Climbing the mountain of empowerment

The impact of empowerment activities on the lives of women living in Soacha, Colombia

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This thesis is submitted for obtaining the Joint Master’s Degree in International Humanitarian Action. By submitting the thesis, the author certifies that the text is from his own hand, does not include work of someone else unless clearly indicated, and that the thesis has been produced in accordance with proper academic practices.
Abstract
The purpose of this research is to provide humanitarian organisations with a clear overview of the different impacts of activities on women empowerment in Soacha, Colombia. This overview therefore serves as a guide that humanitarian organisations can use when they decide to implement empowerment activities in their projects, as it is increasingly argued that humanitarian aid should do so. Semi-structured interviews, complemented by a questionnaire, were conducted in Soacha with ten women who had participated in activities of four different organisations. The activities were classified into the economic, political, psychological and cognitive dimensions of empowerment. Empowerment of the participants was measured on the basis of the indicators of the fifth Sustainable Development Goal and the theory on the ability to exercise choice. By combining the dimensions of empowerment and the measurement of empowerment, this research is able to indicate to what extent the four dimensions of empowerment have a different empowering impact on the lives of women in Soacha. The study found that activities that focus on the economic dimension of empowerment have the most impact on decreasing the discrimination of women and improving the shared responsibility within the household and family. The activities that focus on the political as well as the psychological dimension of empowerment have the most impact on less discrimination of women, on their effective participation and equal opportunities in both public and private life, and on their ability to exercise choice. The most impact caused by the activities within the cognitive dimension of empowerment was found in the ability to exercise choice, the effective participation and equal opportunities in public and private life, and on the equal rights to economic resources and access to ownership and control over property.
Resumen
El objetivo de esta investigación es proporcionar a las organizaciones humanitarias una visión clara de los diferentes impactos de las actividades en el empoderamiento de las mujeres en Soacha, Colombia. Por lo tanto, este resumen sirve como una guía que las organizaciones humanitarias pueden usar cuando deciden implementar actividades de empoderamiento en sus proyectos, ya que cada vez se argumenta que la ayuda humanitaria debería hacerlo. La investigación utilizó como instrumento una entrevista semi-estructurada que estuvo acompañada por un cuestionario. Se hizo las entrevistas en Soacha con diez mujeres que habían participado en las actividades de cuatro organizaciones diferentes. Se clasificó las actividades en las dimensiones económica, política, psicológica y cognitiva del empoderamiento. El empoderamiento de los participantes se midió sobre la base de indicadores del quinto Objetivo de Desarrollo Sostenible y la teoría sobre la capacidad de ejercer la elección. Al combinar las dimensiones del empoderamiento y la medición del empoderamiento, esta investigación puede indicar en qué medida las cuatro dimensiones del empoderamiento tienen una influencia de empoderamiento diferente en las vidas de las mujeres en Soacha. A partir del análisis se encontró que las actividades que se centran en la dimensión económica del empoderamiento tienen el mayor impacto en la discriminación de las mujeres y la responsabilidad compartido dentro del hogar y la familia. Las actividades que se centran en la dimensión política y psicológica del empoderamiento tienen el mayor impacto en la discriminación de las mujeres, su participación efectiva e igualdad de oportunidades en la vida pública y privada, y su capacidad para ejercer la elección. El mayor impacto de las actividades dentro de la dimensión cognitiva del empoderamiento se encontró en la capacidad de ejercer la elección, la participación efectiva y la igualdad de oportunidades en la vida pública y privada, y en la igualdad de derechos a los recursos económicos y el acceso y control de la propiedad.
Preface

I proudly present to you my master thesis for the master programme International Humanitarian Action. With a lot of joy and love I look back on my internship and research experience in Colombia and I remember this time and learning process with great satisfaction.

I can gladly say that I have learned a lot during the last 6 months, on a professional level as well as on personal level. Thanks to my internship with the Jesuit Refugee Service Colombia (JRS) in Soacha under the guidance of the coordinator Mauricio Moreno, I gained a deeper understanding of Colombia, Soacha, and the complex situation of this beautiful country.

Most importantly, I want to thank all the women who were willing to sit with me, answer the questions I asked them and share with me their life stories, even though we had just met. I admire them and their strength. They showed me how the support they had received had helped them to move forward and to make a change in their lives, something that motivates me to continue with this work that is so needed in so many places of the world.

A special thanks goes to Prof. Dr. J. Herman for being my first supervisor. Despite his busy work and travel schedule during the past semester, he was able to provide me with valuable feedback. Especially during the initial phase of the thesis writing process, he was able to formulate the lines of reasoning and thoughts I had in my mind. In a more advanced stadium of the process, he raised critical questions which helped me to improve the quality of this research.

Moreover, I want to thank the JRS for giving me the opportunity to learn about their organisation and their work. I especially want to thank them for the access they gave me to the people with whom they work and whom I could interview for this research. They put me in contact with the organisation ‘La Mesa de Mujeres’ in Soacha, which works in collaboration with various smaller organisations to empower women in Soacha. I want to thank the organisation for the excellent work they do and for putting so much effort into helping me with my research. Moreover, I would like to thank the organisations ‘Mencoldes’ and ‘Fundación Ideas para Construir’ who also gave me the opportunity to interview women that participated in the activities of their organisation. I hope that they will be able to continue all the good work they do and influence the lives of more families living in Soacha.

I want to thank Mauricio Moreno, who gave me the opportunity to start the internship in his organisation even though he knew that my Spanish was not perfect. He looked after me and made sure I felt comfortable within the team. A special thanks goes to my team
'Humanitarian Action’ within the Jesuit Refugee Service. While I was struggling during the first month in Colombia, they helped me feel at home in Soacha as well as in Colombia while trying to show me every beautiful aspect of their country and culture. Together we have worked hard but also laughed and ate a lot during the days at the office.

Moreover, I want to give a very special thanks to Esmee and Doutsen, my NOHA buddies in Colombia. There were hardly any days that I did not see or talk to them and together we discovered this country, its beauties and its frustrations. They were the ones who gave me advice on this master thesis and motivated and helped me when I got stuck in the process.

Krista Sojo
December 30, 2016
Prefacio

Con orgullo les present mi tesis de maestría para ‘Acción Humanitaria Internacional’. Con mucho alegría y amor, miro hacia atrás a mis momentos increíbles en Colombia donde hice mi pasantía y mi investigación. Con grán satisfacción miro hacia atrás en el proceso de aprendizaje durante este tiempo y esta investigación.

Estoy muy agradecida con los últimos 6 meses en los que he aprendido mucho a nivel profesional y personal. Gracias a mi pasantía con el Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados Colombia en Soacha, bajo la guía del coordinador Mauricio Moreno, aprendí mucho sobre Colombia, Soacha y la situación compleja de este hermoso país.

Lo más importante, quiero agradecer a todas las mujeres que estuvieron dispuestas a sentarse conmigo, responder a las preguntar que les hice y compartir conmigo sus historias de vida, aunque acabábamos de conocernos. Les admiro a ellas y la fuerza que tienen. Me mostraron cómo el apoyo que habían recibido les había ayudado a hacer un cambio en sus vidas, algo que me motiva en continuar con este trabajo tan necesario en tantos lugares del mundo.

Un agradecimiento especial es para Prof. Dr. J. Herman por ser mi primer supervisor. A pesar de su horario de trabajo y viaje ocupado durante el último semestre, él fue capaz de proporcionarme concomentarios valiosos. Especialmente durante la fase inicial del proceso de escritura de la tesis, él fue capaz de formular las líneas de razonamiento y pensamientos que tenía en mi mente. En un estadio más avanzado del proceso, planteó preguntas críticas que me ayudaron a mejorar la calidad de esta investigación.

Además, quiero agradecer el SJR por darme la oportunidad de aprender sobre su organización y su trabajo. Especialmente quiero agradecerles por el acceso que he habido a las personas con las que trabajan y con quienes podría tener entrevistas para esta investigación. Me pusieron en contacto con la organización ‘La Mesa de Mujeres’ en Soacha, una organización que ofrece un excelente trabajo en colaboración con varias organizaciones más pequeñas con el objetivo de empoderar a las mujeres en Soacha. Quiero agradecer a la organización por el excelente trabajo que hacen y por poner tanto esfuerzo en ayudarme con mi investigación. Además, quiero agradecer a las organizaciones ‘Mencoldes’ y ‘Fundación Ideas para Construir’ que me dieron la oportunidad de entrevistar las mujeres que participaron en las actividades de sus organizaciones. Espero que puedan continuar todo el buen trabajo que hacen e influir en la vida de más familias que viven en Soacha.
Quiero agradecer a Mauricio Moreno, que me dio la oportunidad de iniciar mi pasantía en su organización, aunque sabía que mi nivel de español definitivamente no era perfecto. Él siempre estaba pendiente de mí y se aseguró de que me sentía cómoda dentro del equipo. Un agradecimiento especial a mi equipo ‘Acción Humanitaria’ dentro del SJR. Durante el primer mes en Colombia, me ayudaron a sentirme como en casa tanto en Soacha como en Colombia. Trataban de enseñarme cada aspecto hermoso que tiene su país y su cultura. Con este equipo he trabajado duro pero también he reído y comido mucho durante los días en la oficina. Además, quiero dar un agradecimiento muy especial a Esmee y a Doutsen, mis amigos de NOHA en Colombia. Casi no hubo días que no les vi o hablé con ellas. Juntas descubrimos este país, sus bellezas y sus frustraciones. Fueron ellas que me dieron consejos sobre esta tesis de maestría y que me motivaron y ayudaron cuando me quedé atrapado en el proceso.

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<tr>
<td>ECHO</td>
<td>European Commission for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection</td>
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<td>ELN</td>
<td>Ejército de Liberación Nacional (The National Liberation Army)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FARC</td>
<td>Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarios de Colombia (The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia)</td>
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<td>Oxfam GB</td>
<td>Oxfam Great Britain</td>
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<td>IDP(s)</td>
<td>Internally Displaced Person(s)</td>
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<td>JRS</td>
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<td>MDG(s)</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
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1. Research Outline

1.1. Introduction

The Colombian conflict started with ‘La Violencia’ when the Colombian Liberal and Conservative Parties competed for political supremacy which lasted from 1948 until 1953.\(^1\) Once they agreed on a power-sharing government, some of the excluded left-wing communist parties created the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarios de Colombia) and the ELN (Ejército de Liberación Nacional).\(^2\) In response to the guerrilla groups and the lack of protection of its citizens by the government, paramilitary groups formed themselves. The conflict has been ongoing for over 60 years, with as a result a country that has the world’s largest displaced population with 6,360,000 people.\(^3\) According to the Norwegian branch of Doctors Without Borders (MSF) and the European Commission, the Colombian international displaced persons (IDP) problem can be labelled as one of the world’s forgotten crises.\(^4\) Most IDPs in Colombia have been displaced from rural to urban areas.\(^5\) The urban area which has the highest concentration of IDPs in Colombia is the municipality of Soacha, which can be found in the south of Bogotá, Colombia.\(^6\) Even though the most intense period of the conflict has passed, Soacha is still being called ‘the city of the displaced persons’ (la ciudad de desplazados).\(^7\) In 2012, formal peace talks started in Cuba, in which all parties are still engaged. On August 26th 2012, the Colombian government and FARC representatives signed a General Agreement for the Termination of the Conflict and Building of a Stable and Long-Lasting Peace. A historic milestone has been reached on June 23rd 2016, when the FARC and the Colombian government agreed on the accord for a bilateral and definitive ceasefire,

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\(^2\) Herbert Tico Braun, “‘Que haiga paz!’: the Cultural Contexts of Conflict in Colombia” in Peace, democracy, and human rights in Colombia, ed. Christopher Welna and Gustavo Gallón, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 27.


cessation of hostilities, and laying aside of weapons. At the time of writing, the population of Colombia has rejected the first proposed peace agreements during a referendum. After new peace talks between the government and the FARC, a new peace agreement has been reached.

Of the Colombian displaced population, 52.3% is female. The conflict in Colombia has had a tremendous impact on many of these women whose bodies have been used as weapons of violence during the conflict. During political conflicts like the one in Colombia, women are a vulnerable group who are disproportionately affected by the conflict. Not only in Colombia but also during conflicts in other countries, women’s bodies are being used to compete the different existing ideologies of the conflicting parties. Military strength is shown by violating the wives, daughters, sisters and mothers of the opponent. Besides being violated, women also bear the burden when they become heads of families as a result of losing not only their loved ones but also their source of financial support. Many have to leave their homes because of the fighting or occupation. Consequently, they are responsible to provide for their family in an unknown context which may not grant women equal financial rights. As a result of these abrupt changes, there is a shift in the roles and responsibilities of women in the family.

Roles and relations within a family do not only change in case of a lost family member, though. The displacement of a complete family can, besides posing challenges, create opportunities for women and therefore empower them. According to Segura and Meertens, women show greater flexibility in their adaptation to new environments and in the development of survival strategies in the process of displacement than men, even though they find this process more traumatic. As men tend to expect assistance from formal institutions and possess skills that are often not transferable to the new context, roles of men and women in the household need to change as a consequence. These changes often imply that women develop new capacities and acquire more control over resources which can be both challenging and empowering for them.

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13 Askin, “The Quest for Post-Conflict Gender Justice,” 515.
urban area can feel as empowering results from the fact that the majority of displaced women is used to traditional norms and gender inequality.

With the aim to help affected women and to decrease the inequality between men and women, more and more projects of developmental organisations focus specifically on the empowerment of women and girls. The increased perceived importance to empower women and girls is also expressed by both Millennium Development Goal (MDG) number three and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number five which strive to empower all women and girls in the world. Empowerment is mostly understood as a process of developing capacities and acquiring, providing and bestowing resources and means to gain control over them. It therefore creates the ability to direct and control one’s own life, something which cannot be done for them but can be supported by externals such as organisations. According to Stromquist, women can be empowered in four different dimensions: the economic dimension, the political dimension, the psychological dimension and the knowledge dimension.

The focus on the empowerment of women and girls has always been recognised as a development activity. However, it is increasingly argued that humanitarian aid should keep this goal in mind as well when executing their work. In the field of humanitarian action, it has already been acknowledged that one should make a distinction between the necessities between men and women to make sure the aid being delivered is suitable for everyone. More than delivering suitable aid to distinct groups, the European Commission for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) stated in a report that humanitarian assistance should also benefit of the opportunity created by any crisis to tackle vulnerabilities by challenging

discrimination and inequalities based on gender. Hilhorst et al. argue that these so-called opportunities are part of the third dimension of social life of humanitarian action which concerns the ways in which it affects society. She argues that, especially in areas where crises are protracted and where aid has a large presence, humanitarian action can be seen as affecting the ordering process of society at large, changing people’s outlooks, altering power constellations, transforming institutions and leaving footprints on spatial organisation. Challenging discrimination and inequalities based on gender, and altering power constellations can be done by women empowerment. Focusing on specific vulnerabilities during the emergency phase might pave the way for the post-conflict and developmental phase. Particularly because gender equality is considered as an important mean to achieve a culture of peace, an achievement which is especially important for a country like Colombia that has experienced decades of conflict but has been in a peace process for four years now.

It is one thing to theoretically argue that humanitarian aid should also implement empowerment activities in their scope of activities, it is another thing to actually implement these activities. The discussion about whether or not to implement empowerment activities as part of humanitarian action will not be analysed in this research. However, because the discussion is present and because some humanitarian organisations do already implement such activities, this research will not only be useful to developmental organisations but also for humanitarian organisations. To support the humanitarian sector in deciding which women empowerment activities to execute, it should be clear what the impact is of those different activities. This question that will be examined in this study of which its rationale will be explained in the next section.

1.2. Rationale

As mentioned before, the majority of the Colombian (displaced) women is used to traditional norms and gender inequality. Traditionally, it is expected that women take care of the household and the raising of their children whereas the function of men is to be the head of

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the household and the breadwinner. Differences do exist between the roles of women in society, depending on their social status and the area of Colombia they come from. Women of the upper class normally avoid working outside in order to uphold their family status and honour. They usually do hold a number of prominent public positions and are the ones that can be politically active. Women in the middle class are generally not permitted to work outside of their homes except for volunteer work. Women in the lower-class who live in the rural areas of Colombia usually have to work to contribute money to the household which might give them a degree of equality. However, they are still responsible for the household and are not equally treated at their jobs. According to United Nations (UN) Women Colombia, the work that Colombian women have to do is more dangerous and paid worse than that of men. The estimated gross national income per capita is being estimated on 9,785 $ for females and 14,372 $ for males. Moreover, women are discriminated against by having worse access to land ownership and loans.

Nevertheless, improvement in gender equality can be noticed in the country. Since 1990 important achievements in women’s empowerment in terms of political voice, access to decision-making roles, the capacity to shape law and policy on gender equality and on issues of justice and accountability in relation to the conflict have been established. Aside from still being an underrepresented group in political positions, Colombia does have more women in relevant decision-making positions than ever before. Whereas in 1998, only 12% of the people of the cabinet were female, 32% were female by 2011. In 1997 11.7% of the parliamentarians in the lower house were female as were 6.9% in the senate, in comparison with respectively 19.9% and 22% in 2014. With respect to education and labour market participation, girls’ enrolment in secondary and tertiary education has outnumbered boys while women’s participation in the labour market has risen from 29.9% in 1990 to 42.7% in 2012 – neglecting the unpaid work being done in the household.

32 Domingo, Rocha and Hinestroza, “Progress despite adversity”.
Even though improvements in gender equality can be noticed, Colombia is still one of the most unequal countries on gender segregation and women’s empowerment in the world, as stated by Mendez.\textsuperscript{33} The United Nations Development Programme’s Gender Inequality Index confirms this, stating that Colombia ranks 97 out of 188 countries in gender equality.\textsuperscript{34}

One can identify the combination of the conflict situation and the gender inequality existent in Colombia as the opportunity mentioned in the report of ECHO in which it argues that the humanitarian sector should take up the situation of a humanitarian crisis as an opportunity and use their work activities to challenge discrimination and inequality based on gender. Activities that focus on women empowerment are one of these work activities.

Some humanitarian organisations have already implemented women empowerment activities as one of the work activities. As is normal and important to do so, these activities are monitored and evaluated. One example of an evaluation is the one by Grabska which took place in the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya in which the impact of the gender programming of the UNHCR were investigated\textsuperscript{35} The findings showed that the results of the gender policies in the camp, aiming to empower and enhance the position of women and girls, were not always as intended and several obstacles were found. More examples of evaluations are the one by Agarwal in which he found an influence of ownership and control over property on economic well-being\textsuperscript{36}, the evaluation of Duflo who showed a correlation between economic development and women’s knowledge of their legal rights\textsuperscript{37}, the one by Dijkstra and Hammer in which they detected a correlation between access to financial resources and the level of domestic violence\textsuperscript{38}, and the evaluation of Khogali and Takhar who analysed the influence of a cash-for-work strategy on the status of women.\textsuperscript{39} Some studies succeed to compare different methods of women empowerment activities like the comparative study by Van den Bold, Quisumbing, and Gillespie. They created a synthesis of findings of various reviews and key studies that focus on women’s empowerment in order to compare the impact of cash transfer

\textsuperscript{39} Hisham Khogali and Parmjit Takhar, “Empowering women through cash relief in humanitarian contexts,” \textit{Gender & Development} 9, no.3 (2001): 42.
programness, agricultural interventions, and microfinance programs on women’s empowerment. 40 Another such comparative study has been conducted by Alexander and Welzel, who investigated if and how the factors socioeconomic development, rising gender-egalitarian attitudes, historical legacies, and institutional design factors impacted women’s increasing empowerment. 41

However, some drawbacks can also be found with regards to above executed studies that investigate the effects of women empowerment activities. Even though having retrieved various conclusions with her research, Grabsks did not draw any conclusions about the difference in impact between the multiple activities that were done in the investigated refugee camp. The study of Van den Bold, Quisumbing and Gillespie, and the one of Alexander and Welzel did compare various activities and its influences. However, many evaluations are the one as mentioned above and even though it evaluates and compares, the studies fail to evaluate and compare different kind of activities in one and the same setting. Moreover, the studies have been executed in the traditional humanitarian setting of a refugee camp while currently an increase in urban refugee situation can be noticed.

It is for these two reasons that the research that can be found in this theses is needed. Firstly, this study is executed in the municipality of Soacha, Colombia, which is an example of an urban-refugee situation. According to Wirtz et al., most IDPs in Colombia have been displaced from rural to urban areas in which the violence leads to intra-urban displacement. 42 An example of this phenomenon is the municipality of Soacha which can be found in the south of Bogotá, Colombia. As previously mentioned, Soacha is amongst the poorest areas in Colombia and is called ‘the city of the displaced persons’ because of its high concentrations of IDPs. 43 According to the administration of the municipality of Soacha, it consists of a total of 511,262 habitants. 44 However, the majority of humanitarian and developmental organisations that work in the municipality estimate that the real number of habitants living in

Soacha has already surpassed the amount of 1,000,000.\textsuperscript{45} A census done by the government in 2003 shows that, at that time, 51.53 percent of the population of Soacha was female.\textsuperscript{46}

The second reason for this research to be needed is its comparison of various activities by both humanitarian and developmental organisations within the setting of Soacha. Urban refugees live in a context where social, health and other basic services exist but are often not readily available.\textsuperscript{47} The approaches, tools and skills that humanitarian agencies use in rural or camp settings are therefore not applicable to their situation.\textsuperscript{48} The needs in urban areas are complex and require a broader ‘menu’ of assistance options.\textsuperscript{49} Consequently, a more developmental approach to the humanitarian response in the urban areas is needed in order to ensure that organisations’ responses are focused on building local capacity.\textsuperscript{50} Activities that focus on women empowerment is one of these responses. This mixed methods research is therefore able to compare the different kind of activities of both humanitarian and developmental organisations to provide for an overview of empowerment activities and its different impacts.

1.3. Research Question

This research is meant to contribute to the humanitarian sector and provide them with a comparison between the difference in impact on empowerment of women after the implementation and participation in various kinds of activities. The urban refugee situation in Soacha is used as the setting of this research without being extensively investigated as the focus of this research is on the impact of empowerment activities. The research will answer the following question:

\begin{itemize}
\item 1.3. Research Question
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{50} Department for International Development, Humanitarian Response to Urban Crises, 2.
To what extent does a difference in focus on the four dimensions of empowerment have a different impact on the actual empowerment of the women living in the urban refugee situation in Soacha, Colombia?

To operationalise this question, the study is divided into four sections, each answering a sub-question. The first theoretical section lays the foundation of this research by firstly, establishing the definition of empowerment and secondly, describing and discussing the four dimensions of empowerment as defined by Stromquist. By doing so, this section answers the following sub-question:

**What are the four dimensions of women empowerment and what do they imply?**

The second theoretical section describes the fifth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) which strives to achieve gender equality and to empower all women and girls. This SDG supported by theory of Stromquist on the measurement of empowerment and Kabeer’s theory on the ability to exercise choice will be used to answer the second sub-question:

**How can women empowerment be measured?**

Based on the experiences of the women of Soacha, the third section was created. In this section the activities in which the interviewed women have participated and the consequential impact of those activities are discussed in order to answer both the third and the fourth sub-questions:

**In which types of activities, divided by dimension, do the women participate and what is the impact of these activities?**

**How have the activities in which the women participated empowered them (with reference to the indicators established by the SDGs)?**

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52 Stromquist, “Women’s Empowerment and Education”, 310.
The answers to the formulated questions will enable the formulation of a conclusion and the provision of an overview for the humanitarian sector. The next section explains how the data was obtained that was needed to answer the research questions.

1.4. Methodology

As mentioned in the previous section, the aim of this research is to investigate to what extent a difference in focus on the four dimensions of empowerment have a different impact on the actual empowerment of women. The study of Stromquist made it possible to divide the activities in which the women had participated into the four dimensions of empowerment.54 The sub-indicators of the fifth SDG and the theory of Kabeer55 of the ability to exercise choice provided the theoretical framework to measure a possible change in empowerment of the women who were interviewed. The theories used for the theoretical framework are found in both the qualitative and the quantitative research that were executed. When both qualitative and quantitative research is done, a so-called mixed methods design is being used. The aim to use a mixed methods design is to combine the relationship amongst variables with quantitative research and to understand the meaning that individuals ascribe to a social or human problem with qualitative research. As the results can be used to reinforce each other, the overall strength of the research will be greater56. Moreover, the mixed methods can serve the purpose to advocate marginalised groups such as women or minorities.57 By using a mixed methods design this research is able to investigate both the relationship between activities and women empowerment, and the feelings and opinions of the women who participated in the activities.

More specifically, this research uses a concurrent mixed methods procedure in which both quantitative and qualitative data are merged in order to provide a comprehensive analysis

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57 Creswell, Research Design, 14.
of the research problem.\textsuperscript{58} By one single interview, both forms of data are collected at the same time after which the information will be integrated and analysed in different manners.

An inductive research design is used, as this is the way in which detailed information will be developed into broad patterns, theories or generalisations.\textsuperscript{59} Data is collected by means of interviews with women living in Soacha after which a conclusion and a possible theory will follow. An inductive research design is very common when doing qualitative research, however it can also be used when using a mixed methods methodology.\textsuperscript{60}

Considering the situation in Soacha and the difficulty to create a control group, a cross-sectional design instead of an experimental design is used. Objects of investigation are: the past and current activities in which women in Soacha participated, the way in which these activities empowered them and the potential differences between those ways of empowerment.

1.4.1. Secondary Research
As duplication should be avoided, an extensive literature review has been done to identify a gap in the literature and to gain knowledge and understanding about definitions and processes. The gap in the literature has been used to find the objective of this research whereas the critical review and analysis of previous research has created the base for the field research.

1.4.2. Field Research
The location for the research was Soacha, a municipality close to Bogotá. Being the biggest reception area of displaced people in Colombia, many international, national and grassroots organisations are present. Because of the presence and the use of a broad range of types of organisations, this research can serve as a general overview of the activities in Soacha.

The population for this research is therefore the women of Soacha. Due to the high uncertainty about the number of habitants in Soacha, it is difficult to establish a sampling frame without excluding many women.\textsuperscript{61} The choice has been made to use a non-probability sampling with as the main reason the many dynamics of this recipient municipality, consisting of many people from multiple parts of the country. It is therefore difficult and impractical to create a sample which represents the whole population. This research has used a convenience

\textsuperscript{58} Creswell, \textit{Research Design}, 15.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid, 64.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid, 66.
\textsuperscript{61} Servicio Jesuita de Refugiados, “Informe de avance annual 2015”, 13.
strategy in the data collection which means that information has been collected from participants who were reachable and available for the researcher.  

The women that have been interviewed were found in two ways. Some of the organisations were found via the contacts gathered during an internship with the Jesuit Refugee Service Colombia (JRS) that works in Soacha. After a meeting with the coordinators of the organisations, their coordinator talked with women and introduced me to the women who were able and willing to have an interview with me. The rest of the organisations have been found by contacting humanitarian organisations that were present in Bogotá according to the website ‘humanitarianresponse.info’. The organisations that seemed to have projects with women in Soacha were being contacted by e-mail after which an appointment was made. After some appointments a date was set to interview the women who had participated or were still participating in the activities of the organisation. Again, the women to be interviewed were the ones that voluntarily applied themselves and offered their help and time. In total, interviews were held with women of four different organisations. One organisation was an international humanitarian organisation, the other three organisations were national organisations and focused on the areas of social development, development from a pedagogical and cultural perspective, and the empowerment of women on every possible aspect.

The choice was made to conduct semi-structured interviews with 10 women. A semi-structured interview is a helpful tool to find out the ‘why’ rather than ‘how many’ or ‘how much’. It therefore provided the opportunity to let these women talk about their experiences, their opinions, and their feelings which consequently created the liberty for the conversation to vary and to thoroughly understand their feelings and ideas, and discuss more sensitive topics. With the aim not to forget the subjects that were important to talk about and in order to establish an ethical order to talk about these subjects, an interview guide was established which can be found in Annex I.

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62 Lawrence A. Palinkas et al., “Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research,” Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research 42 no. 5 (2015), 536.
1.4.2.1. Quality Assurance

First of all, the interview questions have been set up in English after which they have been translated into Spanish. The Spanish questions have been corrected by both a bilingual professor at the university and a Colombian colleague to double-check the comprehensibility and professionality of the questions.

The interviews were conducted in Spanish as it was the language the respondents felt most comfortable with. As the researcher was able to comprehend this level of Spanish, it was decided to conduct the interview alone without the help of anyone to prevent a negative change in confidence and attitude towards the researcher. Though, being aware of the fact that the researcher is no native Spanish speaker, all interviews were recorded with consent of the respondents. An example of the consent form can be found in Annex II. Moreover, detailed notes were taken during the interview. These two tools created the ability to revise the interviews repeatedly and to double-check the information from the notes with the information of the recording. This way the probability to a correctly heard, understood and interpreted interview was increased. The process of transcribing the interviews started as soon as possible after having conducted the interviews, the underlying idea being that the dynamics of the conversation were still fresh in memory which increased the understanding of answers and comments. The maximum time of transcribing an interview was one week. In general, the majority of the material has been carefully transcribed, except for long distinct anecdotes that did not seem specifically relevant for this research. It also happened that because of surrounding noise or the high speed at which some women talked, some parts of sentences or words were difficult to understand and therefore left blank and unknown.

It was explicitly decided to not translate the data from Spanish to English before analysing the data. The Spanish language is a very rich language in which many expressions and words exist that do not necessarily exist in the English language. In order to stay as close to the data as possible and to prevent losing valuable information, the data has been analysed in Spanish after which the conclusions of this analysis have been carefully translated.

1.4.3. Ethical considerations

When doing fieldwork consisting of interviews, it is important to consider the ethical aspects and to not harm the respondents. One important aspect is informed consent whereas another important aspect is the confidentiality of the respondents.66 Therefore, before the start of the

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interview women were explained what the objective was of the research, that the information will stay confidential, and that there is always the option to skip a question whenever they did not feel to answer the question. At last, they had to fill in the consent form.

In order to pave the path to a smooth interview, the questions of the interview guide started with basic information, an explication of the activities in which the women had participated, questions about the dynamics in one’s household, questions about the situation outside one’s household and ended with the most sensitive topics: sexual rights and violence.

The location of the interviews has always been the offices in Soacha of the organisations with whom I worked. The interviews that were conducted with women that participated in activities with the JRS or with organisations that were connected to the JRS, were scheduled individually and at times that suited the interviewees the best. The interviews were held at the office of the JRS. The coordinators of the organisations that were not connected to the JRS, scheduled all the interviews on the same day and at times that they had established.

1.5. Limitations

Above described research design did have one limitation, though, created by the choice to use a convenience strategy to collect data. Only four months were available in Soacha to get into contact with as many organisations as possible, meet with them to explain the aim of the research, and set a data or multiple dates to have interviews with some women that participated in their activities. Due to the busy schedules of the organisations only a limited amount of time was available which automatically meant that only a limited amount of women were available to interview. Moreover, the organisations themselves selected the women that would participate in the interviews. It was unknown whether the selection criteria were only the women’s availability or whether the organisations decided to have more selection criteria for the women they choose to send to have an interview with me. Therefore, the final sample does not represent the population of women in Soacha and results might be slightly biased.

1.6. Utility

As mentioned before, discussions are currently going on about the job of humanitarian organisations and whether it should stay focused on emergency help or whether it should make use of its so-called third dimension of social life which concerns the ways in which it
affects society and therefore also implement (women) empowerment activities. The current discussion is a fact, even as it is a fact that some humanitarian organisations already have women empowerment activities as part of their projects. On the other hand, women empowerment is a broadly understood concept of which various organisations have different understandings. Moreover, women empowerment is believed to be achieved in various manners and by numerous sorts of activities. As humanitarian assistance is being provided in times of emergencies and in urgent situations, it is crucial for humanitarian organisations to have a clear overview and comparison between different effects of various women empowerment activities. Such comparison and overview has not been created yet, it is therefore that this research can serve as a tool for humanitarian organisations that can be consulted when needed. On top of that, the research has been done in an urban refugee setting which is extra useful as a rise of urban refugee situations is expected in the future.

2. Definition and Dimensions of Empowerment

Before it can be analysed what has been the influence of activities by organisations on the empowerment of women in Soacha, it should first be clear what is meant by empowerment. This section will discuss not only which definition of empowerment is used in this research, but also how women can be empowered on four dimensions and what it is that these dimensions imply.

According to various academics, empowerment can be seen as a process or as a continuum that varies in degree of power. On this continuum one can move from one extreme to the other; from an absolute lack of power to having absolute power. According to Stromquist, empowerment is a process to change the distribution of power, both in interpersonal relations and in institutions throughout society. Inglis, however, does not describe the process as a change in the distribution of power, but as a process which involves people developing capacities to act successfully within the existing system and structures of

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power. With this definition, Inglis distinguishes empowerment from emancipation, which he defines as critically analysing, resisting and challenging structures of power. Lazo also sees empowerment as a process of acquiring, providing, and bestowing the necessary resources and means or enabling the access to and control over such means and resources. She argues that one should give women the capacity to give themselves power, even if this would only be psychologically. Empowerment can therefore be seen as the ability to direct and control one’s own life. Women are the agents of their change process; it cannot be done to or for them. The women themselves gain the ability to make and enact strategic life choices. Considering the two important elements which are the fact that empowerment is seen as a process and that most academics emphasize the fact that women themselves must be the actors in this process of change, this paper will work with the definition of empowerment as the process of the expansion of the ability of women to direct and control their lives with new acquired means, resources, and capacities.

Many academics have already written about the definition of empowerment, the advantages and disadvantages of empowering women, and the ways in which people can be empowered. One of these academics is, as mentioned before, Stromquist, who describes women’s empowerment as having four key interlocking dimensions:

(a) the economic dimension, or some measure of financial autonomy;
(b) the political dimension, or the ability to be represented or represent oneself at various settings of decision-making;
(c) the psychological dimension, or the sense that one’s self has value and deserves a good and fair existence. Moreover, it includes feelings that women can improve their conditions at both personal and societal levels and that they can succeed in their change efforts.
(d) the cognitive or knowledge dimension in which one is aware of one’s reality, including possibilities and obstacles to women’s equality. It means that women understand the conditions of subordination and the causes of such conditions at both micro and macro levels of society. Women should therefore understand themselves and they should feel the need to make choices that go against cultural and social expectations. Moreover, the patterns of

71 Ibid, 4.
73 Ibid, 34.
behaviour that create dependence, interdependence, and autonomy within the family and in the society at large should be understood. 

Without specifically referring to the four dimensions as described by Stromquist, many researchers and organisations describe and do research on how the obtainment of specific tangible or intangible resources lead to the increase or decrease of dimensions of empowerment. With respect to economic empowerment, for example, Stromquist argues that productive activity will allow women some degree of financial autonomy. Kabeer has also found a correlation between the access to paid work and women’s agency, stating that access to paid work can increase women’s agency. With the concept of agency, Kabeer means the processes by which choices are made and put into effect. It does not only mean decision making persé but also the meaning, motivation and purpose that individuals bring to their action, therefore their sense of agency.

More significant correlations have been found. One critical contributor to the gender gap in economic well-being as well as social status and therefore empowerment, is ownership and control over property. Moreover, research by Duflo shows that a strong correlation exists between economic development and women’s legal rights. Another correlation can be found between the access to financial resources and the level of domestic violence. Considering the importance of the economic dimension of women empowerment, humanitarian aid organisations are commonly using an income-transfer strategy in response to an emergency. Examples of such strategies are cash grants, cash-for-work and the use of vouchers. Out of Oxfam Great Britain’s experience has arisen some evidence that the strategy of cash-for-work challenges the gender division of labour, and prejudices about women’s capabilities, at both community and household level. The status of women did improve and women did feel empowered by being able to contribute to a greater share of household income and therefore their decision-making authority. However, the women were undecided

80 Ibid, 14.
on how permanent this change of status would be once men were able to return to normal wage-earning opportunities again.  

Even though these programs are recognised as important, they are also difficult to implement due to inefficient, time-consuming and risky initial phases. Programs should be well designed, implemented and funded. Without neglecting the importance of income-generating programs, Stromquist argues that international agencies over-rely on macro-level indicators when focusing on the economic dimension. Both macro- and micro-levels of access to material goods and financial resources must be considered when focusing on the economic dimension in order to receive a complete picture of women’s economic empowerment. A proposed example is the widely-used indicator of empowerment; the proportion of women in paid employment in non-agricultural sectors. This indicator does not consider the double burden that women bare because of the job they have and the unremunerated work that they do. In this way, the processes that occur within the household go unattended in public policy which is a major challenge to successful design and implementation of economic empowerment strategies.

The political component of empowerment entails the ability to analyse the surrounding environment in political and social terms; it also means the ability to organize and mobilize for social change. Whereas Stromquist states that empowerment ultimately involves a political process aiming at producing consciousness among policy makers about women and to create pressure to bring about social change, Wilson sees empowerment as something individual which eventually develops into political awareness and participation. She reasons that with the increased sense of community and responsibility, increased political skills follow. Again, Stromquist argues that one is too focused on the macro aspect of the political component. On the micro level, one should consider the household as a major target of social change. Due to the oftentimes unremunerated work that women execute, they are financial and psychological dependent on others. Moreover, due to the multiple tasks that women

84 Hisham Khogali and Parmjit Takhar, “Empowering women through cash relief in humanitarian contexts,” Gender & Development 9, no.3 (2001): 42
90 Ibid, 14.
oftentimes have, they are less available to organise and mobilise themselves for social change. This lack of time is often not recognised in data collection. There has been an increase in humanitarian organisations that focus on those rights that are primarily breached in private, by husbands or other males. Hilhorst & Jansen argue, however, that focusing on gender issues with a rights-based approach can cast dilemmas as the Western human rights standards invade cultural domains.

Although self-confidence and self-esteem cannot be taught, the psychological dimension is significant and should receive specific treatment. In order to initiate a change and feel competent enough to enter public spaces, women need to feel self-confident, have a strong self-esteem, and should develop self-assertiveness. When implementing projects, organisations should involve women directly in all the stages of the planning and implementation of projects. Moreover, one should focus on collective experiences in group participation and joint efforts in which the connection between the psychological empowerment and local spaces is critical. The smaller the space and the closer to home, the more logistical advantage it creates. Moreover, it enables community-based NGOs led by women to emerge. To be successful, however, the psychological element should be strengthened with economic resources.

With respect to the cognitive dimension, Stromquist argues that women should acquire new knowledge about sexuality, legal rights, (domestic) work and household decision-making to create new or different understandings. Following Kabeer’s reasoning, women’s cognitive ability can be changed by giving women access to education. Education is essential to their capacity to question, reflect on, and act on the conditions of their lives and to gain access of knowledge, information and new ideas that will help them to do so. Access to education is therefore a mean to expand people’s ability to make strategic choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them. A difference can be found between formal and non-formal education. Formal education deals with the knowledge and therefore the economic and psychological dimensions of empowerment by increasing the people’s change

97 Nelly P. Stromquist, “The theoretical and practical bases for empowerment”, 15.
98 Ibid, 14.
99 Naila Kabeer, “Gender equality and women’s empowerment,” 16-17.
on better jobs and their sense of self-esteem, efficacy, and future life aspirations. However, research shows that many schools fail to address gender-related knowledge and are not female friendly which can create environments that are unsupportive or hostile. The curriculum should be designed so that it brings relevant gender issues to the consciousness of both girls and boys and deals with a deeper understanding of the functioning of gender in society. Non-formal education, usually run by NGOs, often touches upon the knowledge, political, and psychological dimensions as they often increase feelings of self-esteem and provide the skills to participate in public venues. They address the economic dimension less frequently.

Non-formal education can be effective in empowering women when a space is created to develop the personal agency and critical reflection that enable women to recognise the burden they need to bare because of their female care and domestic responsibilities. Therefore, programmes that have empowering consequences for women are those that provide a safe space, foster discussion, and encourage participants to think critically about gender social norms; they also support individual agency and group cohesion. It is often through access to the public sphere and engagement in group discussions that individual experiences can be shared and social networks developed. The greater social interaction tends to increase communication among female programme beneficiaries and community members and leaders, and this interaction ‘can promote knowledge exchange and induce important changes in behaviour and attitudes’. Even though many organisations have a strong focus on education for the beneficiaries, Stromquist finds education an overestimated pillar of social change. Defining empowerment as a set of knowledge, skills, and conditions that women must possess in order to understand their world and act upon it, she finds that empowerment is inseparable from action at both the individual and collective levels. Empowerment can only succeed, she argues, if it is a mode of learning close to the women’s everyday experiences,

102 Naila Kabeer, “Gender equality and women’s empowerment,” 17.
building upon the emotional, cultural, and intellectual resources the participants bring to their social space.\textsuperscript{107} Putting all pieces and information together, one can argue that focusing on the knowledge dimension has multiple consequences. Women gain more control over resources which would give them a better role in economic decisions and therefore improving the economic dimension. With an improved economic dimensions, less domestic violence would occur which would therefore touch upon the psychological dimension.

This section has laid the theoretical foundation of this research by establishing the definition of empowerment and by describing and discussing the four dimensions of empowerment. Though, empowerment is a broad concept which includes both tangible as intangible aspects. It is therefore that before analysing the various impacts of the performed activities within the four dimensions of empowerment, the next section will first deal with the approach that this study will use towards the measurement of empowerment

3. Measuring women empowerment

As the aim of this study is to answer the question to what extent the four dimensions of empowerment have a different impact on women’s actual empowerment, it is necessary to first specify how organisation’s activities are divided between the dimensions of empowerment. Thereafter, the way in which empowerment of women is measured in this research will be described.

3.1. Determination of division of activities

This section clarifies the consistence of each empowerment dimension even as it explains which kind of activities will be categorized in each dimension.

Activities that can be placed within the economic dimension should be those activities that focus on improving the financial autonomy of women.\textsuperscript{108} Typical activities for a humanitarian organisation within this dimension are income-transfer strategies like cash


grants, cash-for-work and the use of vouchers. Taking into account that the humanitarian organisations working in Soacha have to adapt their activities to the urban displacement situation, other – more developmental - activities can be considered as well. Activities may focus on providing women with material resources in order to start their own businesses, but they may also focus on supporting women to find a job which makes them contribute to a greater share of household income and therefore their decision-making authority. Another contributor that will be considered as being part of the economic dimension is women’s ownership and control over property. Activities regarding this contributor are activities that focus on helping women to receive or reclaim some land, a house, or other material goods. To avoid the temptation to only focus on the macro-level of economic empowerment, activities focusing on the economic dimension on micro-level will not be neglected. Therefore, projects that focus on increasing women’s control over economic resources and economic decisions within the household are also considered to be part of the economic dimension.

With respect to the political dimension of women empowerment which aims to increase the participation of women in decision-making, different types of activities exist. It is important to note that activities in the political dimension do not only focus on politics itself. Taking Stromquist’s argument into account that one should not only focus on macro aspect but also on the micro aspect, both activities that focus on the political dimension on the domestic level and the activities that focus on the public level should be considered. Therefore, projects aiming to produce consciousness about one's community and one’s responsibilities and roles both within and outside of the household can be placed within the political dimension, even as projects helping communities to organize and mobilize themselves. Although Longwe argues that no research shows any correlation between the provision of education and women’s political empowerment, this investigation will not exclude the activities of providing education and training in order to avoid any missed research opportunities. Moreover, activities that focus on changing the political system of

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the specific area through the production of consciousness among policy makers about women and to create pressure to bring social change are also examined.114

Projects that focus on the psychological dimension are varied and broad. The activities that belong within this dimension are those focusing on individual consultation and conversations in order to increase the other’s self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-assertiveness.115 Focus groups and community activities in which people can talk to each other and share experiences are also activities that belong to the psychological dimension. Moreover, activities that might not be designed to empower women psychologically but that do give special attention to the involvement of women in all the stages of a project in order to increase their self-confidence are considered as being part of the psychological dimension.116

Within the cognitive dimension one could place all activities that focus on formal or non-formal education, supporting women to acquire new knowledge about sexuality, legal rights, (domestic) work, household decision-making, basic general education, or specific task-oriented education. It is therefore a multi-dimensional dimension as educating tasks can also be part of another dimension. Therefore, this investigation considers education as a part of the cognitive dimension when it is provided as part of an education programme whereas education provided as part of, for example, an economic empowerment project will be subjected to the economic dimension.

3.2. Measurement women empowerment

3.2.1. The fifth Sustainable Development Goal

A broad spectrum of indicators exists with which the improvement of women empowerment can be measured. As the SDGs are established by the biggest gathering of world leaders and organisations with the aim to erase all poverty in the world, this research will use the sub targets of the fifth goal to measure the activities’ impact on women’s empowerment. As the SDGs have just been established, indicators with which the sub targets and main goal will be measured have not been made concrete yet. Therefore, the indicators used to measure the goal have been established by means of others sources and the use of common sense. A positive improvement in the indicators that will be explained in this section will allow us to partly answer the fourth sub-question. The fifth goal of the SDG is to achieve gender equality and to

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115 Nelly P. Stromquist, “Women’s Empowerment and Education”, 316.
empower all women and girls. It’s sub-targets and belonging established indicators are as follows: 117

5.1) End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.
According to Blank et al., the definition of discrimination consists of two parts. Firstly, discrimination is the differential treatment on the basis of gender that disadvantages women. Secondly, it is the treatment on the basis of inadequately justified factors other than gender that disadvantages women. 118 Discrimination exists in laws that continue to institutionalize second class status for women and girls with regards to nationality and citizenship, health, education, marital rights, employment rights like wage differences between men and women, parental rights, inheritance and property rights. 119 Nevertheless, this research does not focus on the discrimination of women in the Colombian laws for several reasons. The first and most important reason is that this research focuses on the social aspect of women empowerment and the influence of organisations and their activities. Although there would by a possibility for organisations to change laws by means of advocacy, this research focuses on the aspects that are relatively accessible for the women with whom they work. It examines the aspects of their daily lives and their household situation. The second reason is that this research would become too broad if it would also include an analysis of Colombian’s national laws.

Besides discrimination existing in laws, discrimination also appears in regular daily life and can restrain women’s access to resources like the access to education, health care and the labour market. 120 This research also includes women’s discrimination in the household with respect to the tasks the women are allowed or not allowed to do.

5.2. Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.
According to the UN, violence against women is any act of gender-based violence that is directed against a women because she is a women or that affects women disproportionately. Violence against women can therefore occur within a family or community, at school or at work, but also during an armed conflict. Moreover, one can be violated sexually, mentally,

and physically.\textsuperscript{121} It can therefore fall within the category of structural violence or cultural violence as explained by Galtung. Structural violence is the violence which is built into the structure and can be seen as a process with ups and downs. Cultural violence is any aspect of a culture that can be used to legitimize violence in its structural form.\textsuperscript{122}

5.3. Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

Although it is an important indicator, this indicator will not be used as an indicator to answer the research question. The most important reason for not using this indicator is that the information to ask seemed to be too delicate and too sensitive to ask to women in the first and only meeting. Therefore, the risk would be too high to create an uncomfortable situation in therefore change the dynamics of the interview.

5.4. Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.

As it is complicated to measure the recognition of unpaid care and domestic work, this investigation will solely focus on the regional efforts taken to support the women who practice unpaid care and domestic work. An examples is a kind of financial help women might receive in order to support the household. A greater focus will be on the second aspect of this target which is the shared responsibility within the household and the family. This includes the division of tasks within the household and the hours spend at unpaid work versus paid work.

5.5. Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life.

On the public level, investigated will be the actual participation and the possibilities for women to access decision-making positions in Soacha and whether the municipality offers special programs for women to help them to enter these positions. Moreover, women’s access to loans will be investigated. At the household level, this investigation will measure above mentioned target by investigating not only the daily decisions being made but also the economic decisions, political decisions, and the decisions with regard to family planning.

5.6. Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on


Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences.

This target will be measured by the access to and the knowledge of one’s sexual and reproductive health and their rights towards this subject. It therefore also focuses on the availability of education about this specific topic and again it deals with the decision-making process about family planning.

5.a. Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial service, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.

This target includes the access of women to economic resources, ownership and control over land or other property, and other financial services. The situation at both the household level and outside the household will be investigated. On household level, the indicator used is women’s access to and control over the financial resources at home.

5.b. Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women.

It was decided not to include above indicator for the simple reason that no organisation has been found that focused all or one of its activities on the enhancement of the use of enabling technology. A possible reason for this could be the urban refugee situation in Soacha in which people in general have more access to technology.

5.c. Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.

This indicator will be measured at hand of all the organised activities or programs by the municipality of Soacha that have been discussed in the other indicators as well. Analysing the policies and legislation on national level would be too broad for this investigation, therefore it has been decided not to include this part.

3.2.2. The ability to exercise choice

Above mentioned targets and indicators are important to measure a decrease or increase of the empowerment of women. It allows us to partly answer the fourth sub-question. Though, this research works with the definition of empowerment as ‘the ability of women to direct and control their lives with new acquired means and resources, and developed capacities.’ The word ‘ability’ is an important term in this definition which will oblige the investigation to reach beyond the measurement of sole indicators. According to Kabeer, the validity of an indicator in measuring empowerment is the extent to which women have the ability to choose
their involvement or improvement of a certain indicator. The ability to exercise choice is being incorporated by three inter-related dimensions: resources, agency, and achievements. These three dimensions will serve as the means to triangulate the information obtained during the investigation.

Resources can be understood as the pre-conditions to exercise a choice which does not only include material resources in the economic sense, but also the social and human resources which serve to enhance the ability to exercise choice. The resources are required through social relationships which make up a society such as family, market, and community. Resources do not only include access, but also future claims and expectations. The respondents’ resources to exercise choice will be measured by the answer they give to whether they felt they had the possibility to make a certain decision or change and whether they still want to change certain situations in the future. Moreover, the resources of the respondents are being analysed by their expectations and hopes for the future.

The second dimension of the exercise of choice is called agency, which is the actual process and can be understood as the ability to define one’s goals and act upon them. It includes processes of decision making, as well as less measurable manifestations of agency such as negotiation, deception and manipulation. In the positive meaning of the ‘power to’, it refers to people’s capacity to define their own life-chances and to pursue their own goals, even if the face of opposition from others. With respect to the measurement of agency, many measurement indicators focus on women’s mobility in the public domain, their participation in public action, the incidence of violence etcetera. However, Kabeer argues that one should focus more on decision-making agency by defining women’s role in the making of specific decisions. However, again one should keep in mind the difference in significance for women’s lives. Therefore, one should select carefully what should serve as an indicator of empowerment, with attention given to consequential significance of areas of decision-making or of different stages in the decision-making process. The respondents’ agency will be measured by analysing their role in any decision-making process in the household to find out if they can make their own decisions and establish their own goals. Moreover, agency is analysed by examining the possibilities that women saw to change a certain process.

124 Ibid, 452.
125 Ibid, 438.
126 Ibid, 445.
The third dimension of choice is called achievements, which should be understood as one’s well-being outcomes. It is in the measurement achievements that one should make a difference between the possible inequalities in people’s capacity to make choices rather than in differences in the choices they make. Every person gives a different value to a possible way of ‘being’ or ‘doing’ which would therefore not reflect inequality or inability. The part of achievement is measured by the women’s satisfaction about the past and current situation, and their need to still change something about the situation in the future.

When measuring these special features of women empowerment, the criteria of women’s choices and the values of the communities in which they live should be represented in the measurement. Another aspect that should be implemented in the measurement of empowerment is whether women feel that the situation in which they are is unequal, or whether they find it normal and do not feel the need to change the situation. Furthermore, one should assess whether choices were not only materially possible but also whether the choices were conceived to be within their reach of possibilities.

In the next chapter, empowerment is measured using both the indicators of the SDG and the criteria of Kabeer. The answers to the interview questions by the interviewed women have been divided into the sub-indicators of the fifth SDG. A part of these answers is not only how a certain sub-indicator has changed as a consequence of an activity but also provides women’s answers to their ability to exercise choice.

4. Women, Activities, and Empowerment

As previously mentioned, this section analyses the impact of the activities on the empowerment of the ten women who were interviewed. The aim of the analysis is to answer the third and fourth sub-question which will provide the information needed to answer the main research question. Firstly, the analysis starts with a general overview of the interviewed women in order to set the scene for the rest of the analysis. Secondly, the data that came out of the quantitative research will be analysed and the third sub-question will be answered. Thirdly, the fourth sub-question will be answered by listing the indicators of the fifth SDG and the comments made by the women with regards to the indicators.

128 Ibid, 442.
4.1. Set the Scene

For this research, interviews with 10 women have been carried out. Two women were born and raised in Soacha and have lived there on average for 40 years, three women were displaced and came from another region of Colombia, they have lived in Soacha on average for 15 years. The remaining five women have experienced inter-urban displacement and have lived in Soacha on average for 14 years. Only 20% of the interviewed women were employed at the moment of the interview while 80% was looking for a job. Five of the ten women found themselves in a leadership position of another organisation than the organisation of which they had received or were still receiving help.

The youngest interviewee was 29 years old while the oldest interviewee had an age of 78. The average age of the interviewed women was therefore 47 years old. If the age of 78 would be considering as an outlier though, the youngest respondent had an age of 29 years old whereas the oldest respondent was 58 years old which would mean that the average age of the respondents was 44 years old.

During the interview the women were asked what the family structure was in their household, in order to find out the amount of dependents of one’s family. The category dependents includes children that has to be taken care of or children that help their mother financially. A dependent can also be a grandchild or a grandparent. On average, the respondents had 3 dependents (2.9) at home who directly affected the situation.

4.2. Participation in and Impact of Activities

Regarding the participation in the various activities, only two women participated in the activities on their own. In the case of the other eight women, either their husband, their children, or other family members joined their wife or mother in the activities. Sometimes, even both the husband and the children participated.

While two of the interviewees participated in the activities of one single organisation, the remaining eight women received help from multiple organisation. The average amount of organisations from which the women received support was 2.5, hence 2 organisations.

At the start of the interview the women were asked to name all the activities in which they had participated, they had the liberty to mention as many as they wanted and remembered. The activities have been categorised into the empowerment dimension by the researcher, according to the criteria that were mentioned in the previous chapters.
In total, 48 activities were mentioned which gives an average of 4 to 5 activities per respondent. Of these activities, 43.8% could be placed within the cognitive dimension of empowerment, 20.8% of the activities focused on the economic dimension of empowerment, 18.8% could be placed within the psychological dimension whereas the remaining 16.6% of the activities belonged to the political dimension of empowerment. The exact activities that were most mentioned by the respondents were those that taught handicrafts, human and women rights, workshops that focused on increasing one’s self-esteem, workshops that focused on starting a small business (legal, administrative, and economic), psychosocial support, workshops that addressed ‘la convivencia’ (living together), and workshops in which they were taught how to handle children.

At the end of the interviews, the women were asked to sum up the activities they believed had been the most important for them and their empowerment process. Again, they had the liberty to mention as many as they wanted which was provoked by continuous asking of whether they felt they had more activities to mention. In total, 20 activities were named. Of the activities that the women marked as most important, 50% fell in the dimension of cognitive empowerment, 20% fell in the economic dimension of empowerment, another 20% could be placed within the dimension of psychological empowerment and 10% of the mentioned activities were those that focused on women’s political empowerment. Exact activities that were mentioned the most were the workshops about human and women rights, and the psychosocial workshops that focus on one’s self-esteem, followed by economic support and workshops about the business, succeeded by workshops that dealt with ‘la convivencia’ and how to handle children.

After the interviews, the ten women were asked to fill in a questionnaire in which they had to indicate the impact of the activities they marked as most important on the themes that were also touched upon during the interview. These themes are also part of the indicators of empowerment according to the SDG. The themes of the questionnaire were: their role in the household, the division of the household tasks, the decision-making process at home, their access to a job, education, medical attention, economic recourses, property and a political position, their knowledge about sexual and reproductive health, their hope for the future, their sense of security, and their self-esteem. For every so-called theme, women had to indicate on a scale from 1 to 10 how satisfied they were with the dynamics at home and whether they had access to various public services. Moreover, they had to pinpoint the difference between their satisfaction and access before and after the important activities in which they had participated.
Table 1 has been created to provide an overview of the women’s answers and to analyse their answers. An explanation of the terms and abbreviations used can be found in Annex III.

In table 1 one can see all the answers provided by the women. A blank spot means that this question was not answered, a zero means that the women did not feel that the activity in which they had participated had any influence on the theme. Of the given answers for each theme within each dimension, both the mean and the increase in impact in percentages has been calculated which can also be noted from the table.

After the participation in an activity that focused on economic empowerment of women, one can see in the table that the women did not feel that these activities had influence on their knowledge about sexual and reproductive health. Neither did they feel that the activities had much impact on their sense of security. The themes of which the women already indicated a relatively high satisfaction or access to before the participation in the activities were the decision-making process at home, their access to medical attention, their access to economic recourses, and their self-esteem. The activities had most impact on the respondents’ role at home, the division of tasks at the household, their access to a political position, and their hope for the future with an increase of 101.6%, 86.7%, 80.2% and 80.2% respectively.

When revising the influence of an activity that fell within the political dimension, one can see in the table that these activities did not influence the division of the tasks in the respondents’ household nor did it influence their access to a property. An already high initial ranking can be seen within the themes of the respondents’ knowledge about sexual and reproductive health, and their access to work and education. Standing out are the impact of the political empowerment activities on the access to economic resources and the respondents’ role at home, with an increase of 166.7% and 150% respectively.

Investigating the numbers and therefore the impact of the activities from the psychological dimension of empowerment, one of the interpretations is that many women felt that these activities did not have an impact on their access to a political position in the municipality of Soacha. Mixed feelings about the impact on the activities were found on the influence of the activities on the access to a property. Whereas some women felt there was no impact, other women indicated that the impact was very big. As can be clearly seen in table 1 and table 2, the impact of the psychological activities on the themes were significant higher than the impact of the other three dimensions. Overall, the activities had the highest impact on the women’s hope for the future with an increase of 480%. Other themes on which the activities had a high impact were access to a political position, a job, medical attention and economic recourses, and their knowledge about sexual and reproductive health. Although the numbers
given before the activities were low on each theme, the themes in which the respondents started the highest were their sense of security and their role in the household.

Finishing with the impact of the activities of the cognitive dimension, one can see that for two activities no influence in either of the themes was indicated. Mixed feelings existed about the impact of the activities on the division of the tasks in the household, the women’s access to a property and a political position, and their knowledge about sexual and reproductive health. Half of the results show that no impact had been felt whereas the other half did recognize an impact. The division of tasks in the household and women’s self-esteem were themes in which the women, on average, started high. However, they remained below a five out of ten. The highest impact can be found on their hope for the future, their feeling of security, and their access to economic resources and property.

In summary, as can be seen from the computed means in table 2, the women indicated that the activities focusing on psychological empowerment seemed to have the most impact on their lives, followed by the political dimension, the cognitive dimension, and the economic dimension. To make sure that this conclusion is not influenced by any other independent variable, next section states the results of a regression analysis that shows whether some other independent variables can be found that partly explain some of the outcomes.

4.3. Quantitative Analysis

The section that set the scene for the analysis shows that within the group of ten women, differences exist. Women have a different age and a different amount of dependents in the household. There were more aspects in which the women differed. Some women were displaced whereas others were not, some women had a afro-Colombian ethnicity and one woman was transgender, some women had a leadership position, and some women had a husband participating in the activities whereas others had not. Although during the interviews these differences did not seem to have a significant impact on the women interviewed and the answers they gave, linear regression analyses have been executed in order to check whether some of these variables were able to explain a part of the differences in impact of the activities on the themes from the questionnaire.

One of the objectives was to investigate whether someone’s displacement status, ethnicity, leadership position, and participation of one’s husband had influence of the ranking in the questionnaire before the participation in a specific activity. We called above mentioned variables the independent variables. The first objective and therefore the dependent variable is
the mean of the ranking given to all the themes before the participation in a certain activity. The reasoning behind this analysis is that one would expect that it could be possible, for example, that an afro-Colombian woman starts her ranking lower on each theme because of the discrimination against her ethnicity that is still existent in Colombia. As quantitative analysis works with hypotheses, the null hypothesis would therefore be: the independent variable does not have any explanatory power on this rating. In other words: there is no relationship between the independent variable and the mean of the theme rankings before the participation in activities. The alternative hypothesis would be that there is a relationship between one of the independent variables and the dependent variable.

The second objective was to investigate whether one of the independent variables that are mentioned above have had an influence on the impact of the activities. With the impact is meant the difference between the values given to the themes after and before the participation in activities. Again, the null hypothesis is that there is no relationship between the independent variable and the impact on the theme rankings. The alternative hypothesis is that there is a relationship between one of the independent variables and the dependent variable.

Linear regressions were done for each of the independent variables and for both hypotheses. From those regression analyses it can be concluded that the feelings and the expectations on the basis of the interviews were valid. No significant relationship seemed to exist between one of the independent variables and the outcomes on the themes from the questionnaire.

This section has quantitatively responded to the third sub-question and has showed in which type of activities, divided by the dimensions of empowerment, the women participated and what the impact was of these activities. Although the themes of the questionnaire are related the indicators of the fifth SDG, in order to show how the activities have empowered the women on the indicators of the fifth SDG a more detailed and qualitative analysis is needed. This analysis is done in the next section.
Table 1: Answers of respondents (%). Economic Dimensions

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<td>142.9</td>
<td>217</td>
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<td>111.1</td>
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Table 2: Summary of table 1

Table: Krista Sojo, October 2016.

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<td></td>
<td>After</td>
<td>7.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After</td>
<td>6.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Before</td>
<td>2.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>1.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Krista Sojo, October 2016.
4.4. Qualitative Analysis

This section lists all the analysed indicators of the fifth SDG which are sometimes subdivided into a part that examines the indicator in public spheres and a part that discusses the indicator on micro-level; the household. As previously explained, the analysis of the indicators treats both the indicator itself and the ability to exercise choice connected to the indicator.

4.4.1. Discrimination against Women and Girls

As mentioned before, the first sub-target of the SDG to empower all women and girls is to end all forms of discrimination against women and girls. Women can be discriminated in national laws, one’s daily life, and in one’s household. As stated before, discrimination is the differential treatment on the basis of gender or other factors that disadvantages women. This research has talked with several women that come from different regions and have different backgrounds. From the interviews it became clear that besides being woman, afro-Colombian women and transgender women experience more discrimination because of their background and identity.

In this section, the existence of discrimination in daily life and on household level will be analysed. Based on the literature review, women’s access to property, education, health and employment were chosen as the areas of investigation in daily life. On household level, discrimination is being measured by analysing whether the women were prohibited certain tasks, certain decisions, or certain opinions. Not only the respondents’ access was measured, but also their ability to choose this access is part of the measurement.

4.4.1.1. Access to property

Of the ten respondents the majority actually owned a house, only two of the women had a rental house. Of those owning a house, the actual ownership of the property was very mixed among the women. Four of eight women owned their house or land officially together with their husband, two women owned the house themselves, in one case the title of the house was possessed by the husband whereas one couple had decided to leave their house and land to their children.

Although one respondent told me that it was normal (‘común’) that a couple owns a property together, three of the interviewees mentioned that it is mostly women who receive the title of the property. Declared reasons to share the property of a house were the fact that
both had put the same effort and work in it, and the fact that it creates security for the family and the children in case of the death of one of the parents.

When asking the women whether they were satisfied with the fact that they (also) had a title in the ownership of the house, the answer was clear: ‘Sí, claro’: yes, of course. As commented by the respondents, a possibility to own some property was not necessarily gender related or linked to any prohibition by their husbands. The real obstacle to actually owning a property was the lack of financial resources.

In the questionnaire given to the women at the end of the interview, the women could also indicate whether they felt that the activities had had an influence on their access to own a property and if so, what this influence was and why. The respondents answered that an activity within the economic dimension helped them in receiving a small income which helped them to obtain a house. After an activity from the psychological dimension, one of the influences was that the respondent felt mentally stronger which helped them to ask others for financial help or help in obtaining a house. An activity from the cognitive dimension resulted in the knowledge of one’s rights to own a decent housing. This knowledge made the family stronger to claim their rights and therefore obtain some property. As can be concluded from table 1, it seemed that the activities from the cognitive and the psychological dimension had most influence on increasing one’s access to having a property.

4.4.1.2. Access to education.
To the question whether men and women had the same access to education, all the women answered yes without any hesitation. Anyone who wants to study is able to enter any study program, a fact that satisfied them all. One exception seemed to exist for transgender women who are generally being rejected at public universities. As all Colombians have to pay to enter private universities, transgender women with the necessary economic resources do not encounter many problem to enter a private university.

Even though the municipality of Soacha offers special education programmes, the respondents explained that no special programmes for only women existed. The programmes offered were mainly workshops for youth or children, or for adults in general. One woman made the comment that nowadays many programs exist for the displaced population of Soacha.

All the interviewees communicated their desire to either finish the studies they had once started or start some new ones. Some respondents already had a specific subject in mind, like learning English or being a teacher, but it turned out to be the financial aspect that makes it
difficult for women to start or continue studying. Hence, all the women see a theoretical possibility to access education but also acknowledge the obstacles with regards to the financial aspect. As one of the respondents explained:

“Sometimes it is difficult. For example, if the course is here, I go. But if it is in the centre of Soacha, one cannot go because one does not have the 1,000 pesos for the bus ticket.”

Another issue is the fact that the time that one uses to study is the time that one cannot spend on working and therefore earning money. Hence, the decision to study is being complicated even more.

Several women explicitly mentioned the influence of the activities with the organisations on their desire to study. Where previously they did not feel the need to finish their studies or to start a new study programme, the workshops in which they had participated triggered their attention and desire to study and to do something new or different with that potential new knowledge. After the questionnaire that the women filled in, of which the results can be seen in table 1, it seems that activities from the psychological and political dimensions had the most impact on women’s access to education.

4.4.1.3. Access to health care

With respect to women’s access to health care, it was unanimously responded that the access to health care as a woman was the same as the access to health care as a man. Women did not feel to make many remarks about this access because it was completely normal to them. Though, many remarks were made about the health care system itself, mentioning the bad assistance, the bad organisation, and the long queues. Apart from these comments and points of improvement, women were content with their access to medical assistance as a woman.

Table 1 shows that activities from the political and psychological dimensions had the most impact on the respondents’ access to health care, followed by the cognitive dimension. The psychological activities resulted in an increased strength and self-esteem which were needed to fight the health care system when necessary. After the activities of the cognitive dimension, respondents commented that they now know what their rights are, they know what they have to do and where, and how to communicate what they need.

129 Respondent 6, personal interview by Krista Sojo, Soacha, Colombia, October 31, 2016. “Lo que pasa es que a veces se dificulta. Por decir algo: si está acá, me voy. Pero si de pronte está en Soacha, muchas veces uno no puede ir porque no tiene el 1000 pesitos para el pasaje.”
4.4.1.4. Access to a job

Only two of the ten women had a stable job at the time of the interview. The remaining eight women did have a strong desire to work and were actively looking for it. Some of the women were able to occupy temporary informal jobs once in a while. Meanwhile, four out of ten women were in the process of starting their own small business. In the majority of cases, the husband did have a job which was often in the construction sector. In four families, the children had a job and therefore contributed in covering the general expenses.

Remarks were made about the difference in jobs between men and women. Four out of six respondents explicitly said that men generally work in a sector like construction because they feel that ‘la carga es pesada’ for women with which they mean that the work is too heavy for women to perform. Only two women were of the opinion that women and men are able to perform the same job, even in a sector like construction.

In terms of having the same access as men to any job, women felt that they had the same access as men with the construction sector as an exception. Two existing barriers that could limit one can be one’s age or the fact that someone is openly homosexual or transgender. One woman argued that it is easier for single mothers to receive a job than women who live together with their husband. Once having obtained a job, all the women were of the opinion that no difference exists in the amount of salary between men and women with gender as reason. Differences do exist, but because of people’s different functions, knowledge, study background, and qualifications.

In answer to the question whether the municipality of Soacha offered any programs in order to help women to find a job, two out of ten women did not know whereas four women responded that the municipality did offer help, however it was not enough to cover the demand in Soacha. According to these women, Soacha does not have the resources to offer educational programs and they felt the municipality tried to ‘tapar el sol con un dedo’ (bury its head in the sand).130 The remaining four women were of the opinion that Soacha shows to the public that they are offering many programs, but when the moment arrives that they actually need to execute these programs, nothing was left nor did certain jobs exist. As mentioned before, the respondents had a very strong desire to work and to contribute to the expenses of the household. As one woman explained: “(...)you feel part of the family. One feels herself useful, successful, one feels that she is of importance for the family.”131

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130 Respondent 1, personal interview by Krista Sojo, Soacha, Colombia, October 4, 2016.
131 Ibid.
It was mentioned that some of the activities in which the women had participated gave them even more motivation to work. Moreover, the activities taught them how to manage the income and expenses of their start-up companies. Table 1 shows that the activities from the psychological and cognitive dimensions were the activities that had most impact on one’s access to a job. Provided comments of the respondents about the influence of the psychological activities show that the respondents felt more independent after the activities. Moreover, the increased self-esteem helped them to go to more job interviews and have a better idea of what to do. One respondent argued that it is the combination between psychological and economic empowerment that make jobs more accessible. Besides having a higher self-esteem, one also has a better idea of money and knows how to handle and value it. Activities within the cognitive dimension increased the knowledge of the respondents concerning the application to jobs. Besides that, opportunities were created through workshops in which they participated. Another comment made about the influence about activities from the political dimension is an increase in tolerance by the women themselves. Because they had more understanding about the system and because they learned how to live in a community with different people, the obstacles to apply for or to accept a certain job were less which improved the access to a job.

4.4.1.5. Household – Prohibition and division of tasks

To the question whether the women experienced any restraint in the making of a particular decision, the execution of specific tasks, or talking about specific subjects, three of the women clearly replied that they were not forbidden anything and that it would never happen. Two women included the dynamics with their children in their answer and mentioned that their children do not always listen and that they had some difficulties within that area. One respondent clearly stated that even while she and her husband communicated and consulted each other, some decisions in a specific area existed that only the person could decide who was involved in the situation. As an example she mentioned that her husband could only make decisions about his own children whereas she could only make decisions about her children. Only one woman mentioned that there were some decisions she could not make because her husband did not give her the option to decide because he felt it was only his decision. He did not ask her about her opinion neither did he involve her in the decision-making process.

With regards to the general role of women in the decision-making process, which will be discussed extensively in section 4.3.4., the majority of women sat together with their husband and children to discuss and make a decision together. They therefore had equal
opportunities to make a decision as the rest of the people in the household. Likewise, the majority of respondents also explained how many tasks at home are divided. Only one woman was responsible for all the tasks at home. Although this woman wanted to change this situation very badly, she did not see an easy possibility to do so. A detailed explanation about the division of tasks in the household can be found in section 4.3.3.

4.4.2. Violence against Women and Girls
The majority of the women that were interviewed had participated in workshops or activities in which they covered the subject of violence against women or the violence that parents use against their children. They learned about their rights as women, they learned how to avoid to use violence themselves and they learned about the difference manners that exist to punish their children or teach them something.

Only one woman told how she had experienced emotional and physical violence of her husband, and how this ended after having participated in activities. The workshops taught her that although she is a woman, she can also have an opinion and she also has her rights. With this knowledge she was able to completely change the situation and the dynamics at her home. Multiple women told me that they used to hit their children when they did not listen or did something wrong. After the workshops they realised that there are ways to temper your anger and that there are other ways in which one can teach children that something is right or wrong. By informing their husband about the new knowledge they had gained, their husband also tried to change and handle situations differently. There were also women that did not had experienced or were not experiencing any violence mentioned but who did participate in the workshop. They commented that the workshops were good and interesting, but it did not generate a change because they did not need that change.

4.4.3. Recognize and Value Unpaid Care and Domestic Work
As mentioned before, this part focuses more on the shared responsibility within one’s household than the recognition and valuation of unpaid care and domestic work. However, starting with this recognition by the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies, the women were asked whether Soacha had any program or help in place for when women were unemployed but did do a lot of domestic work. The answer was clear: there was none, Soacha does not provide financial help to help them. The biggest part of this

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132 Respondent 3, personal interview by Krista Sojo, Soacha, Colombia, October 7, 2016. “Yo como mujer tengo mis derechos, mi derecho para poder opinar, podiendo organizarme mejor.”
section treats the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and family, both by the government as by organisations.

Firstly, the women were asked to describe the division of the tasks at home. Only one of the women answered that she was responsible for all tasks in house and to take care of the children. The rest of the women, however, commented that everyone at home had his or her own responsibility and that the tasks were divided between everyone. For some, this division depended on the day but two women explicitly mentioned that they had created a scheme in which tasks and their rotation were specified. Three women commented that tasks had always been divided at home like the way it was divided at this moment. For other women, the division of tasks was different in the past, before participating in the activities of organisations. This differences was not only due to a change in employment or the influence of younger children that needed more time and care, four women admitted that the division of tasks in the past was different and that it had changed because of the activities in which they had participated. The dynamics at home were very individual in the past and the women executed almost all tasks in the house by themselves.

When talking with the women about the division of their time between their paid job and their unpaid care, the answers were different for every woman. While some had a fixed schedule, others had a different schedule every day, depending on the other activities they had. One thing the women had in common was the fact that they all said that the moment they had less paid work (which many times was actually not remunerated because it consisted of meetings), they worked more at home and vice versa.

With respect to the support and promotion of the municipality of Soacha about the shared responsibility in house, five women responded that Soacha did not have anything like this of which one of the reason was the lack of resources. Some workshops were being given but they did not focus on this specific theme.

At the moment of interviewing, the majority of the women was satisfied with the way the tasks in house were divided, only one women commented that she wanted to improve the division a little bit although she did not necessarily feel unsatisfied at the moment. One women clearly stated that she was very unsatisfied with the situation. Although she would love to change the situation, she saw it as very difficult. As her husband did not want her to leave the house and stay with the children, she also felt that this was her responsibility and therefore did not see a possibility to change the situation. When asking the other women whether they saw a possibility to change the situation and the division of tasks if they would
want to, they all answered that they did and that they could just communicate with their husband and family about the things they would want to change.

This third sub-indicator of the fifth SDG was being represented in the questionnaire as whether the women felt that the activities had influenced the divisions of tasks at home. As can be seen from table 1, it seems like the psychological dimension had the most influence on this division, followed by the cognitive and the political dimension. A comment made by one of the women about the influence of a psychological activity on the division of tasks at home stated that before the participation in the activity, she was responsible of everything at home. After the activities she changed, her mind changed, and she tried to change the situation at home which resulted in a total division of tasks between her and her husband.

4.4.4. Ensure Women’s Full and Effective Participation and Equal Opportunities for Leadership

On public level, both women’s access to decision-making positions in Soacha and their access to loans were investigated. At household level, this research investigated the regular, economic and political decision-making process, and the decisions with regard to one’s family planning.

4.4.4.1. Public

When asking the women whether they knew if the municipality of Soacha was somehow promoting the participation of women in the municipality of Soacha, five of the eight women resolutely responded with ‘no’ whereas three of the women did not necessarily answer to the question itself but they mentioned that there are some women participating in the politics of Soacha, partially because of the reason that a political party cannot participate in elections if they do not have a woman in their party.

With respect to women’s access to economic resources, which was investigated as the access to a loan as a women, all women saw that their access to economic resources is the same as the access for men. However, as in every country, standards exist in order to get a loan: you have to show that you have at least some money and that you do not have a serious illness. Again a comment was made that it was mentioned that it was more difficult for a victim of the armed conflict to get a loan.

According to the respondents it was not impossible to enter a political position in Soacha, they definitely saw possibilities. Everyone added, however, that it was complicated. Besides
the existing competitiveness, everyone said that you need to have ‘a friend’ in there who helps you to enter. Hence, it was not necessarily the gender aspect that made it difficult for women to enter into the politics of Soacha, but the fact that one needs to know people who already work in the scene. Multiple comments were also made that even when a woman is capable to enter, finally the men always win. One woman mentioned that she believed that it was more difficult for a displaced person to enter into politics in Soacha.

Of the ten women, two already had a political position in Soacha and one women wanted to enter in such a position because she felt that it was an opportunity for one to learn more about the place where one lives and in which one can focus on the needs of this place. The other seven women did not want to participate in the politics in Soacha. The reasons not to enter into politics were very distinct; one woman was afraid as a result of experiences from the past, one woman just did not like it, another woman felt it needed too much dedication on both family and community level, and another woman did not like the attitude of the people who worked in politics because they felt that they were higher up and better than the rest. It was for this reason that she did not want to enter. The transgender woman did want to enter, but did not want to enter alone, because it would be like ‘putting yourself in a river full of piranhas’.133

The access to a decision-making position in Soacha and the access to economic resources from the bank were both included in the questionnaire that the women filled in. The access to a decision-making position in Soacha seems to be influenced the most by activities from the political dimension, followed by the psychological dimension. The activities triggered the interest of some women and as a result of a psychological activity, one woman commented that she changed from being a very quiet woman to a woman who dared to speak up, which had offered her new opportunities within the politics of Soacha. Access to economic resources seems to be influenced most by activities from the psychological dimension, followed by the political dimension. Though, when analysing the comments made during the questionnaire, it seems that the women did not only focused on economic resources from the bank, but saw the access from a general perspective. Comments being made are that the psychological activities helped them in gaining the confidence to ask others for help, to not be scared to defend one’s rights, and to talk with one’s husband and tell him that he needs to help her as well.

133 Respondent 4, personal interview by Krista Sojo, Soacha, Colombia, October 12, 2016. “(...)es como si tu te metieras en un rio lleno de pirañas.”
4.4.4.2. Household

4.4.4.2.1. Family-planning decision-making
When switching the level of participation of women to the household level and focussing on the decisions of women in the process of family-planning, all women confirmed to have had a decision in this planning. Some of them even got operated.

The women that had chosen to undergo an operation commented that the decision to do this was completely their own, the activities in which they had participated did not have any influence on this decisions. Some women mentioned that the activities that addressed the subject of sexual health and prevention had helped them or their daughters.

4.4.4.2.2. Decision-making process
When asking the women to explain the current decision-making process at the household, almost all the women answered that they consult their husband and children a lot. They sit together, discuss, and make a decision together. The words that were used often were ‘hablar’ (talk), ‘consultar’ (consult), and ‘en conjunto’ (altogether). Even though they all consult, talk, and discuss with each other, five women explicitly mentioned that when it concerned individual decisions, they only asked for help when they had doubts. After the discussion and consulting phase, they used this information to take their own decision. One woman especially mandated over her children and mentioned that her husband was not in the position to make a decision about the children because she had better knowledge.

The women were also asked whether the decision-making process was different when the decision being made was economic. Two women said that economic decisions were being made between them and their husband only. Two other women mentioned that the decision-making process was the same as with a normal decision whereas two other women mentioned that when it comes to an economic decision, the whole family talks together and helps each other out with money if necessary. They felt that the family was more united. One woman mentioned that the process changed the other way around when talking about economics because she managed her money and her husband managed his money.

With respect to the political decision-making process, the words being used were ‘hablar’ (talk), ‘consultar’ (consult), ‘compartimos nuestras opiniones’ (we share our opinions), and ‘respetar’ (to respect). The political decision-making process therefore seemed to be a joint decision-making process.

All the women were satisfied with the current decision-making process and hardly anyone wanted to change the process. One woman mentioned that emotionally she felt amazing and
she was very satisfied with the decision-making process. The only desire she had was to change her financial situation so that her family could improve more. All the women felt that if they wanted to change the decision-making process even more, they had the possibility to do so and to talk about it.

When comparing the current decision-making process with the decision-making process in the past, many women answered that it was almost the same. They reckon that some things have changed, though. Examples mentioned were their children that had grown up and who now make their own decisions, or that things happen differently because there are moments in which one does not agree with the other. Though, they always worked it out. Two of the women, however, said that in the past the decision-making process was completely different. In one case, the respondent’s husband decided everything, she had to follow. She did not have anything to say at home. A similar process was mentioned by another woman, however the one who mandated in the household was her older son. The difference between the two cases is that the latter woman was aware of the fact that this was not the way it should go because she grew up with other norms and values. The woman of the first case, however, did not realise that other dynamics at home were also possible. She was used to a certain way of treatment, and found her own customs and habits in this process. It was until the participation in activities with the organisation that she realised that things could and should be different.

To the question whether women felt that the activities in which they had participated had had an impact on the current decision-making process, 80% of the women confirmed. There was more understanding and peace at home, they learned that everyone is equal and should therefore help each other out. They learned about the existence of more and other opportunities which strengthened their families. An often occurring word was ‘unidos’; being more united as a family. The majority of the women mentioned that it had helped that they had brought their children to the activities as well. It therefore made them also think differently, which reinforced the changing dynamic at home.

According to table 1, the activities of the psychological dimension and the cognitive dimension had the most influence on the decision-making process at home. In the comments that were made during the questionnaire, the words ‘conversamos’ (we talk) and ‘compartimos’ (we share) were used often.

4.4.5. Universal Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights
All of the respondents had received education about sexual and reproductive health and their reproductive rights. This education had been brought to them by different people,
organisations or institutions. Some had received information at school when they were young, whereas others had received them from the health centres where they were invited for talks or in the family planning clinics. Three out of seven women mentioned the workshops from organisations as sources of information.

When asking the women whether they wanted to have more education about this theme, two of seven said no whereas five of seven answered yes and explained that it was not only for them to have more information, but also for their children as they could teach their children who would continue the process and teach their children in the future.

The women that mentioned the workshops from organisations as sources of information mentioned that these workshops provided them with a lot of extra information. This information taught them their reproductive rights and how they could claim and execute them. One woman said that the activities initiated a change in her feelings. Where the subject felt as a taboo before the activities she moved to a stage in which she was very interested in the subject and wanted to learn more to be able to teach her children. As mentioned before, all women had been able to decide on the planning of their family. The decision to have an operation was more their decision than it was a decision influenced by the activities.

4.4.6. Equal Rights to Economic Resources

As has been argued many times in this paper, it is the goal to investigate the indicators both at public and at household level. At public level, this indicator focuses on women’s equal rights to economic resources and access to ownership and control over property and financial services. On household level, this research investigates women’s access and control over the money at home.

4.4.6.1. Public

Women’s access to economic resources has already been discussed in the section about the fourth indicator. In this part it could be seen that all women felt they had the same access to economic resources as men. Taking into account that the women interpreted the access to economic resources more broadly than only loans of the bank, it seemed that the activities from the psychological dimension and the political dimension had the most influence on their access to economic resources.

The access to a property has already been discussed for the first indicator in which the analysis showed that the majority of the respondents owned a house of which the official ownership changed between families. Reasons for the decision to let the woman, her husband,
or both have the title of the property were distinct. Nevertheless, almost all women were satisfied with the situation and they felt that it was the lack of financial resources that created a barrier to own a house and it was not gender nor prohibition by their husband.

4.4.6.2. Household

Continuing with women’s rights to economic resources at household level, women’s access to and control over the money at home was investigated. Of the nine women that answered, three of them had all the access and control over the money that came at home. They were the one who managed and divided all the money they had as family in order to cover the costs and try to have money left for food. Four of the women explained how they managed the money together with their husband or with the whole family. Two women responded that their husband was the one who manages the money. However, this did not mean that they did not have access to this money. They still talked about it and made decisions together.

In comparison to past access and control over money, the process had been the same for all women. The only changes that occurred were because of the fact that one’s job changed which could mean that there was more or less money to spend. It seemed like the activities of organisations did not necessarily change anything in the access to and the control that the women had over the money at their house. All respondents were as well satisfied with the way the things were arranged at home.

4.4.7. Other Impacts of Activities.

In above sections the impact of the activities on the various indicators of women empowerment for the women of Soacha have been analysed. Additionally, more but different kind of impacts have been mentioned during the investigation. An overview of the impact will be discussed in this paragraph.

Women felt that their role at home, their self-esteem, and their hopes for the future have changed after the participation in the activities. A word that has often been used by the participants was ‘confidence’; they feel more confident with what they have, what they do, and what they can still do and have in the future. Many respondents also mentioned the value of knowing their rights and being able to defend and claim them. Their hopes for the future were already high before the participation in activities, because of the reason that the respondents had their children to fight for. Though, many women mentioned that their hopes have risen and that they have more expectations.
During the interviews, the women talked a lot and therefore unknowingly mentioned some general influences by the activities in which they participated. A frequent comment made by various women was that women felt they were another person, that they found a person or an identity within themselves that they didn’t know or see before. Moreover, the women themselves used the word ‘empowerment’ in various occasions. As clearly stated by one of the respondents:

“I have met with another person of whom I did not know that existed. An empowered person, a courageous person, a person that is always motivated to go on, who is able to say: ‘never again’ and ‘yes, I can’.”

They feel more empowered and they mention that with the activities of the organisations they have been through a process of empowerment. Moreover, the reason to take their children to activities is for them to be able to empower them as well. The comments made about the empowerment of the children links to the next observation; women were actively trying to implement the new knowledge in their house, in their family. Many took their children to the activities as well which also generated a change in attitude with the children which stimulated the whole empowerment process. When asking the women what it was that they wanted to change at the moment, almost all of their answers related to employment. The respondents answered they wanted to find a job, change to a better job, or start their own business. This would help them to create something sustainable and even give other people a job. One woman also responded that she wanted her children to participate more in the activities. Lastly, many times the activities were seen as a process of empowerment, in which all activities together made the difference, not one activity solely.

This section has divided the activities, in which the women have participated, into the dimensions of empowerment. Afterwards, the quantitative impact of those dimensions on themes that are linked to the fifth SDG were analysed. Finally, the influence of the activities on the indicators of the fifth SDG was examined qualitatively. With the information of above analysis, the next chapter will discuss the found data and compare it with the information which was found in the literature.

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134 Respondent 1, personal interview by Krista Sojo, Soacha, Colombia, October 4, 2016. “Me he encontrado con otra X que no sabí que existía. Una X empoderada, una X valiente, una X llena de continuar, de decir ‘nunca más’ sino siempre ‘sí puedo, sí puedo.’”
5. Discussion

In the previous chapter, the retrieved data has been quantitatively and qualitatively analysed, sometimes divided by women empowerment dimensions and sometimes divided by the sub-indicators of the fifth SDG. In this chapter, the found data will be discussed and a comparison with the information from the literature will be made. This will be done per women empowerment dimension as the aim of this research is to provide a comparison and overview of the differences in impact on the lives of the women in Soacha after certain activities that fall within the dimensions.

5.1. Economic empowerment

Starting with the economic dimension of empowerment, the activities that fall within this dimension had the most impact on one’s access to a job, one’s role in the household, and the division of tasks within the household. These subjects are part of the first and the fourth indicator of the measurement of empowerment as described by the SDG. More specifically, the first indicator treats the discrimination against women and the fourth one discusses the promotion of a shared responsibility within the household and the family. The way in which the activities influenced the access to a job were by increasing the motivation to start working and by providing knowledge about the management of a small enterprise. Although not literally, the economic dimension influencing one’s access to a job is in line with the literature which argued that economic empowerment should result in some degree of financial autonomy.135 If one’s access to a job improves, a higher probability on obtaining financial autonomy is also existent.

The women that participated in activities within the economic dimension also indicated that those activities had an impact on their role in the household. They felt more confident, more knowledgeable, more useful within their family and therefore they had the feeling they were able to change their role in the household. This impact is in line with the reasoning of Kabeer, who argued that access to paid work can increase women’s agency which are the processes by which choices are made and put into effect.136

At the moment of interviewing, the satisfaction of women, which corresponds to the achievement dimension of the ability to exercise a choice, was positive for all women except for one woman who had not participated in many activities. She did not feel she had the possibility to change the division of tasks. A possible reason for this could be that the lack of participation made that had not been able to change the division of tasks yet. However, as only one out of the ten women indicated her dissatisfaction, no strong arguments can be made. All nine women also felt they had the possibility to change the division of tasks in the household if they would want to do. Again, this shows a positive agency of the women.

A comment must be made about the differences between what was stated in the literature and what was commented by the respondents. Even though UN Women argues that women in Colombia do not have equal access to financial resources, the respondents felt that they did have the same access to receive loans as men. They also explicitly mentioned that the activities in which they had participated had not changed anything about this access. Another contradiction could be noted between the information on the inequality in the access to a job and the amount of salaries between men and women. Except for the transgender woman, the rest of the women did not feel there was any inequality in the access to a job between men and women. This finding contradicts with the information in the literature review which state that as well in Colombia as in Soacha there is a difference in the access to a job between men and women. It did not seemed that the activities increased the women’s access to a job, created extra jobs, or changed he level of discrimination within this area. Though, it did seem like the activities influenced the participants’ ability to make a choice: by providing knowledge the women increased their resources and motivation which influenced the agency dimension. These specific influences could therefore be an explanation for the case of one woman who wanted to work but whose husband did not let her work. She had hardly participated in activities which could explain the lack of the ability to make the decision to start working and argue about it with her husband. This would be in line with what Kabeer says about how a focus on the economic dimension could change one’s agency. A final difference between the literature and the data were found. While it was argued that in displaced families women adapt faster to a new situation and therefore find a job faster than

men, the data showed that in both displaced and intra-urban displaced families it was often the husband that had a job instead of the wife.  

5.2. Political empowerment

The political dimensions had the most impact on one’s access to health care, on a political position in Soacha, and on one’s hope for the future. Whereas access to health care is part of the first indicator of the SDG that treats discrimination, access to a political position in Soacha is part of the fifth indicator which focuses on participation and opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making. One’s hope for the future cannot necessarily be placed in one of the indicators of the SDG, but could be considered to be placed into the ability to exercise choice. Activities within the political dimension had an impact on one’s access to health care services, according to the participants. However, no specific explanation why or how has been given. The women did mention that although the health care system is bad in general, the access for women and men is the same.

The political dimension also had an influence on one’s access to a political position in Soacha. Due to the activities the women realised that they themselves were also able to help others. This line of thinking is in line with the reasoning of Wilson who stated that an increased sense of community and responsibility, increased political skills follow. Moreover, it is remarkable that five of the ten women are leader of an organisation. This can be connected to one of the goals of the activities within the political dimension of empowerment which is to create the ability to organise and mobilise for social change.

Although one of the indicators of the SDG focuses on the participation of women in public politics, only few participants actually wanted to participate. A possible explanation can be the cultural and social context in which the women are living. It is exactly for this reason that Stromquist argued that indicators that only measure on macro level are not sufficient enough because you one is unable to measure all the aspects of women empowerment. Moreover, the lack of interest for a political position is an example of Kabeer’s argument on how criteria of women’s choices should be represented in the

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measurement of women’s empowerment.\textsuperscript{144} It was clear that both the women that had the desire to enter the politics and the women that did not have this desire felt that they lacked the resources to enter, especially the social relationships.

For the impact that the activities had on one’s hope for the future no reasons have been given, however as can be seen from the table the political activities have had an impact on many subjects which could make one assume that it is the conjunction of the impact on all subjects that makes someone’s hope for the future increase. An increasing hope for the future could be seen as a part of the resources dimension of the ability to exercise a choice. One’s future hopes and expectations make people feel that they have the ability to move forward. This is an important foundation for the rest of the process.

5.3. Psychological empowerment

Most impact created after participation in activities of the psychological dimension was on the subjects hope for the future, access to a political position in Soacha, and access to health care. Whereas hope for the future can be seen as part of the ability to exercise choice, the access to a political position is part of the fifth indicator of the SDG that treats the participation and possibilities for women, and the access to health care is part of the first indicator of the SDG which discusses discrimination. The activities generated another perspective on one’s life and a feeling of need to improve the lives of someone’s children or the family in general. As a consequence, hope for the future improved and created the expectations that life would improve even more.

The psychological dimension impacted the access to a political position by increasing the confidence of women to talk and to give their opinion which generated new opportunities and an improvement in the access to a political position in Soacha. Moreover, by new gained strength and a higher self-esteem, women felt they were able to fight the health care system and to claim their rights as human and as woman. The feeling of being valuable helped women to feel strong to fight for what is supposed to be offered to them. The effects of the activities on the impact on the access to a political position and health care is exactly the effect described in the psychological dimension which states that confidence and self-esteem is important to initiate a change and to feel competent enough to enter public spaces.\textsuperscript{145}

\textsuperscript{144} Naila Kabeer, “Resources, agency, achievements”, 439.

5.4. Cognitive empowerment

The cognitive dimension had the most impact on women’s hope for the future, their sense of security, and their access to economic resources. One’s access to economic resources is part of both the fifth and the seventh indicator of the SDG that respectively deal with women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life, and women’s equal rights to economic resources. One’s hope for future is part of the dimension of the ability to exercise choice.

The activities of the cognitive dimension have influenced women’s hope for the future by giving them knowledge. Through, for example, the gained knowledge about one’s human rights one knows that one has the possibility to do something for their family and that someone is able to obtain something. It is the knowledge that someone has rights and that others need to respect that and comply with that. It therefore also provides more resources to people which helps them in the ability to exercise a choice. As stated as one of the effects of the cognitive dimension of empowerment, it expands people’s ability to make strategic choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them.¹⁴⁶

Moreover, the cognitive dimensions were said to influence one’s sense of security, however this was not extensively explained by the women. Known is, though, that the women did not understand the sense of security as a physical security but more as a social security. By having more knowledge, people have more tools to hold on to and therefore feel more secure.

With respect to one’s access to economic resources, the women understood this as a more general access than only loans of the bank. Little specific explanation has been given about the influence of the cognitive dimension, but one woman stated that the information she had received gave her a push to start and to believe that she was also able to help others. In general, women felt that they had the same access to economic resources as men and they were satisfied with this fact.

6. Conclusion

A current discussion in the world of humanitarian action is whether humanitarian organisations should get involved in the third dimension of social life of humanitarian action in which it affects the ordering process of a society at large. Activities that focus on empowering women and hereby changing people’s outlooks and power division in families, can be seen as being part of this third dimension. Meanwhile, an increasing amount of humanitarian organisations started to implement women empowerment activities in their projects. It is, however, something that has not been done by humanitarian organisations in the past. Moreover, no clear overview or guide exists in which results of researches show and compare how different women empowerment activities can have a distinct impact on women and their empowerment process. Such a guide is essential to humanitarian organisations, though, as they need to respond quick in emergency situations and they should be able to decide fast on the activities they want to execute. The aim of this study is to provide such a guide, or at least a beginning, which can be used by both humanitarian and developmental organisations. The chosen setting for the study is Soacha, a municipality in Colombia which finds itself in an urban refugee situation. As an urban refugee situation is becoming a new phenomenon in the humanitarian sector, Soacha offers a perfect example to do research and provide tools which can be used in the future. The main research question that this study aimed to respond is to what extent a difference in the focus on the four dimensions of empowerment have a different impact on the actual empowerment of the women living in the urban refugee situation in Soacha, Colombia.

Empowerment is a broad concept and is defined in various manners by different people. This study uses the definition of empowerment as a process of developing capacities and acquiring, providing and bestowing resources and means to gain control over them. It therefore creates the ability to direct and control one’s own life.

The academic Stromquist describes women empowerment as having four dimensions: four different dimensions: the economic, the political, the psychological, and the cognitive dimension. It was chosen to use the sub-indicators of the fifth SDG as a benchmark to measure the empowerment of women. By means of a semi-structured interview and a questionnaire, a decrease or increase in the established sub-indicators and therefore a decrease or increase in empowerment could be measured. To perfect the measurement of women empowerment not only indicators on macro but also on micro level were used. On top of that, the theory of the ability to exercise choice established by Kabeer was used to triangulate the
obtained information. Therefore, a woman was seen as empowered when there was an increase in one or more sub-indicators and when she had the ability to exercise her choice.

Analysing the data which was found after the semi-structured interviews and the questionnaires, it can be concluded that 43.8% of the activities in which the women participated fell within the cognitive dimension, 20.8% focused on the economic dimension, 18.8% could be placed within the psychological dimension and the remaining 16.6% of the activities belonged to the political dimension of empowerment. The exact activities that were most mentioned by the respondents were those that taught handicrafts, human and women rights, workshops that focused on increasing one’s self-esteem, workshops that focused on starting a small business (legal, administrative, and economic), psychosocial support, workshops that addressed ‘la convivencia’ (living together), and workshops in which they were taught how to handle children. With the data from the quantitative analysis, it could be concluded that activities that belonged to the psychological dimension had most impact on the empowerment of women, followed by the political, economic and cognitive dimension.

More specifically, it was found that activities from the economic dimension had the most empowering impact on women’s access to a job, women’s role in the household, and the division of tasks within the household. This means that the economic dimension of empowerment has the most impact on decreasing the discrimination against women and improving the shared responsibility within the household and family. Moreover, the activities of the economic dimension increased women’s agency.

After an analysis, it was found that the activities from the political dimension had the most empowering impact on women’s access to health care, women’s access to a political position in Soacha, and women’s hope for the future. Translated to the sub-indicators of the SDG, the political dimension decreases discrimination against women and increases the effective participation and equal opportunities in both public and private life, and on their ability to exercise choice by augmenting the amount of resources that the women have.

The psychological dimension had most impact on women’s hope for the future, women’s access to a political position in Soacha, and their access to health care. Same as the political dimension, this means that a focus on the psychological dimension impacts the resources which are needed to be able to exercise choice, it increases the participation and opportunities in public and private life, and it decreases the amount of discrimination against women.

The analysis of the activities within the cognitive dimension of empowerment shows that most impact was created on women’s hope for the future, their sense of security, and their
access to economic resources. Hereby the activities impacted the women’s ability to exercise choice, their effective participation and equal opportunities in public and private life, and it equalised the women’s rights to economic resources and access to ownership and control over property.

Above mentioned results can serve as the beginning of a guide that can be used by humanitarian organisations that want to implement women empowerment activities in their projects. The guide is only completed when complemented with some remarks or some guidelines, though. Firstly, it is important to note that empowerment is a process as has been defined at the beginning of this study as well as has been stressed by the women themselves. It takes time and it takes more than just one activity, preferably from different dimensions as a focus on a different dimension creates a different kind of impact. Secondly, organisations should keep in mind that although women empowerment focuses on empowering women, it is of added value when the family is included in this process to reinforce the empowering effect.

This research has been executed in a specific setting in the country Colombia. It would be of added value if future research would execute a same kind of research in a urban refugee situation in a different country in order to compare the impacts and note the differences which could complement the guide. If done so, it would be of importance to analyse both the macro and micro level of indicators and to include the theory of Kabeer about the ability to exercise choice or a similar theory in order to triangulate the information and not excluding this important information. Another option for future research would be to investigate how a situation and a woman’s empowerment when the economic situation of a household improves. Many women indicated that they wanted to improve their economic situation. If this would mean that the women would also move to another social class, a potential change could theoretically occur.

During and after the executing of above described research, some limitations of the research could be identified. Firstly, the women that were interviewed had participated in the activities of different organisations. Although on the one hand this created an opportunity to amplify the reach of the research, it also makes it more difficult to compare the activities in which the women had participated. For example, a workshop on human rights by organisation X can be done completely different than a workshop on human rights by organisation Y. Even though both workshops were categorised into the same dimension of empowerment, a possibility exist that the effects of the workshops is different approach by both organisations.
Secondly, it should be recognised that the women that were interviewed were women that lived in a difficult situation. They found themselves in a daily struggle to gain or save money while taking care of the household and their children. It was therefore that the women were only available of a certain amount of time. As a result, not all questions were always answered or women were able to fill out the questionnaire because of a lack of time. Therefore, the research that has done is not as complete as it could have been.

Moreover, there was sometimes the feeling that the women did not fully understand the question in the way that the researcher did. An example of this is the questionnaire that had to be filled out. It was difficult to explain the meaning of the questionnaire and the way it should be filled out. Therefore, a possibility exist that some women filled out the questionnaire in a different manner or with a different idea in mind than others.

Finally, as the research has been executed in Colombia it is subject to a long history of conflict and a certain type of culture. This should also be kept in mind when using this research for future purposes.
7. References


[http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/goals/gti.htm#goal3](http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/goals/gti.htm#goal3).


https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg5


http://colombia.unwomen.org/es/como-trabajamos/empoderamiento-economico


8. Tables and Figures

Table 1. *Answers of respondents about the impact of the empowerment dimensions on chosen themes.* Sojo, Krista. October 2016.

Table 2. *Summary of Table 1.* Sojo, Krista. October 2016.
Annex I

Interview Guide

1. Explain the interviewee what the interview is about and what the goal is of this interview. Afterwards, let the interviewee read and sign the consent form.

2. Tell the interviewee that she can you indicate me whenever she does not want to give an answer to a certain question.

Basic questions

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<td>Possible comments</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From which organisation(s) did you receive help or do you still receive help? For how long? ¿De qué organización u organizaciones ha recibido o sigue recibiendo ayuda? ¿Por cuánto tiempo?

| Name(s) organisation(s) + time |       |

Which kind of help do/did you receive? In which activities are/were you involved? ¿Qué tipo de ayuda recibió o recibió? ¿En qué actividades está/estaba involucrada?

| Economic |       |
| Political |       |
| Psychological |       |
| Cognitive |       |
| Others |       |
| Alone of with others from |       |
Explain: First I will ask questions about activities and happenings within their family and homes and afterwards about things that happen outside their homes and families.

**INSIDE HOUSEHOLD**

Can you tell me/describe me how, in general, decisions are being made at home?

- **What about economic decisions?**
- **What about political decisions?**

¿Me podría describir cómo, en general, se toman las decisiones en su hogar?

- ¿Cómo se toman las decisiones económicas?
- ¿Cómo se toman las decisiones políticas?

Has the decision-making process you just told me about has been different before the activities in which you participated?

¿Este proceso de toma de decisiones que acaba de describirme era diferente antes de las actividades en las que ha participado?

**Yes** → How? What changed? Is it due to the activities that it changed?

- Did you, beforehand, feel the need or the want to change the situation?
  ¿Usted sintió la necesidad o el deseo de cambiar el proceso de toma decisiones antes de las actividades en las que ha partidipado?

- Would you like the situation to change more or are you satisfied?
  ¿Le gustaría que la situación/el proceso cambie más o está satisfecha con la situación ahora?

**No** → Are you satisfied with the way the decision-making process goes or would you like to change it?

- **Yes** → OK, but if you would want to, do you feel you have the opportunities to change?
  ¿Per si usted quisiera, siente que tiene las oportunidades, las posibilidades y los recursos para cambiarlo?

- **No** → What would you like to change? Do you have the feeling that you have the possibilities to change the situation?
  ¿Qué le gustaría cambiar? ¿Tiene la sensación de que usted tiene las posibilidades y los recursos de cambiar la situación?

Could you tell me/describe me what your tasks are in the house? What are your husband’s task (if existent)? Children’s’ task? Other’s task?

¿Podría decirme cuáles son sus tareas en la casa? ¿Cuáles son las tareas de su esposo (si tiene)? ¿Cuáles son las tareas de sus hijos? ¿Hay más personas en la casa? → ¿Cuáles son sus tareas?

Have the tasks always been divided like the way you just described? (Or has it been different?)
¿Las tareas siempre han sido divididas en la forma que acaba de describir, o ha sido diferente?

Yes → Are you fine with this or would you like it to be different?
SI → ¿Está satisfecha con esta situación o le gustaría que fuera diferente?
- Yes → Do you, however, have the feeling that you have the possibilities/resources/help from others to change it if you would want to? Did the activities help with this feeling?
SI → ¿Sin embargo, tiene la sensación de que usted tiene la posibilidad, los recursos o la ayuda de otros para cambiarlo si quisiera? ¿Las actividades han contribuido a este sentimiento?
- No → Do you have the feeling that you have the possibilities to change it? Did the activities help with this feeling?
NO → ¿Tiene la sensación de que tiene la posibilidad, los recursos o la ayuda de otros para cambiarlo si quisiera? ¿Las actividades han contribuido a este sentimiento?

No → What changed? How did it change? Why? Did the activities help?
NO → ¿Qué cambió? ¿Cómo cambió? ¿Por qué cambió? Las actividades han contribuido a este cambio?

Do you have the feeling that there are certain things/tasks in the house that you are not allowed to do or say? ¿Tiene la sensación de que en su casa se le prohíbe realizar ciertas tareas, tomar ciertas decisiones o decir ciertas cosas?

No → Has this always been the case? NO → ¿Siempre ha sido así?
- Yes → Do you feel the need/want to change this situation? If yes: do you feel you have the possibilities and did the activities help you with this feeling?
SI → ¿Siente la necesidad o el deseo de cambiar esta situación? → En caso afirmativo → ¿Usted siente que tiene las posibilidades, los recursos o la ayuda de otros para cambiarla? ¿Las actividades han contribuido a este sentimiento?
- No → How/when did the situation change? Do you feel that the activities helped with this change?
NO → ¿Cómo y cuándo cambió la situación? ¿Usted siente que las actividades contribuyeron a este cambio?

Yes → Do you feel the need/want to change this situation?
SI → ¿Siente la necesidad o el deseo de cambiar esta situación?
- No → OK
- Yes → Do you feel that you have the possibilities to change the situation as you want it to be? Why/Why not? Did the activities help with this feeling?
SI → ¿Siente que tiene las posibilidades, los recursos o la ayuda de otros para cambiar la situación de la forma que usted quiere? ¿Por qué sí/por qué no? ¿Las actividades contribuyeron a este cambio?

Approximately, how many hours do you provide unpaid care or domestic work per week? And how many hours paid work per week? How is this division for your husband/others in household?
¿Aproximadamente, cuántas horas dedica al trabajo doméstico o a trabajo no remunerado por
Has this division been different before?
Yes → How? Why now different? Connexion with activities? Did you feel the need/want beforehand?
No → Would you like the division to be different? Do you feel you have this need/want & possibilities?

¿Esta división era diferente anteriormente?
SI → ¿Cómo? ¿Por qué es diferente ahora? ¿Cree que hay una relación con las actividades recibidas? ¿Antes de participar en las actividades, usted tenía el deseo de cambiar esa división?
NO → ¿Le gustaría que la división fuera diferente? ¿Usted siente que tiene las posibilidades, los recursos o el apoyo de otros para generar este cambio?

Do you have access to and control over the money in your house?
¿Tiene acceso y control sobre el dinero en su casa?

Yes → Has it always been like this?
SI → ¿Siempre ha sido así?
• Yes → OK. Are you happy? Do you want anything to change?
  SI → OK. ¿Estás contenta/satisfecha? ¿Quiere que algo cambie?
• No → What changed and when? Did the activities influence any of this change?
  NO → ¿Qué ha cambiado y cuándo cambió? ¿Las actividades han contribuido en algo a este cambio?

No → Would you like to have access/ownership/control?
NO → ¿Le gustaría tener más acceso y control sobre el dinero?
• Yes → Do you feel you have the opportunities to have this/change this situation? Do you think the activities helped/can help you with this?
  SI → ¿Siente que tiene la posibilidad, los recursos o la ayuda de otros para cambiar esta situación? ¿Cree que las actividades la han ayudado o le pueden ayudar con esto?
• No → And if you would like, would you be able to get it? Do the activities have any influence on this feeling?
  NO → Si embargo, usted siente que podría tener más acceso y control sobre el dinero si quisiera? ¿Las actividades tienen alguna influencia en este sentimiento?

OUTSIDE HOUSEHOLD

Do you have a job? ¿Usted tiene trabajo?
Yes → OK. If you would have sufficient money, would you also have a job?
SI → OK. ¿Si tuvieras suficiente dinero, también tendrías un trabajo?
• Yes → OK. Explain why? SI → OK. ¿Me podría explicar por qué?
• NO → Why not? NO → ¿Por qué no?
No → Would you like to have a job?
NO → ¿Le gustaría tener un trabajo?

- Yes → Why? Need or want? If you would have sufficient money, would you also have a job?
  
  SI → ¿Por qué? ¿Lo necesita o lo desea? ¿Si tuviera suficiente dinero, también tendría un trabajo?

- No → Why not?
  
  NO → ¿Por qué no?

Did the activities in which you participated in any sense helped to form your feelings and thoughts?
¿Las actividades en las que participó han contribuido a formar sus sentimientos y pensamientos sobre eso?

Could you tell me how much you earn per month? And how much does your husband earn? (In case of difference) Why do you think there is a difference?
¿Me podría decir cuánto gana por mes? ¿Y cuánto gana su esposo? ¿Por qué cree que hay una diferencia?

IF interviewee mentions gender as an explanation:
Do you feel that this is unfair? ¿Siente que esto es injusto?

NO → If people do feel it is unfair, do you think it would be possible to change the situation?
NO → ¿Si alguien siente que es injusto, qué cree que sería posible cambiar la situación?

YES → Would you like to change the situation? Do you think that this is changeable? → Is it changeable by you? (by for example negotiation) → Do you feel you have the possibilities to change something about the situation?
SI → ¿Le gustaría cambiar la situación? ¿Cree que es posible cambiar la situación? ¿Cree que usted misma puede cambiarla? (Por ejemplo, mediante una negociación) ¿Siente que tiene la posibilidad de cambiar algoacerca de la situación?

Do you have the feeling that you have access to any job you want to do? Why yes/no? Is there a relationship with the activities? ¿Tiene la sensación de que tiene acceso a cualquier tipo de trabajo que quiera? ¿Por qué sí/por qué no? ¿Hay una relación con las actividades en las que participó?

Does the municipality of Soacha have any special programs for women who are looking for a job? Or does the municipality promote women having a job? ¿Sabe si el municipio de Soacha tiene programas especiales para las mujeres que buscan un puesto de trabajo? ¿El municipio de Soacha promueve que las mujeres tengan un trabajo?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If you wouldn’t have a job, would they financially help you?</td>
<td>¿Si usted no tuviera un trabajo, el municipio de Soacha le ayudaría financieramente?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the municipality of Soacha or the state promote the shared</td>
<td>¿El municipio de Soacha o el estado está promoviendo una responsabilidad compartida dentro del hogar? Tienen algunas otras programas para apoyarle con el trabajo que hacer en el hogar? (para aliviar)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>responsibility within the household?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you like to follow some extra education? Would this also be</td>
<td>¿Le gustaría recibir algún tipo de educación adicional? ¿Esto sería posible para usted en términos de dinero, tiempo, trabajo, permitido por su esposo?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>possible for you in terms of money/time/work/allowed from man?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have the feeling that you have the same access to education as</td>
<td>¿Tiene la sensación de que tiene el mismo acceso a la educación que los hombres?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>men?</td>
<td>Yes → OK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No → Do you find this unfair?</td>
<td>NO → ¿Le parece injusto?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the activities have any influence on your feelings about this</td>
<td>¿Las actividades han influído sus sentimientos acerca de este tema?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subject?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the municipality of Soacha offer any education programs especially</td>
<td>¿El municipio de Soacha ofrece programas de educación especial para las mujeres?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for women?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With regard to health care, do you have the same easy to access health</td>
<td>¿Y si hablemos sobre la atención médica, tiene el sentido que usted tiene la misma facilidad de acceder a los servicios de salud y puede reclamar los servicios de salud como hacen los hombres?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>care services and claim health care services as men?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you describe me what happens when you need a loan from the bank?</td>
<td>¿Me puede describir lo que sucede cuando necesita un préstamo del banco? ¿Quién va al banco y quién recibe el préstamo?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who goes to the bank and who gets the loan?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Has it always been like this or have things and the process changed?  
¿Siempre ha sido así o han cambiado cosas en el proceso?  
Yes → Would you like it to be different? SI → ¿Le gustaría que fuera diferente?  
- Yes → How? Do you feel able to change the process? Do you have the resources?  
   SI → ¿Cómo? ¿Se siente capaz de cambiar el proceso? ¿Tiene posibilidades, recursos o ayuda?  
- No → OK. Why not?  
No → How was it before? What has changed? Did the activities influence this difference?  
NO → ¿Cómo era antes? ¿Qué ha cambiado? ¿Las actividades han influido en este cambio?  

Does your family own any house and/or land? Who is the official owner over this house and/or land?  
¿Su familia posee una casa o un terreno? ¿Quién es el dueño/la dueña oficial de esta casa o terreno?  

IF woman is official owner:  
Why? Has it always been like this? How do you feel about that?  
¿Por qué? ¿Cómo se siente sobre eso? ¿Siempre ha sido así?  
Yes → OK. Are you happy? Do you want anything to change? Do you think it would be possible to change things?  
SI → OK. ¿Está satisfecha? ¿Quiere que algo cambie? ¿Cree que sería posible cambiar las cosas?  
No → What changed, when and how? Did the activities influence any of this?  
NO → ¿Qué ha cambiado? ¿Cuándo y cómo cambió? ¿Las actividades han influido en esto?  

IF man is official owner:  
Why? Has it always been like this? How do you feel about that?  
¿Por qué? ¿Cómo se siente sobre eso? ¿Siempre ha sido así?  
Yes → Are you happy? Do you want anything to change? Would you like to have ownership and control over the house and/or land? Do you feel you have the opportunities to have this/change this situation? Do you think the activities helped/can help you with this?  
SI → OK. ¿Está satisfecha? ¿Quiere que algo cambie? ¿Le gustaría tener propiedad y control sobre la casa o la tierra? ¿Siente que tiene la oportunidad, la posibilidad, los recursos o la ayuda de otros para cambiar esta situación? ¿Cree que las actividades han ayudado o le pueden ayudar con esto?  
No → What changed, when and how? Did the activities influence any of this? How do you feel about the change?  
NO → ¿Qué ha cambiado? ¿Cuándo y cómo cambió? ¿Las actividades han influido en esto? ¿Cómo se siente sobre eso?
Do you have any political/decision-making position of Soacha? Why yes/no?
¿Usted ocupa alguna posición política en Soacha? ¿Por qué sí / por qué no?

Would you like to? Do you feel that you could enter and get a position like this? Why yes/no?
¿Le gustaría ocupar alguna posición política? ¿Siente que puede obtener una posición política? ¿Por qué sí / por qué no?

Do you feel there is a difference because of the fact that you are a woman?
¿Siente que hay alguna diferencia por el hecho de ser mujer?

Does Soacha have any programs especially for women in order to let them participate in the municipality’s politics?
¿Soacha tiene algún programa especialmente para las mujeres con el fin de hacerles participar en la política de la municipalidad?

Did you ever receive education about sexual and reproductive health, your rights with regards to sex, and the possibilities and the use of birth prevention?
¿Ha recibido educación sobre salud sexual y salud reproductiva, sus derecho con respecto a sexo, y las posibilidades y el uso de un método anticonceptivo?
NO → Would you have liked that? Would you be allowed to?
NO → ¿Le hubiera gustado recibir esa educación? ¿Le permitirá seguir esa educación?

Did you have a decision in your family-planning? Was this influenced by the activities in which you participated?
¿Ha tenido una decisión en la planificación de la familia? ¿Está influenciada por las actividades en las que ha participado?

I don’t know if you have ever experienced mental/physical/sexual violence, or are still experiencing this, but do you have the feeling that the amount of violence has changed?
No sé si ha sufrido violencia mental, física, o sexual, o aún está sufriendo de eso. ¿Pero usted tiene la sensación de que la cantidad de violencia ha cambiado?

| Antes de las actividades | Después de las actividades |
Do you have anything you would still like to say about the interview, about the activities you have received. Do you have any questions?

¿Hay algo más que le gustaría decir acerca de esta entrevista y de las actividades en las que ha participado? ¿Tiene alguna pregunta?
Annex II

Formato de Consentimiento informado

Este formulario certifica que las personas entrevistadas están de acuerdo en el uso de sus datos para la investigación de la señora Krista Diamanda Sojo y las evaluaciones de la organización de la cual he recibido/estoy recibiendo apoyo.

La señora Krista Diamanda Sojo no publicará el nombre real de las entrevistadas. Krista Diamanda Sojo tratará responsablemente los testimonios, teniendo en cuenta la dignidad de la persona, su experiencia, su seguridad y las posibles consecuencias que suponga dicho tratamiento.

Nombre: …………………………………………………………………… Edad: 
………………………………………………………………………………………………
Víctima de desplazamiento forzado Retornado/a Migrante forzado
Solicitante de refugio En riesgo Otro (especificar) _________________

Lugar de origen:………………………………………………………………………………
Lugar de residencia actual:……………………………………………………………………
Lugar donde se hizo la entrevista:…………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………
……
Pertenece a alguna etnia: Si Cual: …………………………………
No

Nombre del entrevistador:………………………………………………………………

☐ El entrevistado ha sido informado en detalle (si fuera necesario en su lengua materna) sobre el propósito con el que Krista Diamanda Sojo utilizará el testimonio.

☐ Se le notificó que la información se hará pública en la tesis de Krista Diamanda Sojo y será usado por las evaluaciones de la organización de la cual he recibido/estoy recibiendo apoyo.

CONSENTIMIENTO

Yo ………………………………………….., doy mi consentimiento a Krista Diamanda Sojo para que utilice mi testimonio de acuerdo con los propósitos arriba mencionados y de los cuales manifiesto haber sido informado/a.
Estoy de acuerdo en que dicho material se use exclusivamente para la tesis de Krista Diamanda Sojo y para las evaluaciones de la organización de la cual he recibido/estoy recibiendo apoyo.

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
Fecha y lugar Firma (entrevistado)

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
Firma (entrevistador) Firma (intérprete)
Annex III.

ROL  Mi rol en el hogar
My role in the household
No me gusta nada – Es perfecto, no quiero cambiar nada.
I do not like it at all – It is perfect, I do not wish to change anything.

DIV  Las divisiones de las tareas en la casa
The divisions of tasks in the household
No me gusta nada – Es perfecto, no quiero cambiar nada.
I do not like it at all – It is perfect, I do not wish to change anything.

DEC  El proceso de la toma de decisiones
The decision-making process
No me gusta nada – Es perfecto, no quiero cambiar nada.
I do not like it at all – It is perfect, I do not wish to change anything.

TRAB El acceso a trabajo
Access to a job
No tengo acceso, es imposible – Tengo todo el acceso, lo mismo como un hombre.
I do not have access, it is impossible – I have all access, the same as a man.

EDU  El acceso a educación
Access to education
No tengo acceso, es imposible – Tengo todo el acceso, lo mismo como un hombre.
I do not have access, it is impossible – I have all access, the same as a man.

MED  El acceso a atención médica
Access to health care
No tengo acceso, es imposible – Tengo todo el acceso, lo mismo como un hombre.
I do not have access, it is impossible – I have all access, the same as a man.

REC  El acceso a obtener recursos económicos
Access to obtain financial resources
No tengo acceso, es imposible – Tengo todo el acceso, lo mismo como un hombre.
I do not have access, it is impossible – I have all access, the same as a man.

PROP El acceso a (tener) una propiedad (casa/terreno)
Access to (have) a property (house/terrain)
No tengo acceso, es imposible – Tengo todo el acceso, lo mismo como un hombre.
I do not have access, it is impossible – I have all access, the same as a man.

POL  El acceso a un puesto político
Access to a political position
No tengo acceso, es imposible – Tengo todo el acceso, lo mismo como un hombre.
I do not have access, it is impossible – I have all access, the same as a man.

SEX  Mi conocimiento de salud sexual y salud reproductiva
My knowledge of sexual and reproductive health
No sé nada sobre este tema – Yo sé todo sobre este tema que necesito saber.
I do not know anything about this theme – I know anything about this theme that I have to know.

ESP  Mi esperanza para el futuro
My hope for the future
No tengo esperanza – Tengo mucha esperanza.
I do not have any hope – I have a lot of hope.

SEG  El sentido de seguridad
The feeling of security
Me siento muy insegura – Me siento muy segura.
I feel very insecure – I feel very secure.

AUTO Mi autoestima / mi auto-confianza
My self-esteem
Muy baja – Muy alta.
Very low – Very high.