

## The Powerwalk

  	<p><b>45 minutes</b></p> <p><b>To demonstrate power differentials, gender inequity and issues related to access to information, participation, feedback, risk of exploitation and abuse and the need for protection</b></p> <p><b>20 cards with names of different characters written on them (one per participant)</b></p> <p><b>20 statements for facilitator to read out loud during activity</b></p> <p><b>Enough room for participants to stand and move 25 steps</b></p>
Source	Musili Nzau, UNDP Liberia Child Protection Training Manual Save the Children Adapted by Ester Dross, independent consultant

### **45 minutes - The Powerwalk**

This exercise can be adapted to the number of participants; the main criteria will be available space for standing and spreading out the group as per questions and statements.

The exercise serves both as an energizer as well as to amplify the concept of the power differential leading to meaningful participation (or apparent participation not including voices through participation). The measure of power in this case is symbolized by the position of the characters at the end of the exercise:

#### **Examples of characters:**

1. District Chief or government official
2. Village Health Worker (male)
3. Traditional Birth Attendant (female)
4. Orphaned boy, aged 13
5. Grandmother, caretaker of orphans
6. Uncle, caretaker of orphans
7. Primary school girl, aged 12
8. Girl with physical disability, aged 12
9. Unemployed boy, aged 17
10. Girl looking after her sick mother and younger siblings
11. International humanitarian worker
12. Religious leader (male)
13. Community leader (female)
14. School Teacher (female)
15. Medical doctor, employed by an International Non-Governmental Organization (INGO)
16. University professor
17. Female vegetal seller

18. Mother of 5 small children, living in an IDP (Internally Displaced Person) camp
19. School Teacher (male)
20. Security Guard, employed by a Community Based Organization (CBO)

**Statements:**

- (i) I get to meet visiting government officials when they visit our community.
- (ii) I can influence decisions made at community level.
- (iii) I get new clothes on religious holidays.
- (iv) I can read newspapers regularly.
- (v) I have time and access to listen to the radio.
- (vi) I would never have to queue at the dispensary.
- (vii) I have my own bank account.
- (viii) I can speak in extended family meetings.
- (ix) I can afford to boil drinking water.
- (x) I can negotiate condom use with my partner.
- (xi) I only have sex when I want to.
- (xii) I went to secondary or I expect to go to secondary school.
- (xiii) I can pay for treatment at a hospital if necessary.
- (xiv) I can speak at a village meeting.
- (xv) I eat at least two full meals a day.
- (xvi) I sometimes attend workshops and seminars.
- (xvii) I am not afraid of walking on my own at night.
- (xviii) I can question expenditure of household funds.
- (xix) I am not afraid of violence in my home.
- (xx) I have never had to line up or beg for food.

**Activity Instructions:**

- Bring the participants to a large space (empty conference room or outdoor space) where they can form a big circle.
- Give each participant one card with one of the characters written on it. Ask the participants not to let anyone else know the character that they are representing.
- Tell participants to listen to the statements you read out loud. For every statement to which the character they are representing could answer “yes”, they should take one step forward towards the center of the circle. This is also an exercise about trying to stand in somebody else’s shoes, participants must therefore adapt their answers to how their character would feel in terms of potential and possibilities.
- At the end of the exercise, participants should remain in place and in character for a debriefing. The visual should be with some few characters in the center, looking at each other and others scattered outside the center at various stages from the initial circle.
- Give some time to participants to debrief, why are they standing where they are? How can they link this to their character?
- Use the debriefing to demonstrate power differences and why these represent barriers to meaningful participation and information. Point out the importance of age and gender in relation to those barriers. Most probably, in this walk, the ones outside the circle will be the powerless (women, children, poor, etc.). Explain that differences in power always exist but they represent important barriers. How will a

very poor old woman, speaking only her local dialect, be able to come to your organization and have her voice heard? Underline that assumptions related to power, influence and status represent very important barriers.

- Point out as well that as humanitarians, our work should be people centered, meaning that our beneficiaries should be at the center of our work. When looking at this circle, the people in the center are the most powerful. What does this mean in relation to our work and accountability? Whom do the people in the center look at (other powerful people)? Visually they turn their back to the people they are supposed to support and invite to participate.
- Wrap up the session by reinforcing the importance of being conscious of these barriers and power relations when implementing accountability measures. For our organization, this means to analyze and carefully keep in mind all those barriers in order to create systems which empower people and help them participating in designing projects and implementing them. To enable people to do this, we need to create a 2-way dialogue and ensure good information sharing with communities so that they have access to the information they need to enable them to participate meaningful, have their voices heard.

Distribute the report *From Voices to Choices, IARAN Paris 2017*.