

Power Walk with Climate Events

Introduction: The Power Walk is a group exercise that enables participants to “walk” in the shoes of other people in society, allowing them to be more aware of disparities in society and their impact on different groups of people. This session creates critical awareness of how power and gender operate in relation to other intersecting social factors such as gender and sex, age, social class, education status, ethnicity, race, rural-urban dynamics, religion, political status, etc. Ultimately, the exercise allows development leaders and practitioners to introspect on the implications of discrimination and privilege in society, urging for deliberate and targeted interventions to support the powerless to rise up.

Exercise Duration: 45 minutes

Instructions

- Prepare role cards that represent different types of people in the community, including the most vulnerable to human rights violation, climate change and other shocks. (see Power Walk Characters on p.4)
- Line up participants in a row facing the same direction. Explain that the straight line symbolizes Article 1 in the Universal declaration of Human rights: **“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and human rights”**
- Give each participant a random role card and ask them to keep it confidential.
- Read each of the following statements and give participants several seconds to think and decide whether they should take a step forward

Power Walk Statements

1. **Take one step forward** if you have completed or are likely to complete your education
2. **Take one step forward** if you eat two full meals and drink clean water everyday
3. **Take one step forward** if you earn enough money to make a good life for yourself and your children
4. **Take one step forward** if you can easily afford to see a doctor and access medical care when sick
5. **Take one step forward** if you are free to choose when and who to marry
6. **Take one step forward** if the local chief in your village listens to what you have to say
7. **Take one step forward** if you can access to any information that you need e.g. via radio, TV, mobile phone etc
8. **Take one step forward** if you could get a micro-finance or bank loan to start a business if you wanted one
9. **Take one step forward** if you feel very safe at home and in the community, and ARE NOT in major danger of being sexually abused or exploited
10. **Take one step forward** if you will be treated well if you go to the police station to report an incident
11. **Take one step forward** if you have a good house to live in
12. **Take one step forward** if you have the power to decide about how your household income is spent

13. **Take one step forward** if you are part of a social network such as a savings group, cooperative, Church group or other
14. **Take one step forward** if you can freely and safely vote and run for a public or political office if I wish to.
15. **Take one step forward** if NEVER had to flee from your home because of violence or natural disaster

Climate impacts

Instructions:

Please have a look at the current position you are in, how far you have moved and where you are in relation to the other players. Try to remember your position.

We will now play another round, cognizant that our world will be affected by climate change, and want observe how climate change related events impacts our characters.

The following statements are slightly longer than those before. The first sentence explains the climate event, the second sentence explains who will be affected.

Climate change related statements

1. *The Water levels are decreasing because of a prolonged drought and some boreholes run dry. If you do not have a piped water connection and you are responsible for fetching water in your household, take a step backward.*
2. *Extreme weather events in your region led to high harvest losses which increased food prices. If your household spends more than 50% of the available income on food you will be severely impacted. Take 1 step back.*
3. *Climate change enhances severity of heat waves. If you are particularly vulnerable to heat (elderly, you have a health condition, etc) or if you are very exposed because of your housing or work conditions, take a step backwards.*
4. *Climate change requires our society to change in many ways. This also brings opportunities for certain sectors. For example if you work for an NGO, for government or in a related industry there may be additional funds available to address climate change and new career opportunities. If this is likely to benefit you, take a step forward.*
5. *A disaster has hit your community and left many traumatised. The post-traumatic stress leads to increased domestic violence in the whole community. If you are likely to be affected, take a step back.*
6. *If your livelihood depends on the services of the ecosystem (fishing, farming, forestry, animal husbandry), you may need to invest in new technology. If you can afford to make that investment, take one step backwards. If you cannot afford it, take 2 steps backwards.*

Debrief & Learning (Look, Think, Plan)

When you finish the questions ask participants to remain where they are standing. Ask the following questions, being sure participants recite their role before they respond:

LOOK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What patterns do you observe? What are the common characteristics of the people at the front? At the back? • What identities seem more powerful in this context? (consider gender and intersectionality) • How does it feel to move forward/stay behind? • Which groups are invisible or less included? Whose voice is more heard or more valued? Why? • Which groups experience more impact?
LOOK after CC events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What has changed in the positions of the role players after the climate related events? • Which groups experience more impact?
THINK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does this activity make you think about? • How have we experienced power or lack of power in our lives or the work that we do? • How does power and privilege relate to: enjoyment of human rights; people's resilience; climate change? • What happens when we do not think about power, the power we have, the power others have? • How can we reach people at the back i.e. the poor and marginalised?
PLAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does this relate to our work with communities? How do we use our power? • How do we pay attention to power dynamics in the communities where we are working? • Are people at the front aware of the real problems experienced by those at the back? Who are more likely to be our main interlocutors or partners? • Who are our intended project beneficiaries? Are they the ones benefiting in reality? Why do you think all this is happening? • What role can our programs play in maintaining and or challenging power differences?

Notes for the Facilitator

- Power is the ability to influence our own lives and the lives of others. The ability to impose your will on others, or the ability to access and control resources and opportunities
- In most societies, some groups have more power than other groups. Some time, power imbalances are based on gender e.g. when men have access to resources than women. Balancing power between men and women helps to prevent violence against women.
- **Power is directly linked to choice, so persons with little power, such as children and many women- have fewer choices and are also more vulnerable to SGBV**

As programme staff:

- **Are we** sensitive to power structures in society?
- **How do we use our power to lift up others?** How much effort do we put in identifying activities and interventions that target the most vulnerable populations?

- **How do we build awareness (wider access to info)**, enhance **participation in** and ownership of project activities? (bearing in mind gendered and other barriers to participation?)
- **Interventions have to consider intersectionality.**
- However, we may not be able to address all intersectional factors- hence the power of partnerships- to complement our efforts and provide comprehensive support to beneficiaries.
- Many times, making efforts to wear a gender lens do not need additional funding, but calls for strengthening existing initiatives e.g. by better targeting, wider awareness creation, partnerships etc

Power walk Characters

Print the character descriptions and hand them out to the participants.

1. Male village chief, age 66. Did not finish secondary school.
2. Orphaned girl, age 14. In primary school. Lives with aunt and alcoholic uncle.
3. Female widow age 33; HIV positive; has five children; labours in people's fields
4. Girl age 15, married to a 40-year-old jobless man. Pregnant. Lives in a rural village.
5. Boy age 15, looking after siblings and sick mother. Dropped out of school.
6. Female government official, 50 years old, university education, married, 2 young children
7. Male cow herder and seller, 40 years, has 2 wives, 12 children
8. Female rural small holder farmer; age 45; married; 6 children
9. Male NGO worker with university education; age 32; married, 2 children
10. Male local government official; 40 years; university education; friend of governor's brother.
11. Female fishmonger; age 40; co-wife, 4 children, no schooling; savings group member
12. Male, mathematics secondary school teacher; 60 years old; single, no children
13. Female NGO worker with university education; age 25; single
14. 14-year old female student, parents struggling financially, may leave school to work
15. 12-year old boy, no schooling, herds goats for uncle, parents deceased

Adapted from Episcopal Relief and Development. Working together for lasting change.
<https://jiliflc.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Power-Walk.pdf>