



Power Analysis for Strategy

Overview: This activity builds on the power analysis introduced in Understanding Power Over to enable a group to apply the power framework to specific organizing issues in their context both to understand the dynamics of power over they are up against and think through strategies for change.

Purpose: Applying the Power Framework to our specific contexts and organizing efforts, we can deepen our analysis of the complexities of power we will need to navigate. It will help us identify the different forms of power at play – from formal power in decision making arenas to less visible but equally important forms of power – shadow forces and invisible power. And it will move towards developing targeted and well-informed strategies that both challenge power over and enable us to build transformative power.

Time: 1.5 - 2 hours

Materials:

- Copies of handouts:
 - Three Faces of Power definitions
 - Strategies for Power
- If possible have the analysis you did for the last section of Understanding Power Over
- Flip chart
- Markers
- Tape

Credit: Developed and adapted by JASS practitioners over the years



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Process:

Step 1: Power Analysis

Facilitator Note: If you are NOT doing this activity immediately following Understanding Power Over, you will want to hand out and review the definitions of the Three Faces of Power and the Power Analysis worksheet. It is the foundation for the Power Analysis for Strategy activity.

In plenary:

- Introduction: Using the power framework to a clearly defined problem affecting our lives, will allow us to map how visible, hidden and invisible power are impacting the issue/problem. We will work in small groups applying the 3 Faces of Power analysis to a critical issue/problem and begin to look at possible strategies as well.
- Handout *Using the Power Framework* – a worksheet for doing a basic power analysis of a given issue or campaign.
- Divide into smaller working groups focused on a specific organizing issue.
Facilitator Note: The group can divide into different organizing issues or all address the same one.
- Each group should:
 - Develop a brief description of the problem they are addressing, and write it clearly in a short phrase including who it affects and how it affects them (e.g. Lack of women's access to quality ARVs - inferior drugs causing painful side effects; Multinationals and government taking peasant lands, increasing rural poverty, ecological damage and repression of community resistance).
- Then they apply the power analysis - filling in the grid for each form of "power over" – formal/visible, shadow/hidden and invisible – groups name 2 specific ways this form of power contributes to the problem and write it in the grid. Identify the actors and institutions who influence this problem for each form of power.
 - **Formal/Visible:** What laws, policies, government institutions or officials affect the problem and how? How much access and clout does your community and organization have in terms of formal power?
 - **Shadow/Hidden:** Which interests have dominated the political agenda and decision making? How have they worked to silence or discredit activists and their issues so they are excluded from political processes and can't get their problems or solutions considered as legitimate?



- **Invisible:** How do belief systems and norms affect the problem and the people trying to overcome it (ideologies such as patriarchy, racism, religious fundamentalism or neoliberalism) and how are these belief and norms actively manipulated by formal or shadow powers to gain the political control?
- Discuss: What are you seeing that you haven't seen before? Any a-ha's?

Step 2: Strategies to Counter Power Over

In Plenary:

- Intro: We are going to look at different strategies that community based organizations can use to counter power over in different forms and to build our own transformative power for change.

ROUND ONE:

- We will begin by reviewing the strategies that the TAC (or other case study used) carried out to confront different forms of power, for example:
 - Formal: advocacy, lobbying meetings, petitions, protests and direct actions, clear demands, etc.
 - Hidden: protests, exposing their role and impact, high level meetings, direct action to put the issue on the table, etc.
 - Invisible: challenging perceptions and shame about HIV+ people, building a broad group of allies on the issue, symbolic actions that brought the issue to the public's attention, using celebrities to highlight possible solutions, etc.

In small groups:

- Participants divide into small groups and to push their analysis further in examining strategies. Building on the earlier analysis about how power is manifesting in their context, they need to look at possible strategies for each form.
- Referring to the chart (**see handout**), each group identifies their overall goal. Then focusing on column one, name their two main strategies for each form of e.g. lobbying, media, litigation, education, research, direct action such as marches, boycotts, etc.
 - Note: In some contexts, it is not possible to safely or effectively engage formal or hidden power directly. In those cases, consider what alternative strategies to move your issue or agenda.

- Report back by groups.
- What did the exercise tell you about your work and analysis – specifically, how you are challenging different forms of power over? Any gaps? Any a-ha's?

Our Issue (E.g Lack of ARVs)	Our Goal: (e.g. Ensure that increasing numbers of women have access to safe ARVs)	
Form of Power Over impacting our Issue	Strategies to Impact, Challenge or Resist	Strategies to Build our Own Transformative Power
Visible		
Hidden		
Invisible		
Combination		

- **Remind them about the Iceberg (formal/visible, hidden and invisible power):**
Visible power is the tip of the iceberg and the hidden and invisible power as below the surface. If we don't address what is below, we will not make lasting change.



- **Facilitator input:** The picture of the iceberg serves as a visual illustration of the dangers of focusing on only the most visible, structural components of power. Focusing on the visible is focusing only on the tip of the iceberg without tackling its



deepest roots which are hidden / invisible but very powerful and potentially destructive bedrocks if not understood. To dismantle the building blocks of patriarchy, power and oppression requires an analysis that allows you to see all the layers at play and thus enables the development of strategies appropriate to our own contexts and power dynamics.

ROUND TWO

In plenary:

- Strategy also involves what we do to build our own power and capacity to transform: our Transformative Power – power within, power to, power with and power for. These strategies are what builds movements.
- Thinking back to TAC or your case study: Brainstorm what else did they do to build these different kinds of power? Some of it is stated, and some of it is between the lines (e.g. building the public leadership of people with HIV+ or building allies).

Facilitator Note: Help them surface as much as possible: consciousness raising, building confidence and political awareness, leadership development, speaking out, building collective power in organizations and alliances, public education, research and evidence gathering, developing our own solutions, etc.

- Hand out the Strategies for Power Handout and look at different kinds of strategies in each box.

In small groups:

- Participants go back into same groups to fill in the second column. The biggest question is: how are we building strong activist leaders and movements as we go? Discuss all the ways they are or COULD be building their transforming power.
- After completing the second column, ask group to consider what does the overall power analysis say about some of the future a) opportunities and b) gaps or challenges in organizing and building strong women activists
- Report backs: Participants share their charts, and identify where they think the opportunities, gaps and challenges are.



- Key summary points
 - How we respond, engage and build alternative forms of power and what are the broad strategies that groups use to challenge visible, hidden, invisible power?
 - One key insight that this activity usually surfaces is that much of the organising and action responses to national problems are in the realm of visible power, very few groups develop targeted strategies directed at the deepest forms of power: hidden and invisible.
- Reflect on how this analysis can be incorporated into our work and strategies. Wrap up the discussion with exploration of the different realms of our lives – personal/ public/ intimate – and how power affects us in these different dimensions of life.



Power and Strategy Worksheet

Our Issue (E.g Lack of ARVs)	Our Goal: (e.g. Ensure that women have access to safe ARVs)	
Form of Power Over impacting our Issue	Strategies to Impact, Challenge or Resist	Strategies to Build our Own Transformative Power
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Strategies for Power

This describes two different kinds of strategies: those needed to confront power over and those that help us build our own power for change, safety and transformation. The first column is focused on resisting and confronting power - in its visible, shadow and invisible forms. The second is focused strategies we can use to build our own power. We can use this to help us think about strategies and strategic priorities.

Challenge and Resist Power Over	Build and Create Our Own Power for Transformation
<p>Visible Power:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Expose corruption and ties to hidden power <input type="checkbox"/> Hold decision makers accountable to existing laws and community commitments including thru direct action and protest <input type="checkbox"/> Challenge discriminatory and inequitable laws and policies 	<p>Organize to Impact Decisions and Governance: Laws, Policy, Judicial and Budgets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Mobilize women's political engagement to gain social accountability – <i>our power to</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Leverage relationships with those in decision making positions <input type="checkbox"/> Engage in legal, political and judicial advocacy <input type="checkbox"/> Shape the policies and practices we need and want
<p>Shadow Power:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Expose and discredit shadow actors <input type="checkbox"/> Research non-state actors and their influence and power <input type="checkbox"/> Develop strategies to protect ourselves from threats, <input type="checkbox"/> Integrate risk and conflict analysis into our networks and strategies consistently <input type="checkbox"/> Use of technology to expose abuses of power + to protect us 	<p>Build Our Own Movement Infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Strengthen women's movement leadership and organizing skills, our <i>power to</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Build diverse, inclusive alliances + networks with women's leadership and perspectives at the center <input type="checkbox"/> Grow and engage a base of activists <input type="checkbox"/> Build our organizations' capacity and collective power, our <i>power with</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Create strategies for our safety and well-being including safe houses <input type="checkbox"/> Strategically build alliances with powerful state + non-state actors



Invisible Power:

- Challenge and disrupt social norms
- Question taboos, negative traditions and use of shame/guilt to control
- Name and expose underlying interests and values of dominant players behind messages
- Draw attention to contradictions and consequences of invisible power
- Understand fear and its impact on our bodies

Create Critical Awareness and Communicate Our Own Ideas:

- Foster critical consciousness
- Amplify women's voices, ideas, views and beliefs
- Influence and inform public discourse, attitudes and behavior
- Creatively use and produce media and knowledge content and products as a form of cultural and political intervention
- Value women's practical know-how, life experience, and *power within*
- Cultivate an alternative vision for a better future and understand the critical role we play in building it, *our power for*
- Feel and promote solidarity, sisterhood and shared power