

## Privilege Walk (Notes for Facilitators)

### Purpose

- Expose the lifelong impact of privileges and 'normality' that we were either born into or born without. Privileges are assumed and seldom addressed in our daily interactions – this 'invisibility' is part of the problem.
- Start a (hard) dialogue on inequalities (Please see note of caution below!)
- Begin to identify how to address the imbalances created by privilege

### Process

- Ask everyone to stand along a line across the room.
- Explain that when you read a statement, participants should consider if it applies to them and then either step forward or back.
- Point out that the purpose of this exercise is not to apportion blame and make people feel bad, but to make us all aware of the invisible privileges that we have come to take for granted (or not) Explain that the statements do not target personal, but rather collective privileges
- Read out the statements and facilitate the stepping 'out of line'.
- Ask participants to 'stop!' and look around: who is standing where?
- Invite them to sit down and facilitate dialogue around the experience.
- Include questions such as
  - o How did this exercise make you feel? Why?
  - o What did you feel / think when you felt /saw others moving away from you?
  - o How did you deal with feelings of unease when you did not want to show up / expose yourself as privileged (or not)?
  - o What did the final arrangement of people tell us about inequality?
  - o Are there any dimensions of privilege that were left out in this particular exercise? (I.e. if the workshop is focused on racism, did we look into gender, ableism, multi-lingualism?)
  - o Where does privilege (or the lack of it) come from and how is it reproduced?
  - o What can we do about it?
- End the activity with a breathing exercise. Ask participants to name what they will do differently in their own lives? How will they attempt to change the conditions that created privileges? What systems need to be tackled, and how?
- End the process by thanking all participants. (Depending on the tension in the room you could have a follow-up energiser to facilitate moving on, together.

### An added note for facilitators:

- There is a danger of a situation arising where people who are less privileged having to educate the privileged. In deciding whether this is an appropriate exercise or not, one needs to consider how this situation might arise, how it might be addressed and worked with or whether a different exercise should be used.

- There are varieties of this exercise. See this one, for example, using a circle instead of a line as the starting formation ([See Brown's idea](#)).

## Statements

*(Select those statements that seem most appropriate to the group you are working with)*

If your ancestors were from a rural area, take one step back.

If your home language is English, take one step forward.

If you've ever tried to change your appearance, mannerisms or behaviour to avoid being judged or ridiculed, take one step back.

If you've ever had to skip a meal, or were hungry because there was not enough money to buy food while you were growing up, take one step back.

If one or both of your parents were professionals in secure employment take one step forward.

If there were people working in your household as servants, gardeners, etc., while you were growing up, take one step forward.

If your family owned the house where you grew up take one step forward.

If you were raised in a one-parent household, take one step back.

If you rely primarily on public transportation, take one step back.

If you were raised in an area where there were drug, gangs and regular violence, take one step back.

If you saw members of your race or ethnic group portrayed in the media in degrading positions or roles, take one step back.

If you studied the culture of your ancestors in primary school, take one step forward.

If you were encouraged to attend further / higher education by your parents, take one step forward.

If you were paid less, treated unfairly or denied employment because of race, class, ethnicity take one step back.

If you were ever offered a good job because of your association with a friend or family member, take one step forward.

If you were ever afraid of, or the victim of violence because of your race take one step back.

If you were ever uncomfortable about a joke related to your race, but felt unsafe to confront the situation, take one step back.

Adapted by Astrid von Kotze from School of Social Welfare, Albany University, New York. (2009):

<http://www.albany.edu/ssw/efc/efc-trainers-manual.html>