

Power Flower



To look at shifts in different forms of power.

The power flower tool provides a critical lens and a simple way to gather, consolidate and analyze information looking at shifts in different forms of power, which include:

- Power within – Self-worth, self-confidence, inner strength, sense of identity, dignity. Enhancing the ‘power within’ individuals builds their capacities to imagine and raise aspirations about change. Changes happen in rights consciousness, capacity, organization and mobilization that result from conscientisation processes.
- Power with – Collective power and strength, mutual support, cooperation and working together, solidarity and joint action. ‘Power with’ helps build bridges across different interests, experiences and knowledge and is about bringing together resources and strategies. Changes happen in the organization and mobilization of civil society in support of people.
- Power to – Ability to act, potential to make a difference and shape lives, capacity to decide action and carry them out. Changes happen in the condition of people living in poverty, individual ability to act. This is rooted in the belief that every individual has the ‘power to’ make a difference.
- Power over – Domination or control of one person, group or institution over another. Actors such as police, judges, teachers, politicians all have a certain power over us in society. Duty bearers can use this power for positive or negative change which is why we work to influence them. Changes happen in policies, budgets, practices of state and non-state institutions and actors, duty bearers.

Steps

1. Introduce each other, the 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).
2. Discuss the idea of the flower and its different components, with its base in the centre and a large circle of four petals covered by small petals.
3. Ask the group to draw the center of the flower which represents them.
4. Brainstorm and explain the idea of four forms of power (within, with, over, to) and ask people to draw the four large petals, each representing one form of power .
5. Take one petal at one time and ask group to discuss what changes (shifts in power) are being realized as individuals, family and community as whole. Encourage group to share real life examples of changes they have experienced. Refer to the questions section below to help you guide discussions and responses.
6. Draw symbols or write these changes as small petals connected to the large petal representing each of the different forms of power. (These petals can also be different in the size representing the scale and impact of the change)
7. Repeat the process for all four petals and make the flower grow.
8. Ask people to discuss their flower and share their experiences by explaining;
 - Which side of the flower is healthy (with more petals) and why?
 - Which side of the flower is weak and why?
 - What could have made the flower healthier/stronger?
9. Photograph the flower and conclude the conversation by thanking the group for sharing their experiences of shifts in power and discussing with them how they can use this information to identify new strategies to build their power.

Guiding Questions

This tool can be used in many different contexts. Therefore, the framework and questions are necessarily broad and generic. Specific details can be added based on the nature and content of the programme under review.

Power within:

- What changes do people report in themselves, their self-confidence and awareness of their rights?
- How have those changes motivated people to act in new ways?
- How have these actions shifted power (even if this is in very subtle ways)? Power with:
- How have people worked together towards change?
- How have traditional alliances been strengthened and new alliances been formed?
- What changes have been influenced by this collective action?
- How do those changes reflect shifts in power? Power

to:

- What actions have people taken?
- What new things have they been able to do that were not possible before?
- How do those changes reflect shifts in power Power

over:

- What people, groups or institutions have power over you? (It may be helpful here to specify the issue that you are talking about)
- What strategies have / can you use to try to influence their agendas or actions?
- What changes (if any) have you seen in the way in which these groups exercise their power on a specific issue?

Reflection across forms of power:

- What were the strategies used to shift power and how effective do you think they are?
- What challenges and obstacles have been overcome? What strategies have helped to overcome these difficulties, challenges and obstacles?
- What have we learnt?

Suggestions for Documenting and Reporting

The discussions and response should be gathered and documented in some way. This has two purposes, i) to enable groups to look back at these reflections in the future and reflect again on how power has changed; ii) to support wider learning about how an organization is shifting power. It is important that documenting these processes are done as simply and conveniently as possible to not create an additional burden. You should focus on capturing critical words, examples, metaphors, testimonies and bring them into the analysis.

The following simple template can be used to facilitate reporting and further analysis. This can be adapted based on the focus of analysis and discussions.

	Changes (Shifts in Power)
Power Within	Reported changes: New actions: Examples of shifts in power:
Power With	Examples of working together towards change: Strategies to strengthen or create new alliances: Examples of shifts in power:
Power To	Actions taken: New abilities: Examples of shifts in power
Power Over	Identified sources of power: Strategies to influence Examples of shifts in power
Successful strategies	
Challenged faced and how these were mitigated?	
What will we improve in future?	

Resources

- Communication & Power, ActionAid, 2003, p. 1003.
- 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.
- www.powercube.net