



GEDSI Power Walk

Description: The Power Walk is a group exercise that facilitates participants to “walk” in someone else’s shoes and experience what it feels like to be powerless or powerful based on gender, occupation, education level, disability, age, health etc. and in the face of different obstacles or shocks.

Purpose: The Power Walk allows participants to become more aware of the power dynamics that exist within and between communities and our organisations. The Power Walk is a way to think critically about how people’s different backgrounds and opportunities can result in different levels of power and resilience to climate change and other barriers to prosperity. It also allows for introspection on the part of those in leadership positions in terms of how our roles can create distance between us and those we are trying to work with.

Can be used at different stages in projects:

1- Assessment Phase	Can be used to help people recognize the different types of people in the community and the different opportunities and barriers they face Can be used to identify and bring to the forefront the type of people who should be targeted for resilience building
2 - Planning Phase	Can be used to help people identify barriers to power or “mobility” Can be used to explore how different obstacles and challenges affect people differently
3 - Implementation & Monitoring Phase	Can be used to help participants identify and adapt to the barriers and shifting landscape that may positively or negatively impact different people
4 - Evaluation Phase	Can be used to help participants measure progress and discern if despite “roles” (i.e. gender, age, class, etc.), people are being empowered and benefiting from interventions

5 - Reporting Phase	Can be used to help participants demonstrate and 'report' on their current levels of influence in their communities. (Community participatory reporting)
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Steps

Step 1: Preparation

Prepare role cards (see examples in Appendix) that represent different types of people in the community, including the most vulnerable to climate change and other shocks.

Identify an open area where participants will have space to line up horizontally and walk forwards or backwards 5 to 10 meters.

Step 2: Introduction

The exercise could take 30-45 minutes depending on the number of participants and the level of discussion. Introduce the Power Walk exercise by explaining that it is a way for everyone to reflect on the different kinds of people in the community, including ourselves, and how our different backgrounds, opportunities and barriers affect our power and “place” in society. Remind the participants that all in the group are invited to join in the exercise and share their ideas.

Step 3: Exercise Instructions

1. Ask the participants to stand in a row. Randomly pass out the Power Walk Role Cards so that every participant has one. Ask the participants to read aloud their role card.
2. Explain that you will read a series of statements. If the statement applies to the role the participant is playing they should take one step forward (the maximum is 10 steps to give you an idea of space required).
3. Read each of the following statements and give participants several seconds to think and decide whether they should take a step forward (Note The Power Walk prompts should be tailored to your community context, participants and your specific program and learning objectives):
 - Take **1 step forward** if you have had or will have opportunities to complete your education.
 - Take **1 step forward** if you don't worry about having enough food to eat.
 - Take **1 step forward** if you can earn enough money to make a good life for yourself and your children.
 - Take **2 steps forward** if you own a cellphone and have access to the Internet all the time. Take 1 step forward if you own a cellphone and have access to the Internet some of the time (ie when you move within range of a tower).
 - Take **1 step forward** if you can determine when and how many children you will have.
 - In Vanuatu about 2/3 women and girls are victims of violence. Take **2 steps backwards** if you are a female.

- Take **1 step forward** if you could get a bank loan to start a business if you wanted one.
- There has been a drought. Take **2 steps backwards** if your livelihood depends on rainfall.
- Take **1 step forward** if you and your family eat at least two full meals a day in all seasons.
- Take **2 steps forward** if you are part of a social network such as a savings group, cooperative, Church group or other.
- There is a big family/clan funeral. All families have been asked to contribute 9,000, 3 sacks of rice or 2 boxes of chicken. Can you afford your contribution? Take **1 step forward** if you can, stay where you are if you cannot (the head of family is forgiving).
- Take **1 step forward** if you are not expected to do household work (cooking, cleaning, caring for children) every day.
- Take **1 step forward** if you can decide when to see my friends or travel to visit relatives without asking for permission (if aged under 18 remain where you are).
- NDMO used the climate information to bring in bottled water to prepare for the long dry season (not quite a drought) and distributed 2 boxes per household. Take **1 step forward** if you live in a family of less than 5 people.
- There has been a Cat 1 cyclone. Everyone take **2 steps backward**.
- December 2024 Climate Information told us that Jan-March 2025 were going to be very hot and humid, but you didn't get the information:
 - You planted kumala, manioc and taro for food for the family. Take **1 step backward** if you rely on your garden (or other people's gardens) as your main food or income source because most of the food crops failed.
- There has been no rain for 3 weeks and where you live there is no piped water system. Take **1 step forward** if either you have enough money (or saved enough) to buy drinking water or you have a water/tank or catchment and gas/fire to boil the water because there has been no rain for 3 weeks. Everyone else take **2 steps backward**.
- Take **2 steps forward** if you have a job in the formal sector with regular (dependable) income.

Other optional scenarios:

Depending on the group and your objectives, you could include statements like:

- I can speak in extended family meetings.
- I have access to information about sexual and reproductive health, STI and other health information.
- I can get information in the language that I use.
- My family and I are not vulnerable to natural disasters
- I have time and access to listen to the radio.

- I am comfortable talking in public and expressing my views.
- I do not face discrimination or stigma when using public services.
- I feel very safe at home and in my community, and I do not worry about being sexually harassed or abused.
- If I were accused of a crime I would be asked for my side of the story and believed.

Step 4: 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:

1. LOOK

- *What do we see?*
- *How did it feel to move forward? Stay behind?*
- *How does it feel to be standing where you are? (those in the front, middle and back)*

2. THINK (while still standing or after returning to your seats)

- *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?*
- *What happens when we do not think about power, the power we have, the power others have?*
- *How does power relate to people's resilience, in general, and to climate change?*

3. PLAN

- *How does this activity relate to our work with communities and our roles as development practitioners? How do we use our power? How do we pay attention to power dynamics in the communities where we are working?*
- *What happens when people with power dominate discussions?*
- *What role do we and our programs play in maintaining and or challenging power differences?*

Useful Hints:

- The Power Walk can be adapted for different groups and objectives. For program staff and/or community leaders and volunteers, it can be used to spur reflection and discussion on how we use our power to lift up others. Among community members who are direct participants, it can be used to identify initial activities to target the most vulnerable populations, and thus build awareness and ownership of the project activities.
- To examine the relationship between power and the effects of climate change, you can create Power Walk scenarios that show how access to dwindling natural resources affects everyone to a certain degree, but most acutely those with less power.

Pairing Pathways:

The Power Walk is useful when paired with:

- Mapping and analysis exercises such as the People's Map, Transect Walk, and/or Pair-Wise Preference Ranking to discern or validate the identification of vulnerable areas or populations.
- Well-being Map to explore how high and low wellbeing households are resilient (i.e., experience minor seasonal fluctuations in key variables) and to develop target activities
- Contextual Bible studies, such as John 4:4–42 - Woman at the Well

Appendix: Power Walk Roles

1. Male rural farmer (kava and copra); married; 6 children - boy in school, girls not
2. Female widow, makes and sells laplap at local market from her garden
3. Male NGO worker with university education, married, 2 children
4. Female divorced shop owner, 3 children in secondary school
5. Male local government official, university education
6. 17 year old boy, labourer in local construction company, no formal schooling
7. Male restaurant owner, married 4 children, primary school education, has T2 diabetes
8. Male secondary school teacher, single, no children
9. Female produces handcrafts and buys souvenirs for sale to tourists at the local market, primary school education, married, 5 children, VanWoods/micro finance group member
10. Female primary school teacher, married, 1 child
11. Male church paster, married, 4 children
12. 17 year old girl, primary school education, working as housegirl in Provincial centre (1 hour walk or 10 minutes in transport) away from house
13. Male widower, blind, lives with son, cannot work
14. Female subsistence farmer, 5 children, husband left, eldest child takes surplus garden produce to the market for sale
15. Male hardware shop owner, no schooling, married, 4 children, 2 in school
16. Female NGO worker with university education, single
17. Male transport driver, no education, single
18. 14 year old female student, parents struggling financially, may leave school to work
19. Female village health worker, single, 1 child
20. Male gardener, goes around area council asking for day work, single, no schooling
21. Male village chief, widower, clan/village look after his livestock and garden
22. Female government official, university education, married, 2 children in primary school
23. 18 year old girl, cognitive difficulties [or could be deaf], pregnant, helps mother at home with chores (is responsible for washing all the clothes etc)
24. Male who cannot walk because of a fall as a child, on crutches, has a small 'project' tilapia pond through an NGO that his family helps him with, sells fish for cash

Card layout for printing

<p>Male rural farmer (kava and copra); married; 6 children - boy in school, girls not</p>	<p>Female widow, makes and sells laplap at local market from her garden</p>
<p>Male NGO worker with university education, married, 2 children</p>	<p>Female divorced shop owner, 3 children in secondary school</p>
<p>Male local government official, university education</p>	<p>17 year old boy, labourer in local construction company, no formal schooling</p>
<p>Male restaurant owner, married 4 children, primary school education, has T2 diabetes</p>	<p>Male secondary school teacher, single, no children</p>
<p>Female produces handcrafts and buys souvenirs for sale to tourists at the local market, primary school education, married, 5 children, VanWoods/micro finance group member</p>	<p>Female primary school teacher, married, 1 child</p>
<p>Male church paster, married, 4 children</p>	<p>17 year old girl, primary school education, working as housegirl in Provincial centre (1 hour walk or 10 minutes in transport) away from house</p>
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