S0x: Power walk (WASH)

Session length

30 minutes

Purpose

This session aims to create discussion about unequal power dynamics that lead to exclusion from WASH facilities, information and decision making process, and can lead to risk of violence. This session also aims to explore strategies for facilitating access to opportunities and rights for everyone.

Learning objectives

By the end of the session participants will be able to:

* Describe how different people have different power, and how this can lead to exclusion from WASH –in terms of facilities, information and the decision making process.
* Reflect what violence and safety means to different groups/individuals, in relation to WASH.

Preparation – before the training

1. Ensure big enough space for participants to form a line and move around (empty conference room or outdoor space). Another good option is to do this activity on a set of stairs – this can portray well how different people ‘move up’ and some stay ‘at the bottom’.
2. Select the power walk characters and statements – **adapt them to fit your training context (and number of participants)!**
3. Make sure that the characters are evenly split – for example that you have approximately half with ‘more power’, and half of characters who are ‘more vulnerable’.
4. [Optional] Make up paper balls (at least four for each participant and ideally made from used papers).

Activity instructions

1. Gather participants to stand side by side in a line (or at the bottom of the stairs). Make sure they have room to take at least 20 steps forward. Give each participant at least four paper balls.
2. Give participants a card with one of the characters written on it. Ask them to not let anyone know the character they are representing. Explain to them that if they have questions about their character, they must ask them only to you. They can use their imaginations and develop their characters; however, they must remain true to the description provided.
3. Explain the context to the participants: it can either be the existing training scenario (e.g. Zumbumbia used in HP or MSM trainings, or describe a common small rural community in your country / region that has experienced a disaster [For example: Last week there were very heavy rains and your community has been badly affected by flooding. Some people are still living at home, while others are staying at emergency shelters, set up at schools and other community buildings. A lot of the water wells are contaminated, but buying water from the shops is expensive. ……etc.].
4. Instruct participants with numbers 1-5 on the back of their card to take 2 steps forward. Participants with numbers 6-10 on the back of their card to take one step back. (Do not provide an explanation as to why now.)
5. Invite participants to close their eyes (if they feel comfortable doing so), clear their minds and relax in silence. Ask them to think about their character, to visualize that person, to try to see, hear and feel that person, to imagine their life and make it their own.
6. Tell participants they will hear a series of statements. For each statement, those who do not have enough information on their character to answer and those who think their answer to the question is ‘no’, have to stay where they are. Those who can answer “yes”, take one large step forward and throw paper balls at those who stayed in place and who are now standing behind them.
7. Read the statements one by one and allow time for participants to make their decision. Remind participants that they should always keep in mind the character they are representing, and not their own status, while responding “yes” or “no”.
8. Allow 10 minutes for the exercise. If time is not enough, facilitators should pick the most significant statements.
9. Tell participants to remain in their place and look around and stay where they are. Ask each participant to read out their character description.
10. Invite participants to reflect on this experience:

* How did you feel about your character? Think about whether or not you feel their identity and situation was very far from real life, and why, etc.
* How did you feel about others’ reactions when you revealed the identity and situation of your character?
* How did you feel when taking steps forward? How did you feel when having to stay where you were, in the back, while seeing others moving ahead?
* How did you feel when throwing paper balls at those standing behind you? How did you feel when others threw paper balls at you?
* What did you notice at the end of the game when you looked around and compared your position to others’?
* How can you explain the distance between people? Think about:
  + the identity traits of the characters who moved forward and those of the ones who stayed in place
  + the positions in the space of the characters with multiple ‘privileging’ traits (i.e., ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, mobility, wealth, etc.) and the ones of those with multiple ‘marginalizing’ traits (i.e., ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, mobility, wealth, etc.)
  + your own preconceived ideas, stereotypes and prejudices towards your character and their life limitations, etc.

1. Ask participants to share ideas about how we could bring all the different characters together (e.g. into one line). What questions would we need to asked, or what would need to happen?

*If time, continue with the steps below:*

1. Divide the group in two: those in the back and those in the middle and front (the groups do not need to be of equal number). Tell the groups that they should still be in their characters.
2. **Ask the group who was left behind** reflect on how or what they could do to advocate for their needs and better access to services, rights and opportunities.
3. **Ask the group in the front** to brainstorm how they can use their power to include those further back.
4. Ask the group in the front to summarise the key points from their discussion and then ask the group at the back to share their suggestions (5 – 10 minute discussion). These might be quite different so it is **important to emphasise that as humanitarians we cannot assume we know the best how to help the affected people and in order to find the most appropriate solutions it is necessary to promote marginalized groups’ participation to decision-making.**
5. Remind participants that when the exercise started, some of them were assigned a step forward or backwards. This is because some people are born with more privilege than others and it is important to recognize this privilege.
6. Explain that although different people’s different needs, protection risks and capacities are specific to the context, it also remains important to recognize that certain groups are widely marginalized and discriminated against in all societies and any given context, globally.
7. **Finish** the exercise by relating it to participants real-life and applying the learnings in the future:

* What do you learn from this experience?
* How can you relate this activity to real-life situations that you may have experienced or witnessed in your community? Think about:
  + the way that privileges work in society
  + the groups who may suffer from exclusion and violence in your community, and why
  + the consequences of exclusion and violence
  + the impact of multiple ‘oppressions’ (i.e., ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, wealth, etc.) on the daily lives of the individuals concerned, etc.
* How can we as Red Cross Red Crescent promote meaningful participation of traditionally excluded groups in decision-making?

Tips for facilitating the activity

* Preferably, there should be two trainers to facilitate this activity: one to collect the paper balls on the floor and hand them back to participants, and one to read out the statements loudly and clearly.
* Use a calm and soft voice, speak slowly and pause after each instruction to allow time to reflect.
* It is best not to make the game too long. Define an appropriate number of questions and make an appropriate selection in the list provided depending on your objectives and time-frame, as well as on the size of the group and the speed at which the participants complete the different steps of the suggested process.
* Note that some participants may feel uncomfortable about physical closeness to others and/or having their eyes closed. Also, some may experience overwhelming emotions as this activity might bring up memories from real life. Therefore, closely monitor the group dynamics, pay particular attention to participants’ reactions as you go along, and let them know that they can step out of the process any time.
* Make sure that participants step out of their roles properly and return to their own reality after the activity, using, for instance, an energizer or asking one of them an everyday-life question (e.g., what did you have for breakfast this morning? what are you doing tonight?, etc.).

List of statements – please adapt to your training!

1. I can understand and talk with the Red Cross/Crescent volunteers when they visit our home.
2. I can easily collect relief items that our family receives from the Red Cross/Crescent.
3. I can speak at the community WASH committee meeting.
4. I can afford to boil (or buy) drinking water.
5. I have my own money to buy hygiene items, for example sanitary pads or razors.
6. I am part of the group who decides where the water point/hand pump is going to be built.
7. I have time and access to listen to the radio.
8. I am not afraid of walking on my own to collect water.
9. I can read the community notice board.
10. I have access to plenty of information about diseases in our community and how to prevent them.
11. I can travel alone by bus to work or school.
12. I can decide whether my family builds a toilet/latrine.
13. I am never teased, ridiculed or excluded from using community WASH facilities.
14. I can question expenditure of household funds.

Power walk character cut-outs

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| **1**  **DISTRICT CHIEF** | **2**  **INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN WORKER** | **3**  **POLICE OFFICER (MALE)** | **4**  **PRIMARY SCHOOL BOY** | **5**  **COMMUNITY LEADER (FEMALE)** |
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| **6**  **LEADER OF A YOUTH GROUP (MALE)** | **7**  **ORPHANED MIGRANT BOY, AGED 13** | **8**  **ORPHANED GIRL, AGED 13** | **9**  **GRANDMOTHER, CARETAKER OF ORPHANS** | **10**  **RED CROSS VOLUNTEER, AGED 18 (FEMALE)** |

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| **11**  **MIGRANT GIRL WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITY, AGED 12** | **12**  **SCHOOL TEACHER (FEMALE)** | **13**  **PRIMARY SCHOOL GIRL** | **14**  **GIRL IN PROSTITUTION, AGED 16** | **15**  **MARRIED GIRL, AGED 16** |
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| **16**  **WOMAN WHOSE HUSBAND DIED OF AIDS, AGED 30** | **17**  **UNDEMPLOYED BOY, AGED 17** | **18**  **DEMOBILISED SOLDIER, BOY** | **19**  **INTERNALLY DISPLACED GIRL LOOKING AFTER SICK MOTHER AND YOUNGER SIBLINGS** | **20**  **HEALTH WORKER** |
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| **21**  **ADULT MALE SOLDIER** | **22**  **HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR** | **23**  **VISUALLY IMPAIRED YOUNG MAN** | **24**  **NGO LEADER (FEMALE)** | **25**  **FEMALE MIGRANT WORKER** |
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| **26**  **UN NATIONAL STAFF MEMBER** | **27**  **MALE PEACEKEEPER** | **28**  **VILLAGE ELDER (MALE)** | **29**  **VILLAGE ELDER (FEMALE)** | **30**  **LOCAL RED CROSS RED CRESCENT WORKER** |
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| **31**  **VILLAGE CHAIRPERSON** | **32**  **VILLAGE SHOP-KEEPER** | **33**  **NATIONAL MINISTRY OFFICIAL** | **34**  **UN INTERNATIONAL STAFF** | **35**  **SINGLE FATHER OF FOUR, AGED 29** |