

Power Walk exercise

This power walk exercise was developed to accompany [the RSH How-to note on developing a safeguarding policy](#). The power walk exercise was adapted from: Catholic Relief Services (CRS), (2020) [Safeguarding and PSEA Toolkit](#), Part I, page 12.

Introduction

Power imbalance is at the heart of issues relating to sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment (SEAH) and other forms of harm. Staff working for civil society organisations (CSOs) often hold significant power in the communities that they are working in. This can create the risk of abuse and harms. In this power walk exercise you will explore basic concepts related to power and SEAH and other forms of harm.

Preparation

The power walk is best achieved in a face-to-face meeting. It can also be carried out online.

1. Check the power walk characters (annex 1) and adapt them for your context and number of participants. Choose a variety of characters based on the number of participants.
2. For face-to-face session, create cut out cards for each character.
3. If online, create and share a google excel document. Shrink cell size to fit many cells on one page. Indicate a starting point 8-10 cells away from the left margin. Name a row for each participant (note: use their name not their character). Share characters with all participants separately by email before the session. Ask them not to share their character's identity.

Activity

1. Distribute the power walk characters to the participants (this has already been done for online version). Instruct them not to share their character's identity. Ask them to pretend to be that character and to form a picture of who they are and what their life is like. They must then think about what their character's answers would be to a list of questions.
2. Ask the participants to stand in a single row across one side of the room facing the facilitator. For the online version, ask participants to identify the row for their character and find the starting point.

3. Ask the participants to take one step forward if their answer is “yes” to a question, and to stay where they are if the answer is “no”. For the online version, they can fill a cell (going right) with an agreed colour for “yes” and do nothing if the answer is “no”.
4. Facilitator will read each of the following questions, allowing enough time for participants to decide whether to take a step / fill a cell.

Questions:

- Did you have enough to eat today?
 - Do you have available money in your pocket or on your card / phone?
 - Do you have a valid government-issued ID?
 - Do you have access to a mobile phone with data?
 - Do you have regular access to good internet?
 - When you are sick, are you able to see a doctor and pay (if necessary) for their services?
 - Do you travel freely throughout your country of residence?
 - If you were robbed, would you go to the police to report the crime?
 - Did you finish primary school?
 - Are your opinions and ideas respected by your family?
 - Can you read the local newspaper?
 - Did you have access to clean water today?
 - Did you have access to a latrine or toilet today?
 - Can you live your daily life without support (e.g. physical, mental, communication) from another individual or device (e.g. wheelchair)?
5. For the next two questions, ask them to stay where they are if the answer is “yes,” and to take a step backward if the answer is “no.”

Questions:

- Do you feel safe from SEAH?
- If a CSO staff member was sexually exploiting you, would you report the incident?
- If you were sexually abused by a CSO staff member, would you know what kind of assistance and support you could receive?
- If you were bullied, harassed or discriminated against by CSO staff would you report it?
- If a CSO programme you were part of caused a family or community member to abuse you because they didn’t want you to attend, would you report it to the CSO?
- If a CSO staff member was bullying you, would you be able to access the reporting mechanism (e.g. understand it, know how to and be able to actually report

6. Discuss where you are:
 - Ask the participants that have moved the least (the least privileged and with least power):
 - Why are you where you are?
 - Why have you moved so little or even backward?
 - Ask the participants that have moved the most (the most privileged and with more power):
 - Why are you where you are?
 - Why have you moved so much?
7. Rephrase what each participant says, highlighting the vulnerability factor(s) (e.g. sex / gender, age, disability, race, ethnicity and/or other diversity factors) that disadvantages their character.
8. Ask all participants to reveal their characters and to explain why they stepped forward or not in response to particular questions. Use the following questions to guide the discussions:
 - What did you assume about your character, if it was not explicitly stated, e.g. age, gender, disability, ethnicity?
 - Who has the most power and who has the least power?
 - How did the additional risk of SEAH and other forms of harm impact the position of those most vulnerable (those that moved least)?

Answers / reflections:

- Those characters at risk of abuse and exploitation took a step backward; this shows the impact that incidents like these can have on people.
 - Abuse and exploitation can cause injury, health and physiological problems, and further hinder people's dignity, wellbeing, and access to human rights.
 - Which groups would require special attention to better protect them from SEAH and other forms of harm that may be caused by CSO staff, operations and programmes?
 - CSOs and their staff decide who receives resources and who does not. This gives them a lot of power, which can create the risk of SEAH and other forms of harm.
 - Often people have less access to support based on their sex/gender, age or other diversity status. How might lack of access to support further impact victims/survivors of SEAH and other forms of harm in your context? E.g. Will it affect recovery from the incident, stop them from claiming justice, etc.
 - How can your safeguarding policy reflect this?
9. Highlight that participants are scattered across the room (different number of cells completed online).
 - Those with more power and greater access to their rights were closer to the facilitator and those who were more vulnerable were further back.
 - Individuals from a group that is marginalised, or treated differently because of their sex/gender, age, disability or other diversity factor (socioeconomic, political, ethnic or religious), may be less protected in societies, just by virtue of who they are.
 - Conclude that this exercise aims to demonstrate how power imbalance is at the heart of SEA/safeguarding issues. CSO workers hold power, as your organisations decide who receives

services and resources and who does not. This can create the risk of SEAH and other forms of harm, particularly for those who are already marginalized due to sex/gender, age, or other diversity factors, such as disability, lack of economic stability, being a member of a religious/ethnic/political minority.

- This imbalance of power between CSO staff and the most vulnerable is at the core of safeguarding issues. It creates additional risks that must be addressed both programmatically, in project design, and structurally within organisations through your safeguarding policy and measures.

Annex 1: Power Walk characters

- Government staff member
- Community leader
- Member of religious minority
- 65-year-old male
- Subsistence farmer with a wife and six children living in a region of ethnic conflict
- Religious leader working in a peaceful community
- 15-year-old female head of household in a rural village with two younger sisters
- Lesbian female
- 12-year-old newly married girl
- Refugee from a neighboring
- Refugee from a neighboring country with limited understanding of local language
- 16-year-old trafficked male
- Male police officer
- Person with physical disability
- Survivor of a hurricane, wildfire or appropriate natural disaster
- Political leader
- 45-year-old widow with six children
- Ingo staff member from capital city
- Male civil society organisation (CSO) employee from a minority ethnic group
- Transgender person
- Migrant worker without legal documentation
- Successful male business owner
- 17-year-old drug addict living on the streets
- 16-year-old single mother who is a sex worker
- 10-year-old girl with a visual impairment living in an orphanage
- Humanitarian worker with the united nations
- Female head of household
- Unaccompanied child
- Man with a mental health condition
- Son of a local political leader
- Female CSO leader
- Female garment worker (tailor)
- Female CSO employee from dominant ethnic group