Empowerment In Action

CHURCH WORLD SERVICE

Definition of Empowerment:
"The process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes."

Basic Tenants of the Empowerment Model:
- all services are tied to self-sufficiency; they are deliberate and progressive
- least intrusive path to service delivery is followed at all times
- refugees are individuals who demand respect and autonomy; their lives, decisions and personal information are theirs alone

Empowerment in Action:
Every interaction with a newcomer is a learning experience for them. In every action, we must be asking ourselves "how can I perform this task in a way that is empowering them to do it for themselves the next time?" Swap the common "helping" actions below for ones that will instead be moving refugees closer to self-sufficiency.

HELPING (ENABLING)	EMPOWERING
Driving someone to a medical appointment	Teaching the family how to take the bus to their medical appointment
Calling the children's school to schedule a parent/teacher conference	Having the parent call to make the appointment on their own while you stand by to help. Practice through role playing telephone calls, writing out note cards or helping them find a neighbor who can assist until their English improves.
Sorting through the family's mail, tossing out the unimportant things	Make a list for the family of what items are important. Keep samples of the utility bill, letters from the school, etc.
Agreeing to do things for someone who has asked for help because they "can't" do it on their own	Make "Yes, you can" your #1 most often used phrase. Teach your refugee friends how to ask for help in a way that is self-empowering. Every ask for help should start with "how" (as in "how do I write a check?") instead of "can" ("can you write this check for me?")

Remember:
Every time you answer "yes" to a "can you...?" question, you're sending the message that they can't do it themselves, but they can!