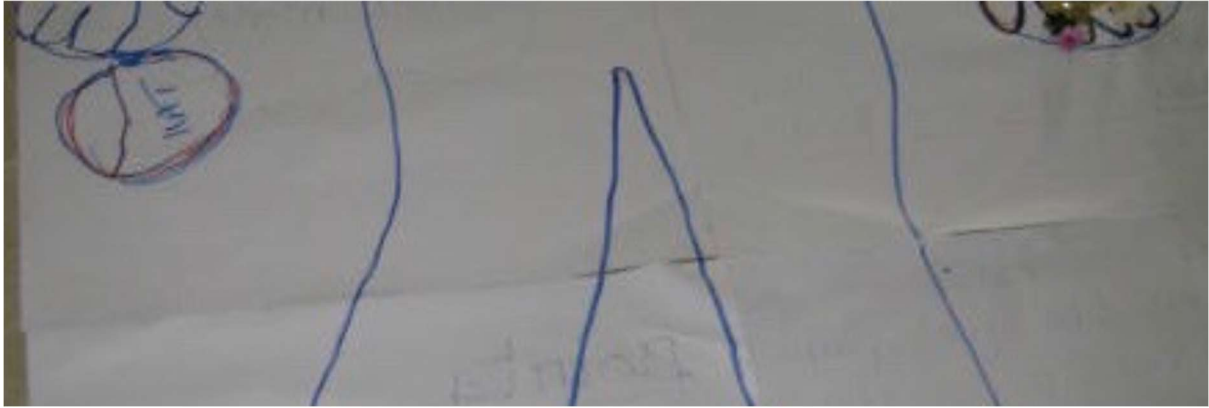


# Body map - power within and power to



To facilitate critical analysis about shifts in 'power within and power to' with a focus on sensitive subjects such as sexual autonomy and women's control over their bodies. The tool aims to help women explore the different elements of power related to their bodies, both the personal and emotional dimensions of 'power within' and their agency to take action to control their bodies of 'power to'.

- **Power within:** self-worth, self-confidence, inner strength, sense of identity, dignity, etc.
- **Power to:** ability to act, to control, potential to make a difference and shape lives, capacity to decide action and carry them out.

This participatory tool enables interactive discussions and visualisation of changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, self-confidence, practices, and ability to negotiate and control decisions. Using the body map supports conscientisation of those who are involved which makes it a motivating and politicising experience.

While using the body map methodology, participants are likely to feel more comfortable in groups of single sexual/gender orientation, and with others of a similar age or marital status, etc. and in locations with some privacy. While facilitating this tool, we need to be prepared that body maps may raise traumatic memories for some participants – for example, people who have been abused or suffered violence and in these cases sensitivity towards participants must be the facilitator's primary concern.

# Steps

1. Introduce each other, the theme and purpose of the exercise and required time. 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 organisation intends to use it.
2. Facilitator explains that the group is a safe space and participants should not share issues discussed outside of the group – this needs to be explained at the start to set the ground rules. Also that all responses are anonymous, and women's names will not be used in any reporting, etc.
3. When you start the exercise, ask a volunteer from the group to lie down on a flip chart and another volunteer to trace the outline of her body. In some contexts, this may not be appropriate, and so the outline can be drawn freehand.
4. Start the discussion with a general question, such as “What changes has the group experienced through their involvement in the programme / project?” The questions should gradually probe more deeply into women's control over their bodies, and as they tell their stories they should use the body map to record different changes they have experienced in different parts of the body. Please note that these changes can be both positive and negative. For example;
  - Changes in knowledge, awareness, their way of thinking and seeing the issues can be presented around head. **Power Within**
  - Changes in attitudes and behaviours, their confidence, and emotions can be represented close to their chest (heart). **Power Within**
  - Changes in skills and practice, ability to act can be presented around hands and feet. **Power To**
  - Their ability to communicate and negotiate can be mapped close to the mouth. **Power To**
  - Changes in control over decisions and choices related to sexual reproductive issues (sexual autonomy) can be mapped close to the different sexual and reproductive organs of the body. **Power To**
5. Use the guiding questions listed below to deepen the group discussions and help the group complete the body map.

6. To identify how power relations have changed (i.e. the power shift), the group can repeat this exercise for the past (retrospective analysis) to invite reflection of how power has shifted and for future for visioning related to the desired levels of shifts in power. It is a good idea to use different colour pens to represent present, past and future. Another possible use is to conduct the body map exercise at the start of a project to set a 'baseline' and then repeat the exercise at different intervals to understand what is changing.
7. At the end of the exercise, take a photograph of the body map and conclude the discussion by thanking the group and asking them to reflect on what they have learnt from these discussions and identify ways in which the information can be used at the community level. If relevant, briefly explain to them again how the organisation will use this information and analysis and how their confidentiality will be protected and double check that they are happy for their stories to be used.

## Guiding questions

The following questions can be used to guide and deepen the discussions. The questions are examples, and users should adapt these to the specific context in which they are applying this tool. The questions are broad and generic, but the specific details can be tailored to the nature and content of the programme/work under review.

- What has changed in your life with regard to your body/your being with regards to the following issues:
  - changes in your knowledge, awareness, their way of thinking and your way seeing the issues:
- What has changed in terms of your knowledge and awareness about:
  - Different contraceptive methods and your right to use them?
  - Your right to decide about the number or spacing of children you have?
  - Relations between men and women in the family, between spouses?
  - Women's right to choose their partner?
  - Women's right to choose whether, when and with whom to have sexual relations?
  - What have you done to put into practice this new knowledge or awareness? What do you plan to do?

- What has changed in terms of your attitudes and behaviours, confidence, and emotions in relation to:
  - Confidence/intention to make your views heard on things when you do not agree with something/ to negotiate on decisions that have to do with your/your children's bodies
  - Attitudes about your own or others sexual and reproductive attitudes, norms and behaviours
  - Changes in your (and your partners') behaviour in terms of using contraception etc.
  - Attitudes/acceptance of violence against women or restrictions on women's movement
- Changes in your skills and practice, ability to act: is this about the space in which you can act?
  - Taking action to report violence/leaving your husband/partner if they are violent towards you
- Changes in your ability to communicate and negotiate:
  - Making your views heard with your family, partner
  - Rejecting practices, values and norms to do with sexuality and reproduction
  - Reporting and rejecting violence
  - negotiating sexual relations, contraceptive use or having children with your husband
- Changes in your control over decisions and choices related to sexual reproductive issues (sexual autonomy). To what extent are you consulted as an equal partner in decisions regarding:
  - When and how you have sexual relations with your partner?
  - Whether you can have a relationship with a man without being married?
  - Who you marry?
  - Who your sexual partners are?
  - Whether you or your husband uses birth control?
  - How many children you have?
- How did this change happen? What contributed to this change?
  - What happened for you to make the change? What prompted the change? What gave you courage/the confidence/the idea?
  - How did you convince your husband? Your mother in law? Your family?
  - Who supported you? How did you gain their support?

- Who was against/rejected your views/decisions/actions? How did you react to this? What did you do to address this?

## Documenting and reporting

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

The simplest way to document the body map is to take a photo or transform it to a flip chart. However, it is useful also to document the evidence in a more structured written form to ensure that you record all the actors identified and the extent of their power. You could do this in a table:

Changes identified	What type of power is the change associated with? (Power within /Power To or combination)	Challenges faced and mitigation strategies	Factors that contributed to the change?	Any strategies identified to continue to increase power within and to?

While analysing the results from different body maps produced from discussion with different groups of women/girls (for example of different ages, from different social, cultural, geographical locations and from different ethnic backgrounds) and from other genders. it will be useful to analyse differences in views, perspectives and experiences shared according to these backgrounds.

## Suggestions for use

- Support women to consider and **recognise aspects of power** in relation to themselves as a basis for identifying what they can do to shift power.
- Form the basis for an **advocacy or a lobby strategy**, where women identify targets for change, allies and strategies to bring in others to achieve their goals
- Use well recorded knowledge as **evidence** for women's contexts, or - if taken over time - changes over the project period to respond to research questions about women's current and changing power and roles.

# Resources

- Reflect Mother Manual, ActionAid 1996, p.127.
- [Critical webs of power and change](#), ActionAid International, 2005.