

# Different dangers 1 h – 1 h 40 min



FORB AND GENDER

SORTING EXERCISE  
GROUP EXERCISE

## About the exercise

### TARGET AUDIENCE

Best suited to faith-based/grassroots communities and civil society organisations/human rights defenders. Requires a basic understanding of gender equality and FORB among participants.

### PURPOSE

- To help participants recognise that violations of freedom of religion or belief (FORB) affect women and men differently.
- To enable participants to reflect on how different groups of women in their context are affected by violations of FORB.

### DESCRIPTION

Quick sorting and listing exercises in small groups are followed by plenary discussion. The exercise follows on well from the '[Article 18: pronoun swap](#)' exercise on page 102, but you can run it without connecting the two.



### NOTE

In many contexts, women contend with societal norms that they should not speak up in public and that the kinds of violations they experience should not be discussed in public. To create safe space and build confidence, this exercise may work best in single-sex groups with a facilitator of the same sex. This strengthens women's participation and empowers them to speak freely, which can also boost confidence to speak in a mixed group setting later.

If the training group is mixed, then two single-sex groups can come together at the end of the exercise and volunteer spokespersons can summarise the reflections of their groups. Facilitators can then invite participants to further reflect on similarities and differences in the reflections from the two groups.

In this exercise, it is advisable to be prepared to deal with emotions that this exercise may trigger in participants with personal experiences of violations. Have a co-facilitator who can help you with this should the situation arise!

## Instructions

### RESOURCES AND ADVANCE PREPARATION

- One copy of the 'FORB violations' [handout](#) per group of three participants.
- Prepare one flipchart sheet per group with the headings 'MEN' and 'WOMEN' at the top of two columns.
- One roll of tape and one pair of scissors per group of three participants.
- Think about which of the points in the '[FORB and gender information sheet](#)' you would like to include in your comments during the plenary discussion.

Find the handout and information sheet at [www.forb-learning.org/exercises/different-dangers](http://www.forb-learning.org/exercises/different-dangers).



### OPTIONAL EXTRA: BUILD YOUR CONFIDENCE!

This can be a challenging topic for some participants. Review the [‘Tips for facilitators’](#) section on page 282 and [‘Responding to tricky questions’](#) on page 286. Boost your understanding of the topic by taking the short online course [‘FORB and gender equality – enemies or allies’](#) at [www.forb-learning.org/courses/forb-and-gender](http://www.forb-learning.org/courses/forb-and-gender).

#### HOW TO INTRODUCE THE EXERCISE 5 MIN

Explain that both men and women around the world experience violations of FORB, but they experience them differently. Tell participants that they are going to take a closer look at this in small groups.

Ask participants to form groups of three with the people sitting closest to them. Give each group one copy of the ‘FORB violations’ handout, along with tape, scissors and the flipchart sheet with the headings women and men written on.

#### HOW TO RUN THE EXERCISE 45 MIN/85 MIN

##### PART 1

##### • GROUPWORK (15 MIN)

Ask participants to look through the violations on the handout, cut them up into strips and sort the strips into two piles – a pile of violations that men are, generally speaking, more likely to experience, and those that women are, generally speaking, more likely to experience. Tape the strips to the corresponding side of the flipchart sheet.

Point out that this is not a debate about whether women and/or men actually experience these violations in your context – the task is to decide if men or women are MORE LIKELY to experience the violation concerned in any given context.

##### • PLENARY DISCUSSION (30 MIN)

Stick the flipchart sheets to the wall and ask the groups to gather around them and spend a couple of minutes looking at other groups’ responses.

Lead the discussion using the following questions:

- What do you notice? (For example, that the column for women is longer.)
- What kind of violations are women more likely to experience in general? (For example, violations in the context of the home, sexual violence.)
- Do different groups have different views as to who is most affected by some violations?
- Which of these violations do women in OUR community sometimes or typically face?
- Are any violations of FORB that happen in our context missing from list? How do those violations affect women and men?
- In our context, are all women affected in the same way or are some groups of women more affected or more vulnerable to particular types of violations? (Ask about women from particular minorities, majority women, women who go against social/gender norms and women who leave their religion/convert).
- How long does the impact of violations faced by women last?
- Why do women and men in our context face different types of violations? What is it about our context that results in this/what ideas and norms underlie these differences?

Try to ensure that the following points are made by you or participants during the discussion. Try to make the points ‘come alive’ by asking for or sharing stories and examples that illustrate them.

- Women face intersectional discrimination – they are at risk of harassment, discrimination and violence both because they are women AND because of their religious or non-religious identity and beliefs.
- Men primarily experience violations of FORB in the public sphere, while women face violations both in the public and the private sphere – in the home, family, and/or community. The reason for this is that women's and men's roles, capabilities and value are perceived differently by society, something which is determined by cultural and religious understandings.
- Very often, women's experiences of violations of FORB remain invisible and undocumented. There are many reasons for this, for example:
  - o societal norms concerning the role and rights of women
  - o impunity and the State's unwillingness to hold perpetrators accountable
  - o a culture of shame within some communities, which keeps such abuses (particularly sexual abuses) hidden, including the ostracization of women affected (and their children).
- Choose additional points to make from the '[FORB and gender information sheet](#)', according to their relevance for your context. Use stories and examples from your context to illustrate the points.



## PART 2 (OPTIONAL)

### • **GROUPWORK** (20 MIN)

Tell participants they are now going to focus in on the issue of conversion in their context. Distribute flipchart sheets and markers to each small group. Ask the groups to list the challenges a man would face if he tried to convert from one religion to another in your context. Then, list the challenges a woman would face if she tried the same. Compare the lists and identify the differences.

### • **PLENARY DISCUSSION** (20 MIN)

Bring the groups back to the plenary and lead the discussion with the following questions:

- What difference did you identify in the challenges facing male and female converts in your context?
- What ideas or norms underlie these differences?

### **HOW TO CONCLUDE THE EXERCISE** 10 MIN

Thank participants for their attention and engagement with this difficult topic. Say something along the following lines:

- In the face of all the problems we've been discussing we have two options: to feel depressed and powerless or to identify something concrete, however small, that we can do to try to make change. We'll be looking at what each of us can do more closely in later sessions. (Find exercises to help you do this in the [Action planning](#) chapter of this toolkit.)
- If possible, share a positive story of people making change from the local context – this is very inspiring for participants.

**TIP!** Take inspiration from CHANGEMAKERS STORIES available [here](#).

### **Source**

Adapted from FORB Learning Platform and Stefanus Alliance International learning resources by Rachel Fleming