SESSION 3

**our many identities**

**One Step Forwards**

Statements and character cards:   
Middle East and North Africa

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In this document you can find character cards and statements to edit, print and use when you run the ‘One Step Forwards’ exercise (found in Session 3 of the Local Changemakers course). These cards and statements have been tailored to Muslim majority contexts in the Middle East and North Africa region. Use the following guidance to select which characters and statements to use and to adapt them to your group’s particular context.

Statements

**Guidance for selecting statements**

You will need 12-15 statements. A list of around 30 statements is provided to choose from.

The statements are presented in the following five categories:

* Societal respect and personal confidence.
* Ability to make choices.
* Material well-being and security.
* Vulnerability to discrimination or violence.
* Freedom to have and practice your religion.

Choose at least 2 statements from each category, basing your choice on the scenarios you think are most relevant to your context. Adapt the statements if necessary.

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| **SOCIETAL RESPECT AND PERSONAL CONFIDENCE** |
| Your language, religion and culture are respected in your society. |
| You feel that your opinions matter and that your views are listened to and sought after by those around you. |
| You are comfortable speaking in public and expressing your opinion. |
| You feel that your competence is appreciated and respected by those you are close to and the wider community. |
| **ABILITY TO MAKE CHOICES** |
| You are involved in making decisions about major purchases for your household. |
| You can meet friends and take trips to meet family without asking anyone’s permission. |
| You can go to school, and study and follow the career of your choice. |
| You can fall in love with the person of your choice, even if they have a different religion than you do. |
| You can get a divorce if you need to, without fear of being punished by those around you  (for example through exclusion from your social networks). |
| You can vote in national and local elections. |
| You can have whatever hobbies, play whatever sports, or see whatever films you want. |
| You can take decisions about your body – for example how many children to have and when. |
| **MATERIAL WELL-BEING AND SECURITY** |
| You and your family are not vulnerable to natural disasters. |
| You have adequate access to medical care and to social benefits/a safety net in case of illness or unemployment. |
| You can give your children what they need to grow up healthy and are not afraid for their future. |
| You know what to do and where to turn for help if you get into difficulties. |
| You feel that you will be able to progress in your career as you want to. |
| You have access to plenty of information about HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. |
| **VULNERABILITY TO DISCRIMINATION OR VIOLENCE** |
| You have never felt discriminated against because of your ethnicity, caste or religion. |
| You are not afraid of being stopped by the police and have never been arrested. |
| You feel safe at home and on the street and are not worried about abuse, sexual harassment or street harassment. |
| School textbooks give/gave you the impression that people like you are good members of society who can achieve anything. |
| Your religious, ethnic, or other identity is positively portrayed in the media. |
| You don’t have any problems getting a new ID card, and using your ID card doesn’t lead to discrimination. |
| **FREEDOM TO HAVE AND PRACTICE YOUR RELIGION** |
| You can celebrate the most important religious festivals, both with the people close to you and publicly. |
| You can travel abroad for a pilgrimage, to meet co-believers or to attend an international seminar. |
| You can pray openly in public and attend your place of worship. |
| The religious community you belong to can build or open a place of worship without facing problems from the authorities or other groups in society. |
| You can be open with your worldview to family, friends and colleagues and talk about it in social media without fear of repercussions. |
| You can acquire, read and share information about your religion or belief freely. |
| You will not lose your friends or social status if you convert to a different religion. |

Character cards

**Guidance for selecting and adapting characters**

You will need 1 character per participant. The characters proposed on the pages that follow are presented in 5 categories:

* Characters with social, political or religious power and/or relatively few vulnerabilities.
* Characters with vulnerabilities related to the intersection of religion/belief and gender.
* Characters with vulnerabilities related to religious or belief identity.
* Characters with vulnerabilities related to caste, class, migrant status or other factors.
* Other characters.

**ADD OR DELETE CHARACTERS**

Think about the list of characters provided:

* Are any characters irrelevant for your context – delete these or edit them to make them relevant.
* Are any really important characters for your context missing, for example a person from a particular religious, ethnic or social group? Add these, keeping the character description short. (NB: Do not add many! Unless you have a very big group, you will have to cut characters to match the size of your group.)

**SELECT CHARACTERS**

* Make sure you include characters from every category.
* No more than one in six characters selected should be from the category with power.
* Choose how many/which characters to select from other categories based on which vulnerabilities are most relevant and important to highlight in your context.
* Include a range of religious/belief identities and a balance of male and female characters.

**TAILOR CHARACTERS IF DESIRED**

Participants will be able to engage with the characters more fully if you spend a little time contextualising characters to your national context. For example, you could edit the characters to specify the place the character lives, name the state agency they work for etc. This is not essential for the exercise to work.

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| CATEGORY  Characters with power and/or  relatively few vulnerabilities. | **You are an influential Islamic scholar based at the most prestigious  institute of theology in your country.** |
| **You are a Western woman  working for a development  NGO in the capital city.** | **You teach in a local  Madrasa in a small town.** |
| **You are a devout, middle-class  Muslim man with a good job.** | **You are a parliamentarian  representing the party  currently in government.** |
| **You are a high-ranking  military officer.** | CATEGORY  Characters with vulnerabilities  related to religion and gender. |
| **You are a Muslim woman  who is severely beaten  by her husband.** | **You are a Christian woman  who is severely beaten  by her husband.** |
| **You are a 16-year-old Muslim girl.**  **Your parents are devout and conservative, and you live in a small town.  You want to go to university and  do not want to marry at a young age.** | **You are a 16-year-old Christian girl.  Your parents are devout and conservative, and you live in a small town.  You want to go to university and  do not want to marry at a young age.** |
| **You are an unemployed single mother  living in a morally conservative  Muslim community.** | **You are a Muslim girl who has  fallen in love with a Christian boy.** |
| **You are a Christian woman  who is married with 2 children.  Your husband has converted to Islam.** | **You are a young Christian girl who is at risk  of female genital mutilation (circumcision).** |
| CATEGORY  Characters with vulnerabilities related to  religious or belief identity. | **You are a convert  from Islam to Christianity.** |
| **You are a convert**  **from Christianity to Islam.** | **You are a female Shia shop worker,  in a Sunni majority area.** |
| **You are a young Yezidi woman.  You fled Iraq with your family in 2015.** | **You are the wife of a protestant Christian pastor.  You work as a teacher in a state school.** |
| **You are a young democracy activist.  You do not believe that religion  should control people’s lives.** | **You are a young woman  from the Baha'i community.** |
| **You are a male member of the capital’s  small Jewish community.** | **You are a Christian priest in a  small village in the countryside.** |
| CATEGORY  Characters with vulnerabilities related  to caste, class, migrant status  or other factors. | **You are a young man from a poor rural area.  You moved to the capital city  to earn money for your family.** |
| **You are an elderly, disabled woman  in a Muslim family living in a rural area.  You are widowed and your son has lost his job.  He plans to move to the city.** | **You are a university educated young man.  You have been unemployed for 3 years since graduation.** |
| **You are a migrant worker from Ethiopia  working as a live-in domestic worker  in a well-off Muslim family.  You are an Orthodox Christian.** | **You are a Sunni Muslim refugee from a  neighbouring war-torn country. You are  struggling with housing, employment and poverty.  You want to continue your university studies.** |
| **You are a daily wage labourer  with three children to support.** | CATEGORY  Other characters. |
| **You are an unemployed, young Muslim man  who participated in recent mob attack  on a minority place of worship.** | **(Add additional characters here.)** |
| **(Add additional characters here.)** | **(Add additional characters here.)** |
| **(Add additional characters here.)** | **(Add additional characters here.)** |