



## A2 ACTIVITIES TO REVEAL HIDDEN ISSUES

# Exploring men and women's power over resources



## Why use this activity?

This tool helps people understand the differences men and women face in **accessing resources** and holding **power over resources**. It often reveals that, while women may be able to access (or use) resources, in most cases they hold little power over them.

This activity is intended to be used as part of a wider process or project, and not as a stand-alone tool without any follow-up. Its main purpose is to help a community begin to recognise the differences in the power held between women and men. Along with other resources, it will hopefully inspire communities to act to change this power imbalance.

Any discussions of this nature, which address power and status within families and communities, need to be facilitated and managed with wisdom and sensitivity. In some situations, raising these issues may cause tension and conflict. This doesn't mean that we should not try to raise them, but that we should do so carefully and as part of a process that will have further follow-up, support and action. We recommend that you read the **Introductory tool: Facilitation skills** before using this tool.



## A brief description

In separate groups, children, men and women rank the level of access to, and control over, resources that the three groups have. They then discuss the results together.



## Explaining the words we use

**Resources** – things that are valuable and useful in a community such as water, cattle, education or money

**Access to resources** – Being able to get to resources, such as water, wood, cattle, land, money, and also to use them

**Control over resources** – Ownership of the resource, or the ability or right to make decisions about the resource – deciding who is able to use it, when they can use it, how much they can use, whether it can be sold (or bought) and for what price, etc.

Awareness-raising

Children &amp; youth

Climate &amp; environment

Conflict &amp; peace-building

Corruption &amp; governance

Disaster risk management

Discrimination &amp; inclusion

Food &amp; livelihoods

Gender &amp; sexual violence

Health &amp; HIV

Influencing decision-makers

Migration &amp; trafficking

Water, sanitation &amp; hygiene

## A2 EXPLORING MEN AND WOMEN'S CONTROL OVER RESOURCES



## You will need

- Large pieces of paper and pens, or an area of dry ground and sticks.
- Small stones or seeds (if you prefer to use these rather than a pen or stick to record scores).



## What to do

- Divide people into separate groups of children, men and women. It is best not to make the groups too big (no more than eight people), so you may have more than three groups. If there are many children of different ages, you could separate them into younger and older children.
- Draw an empty table similar to the one shown in the example below, with the headings “resources”, “access” and “control”. Ask the group to list the resources in their community, and draw or write them in the left hand column under the word ‘resources’. Ask plenty of questions to help the group think about all the different resources available. You may need to make suggestions. Examples include food, land, water, timber, health services, education services, cattle, money, clothes and vehicles. It is important for the group to choose resources that are relevant to their context.

Resources	Access			Control		
	Children	Women	Men	Children	Women	Men
Land						
Food						
Water						
Etc...						
Etc...						
Total						

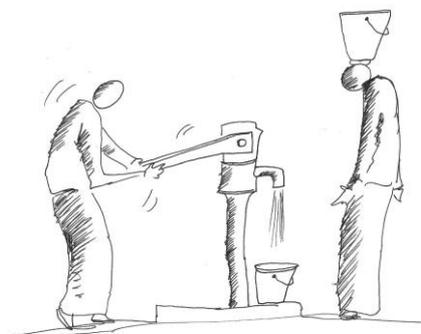
- Encourage the children to do this exercise first and ask the adults not to speak at all while they are doing it. Ask the children to give a score of between ‘0’ and ‘4’ in their own column, under access, to show how much access they think they have to those resources, compared to men and women. ‘0’ means no access or control while ‘4’ means a lot of access. Explain to them that access means how much they can get to and use a resource. You could use small stones or seeds to score, rather than writing numbers.

Then ask them to agree a score for how much control they have over those resources. Explain that control means whether they are able to make decisions about the use of these resources.

A2 EXPLORING MEN AND WOMEN'S CONTROL OVER RESOURCES

You will probably need to explain this more than once to help people to really understand the difference between 'access' and 'control'. You could use a small drama to explain what you mean. For example, one person in your group could pretend to forcibly take another person away from their home to another home where they have to work. Explain that the person who was taken has access to the new home and all its resources, but they have no control about leaving their old home or leaving the new home. (You may need to change this example if this is a sensitive issue in the community you are working with).

- Once the children have completed this exercise, ask the women to do it, in columns next to the children's column. Ask the men not to speak.
- Finally, ask the men to complete the exercise. Ask questions if they say they have the same or less control than women or children, or if they say they have more access (use) of a resource.



For example:

Resource	Access			Control		
	Children	Women	Men	Children	Women	Men
Land	2	4	2	0	1	4
Equipment	1	3	2	0	1	4
Food	1	4	3	0	1	4
Water	0	4	1	0	0	4
Total	4	13	11*	0	3	16

*\*It is important to note that men often can access any of the resources, but that they often aren't the people who actually do access. That is why they may get a lower score in this column.*



## A2 EXPLORING MEN AND WOMEN'S CONTROL OVER RESOURCES

RESOURCE	ACCESS			CONTROL		
	4	13	11	—	3	16

In the example shown above, women and children have very little power. Women usually have much less power over resources than men.

- Once each group has completed the table, ask the groups to compare their answers. You could use the following questions to guide discussion:
  - What differences are there between the columns completed by men, women and children?
  - Who has access to resources in the community?
  - Is it necessary for women to access water, food, cattle or land more than men or could their workload be reduced in some way? For example by piping water in, changing livelihoods, managing the asset more efficiently, or sharing the load more equally with men? How could this happen?
  - Who holds the power over these resources? Why is this?
  - What is wrong with women having less power or more access?
  - What could be done to ensure that power is held more equally?
- Encourage people to reflect personally on what they have learnt and discussed:** *how can we work towards more fairness and equality in accessing and holding power over resources? How would family life and community life benefit from men and women sharing more equal access to and power over resources?*

Explain any next steps you have planned in terms of other activities or studies on this issue. It is important that you have thought about and planned what you will do next so you can explain to the community how things will be taken forward. This activity may have raised some difficult issues – it is extremely important that you continue to support the community as they go forward from this point. We recommend that your next steps include some of the **Bible studies in Section B**. You could also consider using **Tool A2: Exploring gender roles and power**.

## A2 EXPLORING MEN AND WOMEN'S CONTROL OVER RESOURCES

Using groups of children, men and women draws out the vulnerabilities that children and women often face. However, you could also divide people into other groups, for example, people with disabilities, older people or ethnic minorities, to help reveal the needs and vulnerabilities of different groups of people.



## Finding out more

- Tearfund (2007) Footsteps: Family life  
[http://tilz.tearfund.org/en/resources/publications/footsteps/footsteps\\_71-80/footsteps\\_72/](http://tilz.tearfund.org/en/resources/publications/footsteps/footsteps_71-80/footsteps_72/)

### Related tools

- A1 – Revealing inequality between men and women: information for facilitators [*A1: Gender & sexual violence-3*]
- A2 – Understanding how men and women use their time [*A2: Gender & sexual violence-1*]
- A2 – Exploring gender and power [*A2: Gender & sexual violence-5*]
- A2 – Men and women: listening to one another [*A2: Gender & sexual violence-6*]
- B – Gender and restoring relationships (Bible study) [*B: Gender & sexual violence-1*]
- B – God's view of women (Bible study) [*B: Gender & sexual violence-3*]
- B – God's view of men (Bible study) [*B: Gender & sexual violence-4*]
- B – Men, women and God (Bible study) [*B: Gender & sexual violence-5*]
- B – Men, women, love and submission (Bible study) [*B: Gender & sexual violence-6*]

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