

Facilitation Note: Power Walk

The Power Walk helps you to identify marginalised groups and work out a strategy for including them in your project; it also clearly shows the power structure of the community.

Power Walk: Who are we going to listen to – and talk with?

This exercise is a simulation of a community/society in ‘development’. Everyone starts off equal, but ends up very different. The debriefing following the exercise allows participants to reflect on what disparities exist and why and to consider how to address these through project design and implementation. The characters and questions should be adapted to the local context to make it relevant.

Ideally **45 minutes** should be allotted for this exercise so as to allow enough time for thorough discussion/debriefing.

- ❖ Take everyone outside (if there is not enough space inside) and give 20 participants each a piece of paper with a character from a typical community written on it (it is useful for the later discussion to add sex and age to the description of the character). If there are fewer than 20 participants, reduce the number of ‘characters’, making sure that you do not take too many out of one ‘group’ (e.g. all the powerful ones, or all the vulnerable ones).

Possible Characters (adapt to simulate real characters of your country/community)

1. *Local Councillor (male), aged 33*
2. *Woman unable to walk, from a rural family, aged 24*
3. *Tribal leader with 3 wives, 10 children, aged 60*
4. *Religious leader (male), aged 65*
5. *Village health worker (male), in a clinic without minimum sanitation standards*
6. *Traditional Birth Attendant (female), aged 35*
7. *School teacher (female), from a rural school, aged 27*
8. *Ward agricultural officer (male), aged 34*
9. *Male migrant worker, aged 45*
10. *Member of women’s savings group, who sells home grown vegetables in the local market, aged 45*
11. *Orphaned girl, aged 13*
12. *Girl, looking after her parents who are HIV positive and her younger siblings, aged 15*
13. *Minister of Health (male), aged 57*
14. *Primary school boy in a peri-urban location, aged 12*
15. *Girl from an ethnic minority forced into prostitution, aged 16*
16. *Unemployed boy from a female headed household, aged 17*
17. *Married adolescent mother (aged 16) with husband aged 33*

18. *Ethnic minority man recently escaped from a conflict in a neighbouring country, aged 39*
19. *Women's rights activist (female) from a small town, aged 53*
20. *Director of a national TV Channel living in the capital city, (male), aged 47*
21. *Male teenager with hearing impairment, living in a slum without health facilities*
22. *Local political party leader (male), aged 47*
23. *Young woman from a middle class family living in the city, aged 20*
24. *Policeman who frequently pays for sex, father of 4 kids (2 girls and 2 boys all under 15 years old), aged 34,*
25. *Local Journalist (female), aged 26*

- ❖ Ask all participants to **stand in one line**.
- ❖ Ask participants to listen to the statements below and for every statement to which the character they are representing could answer yes, they should take one step forward. Those characters to whom the answer would be no, or it is unclear, should remain in place (note: You need enough space for at least some of the people to take 20 steps forward).
- ❖ It is a more impressive exercise if those characters who would answer "no" take one step backwards, but this usually requires a large open space, such as a football field or park area.

Statements:

1. I feel that I am a valued member of my community.
2. I eat at least two full meals a day in all seasons
3. I expect to finish secondary school or I did finish secondary school.
4. I am not expected to do household work (cooking, cleaning, caring for children) every day.
5. I can decide when to see my friends or travel to visit relatives without asking for permission.
6. I make decisions about major purchases in my household.
7. I have a say in whom I marry and when.
8. I can speak in extended family meetings.
9. I have control over decisions about my body, including when to have children and how many.
10. I have access to information about sexual and reproductive health, HIV and other health information.
11. I can get information in the language that I use.
12. My family and I are not vulnerable to natural disasters
13. I have time and access to listen to the radio.
14. I am comfortable talking in public and expressing my views.
15. I do not face discrimination or stigma when using public services.
16. I feel very safe at home and in my community, and I do not worry about being sexually harassed or abused.
17. If I were accused of a crime I would be asked for my side of the story and believed.
18. I own livestock.

Statements continued:

19. I own a small business
20. I have access to micro credit
21. I can question expenditure of community funds
22. I get paid the at least the official minimum wage
23. I have access to public financial information from the provincial government

Discussion: After reading out the statements:

- **Identify who are those at the front?** Why are they at the front? Should they be there? (do they have the capacity to know and exercise their rights, how could we work with them to better relate and respond to the expectations of those at the back?)
- **Who are those at the back?** Why are they at the back? How did they feel as they watched all the others moving forward? Should they be there? (Are they disempowered, not accessing and realising their rights?)

- **Where are the women and where are the men?** Are there more women or men at the back? Why?
- **How can we reach people at the back?** Because communities are very heterogeneous, it is important to make deliberate efforts to reach the poor and the marginalised, and especially the young. **What can our projects do to help them move forward?**
- **When we arrive in a country/community who are more likely to become our main interlocutors or partners?** Who are the ones for which our projects are ultimately intended? Are people at the front aware of the real problems experienced by those at the back? Who is then most likely benefiting from our project in reality? Why do you think all this is happening?

Learning points:

- There are many factors that affect marginalisation e.g. sex, age, location, ethnicity, access to different types of power etc. Power-relations have a huge impact on who we are, and what we can be, how we access opportunities and realise our potential
- Development isn't power neutral. Discrimination and elites are well known development realities
- For those who are left behind it is impossible to catch up without **specific targeted assistance**.
- Resources and capacities alone will not do the trick. **The enabling environment is a fundamental determinant.**