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## VOICES INTO ACTION: LEARNING WALKS WITH LEARNERS

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‘Learning walks’ can help explore how learners feel about their school. They can also help achieve a level of familiarity with participants before individual interviews or focus groups, and to encourage active participation in any voice-related activity.

A learning walk can be conducted in groups or separately with each participant. Learners are asked to give a ‘guided tour’ around their school for about 30 minutes. If possible, learners can use digital cameras to capture places in the school that they like or don’t like. This way, learners have a choice about what to photograph and can pick out places that are important to them.

During the ‘tour’, facilitators can ask specific questions to prompt discussion. For example, what they do in school, what they find important, what they like best in school and what they do not like, where they feel welcome and comfortable and where they do not.

The discussions with the learners could be audio-recorded. Please be aware that disruptions may adversely affect the quality of the recording (e.g. possible noise, practical difficulty of recording while walking). Some learners like the idea of being recorded – it can be empowering and can add a sense of formality to the activity.

However, learning walks are usually informal and aim to establish a closer rapport with learners. Using a recorder might add unnecessary pressure, so it is important to offer this as a choice. As an alternative, facilitators can write down field notes following the discussions.

Learning walks can be a stand-alone method to elicit views, but they can also inform subsequent interviews or focus group discussions. Photographs produced during a learning walk can be a part of the later interviews or focus groups to help explore the learners’ views of their school.

Finally, teachers can use learning walks as a structured observation method, usually for school evaluation purposes. Learn more about [learning walks for teachers](#).