



LAUNCH OF THE PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH TOOLKIT

SUMMARY REPORT

On 24 November, the Adolescent Girls Investment Plan (AGIP) and GAGE convened the virtual launch of the Participatory Research Toolkit, gathering girl researchers, partners, and practitioners. Moderated by Asha Mukanda, AGIP Communications and Membership Officer, The session aimed to introduce the Toolkit, spotlight lived experiences, and explore how participatory evidence strengthens feminist, girl-led advocacy and programming.

In her introductory remarks, Sana Othman (Junior Qualitative Researcher, GAGE) highlighted the importance of participatory research in achieving the SDGs and challenging traditional models, and called for youth to be recognized as partners in shaping evidence and solutions, particularly in response to global pushback on gender equality. The discussion reinforced that participatory research strengthens girls' agency and confidence, generates richer, context-specific insights, builds trust, and produces more credible evidence for advocacy and accountability.

You can watch the webinar recording [here](#), and find the [Participatory Research Toolkit here](#).



"Participatory research starts from a simple but powerful principle; nothing about us, without us. It transforms young people from subjects of research into partners in shaping questions, generating evidence, and driving change in their own communities."

~ Sana Othman

OVERVIEW OF THE TOOLKIT

Following Sana's opening reflections, the webinar moved into a dedicated overview of the GAGE-AGIP Participatory Research Toolkit, led by **Sally Youssef**, Qualitative Research Manager at GAGE, **Sarah Alheiwidi**, Senior Qualitative Research Manager at GAGE, and **Arkan**, a GAGE participant from Jordan.

Drawing from years of participatory work across **Lebanon, Jordan, Gaza, and Ethiopia**, they outlined why participatory research matters, emphasizing that traditional research often extracts stories, while participatory approaches shift power to adolescents as co-creators of knowledge. They walked participants through how the process works in practice, introducing the **toolkit's six-stage participatory research cycle**, ethical and safeguarding foundations, and creative methodologies such as photovoice, body mapping, and peer-led interviews. Their presentation grounded the toolkit as both a technical resource and a feminist political approach, demonstrating how participatory research strengthens accountability, deepens evidence, and supports girl-led social change.

Arkan shared powerful firsthand reflections on how participating in research allowed her to shape the narratives about her own life, rather than being spoken for or represented by others, which is the norm.

**EXPLORE THE PARTICIPATORY
RESEARCH TOOLKIT!**



REFLECTIONS FROM THE AKILI DADA WATCH PARTY

The audience received rich reflections from a watch party of adolescent girls convened by AGIP member, **Akili Dada**. The discussion demonstrated not only how deeply the girls engaged with the Participatory Research Toolkit but also how confidently they could apply its principles to their own realities.

“I was surprised by how confidently and creatively the girls applied the participatory research method to analyze their experiences and generate strong insights.” ~Faith

“The research tools that I feel would work best for girls in my country are small group discussions where girls can speak freely and feel safe about their life experiences and one-on-one interviews, which can provide insights into girls’ thoughts and feelings.” ~ Daisy

“The support I feel girls in my community would need to do research confidently, most importantly, is having a trusted adult or facilitator who will act as a safety partner and mentor, not a director, from the beginning of the research to the end.” ~ Tracey

INTERGENERATIONAL INSIGHTS

The webinar featured powerful contributions from our intergenerational panel featuring **Khadija Abubakar** (Girl Rights Advocate, Baba Azimi Foundation), **Sana Othman** (Junior Qualitative Researcher, GAGE), **Manjusha Madhu** (Senior Researcher, Breakthrough - AGIP Member), and **Assem Chreif** (Executive Director, Lebanese Organization for Studies and Training - LOST), who each shared reflections on participatory research, safe spaces, context-responsive methods, and the transformative power of youth-led evidence.

Drawing on nearly two decades of experience in the non-profit sector, Assem Chreif reflected on what it truly takes to move beyond participation toward genuine power-sharing in programs, research, and local decision-making. Sana Othman reflected on her journey from first joining GAGE as a young participant to becoming a researcher herself. She shared that the safe, supportive space created through participatory research became a turning point in her life, allowing her to question what she had previously known about participation and power. Khadija Abubakar spoke powerfully about what makes participatory research distinct from traditional research approaches. Manjusha emphasized that participatory research must be rooted in local context and power-sharing from start to finish from shaping the questions to sharing the findings.



IN THEIR WORDS

Speakers underscored the Toolkit's value, the power of co-creation, and concrete steps organizations can take to boost intergenerational leadership. Here are some of the highlights:



"Organisations must be deeply aware of context and involve girls at every stage of the research process from design to dissemination. We also need to remain open to borrowing tools from other disciplines so that participatory research becomes truly holistic, inclusive and responsive to girls' lived realities."

~ Manjusha Madhu Senior Researcher, Breakthrough

"Participatory research is essential because it positions adolescent girls as co-researchers and active knowledge producers whose lived realities shape both the questions asked and the solutions imagined."

~Khadija Abubakar Girl Rights Advocate, Baba Azimi Foundation



"Young people must be recognised not only as participants, but as contributors and agents of change. Empowering adolescent girls alone is not enough communities, institutions, and policymakers must also be empowered to see young people as a long-term investment with the power to transform our societies."

~ Assem Chreif, Executive Director, Lebanese Organization for Studies and Training (LOST)

"Participatory research is transformative because it enables girls and young people not only to contribute, but to become researchers in their own right shaping questions, generating knowledge, and claiming their voices with confidence."

~ Sana Othman Junior Qualitative Researcher, GAGE



WHAT'S NEXT



The webinar confirmed the strength of the Toolkit while focusing on what is needed for participatory research to take root in practice, centered on sustained, long-term commitment rather than one-off projects. Key calls to action included demanding deeper resourcing and wider accessibility (including translations and simplified formats). Speakers emphasized the need for more practice-sharing spaces and stronger monitoring and evaluation tools to track policy influence. Crucially, they stressed supporting girl-led dissemination and advocacy, ensuring girl researchers can present their findings globally and shape public narratives.

Olivia Burns, AGIP Programme Manager, closed the event affirming that the Toolkit is a commitment to doing research differently – a shift from extractive models to approaches that centre girls' agency and leadership, amplify youth voices and embed feminist principles.

"Just having evidence on important issues is not enough, it's also about how that evidence was generated and who by. It's not just about methodologies, it's about power and politics."

~ Olivia Burns, AGIP Programme Manager

Olivia celebrated the Toolkit as a practical, grounded resource that strengthens girl-centered evidence and collective advocacy and encouraged participants to read, use and share it widely.

To explore the Toolkit in full [click here](#). To revisit the discussion on how participatory research can strengthen girl-led advocacy and programming, [click here](#).



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