# Participant Information Sheet

**An EME-focused investigation into barriers facing female engineers**

**Principal-Investigator:** Dr Bill Guariento (Northumbria University); **Co-Investigators:** Ms Amani Elmgadma (Islamic University of Gaza); Professor Hatem Elaydi (Islamic University of Gaza); Professor Sanaa Aboudagga (Islamic University of Gaza); Dr Jane Carnaffan (Northumbria University); Dr Caroline Burns (Northumbria University); Dr Roger Penlington (Northumbria University): Professor Khalid Lafdi (Northumbria University); Dr Rola Naeb (Northumbria University)

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. If there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information, please contact: **william.guariento@northumbria.ac.uk**

Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

The proposal links engineering staff at the Islamic University of Gaza (IUG) and at Northumbria University (NU) on a project designed to promote female empowerment / intercultural awareness. This proposal adopts a new methodology – ‘Story Circles’ – whose aim is to develop listening for understanding (Deardorff, 2019).   We feel that sustainable and inclusive peace requires dialogue between Global South and North engineers, and a centring of the needs of women when discussing engineering challenges.

The proposal draws mainly from two of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The first is SDG 16, which aims to “promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”. The second is SDG 5, which aims to “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”.

For the Islamic University of Gaza, Engineering is seen as crucial for the rebuilding of infrastructure.  The specifically digital employment opportunities it offers can circumvent a blockade now entering its fifteenth year, and provide flexible work that is particularly suited to societal demands facing women in Gaza.

For NU, the Engineering Council Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes report (2020) calls on UK engineers to develop an understanding of Sustainability (criterion M7), and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (M11).  However, in the opinion of the NU-based engineers involved in the project, these attributes are under-emphasised across engineering courses in the UK, and certainly within NU.  The project will also support Northumbria’s Athena Swan application, and provide research outputs for the NU staff involved to allow outputs of relevance to their involvement in NU’s decolonising the curriculum initiative.

Researchers will be involved in both organisations, and will collect anonymised data from all the people involved in the Story Circles sessions, to help us understand more about: barriers to women within engineering in the UK and Gaza; ways in which the chosen language of interaction (Arabic vs English) might impact on participants’ willingness / ability to communicate their true feelings; ways to build and strengthen South-North partnership to promote the sharing of sustainable practices and to maximise the use of digital technologies for peaceful change.

The researchers will take notes on the ways in which the Study Circles take form, and will draw on any documents produced collaboratively by participants for subsequent research. Researchers may also carry out informal individual interviews with individuals and focus groups, lasting around 45 minutes.

Being interviewed, part of a focus group and/or being photographed/videos are all voluntary and will only go ahead if you give your explicit consent, through the consent form or through any other means (e.g. video recorded) that you agree with the researcher. You will be able to withdraw from the research at any point without having to justify this or explain why.

Personal details will be kept confidential at all times. We will use a pseudonym when sharing information with other researchers and/or when using quotes in publications. We will use visual material in which you appear only if you give us your explicit consent to do so, and we will share with you links to all publications, videos, websites, etc. in which we use materials from the research.

Please note that assurances on confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered. In such cases Northumbria University may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies.

Some quotes from interviews, focus groups and photographs/videos may be used on the project’s website, in public presentations, project reports and other forms of sharing information on the project, ensuring that it becomes known and useful to others.

The project is funded by the British Council.

This project has been considered and approved by the ADSS Ethics Committee (University of Northumbria)

Thank you for reading this!

**Consent Form**

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Iconfirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

I consent / do not consent (delete as applicable) to workshops / any subsequent interviews being recorded.

I agree / do not agree (delete as applicable) to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant ………………………………………… Signature

Date ……………………………………

**Please return to Dr William Guariento,** **william.guariento@northumbria.ac.uk**