

Gaining Status

“Many women do not recognize themselves as discriminated against; no better proof could be found of the totality of their conditioning.” Kate Millet

- Complexity** Level I
- Group size** 6 to 30
- Time** 60 minutes
- Overview** This is a brainstorming and prioritisation activity in which you ask participants to think about the status of girls in the society where they live, as well as broader questions of gender and gender equality.
- Objectives**
- To understand the status of girls in the contemporary society
 - To understand the social mechanisms by which society confers status on girls
 - To identify ways in which the status of girls can be improved
- Materials**
- Flipchart
 - Markers
 - Pens
 - Blank paper
- Preparation** This activity does not require significant advance preparation but it is worthwhile for the facilitator to become acquainted with some factual information about the status of girls and young women in the society in which the participants you work with come from.

Instructions

Ask participants the following question:

- What gives status to girls in your society?

You should take note of all the answers on a flip chart or wall chart. Brainstorm for as long as the ideas are flowing freely but for not more than 20 minutes or so. Then ask the group to split up into pairs and to rank the five most important things on the list from 1-5 (1 is most important, 5 is the least important). Give them 15 minutes to complete their ranking.

Then ask the pairs to compare their list with that of any other pair sitting close to them. Ask the groups of four to make their own rank order on the basis of the two lists prepared by the pairs. Give the groups 20 to 30 minutes for this ranking.

Ask the groups of four to present their rankings to the whole group.

Debriefing and evaluation

Begin the debriefing by reviewing the results of the ranking exercise. Is anyone surprised by any of the results? Ask participants if they consider anything particularly noteworthy?

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- Is there any difference between the first list and the second list?
- Why do you think there is a difference?
- What do we want to change about the status of girls?
- What are we able to change?
- How can we change those things?
- Why are girls affected disproportionately when it comes to gender-based violence?
- What instruments are in place to protect the rights of girls?

Tips for facilitators

This exercise can also be well complemented by input and discussion on the European Convention on Human Rights and other human rights instruments, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Consult *Compass*² for more information about these instruments of human rights protection or for good advice about working with ranking techniques if you have never worked with this method before.

Suggestions for follow-up

This exercise can be followed up appropriately by the development of group and personal action plans on the improvement of the status of girls.

Ideas for action

If participants demonstrate an interest in the issue of the status of young women and girls worldwide you can suggest that they consider reading more about it in the 'World Youth Reports' published periodically by the United Nations (Youth Unit). These can be found online at www.un.org/youth. Your group could, on the basis of the information gained, consider developing a campaign to improve the position and status of young women and girls locally or internationally.

² www.coe.int/compass