



POWER MAPPING

Power mapping is being increasingly used in participatory research by partnerships that wish to shape or change the local, regional and national policies. Power mapping involves the identification of key organisational, community and individual players in the policy making environment. These are people who have strength and influence in supporting or opposing a particular policy change. The exercise is ideally designed for a small group of people (Falbe et al., 2018).

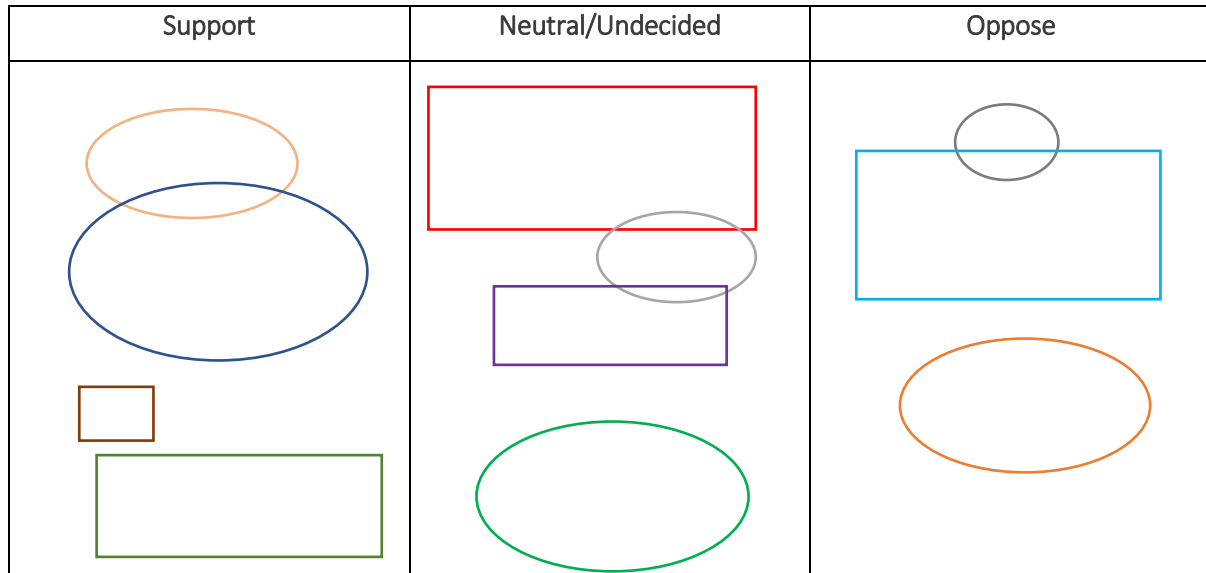
The first step is to select a specific policy that your group wants to help pass or defeat. As a group, complete the following steps:

1. Identify the policy targets or those people and organisations that have power to make a policy change.
2. Identify other key stakeholders or players in this situation—people, communities or organisation that may be affected by the problem or policy and have potential influence. Some of these stakeholders may present later once the policy issue is more prominent so it is important to try to anticipate those parties too.
3. Write your policy objective on the top of a sheet of paper and draw three columns: supporters on the left, neutral/undecided in the middle, and opposition on the right. Put targets in circles (power to make change) and put other players in squares. The size of the circles and squares should indicate the relative power and/or stake that people have; larger shapes are for entities with a lot of power or a lot at stake and smaller with less power or less at stake. The relative size can consider the resources, size, skills and intensity of the issue for the entity. Draw the shapes as overlapping when entities have shared interests.



Example Power Map Template

Policy Goal or Objective: _____



Adapted from Falbe et al. (2018)

1. If it is an election or decision year, consider the donations or perks that have been received by the targets and players in a position of influence.
2. Given the current understanding, choose the three most important entities to influence and consider the following:
 - a. What is most important: strengthen supporters, persuade the neutral/undecided or weaken the opposition?
 - b. When should you approach these entities (if at all)?
 - c. Is more information needed to make the map more accurate?

For an example of the use of a power map, see the following source:

Falbe J, Minkler M, Dean R, & Cordeiro J Power mapping: A useful tool for understanding the policy environment and its application to a local soda tax initiative. In: Wallerstein N, Duran B, Oetzel JG, & Minkler M. editors. Community-based participatory research for health: advancing social and health equity, 3rd edition. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass; 2018. p. 405-410.

