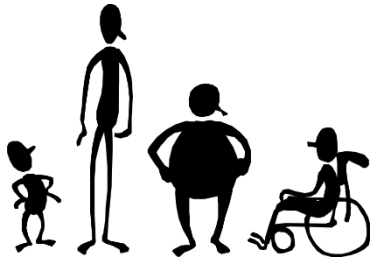

Facilitator Instructions and Materials

Privilege Walk

Exercise 1 Session 10

Background Notes

This activity has been developed based on the concept of a Privilege walk which was first developed from the work of Peggy MacIntosh. We have taken the advice of educators Anderson and Riley (2021) and structured the exercise to try to avoid one of the problems they identified with the way in which this exercise has traditionally been used. Namely "teaching some (the more privileged in the group) at the expense of others (the less privileged in the group, who are generally already well aware of the impacts of privilege in social standing and opportunity)" p.231. Based on their advice we have developed a series of assigned identity cards, asking participants to imagine the impacts of certain situations on their assigned rather than real identity.

Facilitator Instructions

Time required

1 hour including set up and debrief.

Setting the scene: Background Context

Briefly explain that humanitarian responses are often deeply hierarchical with significantly more power enjoyed by international UN, INGO and Donor staff when compared to local NGO/ host community staff. Ask the group to briefly reflect of the range of privileges that might impact this and to consider other hierarchies that might exist within these groups.

Explain that in this situation the refugee communities have fled ethnic violence and persecution in their home countries and are living in either a refugee camp or urban area without the legal rights to work, travel or attend formal schools or universities. Sexual and gender-based violence is endemic and impacts refugee women and girls in all aspects of their lives- at school, work, moving around camps to access food, water and

firewood, in overcrowded and insecure accommodation in camps and cities. There is limited access to justice and to health services.

The instructions

Explain to the participants that they should all line up in the middle of the space and as you read each statement they are to consider the most likely experience of the person whose identity they have been assigned and to follow the instruction accordingly. It is important that you ask participants to engage with their assigned identity in thoughtful and respectful ways. Explain that they are not being asked to perform or to take on their assigned identity but instead to develop an imagined and thoughtful empathy with what the experience

- **Explain the Rules:** Briefly explain how the Privilege Walk will work, emphasising that it's voluntary and participants can choose not to participate or to move if they are uncomfortable.
- **Physical Space:** Arrange chairs (if indoors) or other markers (if outdoors) in a line to represent a spectrum, with one end signifying maximum advantage and the other end signifying maximum disadvantage.
- **Assign each participant an identity:** There are 16 identities available so several participants can be assigned the same identity or if you have a smaller group you will need to reduce the number used. For maximum impact it is recommended that at least half the participants be assigned diverse refugee identities, one quarter the diverse identities of national/local NGO staff and the other quarter shared between UN, INGOS, Donors and Governments.
- **Read Statements:** Read each statement aloud, allowing participants a moment to reflect and physically move forward or backward based on their likely identities experiences related to the statement.
- **Reflective Pause:** After each statement, allow a brief moment for participants to reflect silently or discuss with others nearby.
- **Debriefing:** Facilitate a discussion after the activity to process feelings, observations, and insights that arose during the Privilege Walk. Some more detailed debriefing notes and questions are provided below.

Assigned Identity Cards

Please print and photocopy as many as you require for the activity. Cut the cards up so that each participant can be given their own identity card.

1. A preliterate older refugee woman with children and grandchildren. She has lived in different refugee camps for over 20 years and never had the opportunity to access any formal education.	. A refugee male leader with adolescent sons and daughters. He is a well respected leader and is very concerned about the negative impacts that lack of access to education is having on youth in the camps, in particular the increased risks of recruitment of boys into gangs and girls being abducted or forced to marry.
An adolescent refugee girl from a large family. She are very clever but as the high schools are mixed gender, she has been denied the chance to go to school since the day of your first period.	. A recently widowed refugee single father with 3 children, one with a serious heart condition.
5. A young gay refugee man working as a volunteer medic for an NGO in a refugee camp.	6. A lesbian single refugee woman living in a shelter with

	other refugee families and several single men.
7. A young refugee man with a physical disability and no family. His disability has recently got worse and he is no longer able to collect his monthly food and fuel rations. He now relies on others in the refugee community to do this for him.	8. A young refugee woman leader who has founded an organisation to help other young women. She is constantly harassed by men from the local host community doing her work but she doesn't tell her family and she knows that her father would stop you from going out.
9.International staff - The white male head of an INGO married with 3 children. He has had many international postings and now enjoys a very high salary, he is skilled in finding good places to live and in ensuring that your children access the best international schools.	10.National staff – the male head of a local NGO married with 5 children. As he has a large family he struggles to manage on a local salary so is focused on cultivating networks with INGOs and UN agencies in the hope of a better position.
11.National staff –a young single woman working for a local NGO. This is her first job since graduating from university. She has only taken the position as there is no other work available. Her family are worried about your	12.National staff – female GBV coordinator for an INGO, married with 1 child. She is highly skilled at her job and very well respected, she has learned the language of the main refugee population but does not speak English.

safety and believe the work is below her status.	
13. International staff- a Senior UNHCR Staff member from South Asia, married with 2 children attending the local international school.	14. An older white male from a major international donor government. He recently married his male partner of many years following the passing of marriage equality laws in your home country.

Statements

These statements have been prepared based well documented advantages or disadvantages experienced by diverse stakeholders in refugee and humanitarian settings.

1. *Take one step forward if you never had to worry about where your next meal would come from.*
2. *Take one step back if you have ever been discriminated against because of your skin color.*
3. *Take one step forward if you are confident that your voice and opinion will be listened to and respected in high-level policy meetings.*
4. *Take one step back if you are at high risk of being raped or sexually harassed whenever you leave your home.*
5. *Take one step forward if you can book a last-minute holiday to Europe without having to worry about securing a visa.*
6. *Take one step back if you have no idea whether you will ever again your extended family who live in another country*
7. *Take one step forward if you have never had to worry about choosing which of your children to send to school.*
8. *Take one step back if you have considered marrying your daughter to an older man so that you can afford to feed your other children.*

9. *Take one step forward if you have never had to worry about whether or not you could access appropriate medical care for yourself of your child.*
10. *Take one step back if you don't speak English and have ever been in a meeting where it was the only language used and no interpreters were provided.*
11. *Take one step forward if you have never had to hide your sexuality or gender identity.*
12. *Take one step back if you have ever been denied access to education because of your legal status.*
13. *Take one step forward if you have never had any serious concerns about your children's access to quality education and good employment opportunities.*
14. *Take one step back if you have been denied access to education because of your gender.*
15. *Take one step forward if you could leave your partner if they threatened your physical safety*
16. *Take one step back if you have or at ongoing risk of being arrested and detained.*

Debriefing the Privilege Walk

First encourage the participants to observe where they are now located along Privilege walk. Starting with those who have moved furthest back ask each to briefly explain their assigned identity.

Next ask participants who wish to speak to describe their rationales for choosing to stand still, step forward or step back. If it does not emerge naturally encourage them to explore the compounding impacts of intersecting discriminations which pushed some members so far back that they had nowhere else to go and to reflect on the multiple privileges that propelled others forward.

Ask the participants to suggest ways in which the exercise might have extended their thinking about the impacts of privilege and power in refugee and humanitarian settings and in particular to start to reflect on the impacts of their own positionality. This will establish a strong framework for the next two exercises.