Power

the ability to create or resist change

Prepared by Manisha Majumdar for the IAWN consultation for South Asia, Hyderabad, October 2015
Power: different forms

• **Visible**: observable/ tangible decision-making mechanisms and forums.

• **Hidden**: form or influence the political agenda behind the scenes.

• **Invisible**: norms and beliefs, socialisation, ideology.
Power can be:

- **Power over**: the power of the strong over the weak, including the power to exclude others.
- **Power to**: the capability to decide actions and carry them out.
- **Power with**: collective power, through organisation, solidarity and joint action.
- **Power within**: personal self-confidence, often linked to culture, religion or other aspects of identity, which influences the thoughts and actions that appear legitimate or acceptable.
Types of empowerment

• **Resource Power:** equal access to, and influence over resources and services

• **Knowledge Power:** An understanding of rights and entitlements, responsibilities and obligations, and the actions needed to attain them

• **Positional Power:** the ability to negotiate and claim rights and entitlements, and fulfil responsibilities and obligations, to ensure equality in outcomes

• **Personal Power:** self esteem, a personal realisation and motivation to claim resource, knowledge
Visible faces of ‘power over’

• Observable/ tangible decision-making mechanisms, to make and enforce rules:
  • policies, laws, constitutions, budgets, regulations etc.

• Other examples of ‘power over’?
Hidden faces of ‘power over’

- **Hidden power**: setting the agenda behind the scene, deciding who is invited / excluded
- **Mechanisms**: exclusion by law or practice
- **Or other ways**: society’s unwritten rules, intimidation, misinformation or co-optation

**Example of hidden ‘power over’**: Big pharmaceutical company controls drug pricing, government health budget is non-transparent

Other examples?
Spaces of power

• **Closed spaces**: in private, no access, no entitlement

• **Invited Spaces**: some people are permitted to participate or observe

• **Claimed and created spaces**: excluded people create or claim their own space to make decisions

Examples from your context?
Domains of power

• **Public**: in public life

• **Private**: agreed to be out of public view

• **Intimate**: close relations
Analysis frameworks to look at your programmes

**POWER**

**Faces of power:** visible, invisible, hidden

**Spaces of power**
- Closed, open/invited
- Claimed/created

**Levels of power**
- From household to global

**Realms of power**
- Public, Private, intimate

**Types of power**
- Knowledge
- Resource
- Personal
- Positional

**Concepts of power**
- Power over
- Power to
- Power with
- Power within
Characteristics to remember

• Women and men hold multiple roles and relationships. With each their level of power can vary.
• Power – economic, social, culture, symbolic.
• People are rarely powerful (not powerless across) in all forms.
• Power is socially constructed.
• Not a zero sum game.
• Experiences of power depend on age, gender, caste, etc.
Reflect

• What are the gender dimensions of power?
• Who holds power?
• Where are decisions made?
• How can we address barriers? (social norms, attitudes, beliefs, legislations)
• What strategy to transform power?