Research Network for
Domestic Worker Rights [RN-DWR]

"We want to be the protagonists of our own stories!"









A participatory research manual on how domestic workers and researchers can jointly conduct research

kassel university press

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ICDD International Center for Development and Decent Work

BMZ

DAAD Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst
German Academic Exchange Service

exceed



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This research manual is one of the products of the collaborative research project "Social Security Needs of Domestic Workers" between the Research Network for Domestic Worker Rights (RN-DWR) and the International Domestic Worker Federation (IDWF). The project was funded by the International Labour Organisation's Bureau for Workers' Activities and coordinated by the International Center for Development and Decent Work (ICDD).

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If you are interested in replicating any parts of the manual, please contact us in advance.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction to the manual 7
1.1 What is participatory research? 8
1.2 Our research project: Social security needs of domestic workers 8
1.3 Perspective and ownership matter Participatory research 11
1.4 Collaboration between researchers and 'participants' 12
1.5 What you find in this manual 13

2. The research project: step by step 14
2.1 Planning the project 14
2.2 Setting up a timeline 17
2.3 What is your research question? 18
2.4 Building the team: researchers, unions/organizations, co-researchers 19
2.5 Recruiting co-researchers for the project 22
2.6 How to structure training sessions 24
2.7 Workshop on the content of the project 25
2.8 Designing a questionnaire 28
2.9 Research ethics: clearance and asking for consent 32
2.10 Interview trainings 34
2.11 Selection and sampling of interviewees – and finding them 40
2.12 Recording and transcriptions 42
2.13 Data analysis 44
2.14 How to use your data 46
2.15 Celebrate! 48

3. Reflection and Conclusion 50
4. Literature and further resources 52
5. Glossary with methodological terms 53

■ Infobox
○ Thoughtboxes
|||| Documentboxes
See Glossary

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1. Introduction to the manual

Are you a trade unionist? A researcher? A domestic worker? Or a person who works across a range of contexts? Then you might indeed be part of the ideal target audience for this manual. In this summary, we discuss a research project that positioned domestic workers as researchers to investigate the meaning of social protection in two specific national contexts: The Netherlands and South Africa. We convey some of our experiences in developing and implementing this project in which trade unions, researchers and domestic workers joined together to develop an analysis of domestic workers' perceptions of social protections, a central component of the 2011 ILO Domestic Workers Convention 189.

A *research* project? – Yes. As scholars and practitioners who believe in contributing to social change through meaningful and relevant investigation, we joined forces with unions and collaborated with domestic workers as partners throughout this process. In doing so, we wanted to redress the frequent experiences of domestic workers who have been "studied" by researchers who often demand time, ask difficult and intimate questions, and rarely return their results or give back to the domestic workers and their organizations. At the same time, we focused on assuring that this research would be relevant to domestic workers themselves, accessible to organizations and applicable to the active national contexts that are developing policy changes to increase workers' rights.

This report is an outcome of a collaborative network of researchers, trade unionists and domestic workers, founded in 2011 as the "Research Network for Domestic Workers' Rights". The organization's overarching goal is to pursue a more horizontal collaboration between researchers and 'the researched' to illustrate that research can be a transformational tool for social change.

Our approach to research, documented in this manual, has the objective of empowering domestic workers by making them active parties in the 🗎 research design, implementation, and 🗎 analysis.

Research that is led by those whose lives should be directly affected by it has the potential not only to empower them, but can also provide a more solid basis upon which trade unions and organizations can develop more relevant, needs- and rights-based campaigns. The research project upon which this manual is based documented the social security needs of domestic workers, as it is one of the key issues of concern from their point of view.

We developed a manual format as the most vivid and illustrative method of sharing this concrete research project with a wider audience, in a step-by-step manner. The pages to follow discuss how different groups of domestic workers think about social security in their everyday lives. Our intention is to share the framework of our study in order to encourage other academics, trade unions and organizations to undertake research projects that position domestic workers as experts in their own experience.

We invite you to do research on topics of relevance to those who are traditionally "researched" and adapt the exercises in the manual accordingly. As you read this summary, we encourage you to draw from the examples to apply the design and research process creatively within your own area of study and interest. Our hope is that this step-by-step approach will encourage you to develop, implement and publish related research projects from the point of view of the domestic worker, raising awareness of their voices, and thus developing a broader understanding of domestic labor and its related considerations for policy, protection and increased workers' rights.

1.1 What is participatory research?

'Participatory research' is a collective term for all kinds of investigations that are planned in partnership *with* those individuals and groups whose activities, opinions or lives are studied. Other terms that are used to evoke similar approaches and techniques include: horizontal research, action research, participatory action research (PAR), community-based research, 'research for organizing,' co-operative inquiry, etc.

Participatory research is not a clearly defined applied method with specific research techniques. Rather, it is more of an orientation or an overall approach to research, based on the belief that the traditional subjects of research also have a value as active participants in the research. The techniques of collecting data—from interviews to focus groups to surveys—vary substantially and depend on the research question and research design. The term "research" refers to standards of academic investigation that are based on shared ethical and practical guidelines, as well as common approaches to assure wider relevance. The ethical rationale of research is that both parties profit from the participatory approach undertaken. 'Those being studied' are not considered objects, but ideally as 'co-researchers'.

Participatory research demands from all persons involved a high level of communication, trust, ability, and willingness to invest time – often much more time than for a conventional approach to research where the "expert" leads all aspects of the design, investigation, and analysis of the final data. Participatory research also requires all parties to be open to critical reflection and continued analysis of one's research routines and ongoing interpretations.

1.2 Our research project: Social security needs of domestic workers

Domestic workers around the world lack basic access to social protection, having been left out of labor provisions in nearly half the world's countries. Their ability to access social security remains limited in those countries, too, where they do benefit from the legal right to social protection. With the recent adoption of the ILO Convention (No. 189) on domestic work in 2011, many member states are starting to bring their legislation in line with the provisions of the Convention regarding social security, following Article 14.1:

"Each Member shall take appropriate measures, in accordance with national laws and regulations and with due regard for the specific characteristics of domestic work, to ensure that domestic workers enjoy conditions that are not less favourable than those applicable to workers generally in respect of social security protection, including with respect to maternity" (ILO Convention 189, Art. 14.1).

See Infobox No. 1



Photo: Stefania Azzarello and Sylvia Günther

To make this international instrument concrete at the state level, national social security schemes must meet the needs of the domestic workers living and working in the country. Although this international document states that domestic work should be treated the same as any other work with regards to rights and entitlements; the nature of paid household labor contains certain characteristics that set it apart from most other sectors. Moreover, experiences from countries that already provide social security provisions for domestic workers show that in many cases, when given the option, domestic workers are still paid under the table, making access to social security virtually impossible. Based on the assumption that they do not really benefit from the type of protection provided, domestic workers often hesitate to pay into the social security mechanism.

As governments set out to improve access to social security for domestic workers, questions clearly remain as to how a national legislative and enforcement system can be designed such that domestic workers benefit from and contribute to it. Participatory research can play a central role in constructing both mean-

Infobox No. 1

Convention No. 189
"Decent Work for Domestic Workers" by the International Labour Organization

"The Convention and Recommendation are historic because, for the first time, international instruments are applied to an essentially informal segment of the global workforce. Due recognition is given to the social and economic value of domestic work. These instruments provide the basis for ensuring that under the law, domestic workers have the respect and rights that workers in the formal economy have long fought for and acquired. Yet, as always, the adoption of these standards is a beginning – they need to be ratified and implemented. Now begins the collective task of ILO constituents to ensure their concrete application at the country level." Juan Somavia, former Director-General of the ILO

The texts of the convention C189 and the related recommendation R201 can be found here:
http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---travail/documents/publication/wcms_168266.pdf

ingful policies and relevant implementation practices. To develop sound social security provisions and mechanisms that domestic workers would voluntarily contribute to and benefit from, participatory research affords the opportunity to gain a better understanding of their social security needs. To this end, the Research Network for Domestic Worker Rights conducted a research project to document social security needs of domestic workers. Our study posed key questions to obtain information that could support the development of national legislation and protective frameworks for domestic workers. For example, we asked, what are the needs of domestic workers in terms of social security? Given the decentralized and dispersed nature of their daily labor, often working for multiple employers, what are the barriers that prevent domestic workers' access to such benefits as health care, pensions, maternity protection and workers' compensation?

The research consisted of two extensive participatory, qualitative research projects in the Netherlands and South Africa. These locations reflect distinct needs and country dynamics, but they also show similarities in those different locations. In both cases, we worked in partnership with the International Domestic Worker Network (which renamed itself in 2013 to International Domestic Worker Federation), as well as national member organizations to assess the actual social security needs of domestic workers. Throughout this research, we wanted to develop close research collaborations among researchers, domestic workers, trade unions, and domestic worker organizations.

See Infobox No. 2

Infobox No. 2



The Research Network for Domestic Workers' Rights (RN-DWR)

Around the world, numerous researchers are involved in studies of domestic work, often in collaboration with domestic workers and their organizations. Yet, these research efforts have been, and are still, barely connected. With the international emphasis on global standards for domestic work, the alignment of research projects became that much more important. Therefore, researchers affiliated with the International Center for Development and Decent Work and the Global Labour University, members of the International Domestic Workers Federation, and other individuals started an initiative to form a common research network. In June 2011, at the occasion of the adoption of the Convention 189 Decent Work for Domestic Workers at the ILO, the Research Network for Domestic Worker Rights was launched. Since its inception, the network has aligned scholars and research projects from all over the world to support the development of meaningful studies that support the advancement of domestic worker rights. Currently about 100 researchers have subscribed to the network. Researchers have to meet certain criteria for the network, such as being committed to the rights of domestic workers and collaborating with domestic worker organizations and trade unions. If you are interested in becoming active in the network, you can contact **dw-rn@icdd.uni-kassel.de**

1.3 Perspective and ownership matter... Participatory research

The research project established the goal of representing the needs of domestic workers very much through their own eyes, and expressed in their own voice. This was intended as a means to open wider spaces for the voices of domestic workers to be heard in the public sphere. It also seemed it would provide a more solid basis for trade unions to develop campaigns, because the demands would then be based on needs as expressed and documented by those who should benefit most from the campaigns. As such, we adopted a participatory research approach in which domestic workers, along with experts in social security, helped shape the content and formulation of the questionnaire used for the (semi-structured) interviews. Four researchers trained twelve domestic workers co-researchers to conduct the interviews with their peers, in line with the assumption that domestic workers would be more likely to open up to their peers on issues that are sensitive. By training domestic worker organizational leaders to conduct qualitative interviews with peers, the project aimed at gathering meaningful research findings on the social security needs of domestic workers.

Over the course of the research, this participatory approach proved to be highly valuable. It enriched the research results and had a transformative impact on the domestic workers who participated. Putting the tools of research in the hands of domestic workers also builds their confidence and capacity to apply the same interview skills in all aspects of their work, be it with employers, academics, other workers, organizations, or politicians.

Moreover, training domestic workers who are members of domestic workers' organizations to be able to carry out research had the additional effect of building the capacity of the participating organizations. Capacity-building at rank-and-file level is also very important in promoting internal democracy. For union and organizational leaders it is important to gain an in-depth understanding of the social security needs of domestic workers and the barriers they face. Those who try to influence legislators and develop effective campaigns need to have this knowledge. The content-related reports produced will act as important tools to illustrate the lived experiences of domestic workers, and to influence policy-making. This manual intends to encourage other researchers and domestic workers' organizations to experiment with similar approaches. It documents the reflexive, participatory research process that we engaged throughout this project. Through this manual, we want to contribute to a growing body of literature and practice on involving the subjects of research as researchers themselves.

Thoughtbox No. 1

"The two non-members were very excited to be interviewed and they also wanted to become members of SADSAWU. For me, as the researcher, it feels as if I was entering a new world. I discovered that I was enjoying what I was doing. If I can get the opportunity again, I will do it all over!" *Christine, domestic worker co-researcher South Africa*

1.4 Researchers and co-researchers collaborate

Individuals and groups that are often asked by researchers to respond to questionnaires, to be interviewed or otherwise 'studied' develop their own images of 'the researchers.' Some of these perceptions may be partially true; others may be the result of missing conversation, as researchers and domestic workers have not historically met on common grounds. To find out about this differential between researchers and those researched, this section includes some tips (source: Community Development Toolkit 2012) on how to undo stereotypes about researchers and research and affirm the expertise and knowledge of the members of the domestic workers union involved in the research project.

Here is a list of stereotypes that are often held about researchers:

- "use the time and knowledge of the domestic workers for their own purposes."
- "Researchers don't share the knowledge, expertise, and the outcomes of their investigation with the subjects of their research."
- "Researchers are 'experts.' Researchers and policy makers define the problems and solutions top-down. They are at a far distance from the domestic workers community."

Not all researchers reflect these characteristics. In fact, some contribute substantially to the organizing efforts of domestic workers, and develop a lasting supportive relationship with their organizations. If you want to carry out research together with researchers, it is important to challenge these stereotypes in order to reframe research as a process, in which all the people involved in the project can and should participate.

Infobox No. 3



Principles by the Research Network for Domestic Workers' Rights

- As a network that conducts research on domestic work in cooperation with domestic workers, the RN-DWR aims to support their rights and promote wider levels of respect and recognition. We coordinate and conduct our research based on the following principles:
- Conducting meaningful, quality research that meets the needs of domestic worker organizing efforts
- Remaining accountable to domestic workers by consulting representatives of the International Domestic Workers' Federation (IDWF) and national domestic workers' organizations
- Presenting, publishing and disseminating research results to promote domestic workers' activities and rights
- Making research results accessible to domestic workers and their organizations
- Conducting research in a principled way that respects and supports the empowerment of domestic workers
- Building a community of like-minded researchers in the field
- Cultivating trusting, communicative relationships with researchers and representatives of IDWF and domestic workers' organizations.



Photographs by Stefania Azzarello and Sylvia Günther

As a researcher it is important to

- facilitate the involvement of the individuals and groups in each stage of the research project; give credit to their work.
- underline individual and community knowledge and experience as legitimate and significant to the research's development. The participants become "co-researcher" of the project: their analysis and voice contribute to the collective knowledge on a given issue.
- promote the view that research is a tool that strengthens the process of community building and aims at increasing the power and influence of marginalized groups, such as domestic workers. It gathers people around common issues and needs and it builds base to get engaged in a specific social and political struggle.
- display the research as an action oriented tool. The results of the research advocate claims and strategic actions to influence policy makers and strive for positive social change.
- inform that the research's outcomes will be publicly disseminated; unfortunately, given the power relations in (academic) publishing, not all publications will be open access (where and under which conditions to publish is an issue you should discuss in the research team). However, informational materials can be developed on the basis of the research, and widely disseminated.

1.5 What you find in this manual

The manual is organized in line with the research process and thus provides step-by-step guidance as to how to design a participatory research work plan. This manual includes sub-chapters on planning a project, consulting with domestic workers on the research topic of choice, designing a questionnaire, training domestic workers to be interviewers, conducting interviews, analyzing findings, and how to use the data. Finally, we reflect on our project and the research tool kit. In the last part of the manual you find the literature we referred to as well as further resources that might be helpful for conducting a participatory research project. The appendix contains some material and a glossary with methodological terms.



2. The research project: step by step

Where does a research project come from? – This is an excellent question. It is one of the hardest parts of being a researcher. To develop a good and realistic 🗎 research question and design an original project, one needs time, creative ideas and good people to carry out the study. Even once you have a great 🗎 research question, you might find out that it is still not a good idea to pursue it through original research – because the project is too big for you (and your team), because it is already well documented, or for other related good reasons such as timing and resources. Even though most of the authors of the manual are researchers themselves, we do not think that research is the only way to understand problems or fight for social justice. Research can be useful, but only on some occasions. It is also a good idea to talk about your plans with different persons – ask other researchers about the feasibility of the project and whether it addresses some of the issues debated in the field; inquire with organized domestic workers and trade unionists as to whether they think such a project is really useful. At times, you might receive sceptical responses even though your project might make a lot of sense. As you evaluate constructive criticism, the final decision is up to you and your team.

In this section, we want to sketch step by step approaches to each phase of research projects– from the development of a 🗎 research question to 🗎 analysis of the data and dissemination of the results.

2.1 Planning the project

When you plan a project, ask the following questions to assure the relevance, feasibility and ultimate success of your study (adapted from Datacenter 2010):

1. What campaigns or organizational goals will the project support?
2. What is your primary 🗎 research question?
3. What information do you already have?
4. What information are you looking for? And, who holds this information?
5. What resources (money, staff, technical equipment etc.) will be needed?
6. Who is your audience and how will you release your research to this group?
7. What is the timeline of the project?
8. What methods (🗎 survey, 🗎 interviews etc.) do you think are adequate?
9. What is the scope of your study (How many interviews or 🗎 survey questionnaires?)?
10. Who will train the researchers and carry out the research?
11. What language(s) will you use? Do you have translators?
12. How will the data be analyzed?
13. Who will write the report or create the final dissemination materials?

The research process

A research project contains many steps and is usually a lengthy process. The Illustration No.1 from the "Research for Organizing" project in New York, shows the main steps in taking a research project from conceptualization to completion. On their website, you can find a very comprehensive manual which provides more information on each step of the process. Most of these steps are also covered in this manual on domestic worker research, but not necessarily to the same extent.



Photo: Tatcee Macabuag, Migrant Forum Asia (MFA)

Actual steps taken in the research project

1. Identifying a research question, discussion with colleagues, unions
2. Building the team: researchers, unions/organizations, co-researchers, members of the advisory board
3. Setting up the project (infrastructure, contracts, budget etc.), project management
4. Development of questionnaire
   - Researchers designed first draft of questionnaire
   - Questionnaire discussed with co-researchers and advisory board
   - Second draft of the questionnaire produced
   - Co-researchers trained in content of questionnaire
   - Questionnaire piloted
   - Questionnaire amended
5. Interview training of co-researchers
   - Co-researchers trained on how to conduct interviews
   - Co-researchers trained in handling voice recorders
6. Data gathering phase
   - Discussion of sampling strategy for recruiting interviewees
   - Co-researchers interviewed domestic workers (each 4-6)
7. Celebration and issuing of certificates to co-researchers, evaluation with domestic workers
8. Data handling and preparation for analysis
   - anonymizing interviewee names (according to a scheme, e.g. NL-1, NL-2, …)
   - overview of existing interviews in a table (anonymized name, duration of interview, interviewee, notes, etc.)
   - Responses transcribed (applying similar transcription rules)
9. Data analysis:
   - drafting of a coding scheme (by an experienced team member)
   - joint discussion and sharing of observations from giving the interviews a first read
   - amending of coding scheme
   - distribution of interviews to be coded by team members and coding
   - discussion of results, takes often several rounds to deepen analysis
10. Results
    - Report write-up
    - consultation with advisory board
    - working on academic articles (takes longer periods of time)
11. Reporting to funders, closing the books (upon termination of funding)

PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH TIMELINE



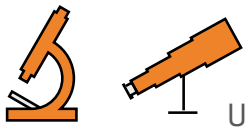
1 Determine Organizing Goal



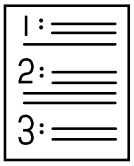
2 Develop Research Question



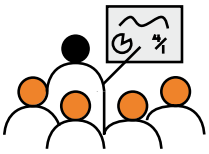
3 Determine Research Sample



4 Determine Methods to be Used for Research



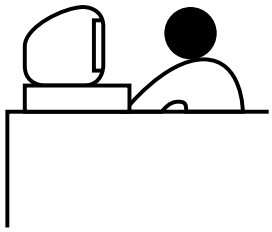
5 Develop research instructions



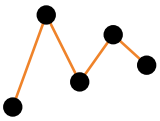
6 Train Community Members in Conducting Research

7 Administer Research

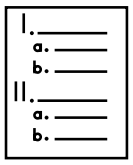
8 Data Entry



9 Data Analysis



10 Develop Outline



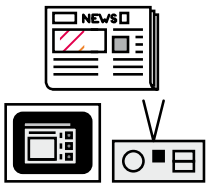
11 Develop Policy Recommendations



12 Write-up Report



13 Media Strategy



14 Report Release



ORGANIZING

Illuatration No. 1: Steps of Participatory Action Research. Source: "Research for Organizing Toolkit," Community Development Project at the Urban Justice Center, New York, 2012.www. researchfororganizing.org. Graphic design by Rosten Woo. Adaptation: Sylvia Saldarriaga

Time-related challenges

We underestimated the time spent on several steps of the project. Thus, after the official end of the project's budget, it was informally stocked-up by our own funds and personnel capacity (for transcription of interviews and a prolongation of the coordination of the project) from the university-based scholars. If possible, allocate some contingency-funds.

Thoughtbox No. 2

2.2 Setting up a timeline

An important part of the overall planning of the project is to set up a realistic timeline. It includes making a list of all tasks, estimating the time for each of the tasks, allotting responsibilities, asking all involved persons about their time resources or constraints, checking for holiday seasons etc.

See Documentbox No. 1

Documentbox No. 1 **Excerpt from the timeline of our research project**

To Do	Responsible person	...	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	...
.....										
Developing training module for interviewers			x⇢	x	x					
Local coordinators conduct training					x	x				
Domestic worker co-researchers (interviewers) carry out the interviews					x	x	x	x	x	
.....										

Thoughtbox No. 3

About time and timelines...

Time is a very sensitive issue in research. Those who fund research always want to know how long a project will take. Those who carry out research also would like to plan their life and work accordingly. However, experience shows that timelines and real-life time obligations often do not match perfectly. In the case of this research, we originally established a detailed timeline, yet the collaborative nature of this research required greater input, more extensive processes and flexibility in working with a number of partners. As a result, the training sessions took longer and were carried out in more phases than anticipated in order to prepare domestic workers to serve as researchers. Furthermore, conducting the interviews required more time than expected because of life circumstances and events that could not be predicted. For example, interviewees became ill or canceled appointments, holiday seasons required extended time flexibility, and life circumstances like marriages and illnesses, interrupted the original plans for conducting interviews. From these experiences, we emphasize the importance of including some buffer time in your research timeline.

2.3 What is your research question?

Students in the social sciences usually need several semesters to learn how to translate every-day questions and problems or theoretical interest into a specific research question and feasible project that fulfills the criteria as 'research'. Different types of research questions exist, such as "how" and "why" questions. Assuring experienced researchers on the team and clarifying the aim of the research early on help avoid some of the most common mistakes and assure the success of your final research.

In this case, the aim is to do participatory research. It is therefore worthwhile to bring domestic workers or other group together to identify the essence of relevant research questions.

Here are some recommendations:

- Brainstorm the topic and approach it from various perspectives.
- Draw your research question on a paper and come up with lines representing (potential) causes and effects, key concepts, actors/organizations etc.
- If your question is too big or vague, think of ways of making it smaller (such as: limiting the scope; focusing on one aspect; reducing the time period; focusing on one actor).
- Collect publications (academic and non-academic) about the topic. Check what they say about your topic. Note some of the most important, and oftentimes contradictory, results and perspectives. In the social sciences this is called a 'literature review' or 'review of the state of the art'. This will help you not only in clarifying your own take on the topic, but also in justifying your research project when looking for funding or writing about it.

2.4 Building the team: researchers, unions/ organizations, co-researchers

Not everybody in the research team contributes to the research project in the same way. Depending on your circumstances and the goals of your project, the establishment of clear roles and associated responsibilities is central to the success of the research project.





Photos: Maren Kirchhoff

The following division of roles and responsibilities provides an example of the distinct contributions each member may offer to the larger process. (There are always different names for each role.)

See Documentbox No. 2

Documentbox No. 2 **Roles and responsibilities in a research project**

Role	Tasks and responsibilities	Skills needed
Principal investigator(s) (PI) or project management	Overall responsibility for the project Fundraising and regular supervision of budget Consulting with research coordinator about progress Financial responsibility Participate in project team decision-making Responsible for ethical conduct and clearance Supervision of steps Provide input about research methods, state of the art Review of in-between steps/drafts and final results Backing-up in case of delays etc. Publishing	Organizational Interpersonal Supervisory Experience with research and management Interest in 🗎 participatory research methodology Delegation
Project or research coordinator	Daily management of the project Supervision of steps and timeline Organize and participate in project team decisions 🗎 Review of the literature Train team members, conceptualize training sessions (jointly with field-work coordinators) Ensure in the case of a comparative project that countries/cities/cases can indeed be compared Drafting of project material (e.g. project description, website, 🗎 questionnaire) Reporting to PIs about progress or difficulties Day-to-day management of budget Preparing reports (to funders) Depending on availability and team-work: Publishing and dissemination	Communication and interpersonal Project management Interest in participatory research methodology Delegation Methodological Writing
Field-work coordinator(s)	Recruiting 🗎 co-researchers Organizing, conceptualize and facilitate meetings and training sessions with co-researchers Reporting to research coordinator Participate in project team decisions Depending on availability and team-work: Publishing and dissemination	Communication Research skills Interest in participatory research methodology Local networks
Co-researchers, participants	Participating in training sessions and team meetings Carrying out interviews Review of results Sharing and disseminating results Feedback to coordinators and PIs about the project Depending on project: 🗎 transcription of interviews and data entry; 🗎 data analysis; publishing	Sharing of research aims Curiosity or interest in Research interpersonal Reliability
Research assistant(s)	Organizational and technical support (e.g. organizing a meeting space) Research support, e.g. transcribing interviews, 🗎 coding data	Reliability Language Software

2.5 Recruiting co-researchers for the project

A participatory research project is only participatory if trained researchers work together with those identified as 'co-researchers,' in our case domestic workers. The ideal case would be to jointly come up with the idea to do research together. But this is not always possible. Thus, either a trade union, a (domestic worker) organization or a group may look for researchers to gather information that will contribute to larger organizational goals, such as the ability to understand membership, influence policy or promote wider education about a particular topic. In other instances, researchers are seeking organizations to partner on a particular project, or connect a topic to the experiences of organizational members. Projects that start with one party initiating contact can easily evolve into participatory research, granted that both parties play an equal role in the process.

When you are a (team of) researcher(s) looking for participants/co-researchers for the participatory research project:

1. Contact a so-called gatekeeper (organizer, leader of a group, member of an NGO), thus a person, who has the authority and credibility to recommend you to potential participants. Introduce yourself and the project (in a written form).
2. Ask this key contact to arrange or join a meeting with that group in order to be able to introduce your project.
3. Conduct the meeting or join a meeting of your target group:
   - Short introduction of yourself
   - Short introduction of the project
   - Present the project in some detail, but keep it rather short and easy to memorize. Key components in a focused introduction of the research project include: Who is organizing the project? Who is financing it? What is the timeline of the project? What is the budget? What are the goals? What are the benefits for the participants?
   - Collect emails and telephone numbers of interested participants
   - Leave your email or telephone number
   - If necessary stay until after the meeting, for questions.
4. Arrange a meeting of those who are interested in participating as co-researchers. Be very clear about the requirements and conditions (e.g. how much time needs to be invested, your ability to offer any compensation for costs, or even a honorarium).
5. Select those who will be part of the project, ideally in close consultation with the organization you are doing the research with, or with the gatekeeper. Our experience is that the group for the training sessions should

Thoughtbox No. 4

"There are different ways to recruit domestic workers as co-researchers. We contacted the union. The organizer invited us to participate in one meeting of the leaders of the domestic workers campaign. There we shortly introduced ourselves, we presented the project, we left a hand-out about the project and we collected e-mails and telephone numbers of interested participants. This way turned out to be ideal: First of all, the organizer introduced us as researchers and activist researchers who had been already working on the topic of domestic work and women's rights. This gave us the credibility to invite domestic workers to join a research project. Second, in this meeting we have been able to reach domestic workers with different nationalities and different status (documented/ undocumented, with or without work permit)."







Photographs by Stefania Azzarello and Sylvia Günther

be a bit bigger than the number anticipated, because you always have to expect that some drop out (lack of time or commitment, quality of research not as needed).

6. Revisit the timeline, if necessary adjust it to the availability of the co-researchers.

When you are a domestic worker organization or trade union and would like to recruit researchers:

- Consider the most pressing needs of your membership and identify a campaign that research might be able to support. For example, the need for a day of rest, for overtime compensation, or for health insurance.
- Look for researchers who have already collaborated with domestic worker organizations or unions. Commitment to the topic alone may not be sufficient.
- Discuss openly your expectations.
- Set up a list of responsibilities and 'terms of reference' for all involved parties.
- Decide on a research question, in consultation with all involved parties.
- Identify members who are interested in participating, either as interviewers or as interviewees, or in other ways.
- Organize an informational session with the researchers and workers.

Tips

- Try to underline the benefits the participants will have from joining this project.
- Say a lot by saying less! Keep it to the main information and rather repeat information several times.
- You may need to undo stereotypes about researchers.
- After the first meeting, don't wait too long to send an invitation to a follow-up meeting.
- Your potential co-researchers may hardly check their emails, instead try to contact them through different medias, especially text messages or calling though mobile in order to reach them.
- Always send a reminder (e.g. text message) to your participants one week and one day before the next meeting.

Selecting co-researchers

It is generally a good idea to leave the doors completely open to domestic workers or other workers who would like to participate as co-researchers. It is important that the organizers and researchers consider some practical concerns. For example, co-researchers should be conversant in the language spoken by the interviewees, and also the language in which the research is being conducted. While sometimes these are one and the same languages, in other cases, it is useful to have bilingual co-researchers. Generally, they should have a literacy level that is high enough to be able to read the questionnaire and take notes during the interview. The co-researchers should also be clearly told how much time the research will require, to be sure they are able to commit to the entirety of the process.

More than money: Paying a compensation for participants?

The notion of paying participants and investigators brings up several core research considerations. While participants will indeed be spending a significant amount of time working on the research, and may suffer loss of income because of their participation, it is also important that the money not be the primary incentive for their participation.

In our project, we intensively discussed the pros/cons of this decision and ultimately decided that those involved in the project should at least have their expenses reimbursed. This is an important component of the budget, because paying the public transportation fares to/from the meetings is for many people a lot of money. Further expenses come up when 🗎 interviewers meet their 🗎 interviewees for example in a café, or have mobile phone expenses to schedule interviews. Depending on the budget there is the possibility of paying a compensation or scholarship to the participants/🗎 co-researchers. In our case, domestic worker interviewees working on an hourly basis lost up to 2-4 hours of paid work per interview, the domestic worker co-researchers even more. We thought it was fair to compensate some of their lost earnings, but it should not be an incentive to participate in the interview. Thus, we gave the interviewees an envelope with 20 Euros (equivalent to circa two hours of the running rate in the Netherlands) and 50 Rand (equivalent to 1/3 a day's labor in South Africa) after the interview. The trade unions with which we cooperated in the Netherlands and South Africa also had similar policies of financial reimbursement for time invested in some organizational events, as well as transportation. Thus, the domestic workers did not find it unusual to receive compensation for their interview. Further, we were in the position of being able to pay a fixed scholarship to the domestic worker co-researchers. Beyond the financial support, it meant an acknowledgement of them as researchers – just as our 'professional researchers' who worked as field-coordinators.

Thoughtbox No. 5

Expectations management is also a crucial part of 🗎 participatory research. 🗎 Co-researchers from the community, who are not familiar with the situation in academia, may have unrealistic expectations regarding the potential of a research project, its capacity to transform their situation, the influence of research on wider social, political and economic circumstances and the opportunities and resources of a researcher. In the same respect, researchers sometimes overestimate their own ability to commit to a project and a community and therefore have to reflect honestly on the time and financial resources they have. Therefore, participatory research projects need to be based on open communication and making expectations transparent.

2.6 How to structure training sessions

In the following chapters we suggest sessions in which the research project is collaboratively developed, researchers are trained in certain research methods, and the data are analysed.

We propose that each session shall be started with a round of expectations (use different methods, such as noting thoughts on paper, discussing in pairs) and should be closed with a round of reflection. These activities, and the material you need, are not marked separately.

See Documentbox No. 3

Documentbox No. 3 **Time estimate for a training session**

Duration (in minutes)	
15	Get settled – take some tea/coffee, wait for late-comers
10	Welcome and purpose of the training session by the trainer(s)
10	Expectations of the participants
...	...
...	...
10	Final evaluation
Total: xxx	(add time for breaks)

2.7 Workshop on the content of the project

After composing the group of researchers and co-researchers, in order to truly collaborate and to avoid misunderstandings, everybody needs to be briefed about all dimensions of the project. The first session may consist of two activities:

1. Background of the research project and
2. Discussion of the research topic. The total duration is about two hours.

Goals:

1. At the end of this session the participants will feel well-informed about the content of the project, the expectations in terms of time, money and the outcome of this participatory research project. All their questions and hesitations towards the project or research in general are answered. You should end-up with a list of engaged and enthusiastic participants to join the project.
2. A second goal is to provide the first thorough overview of the research topic and clearly identify what participants will gain in terms of learning, contributing to organization-building, etc. so that they can wisely decide whether they are motivated to join, or not.

Thoughtbox No. 6

Working language: Experience from the Netherlands

"In our first meeting we did not yet exclude all non-English speakers. A Dutch-speaking participant was present, whose English wasn't very good. It was very hard for him to express himself in English. Translation was necessary, which took a lot of time. Although still encouraging him, that it is a plus to also have a Dutch speaking interviewer, he still decided to not take part in the project after all. One needs to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of limiting the research to one language."

"Due to late-comers, language barriers and content wise, we had to repeat the information on the project about four times. It took us about one hour to go through the points a – e, which we originally though would only take about 15 minutes. Be aware that a lot of repetition is needed to really inform participants about the project."
Stefania Azzarello, fieldwork coordinator, the Netherlands

Thoughtbox No. 7

Activity 1: Background on the research project

Duration: 1 hour
Preparation: prepare a hand-out with all the important information; if necessary prepare a Powerpoint presentation to visualize the information given
Material: paper and pen for participants to take notes; whiteboard and marker or something else to put down e.g. possible dates to meet; projector (if needed)

a) Who are the trainers, who are the 🗎 co-researchers?
b) Who is the organization behind this project?
c) What is the content of the research? Which goals does it have and how does this support the struggle of the people trained?
d) How will the information be gathered (e.g. 🗎 interviews, 🗎 observations, 🗎 surveys, etc.)
e) Discuss the language of the training sessions and interviews. It can be more reasonable that everything is in one language, whereas for bigger projects with a multi-ethnic population it may be very important to run the project in different languages (consider having one training session in each of the major languages spoken, or hire interpreters and translators to facilitate a multilingual meeting).
f) Discuss the timeline of the project. Ensure that all participants have the opportunity to attend the sessions; finding common dates can be very challenging and time consuming. Discuss with the whole group whether weekends are better than evenings. Before discussing this point, it's helpful to already have dates in mind, to just vote on them, rather than leaving it totally open to the participants, the latter can take hours. When discussing the timeline it is also good to set fixed deadlines of the project. Ask the participants whether they can handle it next to their work, or not. Be rather open and direct, then too vague.
g) Let the participants ask as many questions as possible, and answer them as accurately as possible!

Activity 2: The topic of the research project

Duration: 1 hour
Preparation: prepare a short but clear explanation of the research topic
Material: colored paper; markers; tape or magnets to fix the paper on the whiteboard

a) Hand-out a few pages of colored paper to everyone as well as a marker.
b) Explain, that they will have 10-15 minutes to write down key-words, what comes-up to their mind, when thinking about the topic this research is about.
c) If someone has difficulties, suggest working in pairs to feel more comfortable.
d) After 10-15 minutes participants pin their answers to the whiteboard, presenting a brief explanation for their answers.
e) Integrate their answers into an explanation of the topic of this research that you've prepared in advance (e.g. Poweroint slides). Refer to the legislation of the country, to international standards (e.g. by the International Labor Organization), if relevant.
f) Facilitate a discussion on the comparison between the definitions of social security developed by the participants and those ones by the national and ILO legislations and the actual practices and problems in realizing social security benefits for the workers.
g) Answer questions, but stay within the timeframe and say that more details will be given in the training sessions.

Tip: Produce a glossary

Terms and concepts in a research project can be difficult, because they are very technical, their meanings differ from every-day notions of the words, they are backed-up by theories etc. Often unionized workers learned to use this language, because they engage with policy-makers, bureaucrats, and researchers. Therefore, it is important to prepare a list of important words and concepts. This list is called a glossary. In our project we had to clarify a lot of terms in the field of social security: What is a work-permit? What is the difference between private and public health insurance? What is a work-related accident? A glossary is even more important in comparative studies, because, for example, the pension system in the Netherlands works very differently than the one in South Africa. The same is true when a lot of migrant domestic workers participate in the study, because the Filipina worker might have a different understanding of the social security system than her Eritrean colleague. The ability to establish a common meaning around particular terms is very important to researchers' abilities to convey this information during their own interviews.





Photographs by Jennifer N. Fish

Finishing & to do's after these two activities

End the session by:

- shortly asking who would like to participate as co-researchers and/or interviewees and
- what their first impression on the project is.
- confirming the date of the interview and questionnaire training
- if already available, hand out a preliminary questionnaire (for ideas of how to design the questionnaire, see relevant section below) for the participants to read at home, or to discuss with their organization as homework before the next meeting.

After this session, write an email and text message to all participants with the agreed dates and the 'homework' – and a thank you. Always write an additional reminder text message about one week before the next meeting to make sure everybody who wants to join will really join.

2.8 Designing a questionnaire

As this approach to research involves using interviews as your tool for gathering data, you will need to design a questionnaire that helps you to get the information you need for your research.

In our project, co-researchers and researchers together started with a brainstorming session to identify a topic, research question, and overall scope of research. Ideally, this joint brainstorming session would take place between researchers, domestic workers, and their organizations.

Next, the research coordinator read a lot about the topic, added and sorted questions and prepared a first draft of the questionnaire. We further developed the questionnaire in a range of Skype-meetings (as our team was sitting around the world) and asked for inputs from the advisory board. The idea behind asking persons to be part of an advisory board is to profit from their experiences and perspectives. Therefore the composition and brief of an advisory body is key to its practical usefulness. We included in our

Thoughtbox No. 8

"It was a great first meeting with very enthusiastic and engaged participants. One said for example, that she hasn't studied for 13 years, so she is really looking forward to learn. Contrary to our expectations it was quite easy to find a date for the training session on a Saturday afternoon. The participants enjoyed the brainstorming session, and had very good comments, although you could see what one participant put into words: "My brain is really tired after a whole day working", thus 2 hours was more than enough for the first training session."

Sylvia Günther, fieldwork coordinator, the Netherlands

advisory board, for example, one representative from the International Domestic Worker Federation, researchers with experiences in participatory research and one person from the ILO. Then, the research coordinators in the Netherlands and South Africa consulted with the domestic worker co-researchers and their organizations. This was a very important step as we came across language and context specific questions that did not work the way we originally thought. In some cases, we adapted a few questions to meet the locally appropriate standards and language norms. As domestic worker researchers processed the survey, new questions arose. In pilot interviews where we tested the draft questionnaire, the teams also collected further comments from domestic workers on the questions. This proved to be a vital dimension of the project because it assured the relevance and appropriateness of the data-gathering instrument.

Domestic worker co-researchers jointly took part in the finalization of the questionnaire. This was also important in so far as the co-researchers, as those carrying out the actual interviews with their peers, acquired a kind of 'ownership' and a better understanding of the questions' wording and content. Looking back, we nonetheless had the feeling that not all co-researchers grasped the questions in their totality, as they were not as familiar with the objective and social security debates. Furthermore, in many cases, English was not the mother tongue of the co-investigators. This left wide room for misunderstandings of key terms, as well as researchers' interpretation of core concepts in different ways.

We strongly recommend that the co-researchers take an active role in the construction of the interview questionnaire. By doing so, domestic worker co-researchers gain ownership of the research process. And researchers can reduce concerns about validity (does this research measure what is intending to measure?) and reliability (would this research produce the same results if repeated again?).

How to come up with a questionnaire for interviews

There are differences in the design of questionnaires for surveys and for interviews (there are also different types of interviews, such as expert interview, biographical interview, which are outside of the scope of this manual). A survey questionnaire contains mostly closed questions with no or not much room for experiences or stories to be told; those for qualitative interviews have indeed more open-ended questions that are intended to generate longer narratives by those being interviewed. Nonetheless, the basic principles are quite similar: A questionnaire is built of a range of thematic sections; these sections contain several questions. In the following we give some support on how to build a questionnaire and how to formulate questions, which is not at all an easy task. Please be prepared (and not frustrated) that it is quite a lengthy process during which only a few of your originally formulated questions will survive.

Step 1: Identify information that is needed for the research.

In an earlier step, 'How to come up with a research question,' you identified what your overall research question would be. The questionnaire will be composed of sub-questions that relate to that overall question. For example, if our general research question was, "What are the social security needs of domestic workers?", the questionnaire would be composed of questions such as: "how often do you have health problems for which you would like to see a doctor?" Or "do you know if you have the right to a pension?" Try to break up the research question into sub-questions and bits and pieces of information you need. We have good experiences with writing all questions on little sheets of paper and then sort them according to themes.

Step 2: Select questions and define priorities.

It is likely that you will not use all of these collected questions. Discuss what the most important and relevant questions are. This will also help you to shorten the questionnaire in case you find out that it is too long (or that your interviewee's time is severely restricted and you can only ask x-amount of questions). Check against the aims of the research you have formulated before.

Step 3: Wording and ordering of the questions.

Look into surveys and questionnaires of other research projects. They might give you an idea on how to formulate questions. Formulations of questions can also best be discussed in a team.

Here are some rules and recommendations:

- Use easy and clear language.
- If you use technical terms or concepts that your interviewees may not be familiar with, include a short definition.
- Ask unbiased questions; avoid creating a situation where your interviewees feel tested.
- Avoid very abstract questions. Instead ask for concrete experiences or examples.
- Always indicate what kind of answer you expect: a yes/no, true/false one, or a longer narrative, or a precise but open answer?
- For complex issues, you may need more than one question; proceed in a step-by-step manner.
- Do not put two questions into one, it is likely then that one question is not answered.
- Always end the questionnaire with an open question, such as "Is there anything else you would like to tell me?", that leaves room for any issues that come up, but have not been covered in the formal questions.
- If you intend to ask questions on immigration status, irregular employment, memories of sad of painful experiences etc., place them in the last half of the questionnaire; interviewees need to develop trust before they might be ready to answer these difficult questions. As you pose these questions, also repeat that participants don't need to answer questions they don't want to.

Step 4: Think about your first question.

The first question sets the tone for the interview. Test the first question and reformulate or change, if necessary.

Step 5: Compose, shorten and revise the questionnaire.

Now you should be in a position to review your questions. In many instances, you may find out that the questionnaire is too long. It depends on the topic and the type of interview which length is appropriate. You can best find this out by testing the questionnaire in what is known as the "pilot research" stage. There is a difference whether you interview domestic workers in public transportation on their way to their employers or whether you meet them on a Sunday afternoon in a relatively laid-back atmosphere.

Step 6: The interviewers print out their questionnaires and memorize the questions.

Those who carry out the interview need to think about the size of the font and the size of the paper. It depends a bit how experienced the interviewers are. If they are not experienced, it should be printed in quite huge letters, the most important words highlighted, and the questionnaire read out loud several times. When doing the interview, interviewers might be nervous or need to concentrate on what the interviewee says, thus it is important to always know what the next question will be.

By following these steps, interviewers will be prepared to delve into "real" 🗎 data collection, with an assured confidence and familiarity with the data.

Documentbox No. 4 **"Social Security Needs for Domestic Workers" – Excerpt from the interview questionnaire**

Opening question

1) What does social security mean to you?

…
…

9) Does your employer pay contributions to

health insurance	**O yes**	**O no**
accident insurance	**O yes**	**O no**
unemployment benefits	**O yes**	**O no**
pension	**O yes**	**O no**
other, please specify:		

10) If so, in which country do you pay these contributions? _____

11) Have you ever made use of one of these insurances? Please share some examples with me.

Note to the interviewer: Remind the interviewee that the interview is confidential.
"I just want to remind you that the interview is confidential and your responses will not be connected to your name in any way."

12) If you have answered all or most of the questions in section [number] with "no":
Why don't you or your employer pay these contributions?

…
…

Literature tip: toolkit by the DataCenter on creating a 🗎 survey: http://www.datacenter.org/research/creatingsurveys/

Activity: Questionnaire

Aim: Understanding content of the questionnaire
Duration: approx. 60 minutes (The duration depends on the length of the questionnaire. In order to make it short, divide the group into two smaller groups, split the questionnaire into part A and part B.)
Material: markers and pens; white papers
Handout: Sample questionnaire

Ask the participants to look together at the sample questionnaire.

1. Introduce the structure and format of the questionnaire.
2. Explain and discuss the importance of anonymity/confidentiality (10 minutes).

Group work: Understanding the content (50 minutes)
Divide the participants into small groups. Ask each group to read together either the entire questionnaire or certain parts of it. Each group should discuss the questions that are not clear and take notes on white paper (20 minutes).
In the plenary, ask one person of the group to share notes and feedback on the content of the questionnaire in order to clarify as many questions as possible (30 minutes).
Trainer: Take notes of the feedback received to adjust questionnaire accordingly.

Tips:

1. Make sure that the participants understand the questions and the terms used in the questionnaire. During the group work listen to the feedback/questions coming up by the small groups and write them down. You may join the group to help in case clarification is needed.
2. During the plenary take notes of all the feedback received by the participants. The feedback will be used to edit and redraft the questionnaire.

2.9 Research ethics: clearance and asking for consent

Depending on the country where you conduct your research, as a researcher from a research institution, you will have to present your research methodology in front of a research ethics panel and get clearance. This is usually not the case for trade unions or domestic worker organizations. Sometimes other authorities need to be informed about research taking place. The professional researchers in your team will know about it and have experience with what to prepare for it and how to go through this procedure. This is a process that can last for quite a while, so it needs to be taken into account when planning the timeline. It may also make sense to contact other researchers who have experience with participatory 🗎 research designs, because some ethics panels may be inexperienced or even suspicious about these kinds of research.

Another ethics question is valid for everybody conducting interviews. When doing an interview, those being interviewed need to know that the questions they are asked are not small-talk, but part of a research project. This is an important ethical rule. So, how to ask for permission to interview participants of a study?

Step 1: Inform your participant.

You intend to do an interview (with recording it or as a survey without recording it) and approach potential 🗎 interviewees. Before you start with your questions, it is important that you explain your intentions to them very clearly: Who are you? What is the research project about? Why are you doing it? Who is sponsoring it? What will be done with the interview? Be sure to inform your participants that their responses are optional, and that they can decline to answer any question at any point in the process. Raise the issue of anonymity – usually you make sure that excerpts from the 🗎 collection of data are presented in ways that assure that the identity of the inter-

viewee is not evident. However, in cases where you interview organizations, politicians, or other persons with a certain function, these participants might even want to see their organization's name or their own name on the eventual report and publication. Your interviewees need all this information about the research in order to give their "informed consent". This means that they have been informed about the above mentioned questions and that they agree to getting involved in the study. You can either tell them the information, or you can give them written explanations. Always ask whether your interviewee has any remaining questions. Please keep in mind that not all interviewees can read, might have forgotten their glasses or may not feel comfortable in that particular language.

Step 2: The participant/interviewee gives you her/his 'informed consent' .

After step one, it is a good moment to ask them – if they agree! – to sign a form that they agree to being interviewed (see below), and give them a copy. Keep the other copy with yourself and in a safe place. If your interviewees are afraid of providing their real names, offer them that they need not declare their real names to you – but nonetheless you need their consent. If not in a written way, you can alternatively obtain their consent "on tape" in the beginning of the actual interview.

This is an example of how a written form of consent may look:

Documentbox No. 5 **Form for asking for informed consent from interviewee**

[Name of the project]

I, _____, agree to be interviewed for the above mentioned project, which is being produced by [*your name*] of [*your institution*]. The interview will last for about ____ minutes. *Your name and any other identifying information will not be shared with anyone.*

Hereby I certify that I have been informed about the project, the confidentiality of the information collected for this project and the degree of anonymity of my participation; that I have been given satisfactory answers to my inquiries concerning the project; and that I have been advised that I am free to withdraw my consent and to discontinue participation in the project or activity at any time without prejudice.

I agree to participate in a recorded interview for this project. I understand that the results of this study may be published in academic journals, books and used in advocacy work.

Place and date _____,
Signature of the interviewee _____

If you have comments or complaints about your treatment in this study, contact:
[phone number and/or email address of the person responsible for the project]

2.10 Interview training sessions

This section contains a series of training sessions with 🗎 co-researchers who have had no or only little prior training in research methodology and conducting interviews or surveys. Each training session may contain several activities and some training sessions overlap or repeat aspects from the previous. As with every part of this manual, you might need to adjust the order and type of activities to your circumstances.

Duration: the session contains a range of activities and will last up to 10 hours (depending on previous experience, depth, add time for breaks). These sessions can either be done in an intensive bloc or split.

Goals: At the end of this series of training sessions, the participants will be able to

1. understand what an interview is and its characteristics;
2. acknowledge why the interview can be a valuable method;
3. explain techniques and tips on how to conduct good interviews;
4. arrive at a common understanding of the research topic and the terminology used.

Material: whiteboard or flipchart and markers; colored and white paper; computer and projector for PowerPoint presentation; handout for the main point to distribute to participants; voice recorder or other recording devices to do a first demonstration

Tools:

- Social security rights of domestic workers in your country
- Sample questionnaire
- Definitions of important terminology used to define the research topic

Handouts:

- Powerpoint slides about content of the training session;
- Sample questionnaire;
- Glossary of important terminology

Tips:

- Prepare each activity carefully and make sure all participants understand the proposed activity
- Inform yourself about the research topic and the methodology with a variety of resources such as books, brochures etc. You may contact an expert on the topic to give you wider insights.
- Prepare and check the material and equipment before starting the session
- Ensure that all participants are able to speak and participate during the training session, be aware of power dynamics in the room, and intervene if someone is dominating the discussion
- In you are working with another trainer, decide who is chairing which part, the other one may add points at the end of an activity.
- Avoid assuming the role of the expert vs. non-expert (🗎 co-researchers); the trainer has the role of a facilitator who leads an activity without adopting a hierarchical relation with the participants.
- Try to speak clearly, using language that is easily understood by the participants, and make sure all participants can understand the terminology and content.
- Repeat the content more than once, e.g. at the end of an activity or ask the participants to re-call certain content.
- Plan enough extra time for questions.

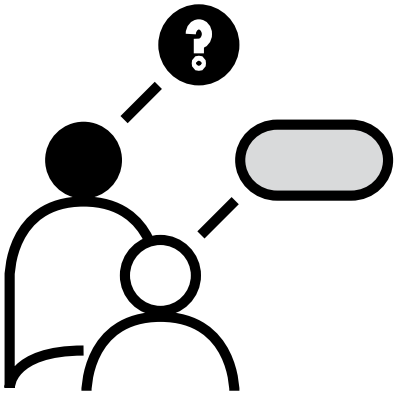


Illustration No. 2: Interview. Source: "Research for Organizing Toolkit," Community Development Project at the Urban Justice Center, New York, 2012. www.researchfororganizing.org, Graphic design by Rosten Woo. Adaptation: Sylvia Saldarriaga

Training session: What is an interview?

Goal: Understand what an interview is
Duration: 50 minutes
Material: black/white board or flipchart; white papers; markers and pens; projector
Handouts: summary of what an interview is

Activity 1: What's an interview?
(15 minutes)

1. Begin the discussion by asking participants to describe how they understand an interview: "What is an interview and why does it differ from a conversation?" Write down the participants' outcomes on a flipchart.
2. Present a definition of an interview.
3. Discuss this definition and the participants' ideas.

Activity 2: Let's get to know each other!
(30 min)

This role play aims at getting a first impression of what it is like to interview someone and to get interviewed by someone. It also aims at getting to know the other participants, listening to what the other person says about him-/herself and how you can present this information to the rest of the group. Preferably, the trainer takes part in this role play to also reveal something about him-/herself (participatory method).

Step 1: Divide participants in pairs. Interview each other 5 minutes each with questions like: "What is your name?" "Where do you come from?" "What is your job?" etc. It is important that the interviewer takes notes of what the other person is saying. After 5 minutes the two people switch roles.

Step 2: Come back to the plenary and ask what their impressions were when being interviewed and doing the interviewing. Discuss the difference between 🗎 interviewer and 🗎 interviewee. What struck them as important difference in the conversation? How did taking notes by hand work out?

Step 3: Have the participants introduce each other briefly.

Thoughtbox No. 9

"We were with two trainers, so we had the advantage of being able to also observe this role play. When one interviewer asked his interviewee: 'What do you like?' He answered: 'I like women.' The interviewer laughed at this answer. After the role play, we asked him, how he felt, when the interviewer laughed: 'It feels like a disgrace... Something comes from the heart and the interviewer laughs.' We used this point to illustrate that an interviewer should try not to be judgmental in any way but respect and try to understand each answer. "

Training session: The technique of interviewing

Goal: Understanding how to conduct a good interview
Duration: 60 minutes
Material: black/white board or flipchart; markers and pens; projector; recorders (if you plan to introduce how recorders work here)
Handout: Interview tips, sample questionnaire

You can use a Powerpoint presentation to explain to the participants the following topics/clusters:

- Why the interview is a valuable research tool?
- Leading up to the interview
- Structure and questions of the interview
- Techniques about conducting interviews
- After an interview
- Getting good interviews
- Pilot interview

At the end of each topic ask the participants to comment on it. Make the presentation as interactive as possible. Use a handout on interview tips and your sample questionnaire. In the cluster about structure and the questions of the interview you can already practice with the participants which questions are 🗎 open-ended versus 🗎 closed or descriptive, follow up questions, questions asking for experiences or examples.

Training session: Conducting interviews

Goals: Testing the questionnaire and practicing what we've learned during this module.
Duration: 40 minutes
Material: Black/white board or flipchart; markers and pens; white papers
Handout: Sample questionnaire

Group work: Interviewing and evaluation

1. Divide the participants into pairs.
2. Have each pair ask/respond to a different set of questions from the questionnaire for about 10 minutes (do not go through all questions, but select +/- 10 questions).
3. Come back to the plenary and discuss with the participants how the interviews went (20min). Take notes of the feedback and write them on the black/white board or flipchart.

You can ask questions such as: What did you feel in the course of the interview (as interviewee, respectively interviewer)? Did your training partner seem to have mixed feelings about anything? Did s/he seem to have trouble articulating anything?

See 2.12 and illustration No. 5 for recording

Thoughtbox No. 10

"We lost quite a lot of time on the recorders. We did not have our own recorders for the project, so we had to be creative and borrow some from friends as well as using other recording devices like computers and mobile phones. Also the explanation of the recording devices took a long time and moreover some of the borrowed recorders were full."

Training session: Pilot interview session

Aim: Testing the interview skills under guidance of the trainer; testing of the questionnaire
Duration: 3 hours
Materials: copies of the sample questionnaire for participants; pencils; white papers; flipcharts with 🗎 interview questionnaire/guideline.
Handout: Questionnaire
Note: All trainees are expected to bring one volunteer for practicing the interview. The volunteer should belong to the target group. The trainers have to arrange enough rooms/ quiet places to have the interviews take place parallel.

What to do before the interview

1. Distribute the questionnaire to the interviewers and review questions; ask if anything is unclear.
2. Check (write on flipchart):
   - Check recorder (battery, on-off switch), ask participants to record a few words to check if the recorder works and the volume of the voice is fine.
   - Remember to switch off mobile phones.

Training session: Carrying out the interviews (40-70 minutes)

Apply the following rules:

1. Introduce yourself and the reasons for doing the interview.
2. Ask 🗎 interviewee for permission to do the interview (🗎 "informed consent") and tell them that the answers will be treated as confidential.
3. Ask the respondent to fill in the interviewee's data form.
4. Respect the privacy of those who do not want to answer certain questions.
5. Remember the guidelines introduced during the last training session: watch the interviewee's facial expressions, listen carefully, allow yourself to pause.
6. Periodically make sure that the recorder is working.
7. When the interview is finished, check that you asked all the questions.
8. Thank the interviewee for her/his time and leave a contact (email or telephone number) for more information.

After finishing the pilot interview, come back to the plenary where the process will be evaluated jointly (🗎 interviewers, 🗎 interviewees, trainers):

- What did you feel in the course of the interview?
- Did the interviewee seem to have mixed feelings about anything?
- Did the interviewee seem to have trouble articulating anything?
- Could the interviewee understand the terminology used in the 🗎 questionnaire?

Training session: Improving interview skills

Goals: The aim this session is to give feedback based on the pilot interviews. The critical points should be generalized in order to discuss what and how future interviews can be improved. After this session the participants should feel more secure to conduct the rest of the interviews in a successful manner.
Duration: 2 hours
Material: Sitting in a circle with chairs and maybe using a whiteboard to put down the feedback points, or/ and prepare a handout stating the feedback points.
Room: Arrange the room into a circle of chairs in order to open-up a comfortable sphere for discussion.
Preparation (before this session): Trainers will listen to each of the pilot interviews in order to give personal as well as general feedback to the participants.

Thoughtbox No. 11

It may be the case that a co-researcher, even after the training sessions and individual feedback, does not demonstrate the capacity to conduct interviews. It is the point in time to take a decision about who will go on to conduct the actual research. Reasons for dropping a participant may be: quality of the interview in terms of language, skipping questions, posing questions too fast, getting off the path, answering questions for the interviewee, etc.

Decide on a way to give feedback:
Start the session by complimenting the group on completing their first interview, and reminding them that this is something to be proud of. Explain that you have listened to all their interviews.

Transform the personal feedback into a more general input, so that the participants can learn from each other's mistakes. Each point should be discussed in detail, enhanced by the experience of the participants.

Examples of feedback:
- Make sure your 🗎 interviewee qualifies for this particular research. It may seem unlikely, but sometimes an interviewee isn't really what he/she pretends to be. You may notice, when the questions are often answered vaguely or different.
- Read the questionnaire before conducting the interview! In the first pilot interview, you can easily tell who has done his/her homework by how they read the questionnaire. The flow of the interview will be much better when the questions are read after some practice and are understood in-depth. The interviewee needs to be ready to explain a question in case it is not understood by the participant and will get more confident in interviewing with more opportunities to explain the meaning of the question.
- Do not skip questions and do the whole interview! Do not skip questions, even when you think it is too difficult for the interviewee, or she/he may not know what to answer – this is patronizing. If the interviewee has only limited time, you might need to show some flexibility and skip questions, but this should be the exception.
- Do not answer any questions for the interviewee: Although, sometimes you may think, you know what the interviewee will answer, always have the interviewee formulate his/her own individual answer. It may often be

surprising that the interviewees actually have different answers. Underline that this is what research is about: Being open for surprises!

- Listen carefully to whether or not the interviewee really answers the question! It may happen that the interviewee does not answer the question that is asked. This can also be caused by a mis-interpretation or by trying to avoid the questions. In both cases the 🗎 interviewer may not directly interrupt the answer, as a different interpretation may help to reformulate an unclear questionnaire, or bring interesting results. However, when the question is avoided or really 'wrongly' answered an interruption should happen quite soon by gently telling the interviewee that you asked something different.

Thoughtbox No. 12

" We lost one interview, because the recorder was full and thus not recording. We had one participant interviewing a person not fitting our research population. We had a lot of questions skipped and not all interviewers were well prepared. But the feedback round really had a positive effect."

Concluding the session

End the session by scheduling the next meeting(s): This might, depending on the needs of the 🗎 co-researchers and the participatory 🗎 research design, be another pilot interview session (again with bringing an 🗎 interviewee), a training session on 🗎 transcription, a session on interview 🗎 analysis, or already the graduation ceremony with a dinner.

2.11 Selection and sampling of interviewees – and finding them

There are two different types of persons that you may want to interview: first, persons with an outstanding knowledge of your research topic or those who have participated in an event or a specific process, so called "experts"; second, persons "taken together, display what happens within a population affected by a situation or event" (Weiss 1994: 17), they "represent" what are likely shared thoughts within a defined group. For each of these two options, different rules exist about how to select – or 🗎 "sample" – interviewees.

What is a sample?

In case you are doing interviews with experts, think first about what makes a person in your study an expert. In real life, experts are not necessarily professors or people sitting in panel discussions in TV shows. The status "expert" always refers to a specific knowledge or experience that an individual person has. For example, a trade union organizer is an expert in how to mobilize best workers of the sector s/he is working in; a bureaucrat in the local health administration can be an expert for the question on the health and safety issues in a specific profession; etc. (Learn more about expert interviews in Bogner/Littig/Menz 2010).

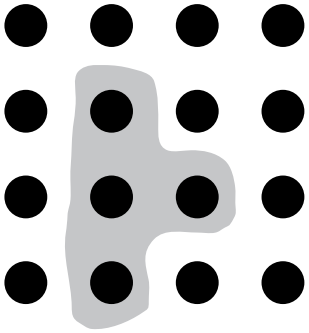


Illustration No. 3: "Sampling". Source: "Research for Organizing Toolkit," www.researchfororganizing.org. Graphic design by Rosten Woo. Adaptation: Sylvia Saldarriaga

The research project that informed this manual, however, did not work with this form of expert interviews. Rather, it utilized a sample approach, drawing from domestic worker populations in both national contexts. A sample is a group of people who have been selected as representatives of a larger group to express their opinions, thoughts, experiences and feelings for the research project (Weiss 1994: 21). The goal of sampling is to be able to generalize the outcome of the study to the wider population. Put more simply: potential interviewees are not all the same; they may differ in gender, social class, age, ethnicity, to name the most common dimensions. Different people may give different answers, thus in order to produce a generally picture we need to reach a diverse group that mirrors the whole research population as closely as possible.

Decide whether you would like to have a sample that is representative (mirroring the distribution of characteristics among your interviewees and the total population of your target population) or whether you are looking for specific sub-groups that represent certain qualities or experiences (for example to have more undocumented migrants in the sample because they are more vulnerable and have specific needs).

Activity to create a good sample

The trainer asks the question: Which criteria do you think are important? On which criteria does the research population differ from each other?

As this manual is about peer-to-peer interviewing, the interviewers may know much better than the trainers, which criteria may make a difference and are important to include. This activity also widened participants' perceptions of who else they could interview (in case they recruited the interviewees themselves).

How to recruit interviewees

Recruiting interviewees (in particular with diverse backgrounds according to the sampling strategy) presented some challenges for our co-researchers and caused delays in the timeline. We used the so-called snow-ball sampling technique, asking interviewers to pass the message to their contacts, but we also tried to further diversify the sample. The following tips might help in establishing contacts to potential interviewees:

- making a flyer and disseminating through networks
- posting a call on facebook or via other social media
- establishing contacts through domestic workers groups, trade union, migrant associations or religious associations
- going to religious services , markets, parks, shopping malls, bus terminals, embassies and consulates



Illustration No. 4: Snowball-sampling.
Illustration: Sylvia Saldarriaga.

2.12 Recording and transcriptions

Once you have completed the training sessions, the 🗎 co-researcher team is prepared to go out and conduct the interviews that will become the data for your study. Think of sending your investigation team out to the field, as explorers with a particular task to come back with information! In our experience, this step of moving from training to the "real life" interviews represented an important moment in the process, where domestic workers actually stepped into the role of a researcher. During this period, it is important to remain in close contact to answer questions about the process and to assure new researchers of their preparedness for this project.
The use of the recording device is one of the most central aspects of assuring quality data. Practice using the recording devices with the co-researchers, and listen to sample interviews to get a sense of how the conversation conveyed on the recording. We invested a substantial amount of time on the technological training because it represented such an important part of the research process. Without accurate recording, interviews would be lost.

Once the researchers have conducted their first interviews, establish a process to transfer the digital recordings to a backup system or device.

In the South African context, interviews were transferred to a computer and a backup drive within days after they were recorded. This process assured that the investment in the 🗎 collecting of data would not be lost if anything happened to the recording equipment. Most researchers did not have their own computers or means of listening to their own role as an interviewer unless they played the actual recordings from the digital recorders. In order to provide feedback and develop interviewers' skills and comfort levels, we provided feedback on the interviews after they were transferred to the computer. Researchers wanted to be sure they were conducting the interviews correctly. This process of providing timely feedback is central to the development of new researchers and the encouragement of confidence in their ability to conduct interviews and follow the lessons learned in the training session.

Once the interviews are conducted and transferred to a computer system, the next step in the process is to begin to transcribe the material. In this sense, the recordings of the interviews are typed out to form a written record, called a "transcript." Here is an example of an excerpt from one of our interview transcripts:

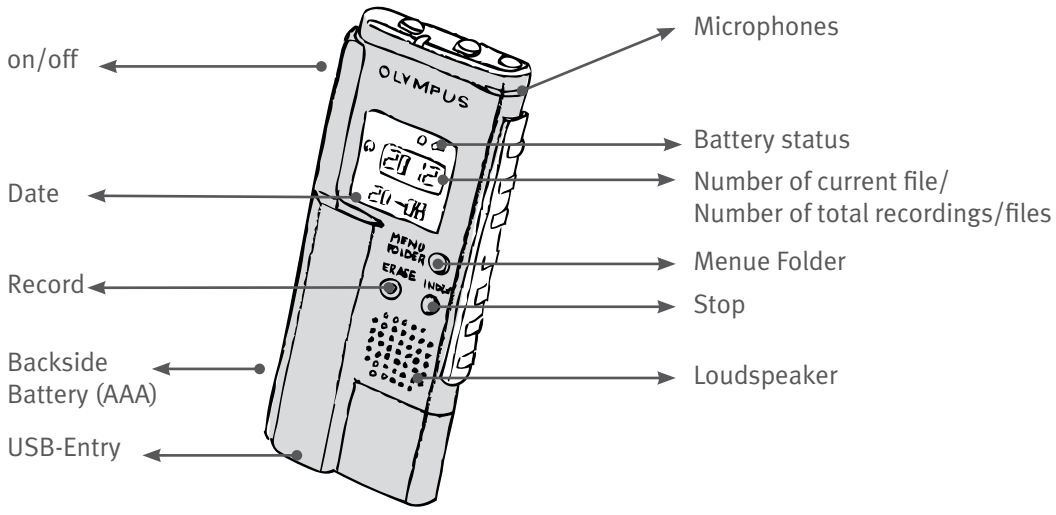


Illustration No. 5: Typical voicerecorder used for taping interviews. Illustration: Sylvia Saldarriaga

Documentbox No. 6 **Excerpt from one interview transcript (South Africa)**

Interviewer: My Name is Mary and we will start with the interview with some opening questions, and in general, there are no wrong and there are no right answers. We want to know your experiences, please, so don't hesitate to share personal experience with me. I would like to know what does social security mean to you?

Interviewee: To me, social security means my leave pay, my annual leave, sick leave, my unemployment insurance fund and pension, because sometimes we are not covered by all these laws.

Interviewer: Have you ever talked with your employer about your social rights as a domestic worker?

Interviewee: No because I didn't find it proper to speak to her about the rights because I didn't know about social rights, about what it really means.

Interviewer: Ok. What social security benefits do you receive: health insurance, accident insurance, unemployment benefits, pension maternity, and child benefits, or others?

Interviewee: The only benefit that I receive is unemployment benefit and pension.

As you see in this excerpt, a transcription takes an interview from a recording of a conversation to a written account. In many cases, reading an interview transcript can seem like a taking part in the conversation or listening to the story of how people actually talk. The accuracy of the transcription is very important to the quality of the research process. While it may be tempting to 'fill in the blanks' or correct respondents' language, interview transcriptions are most valuable when they are written word-for-word, exactly as the participants conveyed. For example, pauses, word choices and even laughing convey meanings that may be important to understanding how participants view the topic at hand. Be prepared to invest a great deal of time in this stage of the research process. If you have funding, you may hire services for transcription, yet each must be reviewed by those who conducted the interviews or others involved in the research process in order to ensure that the written transcriptions reflect the actual conversation, word for word. While this process requires a substantial investment, it also provides an opportunity to step back and 'listen to the interview with new ears.' This process allows investigators to hear themselves, understand the content with a more analytic eye and begin to pick up themes that will contribute to the consequent writing on the project.

"Domestic workers who carried recording devices for this research expressed repeated concerns about their ability to guard these electronic instruments. While their level of comfort with cell phones easily transferred to the recording devices, researchers in South Africa immediately considered that carrying a valuable recorder would potentially attract attention, particularly on public transportation systems. Given the larger societal context where safety and crime are part of domestic workers' everyday experiences, this research role added new dimensions to domestic worker researchers' negotiations of their day-to-day movements. One researcher also indicated that she would like to use the recorder as a tool to document the verbal abuse she heard at the neighboring employment site. She wanted to capture the voice of the employer who frequently shouted at the domestic worker and demanded unreasonable work. In this case, the co-researcher wanted to document the violation of national labor laws and the standards of Convention 189 by recording audio evidence of one employer's obvious disregard for both. In this sense, the recording device became an activist tool, and our research partners immediately identified the wider opportunities available with the capacity to record aspects of their own daily experience, as well as the actual interviews."

Thoughtbox No. 13

2.13 Data analysis

Once you have transcribed all of your interviews, you are likely to have hundreds of pages of transcripts. This stage can be overwhelming in terms of developing an approach to pulling out the central themes of the research. Particularly with extensive interview 🗎 transcriptions and many respondents this might be an issue. Think of the actual transcripts as your archival record of the research process.

The first step of the data analysis is to find out about the original 🗎 research questions. Read through the interviews (use colored text markers) and mark responses to the 'key themes' covered by the 🗎 questionnaire. For example, in our case, the meaning of social security became a very important theme. Because it was the main goal of our research, we pulled together the range of responses to the question "what does social security mean to you?" This enabled us to see all responses to one question at a glance and to compare them.

If you have done this and would like to go into more depth beyond the initial plan to see what additional and possibly unexpected information the interviews have yielded, a more in-depth analysis of the data will be necessary. It starts with stepping away from the interview guide and asking what emerges from the data that was not present in the actual interview questionnaire. Consider those points in the interview conversation that reflected the most important themes for participants, in their own lived experiences. For example, in some cases, domestic workers talked about coping with their situations because they wanted a better life for their children. This theme of "coping for the sake of children" indicated that domestic workers focused on the future of their children in ways that were at times more important than their own experience of assuring access to social security rights.

Many 🗎 qualitative interview research handbooks suggest that researchers "delve into the data" as a first step in looking for themes beyond

the actual topics of the questionnaire. Indeed, in many cases new insights will arise as researchers develop the capacity to step back from the data and look for emergent themes. However, for less experienced researchers it is easier to first stick to the core themes of the research. Which process of analysis you actually choose also depends upon your audience and the goals of your research. In some cases, research reports must write up the thematic findings of all of the interview topics. This type of reporting is more procedural, whereas some scholarly journals will look for creative analysis of symbolic meanings of themes that emerge from the interview. As an example, 'slavery' often comes up when discussing domestic work. The use of these terms carries deeply-embedded historical meanings, while connecting very contemporary circumstances in the age of global labor protections to one of the most abusive forms of labor relations. Researchers could analyze participants' use of this term from historical, symbolic and linguistic perspectives as a more in-depth or creative processing of the language that emerges in interviews and its associated meaning.

In all processes of analysis, researchers develop an analytic 🗎 "coding scheme" that labels transcript material with particular categories. Begin by rereading the transcripts and writing themes in the margins. After you have read all of the transcripts, look for the frequency of themes in your interviews. Then, you can decide what you would like to write about in your analysis of the data. These main themes will be identified through a series of "codes" that label specific excerpts from the interview 🗎 transcriptions. For an extended analysis researchers will pull out central components and link the transcripts through specific categories. Several on-line and computer software programs are available to support this process, but you can also do it – as we did – manually.

The 🗎 "coding scheme" becomes your map of the data. After you have established themes, you will want to consider sub-themes that relate to these larger concepts, and give you more nuanced layers of understanding. For example, in our research, we developed the following code and sub-codes to capture participants' explanations for their inclusion or exclusion from social security.

Thus, our main code was: sources and reasons for inclusion/ exclusion from formal access to social security

As we reviewed participant responses, 4 main explanations occurred in the interview transcripts. These became our sub-codes:

a. legal status (e.g. dichotomy between undocumented versus documented)
b. accessibility of legal system
c. general nature of employment relationship (formal/ informal; self-employment: moving between formal-informal employment, multiple employers
d. migratory, ethnic or socio-economic biographies and background

Each time we found examples of participants talking about the accessibility of the legal system, for example, we labeled that excerpt from the interview with the code "Legal status." Eventually, several interview excerpts fell into the code "legal status." From here, we can write about access to social security systems by drawing directly from what participants say about this central theme. This approach defines the nature of 🗎 qualitative data analysis. Rather than imposing thoughts on the data, the 🗎 thematic coding process allows themes and insights to emerge from the data, which makes it one of the most appropriate forms of research for policy and activist-oriented outcomes.

Documentbox No. 7 **Excerpt from the coding scheme**

1. Access to social security (factual; yes/ no, how much? etc.)
2. Awareness about social security benefits and system
3. Consequences of not having (full) access to social security (health status, family problems, no pensions…)
4. Sources and reasons for inclusion/ exclusion from formal access to social security
   [analytically look e.g. for linkages between different regimes (welfare, immigration)]
   a. legal status (e.g. dichotomy between undocumented versus documented)
   b. migratory, ethnic or socio-economic biographies and background
   c. general nature of employment relationship (formal/ informal; self-employment etc.)
   d. …
5. [the scheme consisted of more codes, which are left out here]
6. Attitude towards future and general handling of problems
   a. reliance on or trust in others to improve the situation (e.g. government will take care; 'God will provide')
   b. individualized/ personalized approach (education/ job change)
   c. collective/ organized solutions (e.g. union membership)
7. Expectations/ responsibilities directed towards
   a. employer
   b. state/ government
   c. international level
   d. trade unions
8. Vision of social security for DW
   a. imaginaries of a fair arrangement
   b. willingness to contribute financially
   c. …

2.14 How to use your data

Once the interview transcripts are completed and the data coded for themes, researchers can report on the data in a number of different ways. For example, in our research, we set out to discover how domestic workers have been able to access social security—one of the major themes of Convention 189. As researchers talked to domestic workers and uncovered data, their research findings showed that the policies in place were not having an impact on the everyday lives of workers in many cases. In this sense, our research shows where these gaps occur between policy and practice. This information can then be shared with organizations, governments, and the ILO as a means to continue to improve accessibility and strengthen the impact of Convention 189.

With relevant research data, trade unions and other organizations can develop campaigns to:

- advocate for additional rights based on the research results
- advise government on how to improve their outreach to domestic workers
- develop awareness-raising materials about the social security needs of domestic workers.

As researchers partner with domestic worker organizations, data may be used by the organization to understand the needs of workers differently and to look more comprehensively at patterns, vs. day-to-day or individual experiences. Research allows organization to make "evidence-based" claims. In other words, the voices of domestic workers themselves become part of organizational claims through the use of research data. This allows for a more powerful stance in interacting with governments, employer bodies, and even international organizations. Furthermore, as we have seen in our experience, the use of research can bring organizations together across mutual areas of interest, such as human trafficking and migration. At times, a quote from a domestic worker puts an organization platform of demands into perspective by integrating the "real life" voices of domestic workers. In other instances, when organizations can say, for example, "90 percent of domestic workers in our study did not claim any social security benefits" the systemic shortcomings between policy and practice are revealed in powerful ways.

Activist, participatory approaches to research are establishing a more powerful place in the policy, government, and scholarly communities. Your research holds the potential to draw together the voices of those impacted by social change policies and those constructing policies for marginalized populations. Furthermore, the voices of those who remain under-represented can be utilized as powerful dimensions of social research. In these ways, participatory action research enacts a philosophical commitment to assuring that research impacts the actual populations impacted by policy. It also serves a larger goal of connecting research with critical social movements and human rights campaigns. In its most ideal sense, data gathered from participatory research may become a critical tool to influence social change.

Thoughtbox No. 14

"Many workers don't know their rights. With the research I want to give them more knowledge as well as to organize people." *Tifany, domestic worker co-researcher from the Netherlands*

2.15 Celebrate!

Once the co-researchers have successfully completed all their tasks, it's time for a celebration. We combined it with handing over certificates from our academic institution and for a feedback round with everybody involved. This process provided a validation of domestic workers as researchers, while bringing closure to the data collection stage.





Celebrating the research collaboration

Photographs by Jennifer N. Fish.

UNIKASSEL VERSITÄT

ICDD
International Center for Development and Decent Work

Certificate of Participation

This is to certify that

_____

participated in the collaborative, participatory research project

"Social Security Needs for Domestic Workers".

This participation entails the co-development of a research instrument as well as taking part in a methods training and conducting qualitative interviews from September to December 2012.
The research project is a cooperation between the Research Network for Domestic Worker Rights (RN-DWR) and the International Domestic Worker Network (IDWN).

Kassel, 01.12.2012

Prof. Dr. Helen Schwenken Project Manager	Claire Hobden Project Manager

3. Reflection and Conclusion

The project that builds the empirical basis for this manual has been a cooperation between the Research Network for Domestic Worker Rights (RN-DWR) and the International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF). It was funded by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and included domestic workers and their organizations in the Netherlands and in South Africa. It documents the reflexive, participatory research process that we took in our project. We hope that this manual can help you implement participatory projects, not only in the context of labor movements, but also in other environments where the subjects of research can add value to it by becoming researchers themselves.

One of the underlying principles of this research project was that domestic workers should be part of the research process as "protagonists of their own story" – as one domestic worker summarized her experience in our evaluative session. By extension, the research project aimed to represent the needs of domestic workers through their own eyes and expressed in their own voice. In order to fulfill this goal, a participatory research approach was adopted in which domestic workers, along with social scientists, helped shape the content and formulation of the questionnaire used for the semi-structured interviews. The domestic workers were also trained to conduct the interviews with their peers in line with the assumption that domestic workers would be more likely to open up to their colleagues on issues that are frequently sensitive. In this way, the project hoped to gather meaningful research findings on the social security needs of domestic workers. By training domestic workers to conduct qualitative interviews, domestic workers, as experts on their own work, could ultimately contribute and expand their knowledge through the research process.

Thoughtbox No. 15

"We've learned so much about how to do interviews. We now know all the tricks that journalists use to pull information out of us. Now we can deal with them more easily!"
Coring, domestic worker co-researcher from the Netherlands

Over the course of the research, this participatory approach proved to be highly valuable, enriching the research results and having a transformative impact on the domestic workers who participated. Putting the tools of research in the hands of domestic workers built their capacity to apply the same interview skills in all aspects of their work, be it with employers, academics, other workers, organizations, or politicians. Moreover, training domestic workers who are members of domestic workers' organizations in the implementation of the research and interview process had the additional effect of building the capacity of the participating organizations. As the primary actors who will be advocating on behalf of domestic workers, gaining

an in-depth understanding of the social security needs of domestic workers and the barriers they face is critical to their ability to influence legislators.

The manual sheds light on some specific issues in participatory research that we discovered in the process of partnering with domestic workers as investigators. Depending on your context, the 🗎 research question, the topic and the purpose of the research, you will probably encounter several other challenges. We hope that this manual will help guide your participatory research, whatever the field of study – migration, labor struggles, environmental justice, etc. Needless to say, the approach we took for our research project is only one way of doing participatory projects.

Hundreds of other complementary projects engage participatory methods that may take different steps in the actual implementation of the research. Some also combine different research techniques (🗎 triangulation). We encourage you to seriously consider how your project can involve 🗎 co-researchers from the community, as a means to provide more evidence for the value of participatory research frameworks. From this perspective, the audiences that will best utilize the intended outcomes of social research are the ones who are best positioned to partner in as many steps as possible to realize new forms of knowledge, promoted grounded social policy, and embed practices that will make an impact in applied communities.

4. Literature and further resources

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5. Glossary with methodological terms

Activist researcher: A researcher's identity who works closely with social movements, trade unions or communities and who considers research a tool for social change.

Advisory board: A group of persons nominated by the researchers to give directions and input to the research project and to monitor the quality of the research. The composition and concrete briefing of an advisory body is key to its practical usefulness. The idea behind it is to profit from the experience and perspectives of others.

Analysis of data/interviews: see data analysis

Closed questions: questions in an interview or a survey that can only be answered with yes or no, agree/disagree, or approve/disapprove pre-given options, the interviewee is not supposed to narrate.

Coding: a part of the data analysis process; the researcher is going through her/his data (i.e. interviews) and looks for specific information (for example on one aspect of the research question) and marks/'flags' it; usually researchers look systematically for all kinds of dimensions/aspects; later the bits and pieces – the coded material – from all the interviews are used for analysis.

Collection of data: see data collection

Consent: see informed consent

Co-researchers: participatory research projects are built upon the cooperation between trained researchers and community members/those affected by a policy – we call the latter 'co-researchers'. The degree of the involvement of co-researchers in participatory research projects differs from project to project.

Data analysis: after having collected the data, they are prepared (see e.g. transcription) for the analysis; by analyzing the data, the researchers try to answer the research question.

Data collection: gathering information in a systematic way (through conducting interviews, surveys etc.) that will help you answer the research question.

Degree: a university education encompasses different academic degrees, oftentimes students just use the abbreviation when referring to their studies of the research they are pursuing to obtain a degree. The most common degrees are B.A. (Bachelor's degree, first academic college/university degree after 3-4 years of study, in some countries called lic. for licenciatura), M.A. (Master's degree, after another 1-2 years of study, often includes writing a 50-100 page long master's thesis, often including own research) and PhD (doctoral degree, see below).

Discipline: often-used as an abbreviation for 'academic discipline', such as sociology, social work, political science; 'disciplines' tend to have their own (and internally contested!) rules as to what 'good research' is, who the important authors to refer to are, etc.. Researchers who want to be acknowledged in the world of academia often have to refer to their disciplinary standards.

Focus group: a specific kind of interview with a small group of persons; a facilitator acts as moderator.

Informed consent: those being 'researched' need to actively agree to it; prior to their consent, the researcher informs them about the project, their rights (e.g. to stop the interview at any moment) and ensures anonymity. Informed consent can be given written or orally (also depends on different research norms).

Interview guideline/questionnaire: A set of pre-formulated questions that is used by the interviewer to guide the interview; to gather data that can be compared, all interviewees should be asked similar questions.

Interview: A prepared and systematic conversation (with the help of an interview guideline/ questionnaire) about a specific topic. Usually it is recorded or if this is not possible, the researcher takes as many notes as possible.

Interviewer: person doing the interview

Interviewee: person being interviewed

Literature review/state of the art: a review of existing, mostly academic, publications to find out what information, theoretical approaches and opinions already exist about the topic you are interested in.

Open-ended questions: Questions in an interview that cannot be answered with yes/no, but that invite the interviewee to share experiences, express her/his opinion etc.

Participatory observation: a qualitative research method; researchers participate in an event or a situation and observe what they see. They take extensive notes of these observations. The observations and notes are part of the data that can then be analyzed.

Participatory research: a collective term for all kinds of investigations that are planned in partnership with those individuals and groups whose activities, opinions or lives are studied. Other terms that are used to evoke similar approaches and techniques include: horizontal research, action research, participatory action research (PAR), community-based research, 'research for organizing,' co-operative inquiry, etc. (for more information see 1.1 in this manual)

PhD-student, PhD: abbreviation for doctoral student or doctoral dissertation; someone who has completed her/his doctoral studies and research (which take between 3 and 6 years, oftentimes even more), can add a Dr. or PhD to her/his name. A PhD dissertation is a manuscript of 250-500 pages.

Protagonist: a person who plays/is the main character.

Reflexive: means normally 'by habitual and unthinking behavior'; however, in the context of qualitative research the terms 'reflexive'/'reflexivity' mean that a researcher is aware of her or his effect on the research process and the outcomes of research. Researchers cannot stay 'outside', they are always part of the process. This needs to be taken into account – or 'reflected'. Therefore researchers observe themselves.

Qualitative methods: research approaches that gather and analyze data that can be observed but not measured; qualitative data are presented as stories, descriptions or opinions, usually collected through qualitative interviews or focus groups; specific techniques of analysis are needed.

Quality of research or data: this is not the same as qualitative methods or interviews, but means "good quality", i.e. containing meaningful information and conducted according to methodological standards.

Quantitative methods: research approaches that produced (surveys) or rely on (secondary data, such as pre-existing statistics) data that can be

measured and are presented in numbers; specific techniques of analysis are needed.

Questionnaire: set of questions for interview (see interview guideline) or survey.

Reliability: Quality criterion (in particular for quantitative, survey research) whether this research would produce the same results if repeated again. Qualitative research cannot be repeated; nonetheless the data needs to fulfill quality criteria, such as internal reliability.

Research design: a systematic plan on how to do the research (what type, which methods for data collection and data analysis etc.).

Research findings: results of the research.

Research question(s): the main question (plus sub-questions) that motivates the whole research project and that should be answered within the given timeframe and methods.

Review of the literature: see Literature review/ state of the art

Sample: a well-chosen group of people that participates in the research as interviewees or respondents to surveys; different sampling methods (e.g. snowball sampling, random sample).

Semi-structured interview: A qualitative research technique. A 'structured questionaire' is a rigid framework for an interview, while a 'semi-structured' one leaves more freedom. A semi-structured interview is guided by a questionnaire that contains pre-defined themes and questions. However, follow-up questions or even new themes can come up during the interview.

Survey: a form of data collection that asks specific questions and tends to include short answer questions, multiple choice questions, and scaled-answer questions using a questionnaire format. Surveys can be done online, by mail, and can be written and filled out in person.

Transcription: Recorded data of an interview is typewritten to have it 'on paper'. Transcription software makes this time consuming job a bit easier. For qualitative research it is important to transcribe the exact wording (and not summarize it). Depending on the data analysis method there are different 🗎 coding rules (whether, for example, 'ah' and 'hm' are transcribed or not).

Triangulation: a combination of different research techniques.

Validity: Quality criterion for research whether this research does measure what it is intending to measure.

Notes



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'We want to be the protagonists of our own stories!'
A participatory research manual on how domestic workers and researchers can jointly conduct research

This manual is a step-by-step guide through all phases of a research process, from coming up with a research question to celebrating its completion. It contains explanations of concrete research methods and practical group exercises. Authors and participants share their experiences, offer tips and materials to work with. The manual was developed on the basis of the experience from conducting a qualitative study of the social security needs of domestic workers in the Netherlands and South Africa. One of the underlying principles of the project was that domestic workers should be part of the research process as "protagonists of their own story" – as one participant summarized her experience. By training domestic workers to conduct research, they, as experts on their own work, could ultimately contribute and expand their knowledge through the research process. In this way, the project hoped to contribute to social change and the capacity-building of all those involved. This manual should be of direct practical use to researchers, trade unions and domestic workers' organizations (and others) who would like to conduct participatory research projects.

The authors are all active in the "Research Network for Domestic Worker Rights" (RN-DWR).

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