



Seeing power in civil society

This is a stakeholder mapping exercise for thinking through the power of different actors in your wider network, and how that influences your capacity to pursue change in partnership with people with first-hand experience.

If you can, bring together people who know different aspects of your organisation to gain a broader perspective. You'll need a big sheet of paper and some small ones (such as sticky notes), ideally different colours, or some coloured pens.

1. Identify the different actors connected to your organisation that influence the way you work – eg individuals (internal and external), partner organisations, funders, or government institutions.
2. Write the name of each actor on a piece of paper. You could use different sizes to show how much power you perceive each to have.
3. Colour-code each sticky to show whether that power is enabling or constraining your work with people with first-hand experience.
4. Draw lines between each actor with an arrow to show the direction of influence. If you like, you can go further and draw solid lines for visible power, dashed lines for hidden power and dotted lines for invisible power.
5. Step back and take a look at your map. What does it tell you? Who or what is enabling or constraining your work?
6. Can you see one action you could take to make a difference?
7. You can also use this activity to explore relationships within your organisation, or to reflect on how power is at play in your social change strategy.

Your power map might look something like this:

