

Chapatti Diagram - Spaces of Power



To explore power relationships between organizations and people, focusing on spaces of power (closed, invited, created).

The chapatti diagram uses circles of different sizes and distance to reflect on power relationships, demonstrating what power looks like in different spaces and how relationships between different groups can create space to claim power or close access to power to other groups such as women or people living in poverty.

- Closed spaces: Where elites such as politicians, bureaucrats, experts, bosses, managers and leaders make decisions behind closed doors with little or no consultation or involvement of others.
- Invited spaces: Spaces that are created and opened for consultation with sectors of the population who have historically been excluded.
- Created spaces: New spaces opened up to focus on citizen action and active participation.

For a more detailed explanation of closed, invited and created spaces of power, take a look at the *Spaces of Power* toolbox section in the Understanding Power Shifts toolbox.

Steps

1. Introduce each other, the theme and purpose of exercise and required time to the group. When discussing the purpose of the exercise the facilitator should be clear how the information gathered will be used (for example for community reflection, to feed into monitoring and reporting processes, to inform PRRPs to develop new strategies for action as a group). Groups should be clear how they can use the information they will generate and how the organization intends to use it.

2. Ask the group to identify and make a list of different institutions that have influence or interest in relation to the specific issue you are working on.
3. Use circles of different sizes to represent the spaces of power (small = institutions with closed space, medium = institutions with invited space and big = institutions with claimed space).
4. Ask the group to think about which of the institutions identified operate in closed spaces. Facilitate the group to draw small size circles to represent these institutions. Explore the following questions with the group:
 - How do these closed spaces restrict participants' access to decision-making processes and/or resources?
 - What strategies have they used to gain access to closed spaces?
 - Has power shifted in any way?
5. Ask the group to reflect which of the institutions identified have spaces in which groups are invited to participate. Facilitate the group to draw medium size circles to represent these institutions. Explore the following questions with the group:
 - What experience does the group have of participating in / accessing invited spaces?
 - Were they able to make their voice heard / influence decision making?
 - What strategies have they used to access invited spaces and increase their influence in them?
 - Have they been able to use invited spaces to shift power in any way?
6. Ask the group to reflect where in the Chapatti diagram they see opportunities for claimed and self-created spaces? Facilitate the group to draw large size circles to represent these institutions. Explore with the group.
 - What experiences do they have of trying to claim spaces for making their voices heard?
 - Have they been able to use claimed spaces to shift power in any way?
7. Ask the group now to position the circles close or far from each other to demonstrate which actors in the Chapatti diagram have worked together to claim the new spaces or to close and limit access to spaces of power?

- If groups have not claimed spaces, you could use this reflection to ask them to look at other actors and think about how they could work together and what strategies they could use to claim spaces.
8. Let the group present and discuss the Chapatti diagram that has been constructed, the visualization can be extended by developing before, now and ideal versions of Chapatti diagram and exploring possible strategies to claim new spaces, take advantage of invited spaces or gain access to closed spaces.
 9. Photograph it and conclude the discussion with by thanking the group and discussing with them how they plan to use this information at community level and briefly explain to them again how this information and analysis will be used by the organization.

Guiding Questions

The following questions can be used to guide and deepen the discussions. They are provided for guidance and can be adapted to the specific context in which you are applying this tool.

- What closed, invited and claimed spaces are identified?
- What experience does the group have of participating in / accessing invited spaces?
- What experience does the group have of participating in / accessing closed spaces?
- Were they able to make their voice heard / influence decision making?
- What shifts in power has been experienced by them in any way?
- What strategies have they used to gain access to closed and invited spaces?
- What strategies have they used to increase their influence in these spaces?

Documenting and Reporting

The discussions and responses can be gathered and documented as people find most convenient and easy. Make sure that the critical words, examples, metaphors, testimonies are captured and brought into the analysis.

The simplest way to document a Chapatti Diagram is to take a photo. However the Chapatti Diagram is a very useful tool for power analysis and so it is useful to also document the evidence in written form to ensure that you record all the actors identified and the extent of their power. You could do this in a table:

Actor/Institution identified	Size of power (small, medium, large)	Power spaces they have access to: closed, invited, claimed spaces	Other actors they are connected with – what is the power relationship between them i.e. to access or challenge power, to share or control power, power neutral	Anything reflections e.g. Strategies identified to influence / access

Alternative Uses

The chapatti diagram can also be adapted and used to analyze:

- Power of allies, influence or power of people, organizations or groups.
- Changes in power relations within the family.
- Inter-personal power relations between communities and implementing agencies, partner organizations, community groups and other stakeholders and institutions.
- Institutional power relations or the practice of power at national or international levels and how this links to local levels.
- Changes in power dynamics between key individuals, actors or institutions in a particular context.

Resources

- Communication & Power, ActionAid, 2003, p. 1007.
- Reflect Mother Manual, ActionAid, 1996, p. 176.
- *Critical webs of power and change*, ActionAid International, 2005.
- *Power - Elite Capture and Hidden Influence*, HRBA Governance Resources, ActionAid, 2012.