

The power pole

SPECIFIC ISSUE/S: Any kind of issue

PURPOSE/OBJECTIVES: To develop group or organisational analysis to prepare for strategising

LENGTH: 30 minutes

GROUP SIZE: Any

GROUP CHARACTERISTICS: Any kind of group

FACILITATOR KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS NEEDED: Medium level of knowledge: the facilitator would need to know more than the participants; basic facilitation skills are sufficient

RESOURCES NEEDED: The power pole handout

For definitions see The Powercube: <http://www.powercube.net/other-forms-of-power/expressions-of-power/>

INSTRUCTIONS: Check understanding of key terms, e.g., relative, finite, infinite, positional power, power-over, power with in bold in the handout.

Ask the group these questions to stimulate thinking and assess the knowledge of participants:

What is power? How would you define it? Do you think relative power is finite or infinite?

Explain the diagram by referring to the handout.

Group task

Identify a group context and issue. In a generic group or movement this will probably be the same issue.

For example, who has power amongst the parties in our campaign to ... stop mining/asset sales etc?

If the group is not a generic one then participants should break into groups according to context, and then choose an issue. Make groups of 4 or 5.

Participants create a power pole in relation to their issue; then they identify the key groups involved (including their own) and place them on the power pole.

Discuss these questions:

1. Which are the groups in relation to your issue that have a lot of power and lot of control about decisions?
2. Which are the groups that have very little control about the decisions?
3. Where do you put yourself or your group on your power pole?

Bring the groups back together and discuss the following questions:

- Looking at your power pole do you think there is any way that you can take more control of choices without other groups losing out?
- Under what circumstances are you willing for another group to move up the power pole, relative to others, including yourself?

- Under what circumstances are you willing for another group to move up the power pole if you will lose power altogether? (You might start by thinking about marae getting funding that previously went to Pakeha performance groups.)

How do your responses to these questions affect how you would go about changing your position on the power pole?

FACILITATION TIPS: See also the 'Thinking about relationships' activity and the Ladder activity.

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