SESSION 3

**our many identities**

**One Step Forwards**

Statements and character cards: Sub-Sahel 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 countries in the belt below the Sahel – countries that often have both Christian and Muslim majorities in different parts of the country (or large minorities). 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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| CATEGORYCharacters with power and/or relatively few vulnerabilities. |  **You are a well-known, respected and influential leader within the majority religious community.**  |
| **You are a Western woman working for a development NGO in the capital city.** | **You teach in a local Madrasa in a Muslim majority small town.** |
| **You are a devout, middle-class man from the majority religious community.** | **You are a parliamentarian representing the party currently in government.** |
| **You are a high-ranking military officer.** | CATEGORYCharacters 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 young girl in a rural area. You do not want to be circumcised (FGM) or marry young but this is expected in your community.**  |
|  **You are an unemployed single mother living in a morally conservative Christian community.** | **You are a Christian boy who is in lovewith a Muslim girl. Both families would oppose the relationship if they knew.**  |
| **You are a lesbian Christian woman** **and live with your partner.** **You wish to come out to your family.**  | CATEGORYCharacters with vulnerabilities related to religious or belief identity. |
| **You are a Muslim woman who has moved to a Christian majority area to find work. Your clothes make you stand out and you feel looked down on.** | **You are a Christian woman who has moved to a Muslim majority area for work. Your clothes and hairstyle make you stand out. There is resentment towards Christian incomers ‘stealing jobs’.**  |
| **You are a young Muslim man with a beard who lives in a Christian majority area. There has recently been an attack by a terror group with links to Islam in the country.** | **You are a Christian pastor working with a small congregation in a part of the country that has a Muslim majority.**  |
| **You are a young woman and a convert from Islam to Christianity. Your family are not aware of your conversion yet.**  | **You are a middle-aged woman who practices an African traditional religion. You reject both Christianity and Islam.** |
| **You are a 16-year-old Muslim girl living in a camp for people displaced due to violence by jihadist groups. Your parents are worried about your safety and honour and are considering your marriage.** | **You are a teenage Christian boy attending a rural boarding school. Children in a neighbouring district were recently abducted from their school by a terror group with links to Islam.**  |
| **You are non-religious. You are involved in** **a campaign for an end to religious influence****in politics and law. Your activism is well-known,** **and your views are seen as un-African.** | CATEGORYCharacters with vulnerabilities related to caste, class, migrant status or other factors. |
| **You are a male daily wage labourer. You live in a slum area close to the capital city. You are trying to get a driver’s license to become a minibus taxi driver.**  | **You are an elderly, disabled man** **in a rural area. Your son is moving to a major city with his family.**  |
|  **You and your husband are farmers and Christians. Nomadic cattle herders sometimes cross your land, damaging crops. Armed herders have attacked some farms. Your impression is that Christian farms are especially vulnerable.**  | **You are a woman belonging to a community of nomadic cattle herders. Changes in patterns of land use and climate change are making life harder. You are a Muslim and practice traditional religion.** |
| **You are a woman and a smallholder farmer. Your plot of land does not produce enough food to feed your family and is increasingly affected by droughts caused by climate change.** | **You are a widow with three children. Everyone knows that your husband died of AIDS and that you and one of your children are HIV positive.**  |
| CATEGORYOther characters. | **You are a rural woman whose son has been recruited to a terror group operating in some parts of the country.** |
| **You are a member of the UN/ECOWAS peacekeeping forces deployed in the country.** | **(Add additional characters here.)** |
| **(Add additional characters here.)** | **(Add additional characters here.)** |
| **(Add additional characters here.)** | **(Add additional characters here.)** |