

Public services map



To analyse the state of a public service (e.g. education) and the impacts on local people, and to analyse and prioritise the most needed public service in the participants' area.

Participants use a map to analyse and prioritise the most needed public service in their area.

Steps in the process

1. Participants draw a map of their area.
2. They choose ONE service for analysis, e.g. education, health, water (analysing many services at the same time would complicate the tool). Let's imagine the group chooses education.
3. The facilitator asks about education:
 - Where are the places where you can get education? Write them on cards on the map.
 - Who provides for education in these places? The family, the community, the shops, the government? You may want to add a symbol to the cards.
 - In these places, do you pay for education? You may want to add a currency symbol.
4. Go back to the stones tool and the idea of public:
 - Quantity: Are there enough basic public education services (provided by the government) in your area? Circle them.
 - Quality: Does the government education service need improvement (i.e. not functional, distance...)? You can rank them.

- Access: How much do they cost? Who is able to receive these services? Who is left out? [The facilitator may inform participants that essential public services like basic education and basic and emergency healthcare should be free. Other public services (e.g. transport) may charge a subsidised amount. This means they are paid by people with support from the government, which means they must be cheap.]
 - Does that happen in your area? Are essential public services free or do you pay for them?
5. To help discussion not get stuck on problems experienced of public services and move to tax, the facilitator can put one stone (from the stones tool) on one of the public services of the map and ask:
- The problems with the public service, are they related to a lack of money to support them?
 - Is the tax you paid (the stones) being used for public services in your area?
 - Would it help to raise more tax (more stones from the richer) so that public services could be improved?

[Optional]: You can repeat the map for other services.

Tips for the facilitator

- You can ask “why” questions to reach tax issues. For instance, if participants say ‘teachers don’t work because they are not motivated’, then ask ‘why are they not motivated?’, to what they may respond ‘because they are not well trained, not paid enough, class size too big’, then keep asking ‘why’ until issues of money, budget and tax come up.
- This tool can be done in areas where there are no public services at all and where only community and private services exist. This would show the urgency to advocate for public services in the area.

Ideas for Action

- What action would you like to take now?
- Do you keep your tax receipts when you complain about public services?
- Can you do something together with public servants?

- Is it feasible to ask for more tax money to be raised, and spent on local public services? To whom?

References

- Reflect Mother Manual, ActionAid International, 1996, p, 220.