

Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative Privilege Walk Session Plan

In 2021 Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) Research Centre adapted a Privilege Walk exercise to enable members of the centre to reflect on their experiences (and their colleagues') experiences of privilege and the challenges faced by people they work with outside of OPHI. The exercise was a starting point for further conversations and actions as a team.

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The session takes 1 hour and was delivered in hybrid, using Quizizz to engage participants virtually. It consists of the Privilege Walk and both individual reflection and group discussion to create space for the team to share and learn from each other. The facilitators sought to create an open, safe environment where participants felt able to talk about the issues openly.

Session outline:

Time	Duration	Task
4.00pm	5 mins	<p>Introduction to session on privilege and OPHI values Introduce the concept of the Privilege Walk and the session's purpose.</p>
4.05pm	20 mins	<p>Run the Privilege Walk exercise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an explanation of the exercise • Explain its limitations <p>If delivering in hybrid, project the virtual exercise on screen. The online questions will need to be facilitated separately online.</p>
4.20pm	10 mins	<p>Plenary discussion of reflections on experience and interpretation The team remains in the positions reached during the walk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selects 2 roles at the front, asks who they were, invites reflections • Selects 2 roles at the back asks who they were, invites reflections <p>Open the discussion to online participants and people in the middle. Potential questions to pose: "What did this exercise make you think about?" "Why do you think your character is here?"</p>
4.30pm	10 mins	<p>Translation Exercise to explore what this means for us and our work at the research centre, including its values.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Start with 5mins of Individual reflection, asking people to write down what comes up for them. b) In small groups of approx. 4 people, participants exchange ideas coming out of the individual exercise and collate ideas on Mural. <p>Facilitation questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did the exercise make you think about? • How does our knowledge of privilege/disadvantages that we gain from this activity inform how we work at OPHI? How does privilege relate to our work at OPHI? • How does this translate into OPHI values? Has the role play renewed any existing OPHI values for you, or added any? • How do you think OPHI's work is affected by inequality?

		<p>If delivering in hybrid, project Mural on screen and a facilitator will need to create break out groups online too. Each in-person group will need a rapporteur with a laptop/phone to post on Mural.</p> <p>Encourage action points and ensure groups online and in-person are engaged in the discussion.</p>
4.45pm	10 mins	<p>Small groups report back to the group the ‘flashlights’ (3 highlights) from their discussion.</p> <p>Collect the feedback on the Mural in a common ‘mind map’</p>
4.50pm	5 mins	<p>Closing, thank you and next steps</p> <p>Comments from facilitators</p>

Summary of the Research Centre Privilege Exercise

The research centre created semi-fictional stakeholders from its research context, including protagonists of poverty, donors, researchers, with a role for each participant.

Sample role cards are shared below. The roles were randomly allotted to participants and their identity revealed at the end of the exercise.

During the exercise, each question is answered ‘yes or no’ in turn based on the character’s description and participants should be encouraged to use their judgement if unsure. Participants should take one step forward (in the room or a virtual platform) for each ‘yes’ response.

Resources required:

1. **Role cards:** It is worth identifying relevant roles for your context to represent the breadth of stakeholders and number of participants. The sample role cards below share the level of detail provided and some examples.
2. **Questions:** It is worth reviewing the questions posed in the exercise. They were developed to transverse multiple areas of privilege (class, gender, nationality, age, race, language and epistemic exclusion or marginalisation)
3. **Space:** The room will need adequate space for participants to move forward.
4. **Facilitators:** A hybrid session will require some to administer the activity, including setting up breakout rooms and updating Mural.
5. **Online feedback tool:** [Mural](#) was used to collate feedback and reflections.

Privilege Walk questions

1. I generally feel safe when travelling/being out at night alone.
2. I can easily get a visa to travel wherever I would like to go in the global North.
3. In the last six months, I was able to access a COVID vaccine if I wanted to.
4. I have received a formal education that is accepted all around the world.
5. I feel confident that my contextual ‘knowledge’ is respected and internationally accepted as epistemically ‘valid’.
6. English is my first language.
7. I speak the language of the community I live in.
8. I am not an immigrant in my country of residence.
9. I have formal legal status in my country of residence.
10. My organisation has the resources and independence to set its own agenda and implement its ideas/vision of development or work.

11. I can see multiple positive role models who share my identities or with whom I feel affinity in the sector I work in/community where I live.
12. I can contact the police in my country of residence confident that they will help me.
13. I generally feel good about how my identities are portrayed in the international media.
14. I can be open about my sexual identity without fear.
15. I can make mistakes without worrying people around me will attribute my mistakes to perceptions of my identities.
16. I have never been asked to speak on behalf of a group of people who share an identity with me.

Sample Roles cards:

Early career technician in Statistical Bureau in Malawi

Male technician, educated in Malawi and US, belongs to Ngoni ethnic group (a minority ethnic group). Single, 38, Malawian national who financially supports his siblings. He is Muslim and speaks Ngoni and English.

Minister of Social Development in Mexico

Female Mexican national, educated at the top Mexican university for political science now serving as Minister of Social Development. Comes from prominent family in the ruling party of Mexico, MORENA and attends Catholic Mass every Sunday.

Grandfather in multidimensionally poor household in Colombia

A widower, 84, who lives with his son in Litoral Pacifico, the highest MPI region of Colombia. He is an Afro-Colombian who speaks Spanish and Creole and attends Catholic Mass when he can. Their household is deprived in years of schooling, cooking fuel, sanitation, drinking water and housing.

Married woman, 40s, in multidimensionally poor household in Afghanistan

Married Muslim woman, 40s, in multidimensionally poor household in Afghanistan (according to national MPI), deprived in electricity, schooling and security. Unable to work, 2 children.

OPHI employee with citizenship in global South

Female 20s, a Zimbabwean national whose first language is Shona, plans to go into national government or the UN, belongs to a Pentecostal Christian church.

QEH MPhil student, German national

Female student from Germany on a fully-funded scholarship living outside of home country for the first time. Speaks German, Italian and English as third language and attends a Protestant Church. Her girlfriend is studying in Germany.

Limitations of the Privilege Walk exercise

There is criticism of the Privilege Walks, e.g. <https://medium.com/@MegB/why-i-dont-won-t-facilitate-privilege-walks-anymore-and-what-i-do-instead-380c95490e10> and alternatives, e.g. Privilege Sale exercise or Positioning Exercises.

The questions posed and sample cards might also miss aspects of privilege, including anticipation of exclusion and so there is scope to adjust questions for each context.

There is a risk of stereotyping or assumptions in empathetic roleplay and it is not a direct comparison of individual roles, as questions are not weighted.