

Activity: Power Mapping



TIME ESTIMATE
45-70 minutes



MATERIALS
A blank wall or board for brainstorming, chart paper, markers, post-it notes

PURPOSE

To unpack the concept of power and examine power relationships in philanthropy and international agriculture development.

DESCRIPTION

In this activity, participants will conceptualize power by identifying power relationships across various levels (systemic, structural, positional, individual) and within the domain of the international food systems governance.

Part 1: Defining Power (Time estimate: 20-25 min)

Facilitator Note

It may be useful to prepare a basic Powerpoint presentation for this activity, however it can also be done using a whiteboard or verbally.

STEPS

- 1 Introduce the activity. Ask the class “What is power?” and write out their responses on a whiteboard or have participants submit their response to a platform such as Menti.
- 2 Once participants have had a chance to respond, offer the following definition: ***Power, in its most basic form, is the ability of people to achieve the change they want.***
- 3 State that there are different kinds of power (Adapted from PeerNetBC). Define the following types of power either on a whiteboard, chart paper or on a screen. Ask the participants to provide examples of each type of power.
 - Systemic power: Refers to power built into socioeconomic relationships. The systems that hold power in our society include: government, business, education, media, family, health, faith groups, etc.
 - Institutional power: Refers to power held by institutions creates, increases or decreases privilege for different groups of people.
 - Positional power: Refers to power that comes from hierarchies, such as age, experience, titles (ie. PhD., middle-aged person, celebrities).
 - Personal power: Refers to power within each individual to take action, make decisions and participate.
- 4 Ask the group “Is power good or bad?”. State that there are different expressions of power (Adapted from [Participatory Methods](#) and [Powercube](#)). Define the following expressions of power either on a whiteboard, chart paper or on a screen. Ask the participants to provide examples of each expression of power.
 - ‘Power over’: One group dominating others; having power requires taking power from others and often works through coercion or fear.
 - ‘Power with’: Collective power; finding common ground between different group interests and building collective action.
 - ‘Power within’: An individual or collective belief in self-worth and self-knowledge; recognizes the importance of dignity and fulfilment in empowerment; for example, we have endless reserves of power within: creativity, imagination, love and more.

MODULE 6: FOOD SYSTEMS GOVERNANCE

- 5 Ask the participants to draw an image that represents power to them. Drawings can come in the form of: powercube, fractals, spectrum, three dimensional axes, organic structure, onion, tree etc.
- View [examples](#) and [this guide on ways of visualizing power](#) by Powercube.

Part 2 : Power Mapping Philanthropy and International Agricultural Development (Time estimate: 25-40 min)

- 6 Ask participants to now put their understanding of power onto the topic of philanthropy and its role in international food systems governance by applying it to the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa. Divide the class into small groups (4-6 learners). Once participants are in their groups, provide them with writing utensils, chart paper and/or post-it notes.
- 7 Have participants search AGRA's website as a place to start their research. Ask them to contribute ideas from their readings and write down key players or stakeholders in AGRA onto the sticky notes as they do their research to be used in the next step.
- List of key players (not an exhaustive list list, just a starting point for facilitators):
 - Alliance for a Green Revolution (AGRA)
 - Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA)
 - Smallholder farmers
 - Industrial farmers
 - Philanthropic Foundations
 - Local NGO's
 - International NGOs
 - World Bank
 - Civil Society Groups
 - Agrochemical Companies
 - State Governments
 - Peasant Farmers Organizations
 - Food Sovereignty movements
 - Agroecology advocates
- 8 Direct participants to draw out a power analysis using AGRA as the centrepiece. This is about drawing the relationships of power and how different groups relate to each other. Prompt them with the following sets of questions:
- What kind of power does your key player hold? Refer back to the types of power discussed earlier (personal, positional, institutional, systemic).
 - How do the different stakeholders interact with each other? Which direction does power flow?
 - How are the different players attempting to leverage power?
 - Map this out in a drawing that resonates with your group. This might be a tree, an onion, or a cube depending on your perception of power in this situation.
- 9 Have the groups share their diagrams with the class. Then, debrief the activity using the following questions to guide a discussion:
- What similarities arose for the different power maps?
 - If the diagram centred smallholder African farmers, how might the drawing change? Alternatively, you could lead a follow-up activity to create a power map that centers smallholder African farmers.
 - Does this power map take into account local specificity?
 - Where are the cracks, push points, weak spots that could transform the existing power dynamics?