

# **Facilitator Guidebook: The Intersectionality Game**

*Conversational Version*

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# Intersectionality Game

## 1. Why This Guide Exists

Hey there! If you're here, it probably means you're going to run the *Intersectionality Game*—awesome! This guide is here to help you do just that. We'll walk you through the steps, what you'll need, and how to create a space where people can open up and reflect on real-life experiences of inequality in a meaningful (and even fun!) way.

## 2. So... What's the Intersectionality Game?

It's a group activity where participants take on roles—like a Cambodian in a floating village or a garment worker in Vietnam—and try to “buy” their way through life using play money. Sounds playful, but it's a powerful way to understand how different kinds of marginalisation (like gender, poverty, or being from a minority group) can stack on top of each other and create real challenges.

People don't just play a game—they feel what it's like to face tough decisions with limited resources, unfair rules, and social bias. That's what makes it memorable.

## 3. Why Use It?

Let's face it: GEDSI issues can be hard to explain and even harder to feel. This activity helps people experience those issues in a safe space. It opens up honest conversation and helps groups rethink how their projects or systems might unintentionally leave people behind. It's great for NGOs, local leaders, government staff, students—really anyone who wants to understand inequality better.

## 4. What Is GEDSI, Anyway?

Glad you asked! GEDSI stands for:

- **Gender Equality** – making sure people of all genders have the same chances and voice
- **Disability Inclusion** – making sure people with disabilities are part of the conversation, not left out
- **Social Inclusion** – thinking about who usually gets left out (like ethnic minorities, migrants, poor families), and finding ways to bring them in

The key idea here is **intersectionality**. That's just a fancy word for how these things combine. For example: being a woman might bring certain challenges. But being a woman **and** from a poor, remote village? That can mean double or triple the barriers.

This game helps people not just learn about these ideas—but really *feel* them. And that makes a big difference.

## Section 2: Game Overview and Roles

### 1. What's the Goal of This Game?

The Intersectionality Game helps people:

- Understand how different forms of inequality stack up and interact
- Talk openly about hard topics like poverty, gender, disability, and more
- See how values (and biases) are assigned to different types of marginalisation
- Think about how we “buy” our way out of problems—or how some people can’t
- Reflect on what this all means for the work we do, especially in WEC (Water-Energy-Climate)

It’s not about having the “right” answers—it’s about building empathy and asking better questions.

### 2. How Does the Game Work?

Here’s the basic idea:

You’ll be split into small groups. Each group gets a role—like a garment worker in Vietnam or a family living in a Bangkok slum. Your group gets \$2000 in fake money and a list of problems your character faces—like no access to school, healthcare, or clean water.

You’ll try to “buy” your way out of those problems... but here’s the catch: there’s a Bank that sets the rules. And the Bank might charge you more—or even say “no”—based on who you are.

It sounds unfair, right? Exactly. That’s the point. This game helps us feel what it’s like to face invisible barriers that some people deal with every day.

### 3. Who Does What?

Here’s a quick look at the roles:

- Facilitator – That’s you! You guide the whole session, keep things moving, ask good questions, and make sure everyone feels heard.
- Scribe – Helps capture ideas, rankings, and reflections during group discussions. (Could be another team member or a participant.)
- The Bank – The fun but tricky role! The bank controls prices and decides who gets what. The bank can say “yes,” “no,” or “maybe, but it’ll cost more.” The idea is to reflect real-world bias—not be fair.
- Participants – The people playing the game. They get into character, talk it out, make tough choices, spend their budget, and reflect afterward.

### 4. How Long Does It Take?

The full game usually takes about 90 minutes to 2 hours. If you’re short on time, you can adapt or simplify some parts, but the deeper the discussion, the better the learning.

## **Section 3: Game Preparation**

### **1. What You'll Need**

Here's your game day packing list:

- Big sheets of paper (flipcharts or whiteboards)
- Markers—lots of them, and in fun colors!
- Worksheets for participants (for ranking and reflection)
- Character cards (with stories and background info)
- Fake money (you can print some or use monopoly-style bills)
- A list of what things “cost” (like clean water, education, health services)
- Printouts for you and your helpers (facilitator notes, Bank guide, scribe guide)
- Optional but cool: intersectionality diagram to explain the concept

### **2. Setting Up the Space**

- Put tables around the room so groups of 4–5 people can sit together.
- Set up a “Bank Table” where participants will go to try to spend their money.
- Make sure there's a flipchart or board visible to everyone for group sharing.

### **3. Getting Groups Ready**

- Aim for 4–5 people per group.
- If needed, group people by language or country so everyone can communicate easily.

### **4. Tips for You (the Facilitator)**

- Read through this whole guide before the session—trust us, it helps.
- Get all your materials printed and sorted ahead of time.
- Decide who's helping you—maybe a teammate to be the Bank, another as the note-taker.
- Prepare a short intro on intersectionality and GEDSI to start the session off strong.

## Overview Instructions for the Intersectionality game

<p>5 mins facilitated discussion</p>	<p><b>What is intersectionality and where does it come from?</b></p>	<p><b>Share origin story, ask why it is relevant for the audience</b></p>
<p>10 minutes facilitated discussion</p> <p><i>Roles: Facilitator, Scribe/harvest</i></p>	<p><b>What are conditions of marginalisation that we see/experience in our work? How do these conditions of marginalisation interact?</b></p>	<p><b>Show the Canadian diagram, capture conditions on flipchart or whiteboard.</b></p> <p><b>Framing questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What makes our context unique? How does this differ by country?</li> </ul>
<p>10 minutes</p> <p><i>Roles: Facilitator</i></p> <p>Materials: <i>Worksheet</i></p>	<p><b>Assigning values for conditions, keeping in mind their intersections - between 1 to 10 REQUIRED for the next step, and if they don't decide, it will be assigned a '10', and there will be consequences.</b></p>	<p><b>On a worksheet, groups of 4 or 5 (language groups) will assign values to the conditions, in a sense ranking them.</b></p> <p><b>Framing questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Which one is the most marginalising (high value) and which is least and why?</li> <li>- Do values change when we consider intersectionality of the conditions of marginalisation (compound)? How?</li> </ul>
<p>5 minutes</p> <p><i>Roles: Facilitator, Scribe/harvest</i></p>	<p><b>Debrief and calibration</b></p>	<p><b>Discussion questions: Can we create a ranking that everyone in the room can agree with? Why or why not?</b></p> <p><b>Scribe</b> - Capture the values on a flipchart</p>
<p>20 minutes</p> <p><i>Roles: Facilitator</i></p>	<p><b>Multiply your values by 100.</b></p> <p><b>Given the three identities, and \$2000, how would groups navigate the intersecting conditions - which ones can be dealt with using money, and which cannot?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bangkok slum dweller</li> <li>- Vietnamese garment factory worker</li> <li>- Cambodian living in 'floating' community</li> </ul>	<p><b>Questions to guide this part of the exercise:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How do conditions of marginalisation intersect in the given roles?</li> <li>- How does bias and prejudice play out in these roles?</li> <li>- How do these vary based on the context or set of roles?</li> </ul> <p>Materials: Intersectionality worksheets, Identity cards with basic contextual information, Play money</p>

		<p>Sizwile &amp; Boripat &amp; Leonie - will be the bank and will have the discretion to negotiate prices and/or access with participant groups (not a straightforward process) based in identities and intersectional marginalisations that sought to be 'purchased'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Buy your way through life?</li> </ul>
	<b>Report out from group – where do we end up?</b>	
<p>15 minutes</p> <p><i>Roles: Facilitator, Scribe/harvest</i></p>	<b>Debrief</b>	<p><b>Framing questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What are the difficulties with being able to rank or judge which conditions are more or less 'valued' in terms of marginalisation, at a personal and institutional level?</li> <li>- How does our current capitalist system enable us to 'buy' our way out of marginalisation, or not?</li> <li>- What reflections emerge from this exercise (personal, policy, in our work/projects) -</li> <li>- What if projects reinforce marginalisations</li> <li>- In what way is this about WEC? How is this an example of a WC issue - how does the exercise illustrate risks in our projects?</li> <li>- What are the GEDSI issues in WEC, what are the issues of exclusion and inequity in WEC.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2 minutes to close</b></p> <p><i>Roles: Facilitator</i></p>	<p><b>Reflection:</b> What are the values that you need to be aware of? What are you doing in your project to look out for them?</p> <p>Risks, Project work - SUMERNET, MTT, or other projects, your professional sphere of influence? If you had to do the project again.</p>	<p>Take down the energy levels a few notches...</p> <p>Email yourself</p> <p>Risks, Project work - SUMERNET, MTT, or other projects, your professional sphere of influence? If you had to do the project again.</p>

## **Section 4: Running the Game (Step-by-Step)**

### **Step 1: Welcome & Introduction (5 minutes)**

- Greet the group and introduce yourself.
- Briefly explain what the game is about and why you're doing it.
- Share the key question: How do different layers of marginalisation affect people's lives?

### **Step 2: What is Intersectionality? (5 minutes)**

- Ask participants: What do you think intersectionality means?
- Share the origin (Kimberlé Crenshaw) and explain how different identities overlap to create complex barriers.
- Use a diagram if helpful!

### **Step 3: Identifying Conditions of Marginalisation (10 minutes)**

- Ask: What kinds of marginalisation do you see in your context?
- Write down answers on a whiteboard or flipchart.
- If needed, offer examples: language, gender, age, disability, ethnicity, poverty, etc.

### **Step 4: Form Small Groups (2 minutes)**

- Ask people to form groups of 4–5.
- Try to mix perspectives or group by language depending on your setting.

### **Step 5: Assigning Values (10 minutes)**

- Give each group a worksheet with the conditions listed.
- They must rank each condition from 1 to 10 (1 = least marginalising, 10 = most).
- If they skip a condition, it gets an automatic 10.
- Ask: Which condition do you think is hardest to overcome? Why?

### **Step 6: Group Calibration (5 minutes)**

- Ask groups: Can we agree on a shared ranking?
- Discuss disagreements or differences in values.
- Record the final shared values on the flipchart.

### **Step 7: Distribute Roles & Budgets (5 minutes)**

- Hand out identity cards (e.g., Bangkok slum dweller, Vietnamese factory worker).
- Give each group \$2000 in fake money.

### **Step 8: Buy Your Way Through Life (20 minutes)**

- Each group tries to overcome their identity's barriers by spending money.
- They go to "The Bank" to purchase services (e.g., school access = \$400).
- The Bank can raise/lower prices or deny access based on intersectional identity.
- Ask the Bank team to roleplay bias and discretion intentionally—this simulates real systems!

### **Step 9: Group Reflection (5–10 minutes)**

- Ask each group to share:
  - What they could/couldn't afford
  - What felt unfair?
  - How did their role's identity affect their outcome?

### **Step 10: Final Debrief (15 minutes)**

- Ask big reflection questions:
  - Can we ever truly rank marginalisation?
  - Does money solve everything?
  - What did you learn about bias, power, and systems?
  - How might your project reinforce or challenge these issues?

### **Step 11: Closing (2 minutes)**

- Invite each person to share one takeaway or value to remember.
- Encourage them to reflect on how this applies to their project or work.
- End on a hopeful, reflective note.



# Section 5: Handouts & Resources

# Profiles

## **Khlong Toey slum dweller**

You are male, with a wife and five children, living in Khlong Toey, a slum with over 100,000 residents, built on marshland adjacent to one of the most wealthy parts of Bangkok. You are amongst the mostly rural migrants from northern Thailand who came to the city for jobs after losing your land due to agricultural encroachment. You and your family consider yourselves lucky to live in a wood 4mx4m shack with a tin roof with electricity, and although your shack does not have running water, but you do not need to walk too far to get it. Your children attend the One Baht School, but nobody in your family has proper documentation, so getting into public schools, or securing employment for you and your wife, is not possible. Likely the boys will continue, but you need the girls to stop attending to help your family earn an income.

Your wife has a chronic disability due to childhood illness and needs support, and cannot work. Your work washing windows for passing vehicles, and as a plastic collector earns you and your family just enough to survive, but you, like many, have remaining debts from when you first arrived in Bangkok and borrowed from informal moneylenders.

The city of Bangkok is interested in developing the land you live on, tearing down slums and clearing out street vendors, for parks and riverside walkways - an ecological initiative for making Bangkok more green, flood resistant, and climate resilient (sponge city concept). You would never move, as the support system of the community and its proximity to work is what makes survival possible.

## **Vietnamese garment factory worker**

You and your husband both work as garment factory workers in Vietnam, although your husband recently lost his job due to a cancelled order and subsequent factory downsizing. Orders are moving to even cheaper factories, mostly in China. In order to compensate for the loss of income, you have taken extra shifts (although you and your husband were already working overtime) and work 10-14 hours a day. You face regular sexual, physical, and emotional harassment at work, as do many of your co-workers. You have one child, who has an intellectual disability and epilepsy and cannot attend public school. You both wish to work in electronics manufacturing, which pays better, but you have no idea how to get the training and experience, or at least work for another factory with better conditions.

You and your family live with your brother outside of HCMC, who has difficulty getting a job because he is openly gay. You all work as private garment manufacturers out of your home and send money back to your family to support your aging parents and your other brother who has polio. Over half of the household income pays for housing, which is a challenge for your family and all low wage earners in HCMC.

Heat conditions have been very challenging for you and your family this year, with your daughter experiencing seizures during the hottest days. You worry about her future and her ability to support herself when she is an adult.

## **Cambodian floating community member**

You and your wife live in the floating household in Prek Tol village in Cambodia with a newborn baby and with your mother-in-law, who has lost her legs in a land mine accident several years ago. Regarding legalisation, you and your family do not carry citizenship papers such as identity cards or birth certificates. As a result, you face difficulties getting access to education, employment, and housing (on land).

Your family's primary income relies on fishing. Regarding WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene), your home can only afford to use 'hanging latrines,' from which faeces go directly into the water, but using this latrine remains difficult for your mother-in-law because of her mobility challenges. Some people in the floating community take a boat to defecate away from their homes, mainly where houses have been constructed closely together. As a result, many of your neighbors defecate by boat-travel because of disgust with the sight and smell of faeces near their homes and the discomfort that it causes neighbours.

During the dry season, limited space on the water dictates that open defecation must be practised on land. Many people do not appreciate this method because it renders anal cleansing more difficult. Your mother in law has a terrible time with this, because of her disability. Though defecation at home may elicit disgust, convenience is valued highly; most people do not want to take a boat out for defecation. Only a few families in the community with sustainable income can afford a private toilet in their homes where waste can be contained and treated.

The fish that your family rely upon have been decreasing over the years, impacting the livelihood of you and your neighbors. A few NGOs have been showing up in your community to try and address the WASH and livelihood challenges that seem to be getting worse each year. Your family's greatest concern is that you find a better latrine option for your mother-in-law, but she is very ashamed of the situation and refuses help.

# Worksheet

## Marginalizations and their intersections

**Instructions:** Please assign a weight to each marginalisation with a **number between 1 and 10**, 1 being a less weighted marginalisation, and 10 being a more weighted marginalisation. More weight and a higher number indicates greater exclusion and more difficulty to function within society.

Documentation		
Ethnicity		
Access to water and sanitation		
Access to electricity		
Physical disability		
Intellectual disability		
Health-related disability		
Gender		
Sexual orientation		
Ability to work		
Ability to own land		
Education - basic		
Education - advanced		
Language - national language fluency		

## **Bank Resource Sheet (Example)**

### **Instructions for Bank Role Players:**

- Do not treat everyone equally.
- Use discretion based on the group's identity card.
- You can raise prices, delay access, or deny a purchase based on how “marginalized” the identity is.
- The goal is to simulate real-world barriers due to systemic bias—not to be fair.

<b>Service/Resource</b>	<b>Base Price (USD)</b>	<b>Bank Role Guidance</b>
Access to Clean Drinking Water	\$300	Raise to \$500 if group is in a rural or floating community
Basic Healthcare Check-up	\$400	Deny if group includes elderly + undocumented + rural
Primary School Enrollment	\$350	Prioritize urban groups; delay or raise cost for ethnic minorities
Safe Transport to Work	\$250	Increase to \$400 for women with disability
Internet Access for Education	\$200	Only offer to urban identities
Food Security Support	\$150	Raise to \$250 for refugees or informal workers
Disability Aids (e.g., wheelchair)	\$500	Available only if group insists/negotiates strongly
Legal Identity Papers	\$600	Deny access for stateless or undocumented identities
Clean Sanitation Facility	\$300	Increase price if group is in slum or informal settlement
Local Government Support/Grant	\$0–\$500	Bank has full discretion (bias encouraged based on intersectionality profile)

# Intersectionality framework

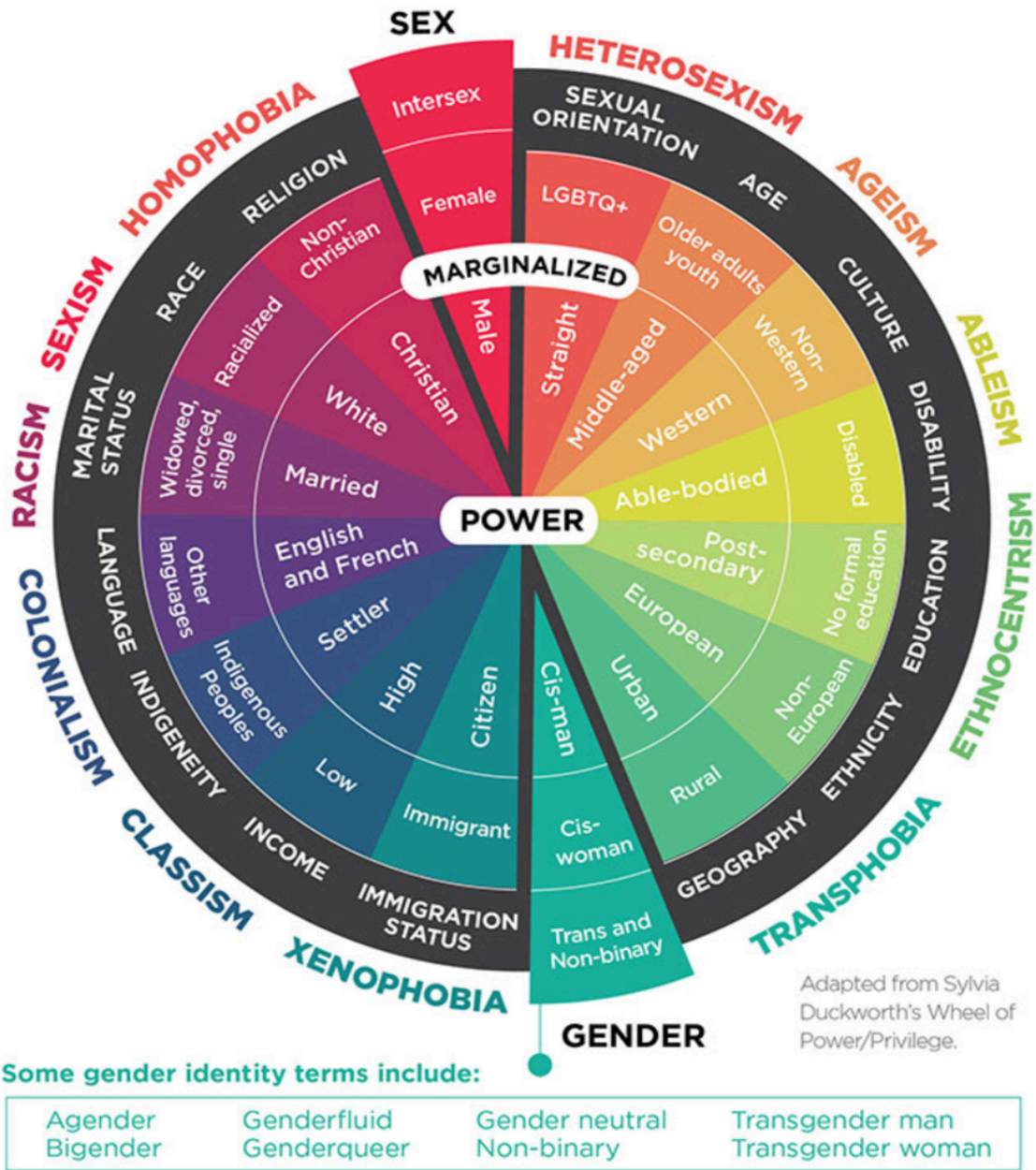


Image source: Bauer, Greta (2021). Meet The Methods Series: Quantitative Intersectional Study Design And Primary Data Collection Issue 3, Part 1. Retrieved from: [https://citr-irsc.gc.ca/e/documents/intersectional-study-design-data-collection\\_EN.pdf](https://citr-irsc.gc.ca/e/documents/intersectional-study-design-data-collection_EN.pdf)

# The Intersectionality Wheel

The drivers and contributing factors leading to inequity, power and privilege from the individual to global level

