in the last five years (ARDD 2018b).

Refugees are often unaware of the mechanisms that are in place to protect them, such as the MoU that Jordan signed with UNHCR which ensures that refugees have free access to courts of law to exercise their right to litigation and legal assistance as accorded to nationals (UNHCR 1998). Women too, while faced with a patriarchal society that has institutionalised gender inequalities and has stigmatised those who challenge such structures, are often unaware of the rights that do exist for them. ARDD's Women's Access to Justice project found, for instance, that, far too frequently, women sign documents forfeiting their entitlements in situations of divorce, unaware that they have certain legal protections in the first place (ARDD 2018c).

Clear gaps are therefore present that a CF model in Jordan could help fill. The dissemination of information to increase understanding of rights, advocacy to help shift sociocultural norms that present barriers to such issues as gender equality and social cohesion, and training in civic engagement skills, are only a few of the ways CFs could enable legal empowerment in Jordan.

Noteworthy too is the economic opportunity the CF model presents for those community members recruited as community facilitators, especially for women for whom barriers to employment are many. The recruitment of Syrian refugees in a formal capacity required the creation of a new work permit under the title of community facilitator¹. This in itself is a huge step for the future

¹ In Arabic, the title permitted was "مرشد إجتماعي", literally meaning "social guide" and often used to refer to social workers.

empowerment of Syrian refugees as CFs and the future of the CF model in Jordan. Important to note, however, are the potential limitations of a CF model for legal empowerment in Jordan, since the legal framework in Jordan prohibits CFs from providing any legal service loosely defined to include even simple legal advice. The Jordanian Bar Association Act of 1972 governs all issues relating to the practice of law in Jordan. Article 6 of this law defines who is a lawyer, what is a legal service and acknowledges the different roles lawyers may play (Thomas & Mahasneh 2012). Only lawyers who register with, and pay membership dues to, the Jordanian Bar Association can provide legal services. The law defines three types of lawyers and the possible legal services they can provide. First are lawyers who represent clients in court, the second type of lawyer drafts contracts and the third type provides legal opinions to clients. Violations are punishable by both fines and imprisonment. This greatly restricts some of the possible functions for paralegals since they are legally barred from providing court representation, consultations, giving legal advice or any other form of direct legal service delivery. This restrictive climate is not exclusively directed towards legal mobilization through paralegals, but also towards legal aid in general. Article 6 of the 1972 Bar Association specifically defines lawyers as “people whose profession is to give judicial and legal aid to others who require it for money” (ibid). An additional issue is that concerning rules regulating competition, which prevents the advertising of legal aid services, restricting outreach and awareness-raising (WANA Institute 2014).

2.2 The Syrian Refugee Empowerment Pilot Project

The Syrian Refugee Empowerment Project (SREP), funded by the Open Society Foundations in Jordan and implemented by ARDD and Tamkeen, aimed to build on and complement existing response efforts through legal empowerment and community-based justice services. The pilot project sought to promote the ability of both Syrian refugees and host communities in Jordan to understand and use legal and administrative systems to find concrete solutions to justice problems. In the pilot, three Jordanian organizations coordinated to incorporate a CF model into their existing legal aid programs.

During the implementation of this pilot, ARDD focused on the right to education and Tamkeen focused on the right to work among both Syrian refugee communities and Jordanian host communities. Using the selection criteria set by each partner, ARDD and Tamkeen selected a total of 16 qualified CFs who were evenly divided between Amman and Zarqa. A capacity building program was developed to improve the outcome of community sensitization, as interested participants received technical trainings on issues such as educational awareness and regulation, protection and human trafficking, and right to work.

ARDD and Tamkeen’s CFs conducted 163 sessions in Amman and Zarqa. ARDD conducted 65 sessions (32 sessions in Zarqa, and 33 sessions in Amman), reaching 1400 Jordanians and Syrians (929 women and 379 men). Tamkeen conducted 98 sessions (38 in Zarqa and 60 in Amman), reaching 1254 beneficiaries (881 women and 314 men).

2.3 Analysis of Community Facilitators Model

Through the desk review, this study identified a number of elements that, when combined, can create an effective CF model. The pages that follow examine these elements through three main categories of analysis: actors, processes, and outcomes.

The section on **actors** analyses CFs in relation to vulnerability, skills and knowledge, and roles and responsibilities in the context of “Do No Harm” principles. The section on **processes** provides a twofold analysis: first, it describes the social transformation that occurred within the communities, namely, how successful knowledge transfer led to social action by communities and enhanced agency; second it explore potential venues for CFs work such as bridging a gap in social capital of vulnerable populations, and the role of CFs as active participants in transitional justice contexts. Finally, the section on **outcomes** explores three results that CFs model should achieve: enhanced social accountability, sustainability of the model, and structural change.

2.3.1. Actors

Reaching vulnerable groups

As discussed, legal empowerment centers on enabling the vulnerable to attain their rights. **Vulnerability is “both universal and particular”** (Peroni & Timmer 2013). While we are all vulnerable to some extent, due to our dependency on others and potential for suffering as human beings, the common usage of the term ‘vulnerable groups’ in development adopts a group-based concept of vulnerability, that refers to those at particular risk of discrimination or abuse (ibid). Children, due to their legal dependency, are considered vulnerable, while persons with disabilities are considered a potentially vulnerable group due to the societal and structural barriers they face. Those from a poorer socio-economic background, as well as refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants are also considered vulnerable groups (UN 2015). While women are not vulnerable by definition, some groups of women, such as female heads of households and pregnant women are, as a result of legal and social inequalities, more vulnerable to human rights abuses (UN Women 2016).

Yet, accessing vulnerable populations is not an easy task and requires specific strategies (WANA Institute 2014). One of the greatest impacts of a CF model is enabling legal empowerment among vulnerable groups, since CFs go directly to the communities - a factor that has been found to facilitate community engagement (NICE 2016). Though it is not a given that they will be a member of the community, by being so, CFs are in a better position to reach such groups as they will have already established networks (Coleman, J 2000). By not being viewed as an outsider, it should also be easier for them to gain trust (ibid).

ARDD identified the vulnerability of children in refugee communities and poorer host communities and chose to focus its pilot project on the right to education, seeking to protect and safeguard children from the barriers to accessing quality education, including violence. The CFs were responsible for identifying vulnerable participants but also reached out to parents, a mixture of men and women, and a mixture of nationalities, especially Syrians and Jordanians. They were also asked to pay attention to the attendance of persons with disabilities, if the location was accessible, and to pay attention to any illiterate attendees who may need help completing pre and post evaluations.

Sessions often took place in rural areas of Amman and Zarqa to target the most vulnerable Syrian refugees and Jordanian host communities.

CFs proved adept at finding ways to access the community through community-based organisations, through friends who had access to community organisations, through community activists, or through women who had already been involved in the ARDD project Women's Access to Justice. Over a total of 65 sessions, 998 Syrians and 393 Jordanians were reached. Of this, 929 were women and 379 were men. The high number of men is noteworthy since men are typically difficult to involve in such projects due to being more likely to be at work during the day. Significant too, is that female CFs successfully engaged men in sessions despite the societal barriers regarding gender that may have inhibited this. CFs showed commitment and flexibility in arranging some sessions in the evening, in order to enable the greater attendance of men. A high number of female headed households were also reached, with 23.6% of participants reporting that their family was headed by a woman. The content of the sessions was also designed to cover issues affecting vulnerable groups, such as the access of students with disabilities to education, and sexual harassment in the workplace.

The selection criteria for the CFs was developed to include gender sensitive criteria towards sex, age, and disabilities, and aimed to create a diverse group, ensuring the involvement of people from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and participants from different cultural backgrounds, including different nationalities. A mix of male and female Syrian and Jordanian CFs were thus selected, many of whom were of lower socio-economic backgrounds. However, the complexity of this issue still presented challenges. Two CFs - a former mayor and a lawyer – whose backgrounds equipped them with useful skills, were from a higher socio-economic background than those communities reached out to and thus faced obstacles in accessing identified communities. In one session, for instance, those who attended were also of higher socio-economic backgrounds and thus not those intended to be reached by the project. In another session, it was observed that the use of Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) inhibited deliverance of the messages, again suggesting that the CF was of a socio-economic background different to that of the community.

That said, the majority of CFs were of a lower socio-economic background and from vulnerable groups, which helped them gain community members' trust. However, since different areas were also reached out to, the CFs had to work with a range of communities and thus still required support in accessing some communities from organisations in the area or from community leaders. Such methods employed for accessing the community thus present a paradox to the CF Model. CFs should be those who connect organisations with the community, as opposed to the other way round. It is expected that, with time, CFs will become better known within communities and develop better connections. One CF noted how they had initially depended on organisations to reach community members but had since developed their skills in this regard by identifying community leaders through which they could expand their reach. However, the initial lack of informal networks between the CFs and targeted communities suggests that barriers already existed before the implementation of the pilot. If – since the CFs were members of either the Jordanian host community or the Syrian refugee community, in their broadest sense – the CFs were chosen due to being community members, it brings into question the matter of how community is being defined in the CF model and to what extent the CFs were really a part of the communities they were working with. While concepts of community and identity are both vague and changeable, if taking the idea of community, not as based solely on geographical location but rather the “quality of character of human relationship” (Gusfield 1975), it may be that some of the CFs involved in the pilot were not in fact from the community of those they sought to reach.

An additional complication, in this regard, was the aim of including a mix of Syrian and Jordanian attendees in each session. While this was beneficial for improving social cohesion, it meant that the CFs had to reach out to many of those of a different nationality, who therefore, given the segregation of these communities in Amman, were most likely not from their 'community'. Indeed, issues appeared with some CFs failing to reach out to those of other nationalities. In 2 of the 8 observed sessions, Jordanian CFs only involved Jordanian community members. To overcome these challenges, it is worth reassessing notions of community in the model – if CFs are to be chosen for their community status, which appears beneficial - and the selection criteria in this regard. If CFs are not able to be chosen from the community, they ought to be very knowledgeable on the communities with which they are working, as noted in meeting minutes (ARDD internal notes, 2018). Thus, when reaching out to both Syrians and Jordanians, it may be worth employing two CFs – one Syrian and one Jordanian – in each session. This will also ensure that a facilitator is present who can relate to the specific needs of each group.

High quality community facilitators with an effective support network

While it would be expected that CFs, by going directly to the community to help build bridges between the community and organisational level, would be well-received, this is not always the case. Particularly with regards to legal empowerment, since they are not legally qualified professionals, the information they disseminate may be distrusted by the community. The community may also doubt the likelihood of a positive outcome. Not only are those who are able to access the formal justice system often pessimistic that a fair and rule-based outcome will be achieved (ARDD 2008a, WANA Institute 2014), but in some communities a “culture of learned helplessness” has developed due to the range of actors who implement projects with little visible change and the perception that structural inequalities cannot be overcome (ADB 2001). ***It is therefore essential for a successful CF model that efforts are made to lessen this knowledge gap.*** Support, training, and capacity-building of facilitators have been shown to improve facilitation of community empowerment (NICE 2016).

The pilot project involved a careful selection procedure, which, as well as including the above mentioned criteria for inclusivity, also assessed the candidate's experience, personal motivations (beyond financial compensation), eagerness to serve their community and previous voluntary experience. From this, a pool of 26 individuals (13 by ARDD and 13 by Tamkeen), of varying professions and experience, were selected to take part in a capacity building program that enabled them to be better assessed in such aspects as their facilitation skills and gender bias.

Almost all of the selected participants evaluated themselves as having experience in leadership, working with vulnerable people, data collection, education, group facilitation and reporting and knowledge on the right to education, informal education provision and gender issues. However, many also lacked knowledge on education regulations, policies and access pathways, monitoring and evaluation, human trafficking jurisdiction and complaints, Jordanian work law (social insurance, general safety and occupational injury), and civil documentation / procedures.

To improve the thematic knowledge and technical skills of CFs, they went through a participatory skills development model. This included training on techniques for awareness-raising and group facilitation, and thematic trainings that included issues such as educational awareness and regulation, protection, the right to work, refugee rights, gender, and working with vulnerable

people. The participatory aspect of the model is worth highlighting, as it enabled space for CFs to request more information on particular topics. To support the CFs' progress, a training guide and community facilitator guide were developed by ARDD and Tamkeen. The latter particularly provided support on structuring sessions, which may have facilitated the strong structure of the sessions of most CFs.

Roles and Responsibilities of Community Facilitators

A strong system was also built for all CFs, regarding their roles and responsibilities. As outlined in the community facilitator guide, their roles and responsibilities were clearly listed and a code of conduct written. In addition to this, as will be discussed below, follow-up by the project team monitored the CFs' adherence to these specifications. This not only held the CFs accountable, but increased their understanding of the requirements of their position, while helping to protect their rights by clarifying the limits of their role.

As will be discussed more in the following section, the training proved successful in improving most CFs' knowledge and facilitation skills. However, there were clearly still gaps in knowledge, even after the training that were noted by some CFs themselves. Observations also found that some CFs were still weak when it came to the content of training sessions. For instance, it was observed that one CF distributed the written information on violence against children but failed to explain it, as well as missing out some important topics. Another lacked thorough awareness of laws and regulations.

In order to mitigate these knowledge gaps in relation to their role vis-à-vis the communities, the support given to CFs throughout the process was important. Both ARDD and Tamkeen conducted monthly meetings with CFs throughout the course of the pilot that enabled two-way feedback and capacity-building. CFs were also given individual feedback and ARDD CFs were required to report on each session by answering a total of 11 questions that explored different aspects of the session. Not only did this enable the project team to have continuous feedback with which they could monitor the sessions, but it encouraged self-reflection among CFs that motivated them to develop their skills and knowledge throughout the pilot. For instance, one CF, in their session report, noted how they had been unable to provide information, when asked, on centers providing informal education. They reflected that they needed to revise their guidance on educational centers and how to contact them, and sought support from ARDD on this matter. It was also noted by other CFs in the FGD that they had improved during the implementation of the pilot in their dialogue and discussion skills and in working with older adults. ARDD's lawyer who facilitated a specialized training attested to having increased the CFs' knowledge on educational matters.

While **learning 'on-the-job'** is a natural and beneficial process, if CFs are still gaining basic knowledge and skills throughout the implementation stage it suggests that their initial sessions were of a lower quality than later ones. Given the principle of **'Do No Harm'**, it may be advisable for a more experienced facilitator to sit in on initial sessions to ensure that the correct, and all, information is being shared and that community members do not have a bad experience that will diminish their trust in the CF model and the organisation implementing it.

Also worthy of attention is the effect that previous experience and professions have on the quality of implementation. One CF noted how their previous experience as a volunteer helped them to deliver the information and to administer the sessions. One attested to having benefited from their skills as a lawyer, as this helped them to deal with different segments of the community. Yet another said

their experience in education assisted them with facilitating the sessions. It appears, in this case, that the careful selection of CFs ensured that they already possessed skills that could be built on.

Progress was also made towards improving community trust of such projects. UNHCR has noted how “communities will mobilize themselves when there is trust and confidence and when they see benefits emerging from the process” (UNHCR 2008). Due to the high volume of NGOs working in the areas that the CFs reached out to during the pilot phase, Tamkeen noted a heightened sense of mistrust among participants at the beginning of the project, which manifested itself through participants not wanting to share their experiences, having doubts about filing for a case or asking for aid, and the withdrawal of many cases after submission. The CFs therefore focused on building trust between them and the communities they were working in, with the results showing themselves in the increased number of attendees at group information sessions and the numbers of cases which CFs began receiving in the field.

ARDD CFs were also clearly aware of the importance of gaining trust as it was reflected on in some session reports and trust was gained, in some cases, through the improved facilitation skills of CFs. One noted, for instance, that they learnt to listen to participants in order to establish their trust. Of significance in establishing trust was also the legal and educational referrals made and speed of response to these cases. Here, the CFs proved apt at both detecting referrals and providing space at the end of sessions for individuals to approach them, while the quick response of the legal team at ARDD or UNICEF for education cases was essential. The use of KoboToolbox, to refer legal and education cases, also allowed for quick responses from legal teams. As beneficiaries saw tangible results, ARDD’s CFs gained legitimacy and were able to mobilize larger groups.

It is clear therefore that improving the knowledge and skills of CFs is not a quick process and, if not done well, can jeopardise opportunities presented by the CF Model and not do justice to the community. The application of strong selection and training procedures, and continuous support by the project team, can help to overcome the risk of quality that is present, and ultimately gain the community’s trust. Identifying CFs’ weaknesses and giving them space to improve both before and during their work is also vital. More research on the benefits that certain professional experience can bring to a CF role would be interesting for future phases.

2.3.2. Processes

From Knowledge Gain into Action

It is hard for people to fully participate in decision-making processes if they do not have the knowledge and information necessary to make informed choices (Ravenscroft 2012). Purkey notes that, for legal empowerment, “refugees must possess basic knowledge about their rights and entitlements and how to access these. They also need the practical knowledge required to defend those rights.” Yet, in Jordan, many people lack awareness of their legal rights and how to defend them (WANA Institute 2014).

With regards to **knowledge transfer**, the pilot showed the CF Model to be particularly effective at disseminating information on rights. Information was not only disseminated but, in most cases, well-explained, thus improving legal literacy. Though lectures can assist in disseminating information, they have shown to be ineffective at encouraging thought or attitudinal change (Bligh 1998), and a lecture-style was discouraged in favour of dialogue and discourse that encouraged discussion and debate on messages. ARDD CFs consistently reported a high level of participation in sessions and, in

the post-evaluation questionnaire, 69.5% of participants in ARDD sessions responded that there was always dialogue in the session and 72% responded that there were always questions and answers. Testament to the effectiveness of this process is the high increase in knowledge of participants. Data from the pre- and post-evaluation questionnaires showed that, after the group sessions, there was a 53.6% increase in awareness to access formal education and a 66.4% increase in awareness of access to informal education.

Furthermore, issues raised by participants were not only listened to but recorded and passed on to ARDD, as was demographic information and some information on experience of legal issues and legal knowledge. This enabled a two-way flow of information that resulted in knowledge transfer, not only exchange (Graham et al. 2006), and which can be used to better understand community needs and knowledge gaps.

To increase public awareness of rights, the mass dissemination of information is also necessary (WANA Institute 2014). To this end, ARDD utilized Facebook, Twitter and its website to develop and post blogs and key messages about access to education. Facebook posts were frequently seen by over a thousand people and one post about the rights of students with disabilities, and the use of the project to raise awareness on this, reached 3154 people. Interestingly, findings from the CF sessions were sometimes used, enabling the transfer of up-to-date community knowledge to a wider audience. This contributes to attempts being made to decolonize knowledge whereby “scholars and practitioners have challenged ‘externally’ imposed knowledge and policies and sought ways to create collaborative forms of knowledge which underpin more appropriate and sustainable social development” (Mohan 2006).

Regarding the transfer of knowledge on how to access such rights, the pilot recognised the need to enable participants to put knowledge into action. In order to access their children’s right to education, community members were provided with contact information for the Ministry of Education and other centres and schools that provide services, as well as information on what documents they would/would not need to present. In addition to being educated on child protection issues, participants were able to seek support directly from the CF, who would then refer them to either ARDD’s legal aid services (for legal cases), or UNICEF or Save the Children (for education cases). This resulted in visible changes in the participants’ lives. Not only were **200 legal cases referred to ARDD** and Tamkeen as a result of the sessions, but CFs reported noticing a **change in participants’ levels of interest in the information and even the immediate decision of some parents to send their children to school**. One CF noted how a child that attended with his parent had left school to work, but decided to go back to school after the session. Worth noting, is that it was not only the dissemination of information that led to such changes, but the active engagement of CFs in discussion with participants who showed resistance to the messages, highlighting the importance of the dedication of CFs to the success of a CF Model. In fact, Tamkeen’s CFs went beyond the scope of the sessions to accompany community members to ministries and other points of service to support them in solving their issues and filling out documents. ARDD’s CFs, on the other hand, were requested to train community members in the necessary skills so that they were able to access services without need of support, thus further enhancing their agency to affect change.

However, there were still gaps in the pilot’s application of the CF Model that hindered the conversion of knowledge into action. As will be discussed in more detail later, there was a lack of social accountability mechanisms put in place, and there was no training on community mobilisation skills for community members. Thus most knowledge was theoretical, rather than practical.

Empowering voices and enabling agency

Enabling people to have a voice is a core component of the process of enabling empowerment and builds on the importance of the two-way process of knowledge exchange discussed. It is essential for “inclusion and participation in social, political and economic processes, meaning-making, autonomy and expression” (Tacchi 2008, emphasis added). Nick Couldry links a “crisis of values” brought on by neoliberal culture to a contemporary “crisis of voice”, and thus calls for “commitment to voice that matters” by situating voice at the centre of progressive socio-political cooperation (Couldry 2010).

There is thus increasing recognition of the importance of empowering community voices, through inclusion and participation in decision-making processes, such as the increased participation of women in peace processes at all levels (S/RES/1325 2000) and calls for refugee participation in justice processes (Janmyr 2016). Attempts were made to address this need through the participatory CF Model applied in the pilot and CFs appeared aware of their role to empower community voices. Indeed, one CF was observed telling session participants: “We don’t solve the problem but we help deliver your voice.” Another CF noted that they were pleased to see the change in confidence of one female participant in speaking out in the session. As mentioned above, by taking note of participants’ comments and passing them onto ARDD, the CF model also facilitated the empowerment of community voices.

Outside of the community sessions, a particularly good example of empowering marginalised voices was implemented with youth by two of the CFs. Youth were encouraged to think critically about the issues affecting them, how they are currently engaged in the community and how they could be empowered to become more so. From this, they were asked to write articles about the experience they had gained, the challenges, lessons learned, and recommendations, which were then published in the ARDD newsletter.

The channels used for empowering voices are also of significance. Technology is increasingly enabling self-expression and the circulation of individual and collective discourse. This provides greater opportunities for self-expression, with informal channels surpassing the restrictions placed on expression by formal media and thus creating more space for community voices. Alternative media has particularly empowered women and youth to engage in political and civic actions (Mourtada & Salem 2012). Technology can also decrease the perceived distance between the speaker and the listener. Digital storytelling, for instance, has been noted for the sense of intimacy it brings between the speaker and listener, with the speaker’s voice at times even being internalised by the listener as their own (Chion 1999). Blogs have also shown an ability to move topics from the blogosphere to the national sphere, and even to the international sphere, leading to attempted clampdowns on blogging by governments who fear such an unrestricted and transparent form of media (Iskander 2012). Indeed, Coleman refers to blogs as “democratic listening posts... enabling us to pick up signals of subjective expression which might inform debate in these more reflexively democratic times” (Coleman, S 2005). The use of media platforms by ARDD and Tamkeen such as Facebook, Twitter and posting blogs on their websites to disseminate findings from session participants was thus a useful component that extended the benefits of the CF Model by providing an external space for participants’ voices.

However, limits to the use of media, in the current age of mass information, for empowering voices, need to be recognised. Before the advent of social media, Lauren Berlant (1997) had already warned that:

“...when sentimentality meets politics, personal stories [may] tell of structural effects, but in doing so they risk thwarting the very attempt to perform rhetorically a

scene of pain that must be soothed politically. Because the ideology of true feeling cannot admit the non-universality of pain, its cases of vulnerability and suffering can become all jumbled together into a scene of the generally human, and the ethical imperative toward social transformation is replaced by a passive and vaguely civic-minded ideal of compassion.”

In this regard, it is important for such channels to target the right people. While aiming messages at the general public for mass dissemination of information on their rights may be effective, using such platforms for advocacy purposes is likely to have less effect. Targeting key stakeholders, however, who are in a better position to make change, may be more effective.

It is also important when seeking to empower marginalised voices to recognise that ***having a voice is also bound in power structures that both inhibit it and shape it*** (de Souza 2005). For instance, drawing on the example of UNSCR 1325, here, women’s participation is framed within pre-existent hierarchical structures and space is only given for women to talk on gendered aspects of peace, not other matters of structural violence (Gibbins 2011). Additionally, it advocates the involvement of women for their use in contributing to achieving long lasting stability and thus stereotypes women as victims and peacebuilders, turning them into products for peace. Attention thus needs to be paid to the potential for speech and the modern-day focus on narratives to reinforce neoliberal processes that create inequality by linking discourses of expression and self-realisation to notions of individual freedom, thus regarding the “individual-as-enterprise” (de Souza 2005).

This presents a challenge for CF Models that work within a development framework and thus often face restrictions in terms of political expression. Organisations, however closely situated to the community, will select community voices and dialogue that align with the messages on which they wish to advocate. For instance, in the pilot, since the topic of the sessions was ‘right to education’ and ‘right to work’, space was given for problems faced in the educational sphere and labour market. This drew interesting information on issues such as the use of corporal punishment in schools and quality of teaching and forms of exploitation by employers for which participants may have felt unable to bring up issues related to other spheres. Similarly, in ARDD sessions, focus was placed on child protection, with GBV even being discussed in this light. From the sessions, a number of educational and legal cases were received but none related to GBV against women, surprising given the high prevalence of GBV in the targeted communities and the high number of women attendees. It may be that they similarly felt unable to discuss this topic within the framework of the sessions.

While this is understandable and not negative in the sense that it can increase awareness of, and attention to, important issues through the voices of those directly affected, it needs to be recognised that such space is thus not sufficient for unrestricted expression. To avoid the conflation of participation and agency, CFs thus need to be aware of not directing community voices in a particular direction and organisations must be aware that they are not using community voices as a means to an end. One way to help overcome this would be to give space at the end of each session for any other needs to be raised. This would also facilitate knowledge exchange. Alternatively, or additionally, a CF Model should give communities the skills and knowledge for self-expression through external means. Though it is positive that participants were empowered to speak within the session, there is need for empowerment outside of the walls of the session room.

Bridging gaps

A key factor of disempowerment is the unequal distribution of social capital which, in turn, creates unequal power dynamics that disadvantage the most vulnerable (Burt 2001). Creating ties between networks can help distribute capital between empowered and disempowered levels of society (Granovetter 1973). However, the relationship between empowerment and social capital is a particularly complex one (Mayoux 2001) and building bridges from below is not a simple task, given that empowered groups often prefer to remain closed to better maintain their levels of capital (Lin 2001). This is where CFs can help. As they are more in touch with the socio-cultural contexts of the communities in which they work, they can act as links between communities, the legal system and policy level (UNDP 2005).

One of the simplest and most effective ways to achieve this is **acting as a conduit for legal referrals**. As mentioned, the CFs in the pilot were able to quickly link community members with legal aid and counselling through informing participants of these services and then providing referrals. To strengthen this function, CFs could be better trained on legal issues and in detection of protection cases so that they are not only dependent on community members approaching them for help but can themselves pick up signs of abuse, or recognise breaches of law, on which they can approach individuals and offer support (through a respectful, sensitive and strictly confidential process).

The CF model should also include a strategy to engage key stakeholders (Gaglioti et al. 2016). CFs can engage members of the community in discussions, evaluate their needs and give feedback to government entities and other institutions that are capable of influencing policy (World Bank online). The process to identify potential stakeholders should build on current relationships and common values around priority focus areas. Existing partners can be engaged who might help identify potential key stakeholders at the local and national levels (ibid). Some CFs, of their own initiative, brought stakeholders to some of the sessions, such as a ministry employee and teacher, and facilitated exchange between them and the community participants. Given the connections with key stakeholders that many organisations already possess, these can be utilised in a CF model to bring more key actors directly to the community.

ARDD and Tamkeen also recognised the need to involve key stakeholders. They held a meeting with members of the Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Interior, and the Ministry of Social Development, in addition to personnel from the Public Security Department, UNHCR, the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit, the Jordanian Women Union and members of the press, with an estimated 40 attendees at the event. The meeting enabled Tamkeen and ARDD to introduce the Syrian Refugees Empowerment Project and to discuss the status of Syrian refugees in Jordan. Discussed matters included issues that influence their daily life in the country, from education to work permits and jobs, as well as the risks that they might face, such as human trafficking. Throughout the event, there were panel discussions in which the attendees engaged in dialogue about the challenges that they face, as well as possible solutions and ways to move forward and improve the status of Syrians in the country, and how this project could help with that.

Another method for bridging gaps is **to strengthen existing, or build new, community structures**, so that communities are in a better position to identify their needs and organise themselves to reach out to key stakeholders.

A UNHCR (2008) report on a community-based approach to its operations notes that:

“It is important to understand and then improve existing structures to ensure that the community is represented equitably and that the structures allow for the

meaningful participation of women, adolescents, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups.”

While traditional community structures may be even disempowering to some, by recognising and working on these shortfalls, rather than ignoring such structures all together, community networks can be strengthened. In Jordan, the presence of an informal justice sector (WANA Institute 2015) presents opportunities for such. For instance, though certainly patriarchal, the Syrian Clan Council was identified in Za’atari Camp as an informal structure that enabled access to justice for some community members and acted as a traditional dispute mechanism (Riach & James 2016). While ignoring such a mechanism would enable the continuation of such unequal structures to inhibit access to justice for some, working with the council to make them, for instance, more gender-sensitive, could help remove a barrier that hinders women from accessing the formal justice sector.

The UNHCR report (2008) also notes that “mapping and documenting the different kinds of community structures and identifying leaders with the people of concern can help give us a full picture of how the community works”. One role of CFs should be networking with influential community members (World Bank 2014), from community activists to religious leaders. This will further the understanding of the power dynamics present *within* such communities, as well as identifying potential links between the most vulnerable and key stakeholders. Some CFs in the pilot reached out to community leaders and organisations to identify potential participants. Such links could be developed to improve the community empowerment that these actors should enable.

Building structures, where none exist, is also a viable means of facilitating participation, since by acting collectively, communities stand a stronger chance of having their voices heard and being listened to (Leighley 2001). Where women’s groups are not already present, building support networks among women in the community, or between ones who may face similar obstacles in accessing justice, such as female headed households, can contribute to enabling empowerment. Additionally, youth groups can provide networking opportunities for a generation who are often more critical of the status quo and have new ideas to bring to society.

In order to ensure involvement of the community in decision-making processes, UNRWA’s experience is worth noting: the UN agency for Palestine refugees created camp service committees consisting of women and men from the community that meet to discuss issues in the camp, which are then heard by UNRWA representatives and taken into account to improve camp services. Camp service officers also provide a port of call for any camp resident who wants to raise an issue (UNRWA online). This shows how even a basic structure, linking different networks, can increase participation of communities in the decisions that affect their lives.

Since CFs are already bringing together community members in their sessions, such sessions provide key opportunities to develop connections between people with similar issues. For instance, the youth that were brought together at the start of the pilot, could be encouraged to meet frequently to continue building on the civic empowerment that was initiated. Given the social nature of Jordanian and Syrian societies, it is likely that strong informal connections already exist between individuals at an apolitical level and simply need to realise their potential as active community groups. To facilitate this, civic engagement trainings could be incorporated into CF sessions to give people the skills to associate and network. Such skills are already being taught to CFs and thus this would simply require the passing on of such knowledge. This would also greatly increase the sustainability of legal empowerment through the CF Model.

Legal empowerment of Syrian refugees – moving beyond the Jordanian justice sector

The Syrian refugee community presents an interesting case when it comes to enabling empowerment. As are most refugee and migrant populations around the world, Syrian refugees are faced by additional structural barriers that create particular legal challenges (Jordan INGO Forum 2018). Unregistered refugees may also decide not to access legal services in fear of being fined or even being sent back to Syria due to their illegal status, and are thus particularly vulnerable to exploitation. As they are new to their current country of residence, refugees are also less likely to have knowledge of the country's legal framework and, thereby, their rights. The additional frameworks created to secure the rights of refugees, such as the MoU between UNHCR and the Jordanian government, further complicate this matter (ibid).

The pilot project showed how a CF model can be adapted to address such particularities. It was identified by ARDD and Tamkeen that Syrian refugees face different challenges to those of the host community in work and education rights. For instance, misinformation with regards to their ability to obtain work permits and the need for certain documents to register their children in school have pushed many Syrians into the informal labour market, where their rights are less secured, and have led many parents to keep their children out of school. Syrian refugees in the project were thus educated on their rights in relation to their situation.

However, while providing information to Syrian refugees on their rights in Jordan through a CF model can improve their quality of life while in Jordan, if they return to Syria, the benefits may be limited. Megan Bradley notes that “as the [Syrian] conflict drags on, it is abundantly clear that large-scale returns will not happen anytime soon, but when they do, such movements will present complex humanitarian, socio-economic and security challenges, with important implications for peacebuilding and post-conflict reconciliation and development” (Bradley 2013). In previous cases of the mass return of refugees to post-conflict settings, such as Afghanistan, disputes have erupted over land and other scarce resources (ibid), yet refugees have frequently been marginalised in peace processes (Janmyr 2016).

With a broader and more forward-thinking approach, however, ***CFs could greatly enhance Syrians' prospects both in terms of gaining justice for war crimes and moving refugees from passive recipients of peace processes to active contributors.*** Included in the various avenues for refugee-focused approaches, are a push for the inclusion of refugees' rights and needs in a final political agreement, for power-sharing options that recognise the identity-based components of the Syrian conflict but do not depend on identity-based governing mechanisms, for the provision of transitional justice mechanisms, for the inclusion of refugee women in peace processes, and for the prioritisation of educational reform (Yahya & Kassir 2017).

CFs can facilitate such processes by providing information to Syrian refugees on their rights, such as on transitional justice mechanisms and to education on their return. By supporting the creation of structures and providing platforms for Syrian refugees' voices, CFs can help build an informed and active base that can then be approached for their participation in processes, or can advocate themselves for inclusion. Janmyr also points to the opportunities that exile provides for skills training in advocacy, leadership, mediation, conflict, and more, that will enable them to participate in rebuilding their communities, and accessing justice, on their return (Janmyr 2016).

Interestingly, ARDD's Syrian Lawyers Initiative project recognised that “strengthening Syrians' network and capacity to build their own community is crucial not just to their wellbeing in Jordan, but also to rebuilding post-conflict Syria when the war eventually ends” (ARDD 2014). If such an

approach was adapted to a CF model and made appropriate for community members without legal experience, this could prove a worthy starting point for building refugees' capacities in this regard.

2.3.3. Outcomes

By providing vulnerable groups with knowledge on their rights, giving them space and tools to express themselves and, finally, helping bridge the gaps between community and the policy level, a CF model should achieve the following outcomes:

Social accountability

Social accountability relates to civic participation, in which individuals can hold their government to account for their delivery of services, outside of formal electoral systems (Joshi 2007). **Legal empowerment is strongest with a social accountability element** (ibid). Social accountability can increase rights awareness at the community level, provide individuals with the skills to monitor government practices, and facilitate community mobilization when their rights and needs aren't met (Ezer, McKenna and Schaaf 2015).

Regarding the promotion of transparency of information, for example, CFs can inform community members about the country's access to information law, which can promote government engagement. Furthermore, CFs can raise awareness on laws, rights, and government policies that affect communities by simplifying the information available and making it more accessible to the public. They can also pass on skills to community members that would enable them to actively and independently search for reliable and useful information (World Bank online).

Ezer et al. note that, "legal empowerment can enhance social accountability interventions by opening new avenues for advocacy and action, providing concrete mechanisms for redress for rights violations... [and] can also set precedence, ultimately strengthening the legal and policy framework" (Ezer, McKenna and Schaaf 2015). The pilot thus began a process towards social accountability by providing information to participants on their rights and incorporating mechanisms that collect data on their needs in relation to certain topics. However, to achieve social accountability, there is a need to increase other processes that will provide vulnerable groups with the skills, tools, and framework with which to hold governments to account.

Sustainability

Sustainability refers to "the possibility of maintaining the achievements of any support provided to the community to ensure effective solutions" (UNHCR 2008). From a development approach, it is fundamentally about community development: "building on the capacities and skills of community members to manage representative and fair structures that can respond to both immediate and long-term protection risks and needs, and to develop solutions while upholding individual rights" (ibid).

A community-based approach is therefore important for increasing sustainability and creating a sense of ownership. While the provision of legal information through a CF model has been criticized for removing responsibility from the state, and thus reducing sustainability in the sense that institutional responsibility is weakened, a CF model has in fact been shown to strengthen and complement formal and state justice processes, while promoting transparency (Robb-Jackson 2012).

For instance, if the community is empowered and gaps are bridged, they should be better able to hold the government to account.

The CF model showed to be an effective method of transferring knowledge to the community. The post-evaluation questionnaire found that 71.6% of participants said they would pass the information they had learnt onto others, with 62.5% saying they would pass it on to their family. The potential translation of knowledge into action was also high, with 49.1% saying they would use the knowledge for themselves. However, by focusing mostly on disseminating information, sustainability was limited. For instance, a community project in Namibia not only organised meetings to disseminate information to women on their rights in accessing public services but also gave women the skills to mobilise and educate other women in their communities (UNAIDS 2012). This is a method suited for a CF model and one that could be added to knowledge exchange to promote sustainability. In the pilot, there was also much focus on building the capacities of CFs – a focus that will be continued in future phases. While this is important for improving the quality of CFs, the capacities of participants should also be strengthened. Training in civic engagement, mobilisation and knowledge transfer for community members, can both increase legal empowerment and improve sustainability. In terms of legally empowering Syrian refugees, the concept of moving beyond Jordanian legal frameworks to prepare refugees for participation in rebuilding processes for a future Syria, can make their involvement much more sustainable.

Structural change

The realisation of legal empowerment in Jordan is also inhibited by structural factors (WANA Institute 2014). While some definitions of structural power regard it as based only on economic structures created in capitalist societies (Fairfield 2015), others take a broader view, regarding structural power as grounded within socio-cultural norms, institutional practices, social and economic policies (Reed et al. 2014), and thus existing at multiple levels. Structural change moves beyond working within structures to actually altering them. For instance, radical feminism asserts that the redistribution of power is not enough, if such power drives inequalities. Rather, new power structures that do not reproduce inequalities or restrict the rights of others are necessary (Luttrell et al. 2009). For this, structural change is required.

Significant for the ***ability of a CF model to create structural change is the debate on agency and structure.*** While some theorists focus on the micro-level, arguing that agency alone is sufficient for social change, others claim that such structures inhibit any force of change occurring from below (Luttrell et al. 2009). However, while the latter denies individuals any agency, the former can be seen to place all responsibility on communities to achieve change themselves, taking responsibility away from the policy-making level. Rather, as Bourdieu's theory of habitus argues, agency is limited by the structures in place, as at the same time structures are not able to eradicate individual agency (Bourdieu 1984). Michel de Certeau also notes that individuals are able to use practices or 'tactics', to subvert 'strategies' – the rules of being, and unequal forces, that are produced and imposed by space (de Certeau 1988).

If we thus take the view that agency and structure are "complementary and dynamic forces" (Luttrell et al. 2009) and that structural power exists on multiple mutually reinforcing levels of society, we find that a community-based approach is an essential part of realising structural change. Looking at the way people think, relate and organise can be a good starting point. By raising awareness of rights – not only of oneself but of others – CFs can contribute to breaking down social norms such as stereotypical gender roles and responsibilities that, in turn, can contribute to addressing patriarchal

structures. CFs are better equipped to navigate the social structures of communities and are thus also better equipped to challenge them.

Strengthening and building community structures is also particularly important in the process to create structural change, as this better enables people to organise and challenge norms and policies. Networks can also combine to form coalitions, which are a common vehicle for achieving structural change (Reed et al. 2013). Additionally, it has been recognised that legal empowerment can even tackle basic structural problems such as legal provisions that constrain access, or a lack of official identity papers and documentation proving entitlements (Joshi 2007). Since agency is not sufficient alone to achieve change, the creations of links by CFs with key stakeholders to act as conduits and advocate on behalf of the community, is thus also important for working towards structural change.

2.3.4. Main Conclusions

The analysis above based on the pilot implementation of the CFs model among Syrian refugees and Jordanians calls for the following points to be considered:

- A CF model is clearly useful for accessing vulnerable groups and disseminating information through dialogue that enables greater understanding and the opportunity to have their voices heard.
- A thorough and holistic approach to training CFs and ongoing support increases the quality of the CF model and enhances community trust.
- The concept of community needs to be better explored within the CF model since in the short-term CFs are shown to be better equipped to address community needs if they are from the community.
- The CF model should go beyond disseminating information to building the capacities of community members to increase their agency in affecting change, such as through having the skills for community mobilization.
- While having Syrians and Jordanians participate in the same sessions may be beneficial to improve social cohesion, the effect of the nationality of the CF needs to be better understood, since they cannot be from both communities.
- It would be beneficial for a CF model to also help build community structures and networks.
- The empowerment of community voices can sometimes be unintentionally constrained by organisations' agendas and thus undefined space should be provided for free expression. The effectiveness of different media platforms in achieving different outcomes also ought to be considered when utilising them for community empowerment.
- Ways to empower Syrian refugees to navigate transitional justice mechanisms and participate in rebuilding processes in a future Syria need to be explored for greater effectiveness and sustainability.

3. Ways forward

- Despite the various challenges faced in Jordan for both legal empowerment and a CF model, ***the CF model proved an effective method for awareness-raising and enhanced agency.*** Discussion between participants and CFs increased the community's understanding of the information, the likelihood of them passing such information on, and their ability to act on such knowledge. The provision of links to legal aid providers and encouragement to use such support also provided participants with pathways for immediate action. The model also enabled knowledge exchange – essential for a sense of ownership and better understanding of community needs and perspectives. A thorough selection process and training proved vital to improving the quality of CFs and, given the short time span of the pilot and the reported increase of trust gained, the CF model showed to be effective at gaining community trust.
- However, the research shows the need to build on this foundation if legal empowerment is to be truly enabled. ***More effective and sustainable methods for empowering community voices need to be explored and opportunity needs to be provided for unrestricted discourse on community needs.*** While ARDD and Tamkeen's links with key stakeholders and the networking of CFs with local organisations and community leaders facilitated bridging the gaps between the community and policy levels, further steps can be taken to increase community empowerment, in this regard, and social accountability. For this, analysis is needed of informal community structures already in place that can be strengthened to become more effective and inclusive.
- **Opportunities to open current structures to receive support from CFs should also be explored.** The existence of numerous women's and youth groups in the community is particularly worth looking into as such groups can then become access points for CFs. Within these groups, CFs could assume a more supportive background role – truly facilitating, rather than giving information to and training communities in civic engagement and community mobilisation skills. This would greatly enhance the agency of vulnerable groups, their sense of ownership and project sustainability.
- Regarding the specific **empowerment of Syrian refugees**, more research into the opportunities present in Syrian refugee communities in Jordan, especially among the most vulnerable, for enabling participation in future rebuilding processes and understanding of transitional justice mechanisms, would be valuable. The CF model clearly presents an effective model for enabling legal empowerment of refugees through knowledge exchange and capacity building, but the complexities of the Syrian conflict and Syrian refugees' status in Jordan would surely provide challenges.

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