

Practical guides for participatory methods

Mapping and power analysis

Purpose

This method enables participants to create a visual map of the key resources and assets in their community, organisation, workplace etc, that are important for their wellbeing and thriving.

It is designed to encourage marginalised groups to visually represent and reflect on these resources and the power relations that shape who accesses and controls resources. They map and rank the actors who have more/less power, control and access, and discuss the reasons behind these differences. Finally, a discussion of possible strategies and actions for change can be facilitated.

Mapping and power analysis may be useful for practitioners and researchers who want to:

- Identify key resources that affect participants' wellbeing/thriving, and their access
- Analyse power relations affecting access
- Generate strategies for change.

Things to consider

With this method, a group/community is invited to discuss a general issue or question.

- Allow time for this to unfold, without rushing to start the drawing.
- Be flexible and facilitative. Allow the community to lead by handing over the pen/stick to draw themselves.
- When identifying actors/stakeholders, these can be listed and ranked, and if necessary, can be given symbols or objects to represent them.
- The actors (objects or circles of paper) can be placed in or outside the circle according to their importance with relations to the issue. The method can be adapted and more circles drawn (as in example below).

- Actors can be moved as the community debates where they should be placed.
- Alternatively, the actors can be listed separately, in a matrix.

Which contexts is it useful for?

It is a useful method to use when people have a shared community, place or space. It can be used with a whole community, and facilitation should enable different sub-groups to participate.

Avoiding harm

Be clear in the invitation to the activity to communicate the purpose.

Disagreements may arise as different groups within the community have different experiences and perspectives. Be prepared to sub-divide the group if necessary; allow time for different perspectives to be considered.

Group dynamics

It may be helpful to separate groups of men and women. Also, make sure that less vocal participants/less powerful sub-groups are given the opportunity to speak.

Consider the appropriate materials for the activity, according to the venue and size of the group.

Work as a team:

- If working with a large group, a co-facilitator can keep an eye on who wants to speak, or to listen to conversations at the back. It is always necessary to have one person making notes.
- Prepare and involve translators in the team.

Be flexible, allow for participants to adapt the exercise to suit their understanding of their 'community' and its boundaries (see below).



Practical steps

Part A: Mapping out community resources

1. Introductions: present the theme and purpose of the exercise and the required time. Clarify what the information will be used for. Allow discussion of what this means, and gain consent.
2. Gather people in a circle around a flipchart on the wall or floor.
3. Determine a boundary for the map; invite a participant to draw this on the flipchart.
4. Invite people to tell the participant at the front to start drawing important landmarks or aspects of their community/everyday life/ work life.
5. Ask participants: What do you understand by resources or assets? What are the assets that allow us to thrive in our everyday (work) lives? Allow different ideas and perspectives to emerge. Facilitators and notetakers take notice of different perspectives e.g. women/men, older/younger, ensuring their participation and documenting their perspectives.
6. As participants respond, invite them to come to the front and locate such resources on the map (by drawing or writing on moveable cards). The map is likely to cover a large area.
7. Once most people have given their ideas, check that nothing is missing and that all assets and resources are represented in the map.

Part B: Access and control analysis (i.e. power analysis)

1. In a separate flipchart make a table:

- Column 1: List of the 5 resources identified that are closely linked to wellbeing.
- Column 2: Who has access to these?
- Column 3: Who has control over them?

2. Facilitate discussion about the meaning of 'access' and 'control', and how they are different.

3. One resource at a time, fill in the table noting down the different actors using one colour card / sticky note for each type of actor.

4. Looking at the control column, invite people to organize the actors from more control to less control.

5. Ask: Who is missing in this control column? Why are you/ aren't you represented here? Who has less control?

6. Using the simple tool: BUT WHY? Open up a group discussion around the causes of the exclusion of certain groups from controlling different resources.

7. Once people stop answering BUT WHY? Move to, What can be done? Noting down ideas of strategies to increase access and control of wellbeing resources.

Ensure that a notetaker records the discussion throughout, and especially steps 5 and 6.



Case study

This method has been used by IDS researchers to identify access to assets and resources for child health and nutrition in communities served by World Food Programme in Uganda.

We worked with WFP to adapt participatory research methods to gather data, but also to establish and strengthen positive relationships between staff and served communities. WFP staff were trained in participatory research principles and methods, which they practised in groups before taking the methods into the communities.

It represented a significant shift in WFP's approach to gathering data, which normally involves checking boxes on electronic tablets. It was important to emphasise attitudes and behaviours in the training, and also documentation, as the tool requires the researcher to pay attention and record the dialogue, especially when different perspectives are voiced.

The different applications of this tool demonstrated its flexibility. In Karamoja, we used this tool in the open air. It was guided by a broad question about which stakeholders contribute to child health in the community. It was adaptable to a large group, and as more people arrived (youth arrived late because of another activity) they were able to get involved. The elders allowed the young people to take up the stick and draw the circles on the ground where we were sitting, and also to place the objects to represent stakeholders.

Allowing for flexibility of local interpretation is key, and the young people decided to draw 3 concentric circles instead of one circle with objects placed inside or outside. This enabled them to make a deeper analysis of the proximity and relationship of that actor to their community. The community first identified and then ranked the actors, and this exercise enabled dialogue about which actors are closer or more important, and why.

The mapping process brought out a huge amount of information relating to health and the stakeholders but also local practices, attitudes, governance issues, child protection etc. The challenge is to capture this data and identify the correct tool for following up specific issues. It

could link nicely to a problem tree tool and action planning.

In Mbarara, this tool also worked well with a large group, and was adapted from mapping on the floor to using a flipchart on the wall so that everyone could see.

In Arua the tool was adapted to map interventions and services. We found that it was inclusive, and enabled participation; everyone wanted to speak, and all had something to contribute. The WFP team reflected that it was an 'eye-opener', as it revealed information and also suggested solutions. For example, the community had initially said that they didn't have water, but through the mapping, they revealed that there was a borehole, a tap, a well etc.



Related resources

- A version of this method is available on the Reflection Action website (reflectionaction.org) as 'Access and control matrix'.

Credits and other information:

This guide was authored by Jo Howard with acknowledgements to World Food Programme Uganda, Erika Lopez Franco, Ben Boham Okiror, Pelagia Nziramwoyo.

DOI: [10.19088/IDS.2023.002](https://doi.org/10.19088/IDS.2023.002)

Please email participate@ids.ac.uk with any feedback you may have, including examples where you have used this method in practice. For more information on participatory methods, please visit participatorymethods.org where you can also find an electronic copy of this guide.

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