

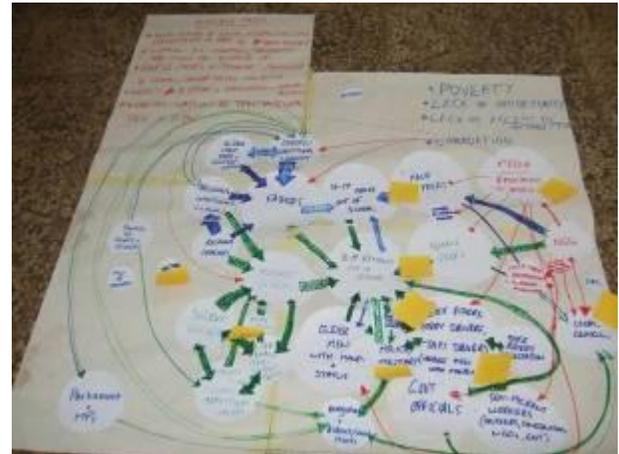
Power Mapping

3hrs+

Time required: 2 hours minimum. Usually between 3-4 hours.

Number of participants: 2-4 is optimum. Maximum 10. Divide up larger groups.

Materials required: Scissors, paper or card, different coloured pens, glue or masking tape, cups, plates or other different-sized circular objects to draw around and act as templates. In a low-resource setting, all of the above can be substituted by using the ground and natural materials. A camera is useful for quickly and easily recording the power map.



Power mapping in Sierra Leone

What is Power Mapping and why use it?

Power Mapping is a picture of the key actors in a particular context and the power relationships between them. 'Power' may be defined as *the ability to create or resist change*. Power Mapping is a participatory tool for understanding who, in a given context, has what ability to create or resist change. It can help us answer some fundamental questions such as:

- What are the power dynamics which keep people poor in a given context?*
- What power do beneficiaries have to create or resist change? What power do other stakeholders have to create or resist change?*
- What can we do to change institutions or power dynamics which keep people in poverty?*
- What additional power do beneficiaries need to ensure they get their own desired change?*
- How can power be more equitably distributed?*
- Who are, or who could be our allies to address power imbalances?*

Power Mapping is a form of stakeholder analysis. But it differs from other tools like Political Economic Analysis because a) it can be used at any level: from examining power dynamics within the household to those within the world b) it actively seeks to identify hidden and invisible power dynamics c) it values 'power with others' and 'within ourselves' above 'power over' others and d) it values *the process* of beneficiaries undertaking the analysis for themselves. This is seen as critical in raising their awareness about the root causes of poverty, and actions they can take to address power imbalances.

D. Concluding

16. Ask participants to present their final maps and their recommendations to the other groups for verification
17. Photograph the maps and record the main action points for each map. Agree next steps with participants

Tips for facilitators

- **Power is always relative and according to a specific context.** So ask participants to focus on the power that stakeholders have with regards to the primary stakeholder and the specific issue.
- **Be specific, don't bundle actors together** e.g. is it the District Council who is resisting change or is it actually a particular individual, procedure, behaviour or policy within the council that is blocking change?
- **Encourage participants to be honest and focus on how power currently is**, not how it is supposed to be, or how they want it to be e.g. there maybe a law protecting the primary stakeholder, but is it applied consistently and justly?
- **Include a legend on the map** which indicates what the different types and colours of lines mean. Otherwise six months later you will not have a clue what the map means.
- **Don't draw circles straight onto paper, or stick the circles down until the end** because participants will frequently change their minds about relationships between actors. Using the ground (e.g. in the sand) avoids this problem.

How can I learn more about power?

- There is an online resource on power at the Programme Learning Blog.
- Technical assistance is available from your regional Programme Performance Advisor and the Power and Governance Advisor.

Programme Performance advisors

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Poverty is an outrage against humanity. It robs people of dignity, freedom and hope, of power over their own lives. Christian Aid has a vision – an end to poverty – and we believe that vision can become a reality. We urge you to join us.

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