



Pillars of power

Purpose

To use a campaign planning tool to identify goals and break down an issue to a level where the group can be effective.

We often use this tool with Social speedometer.

Time

45 minutes

Materials

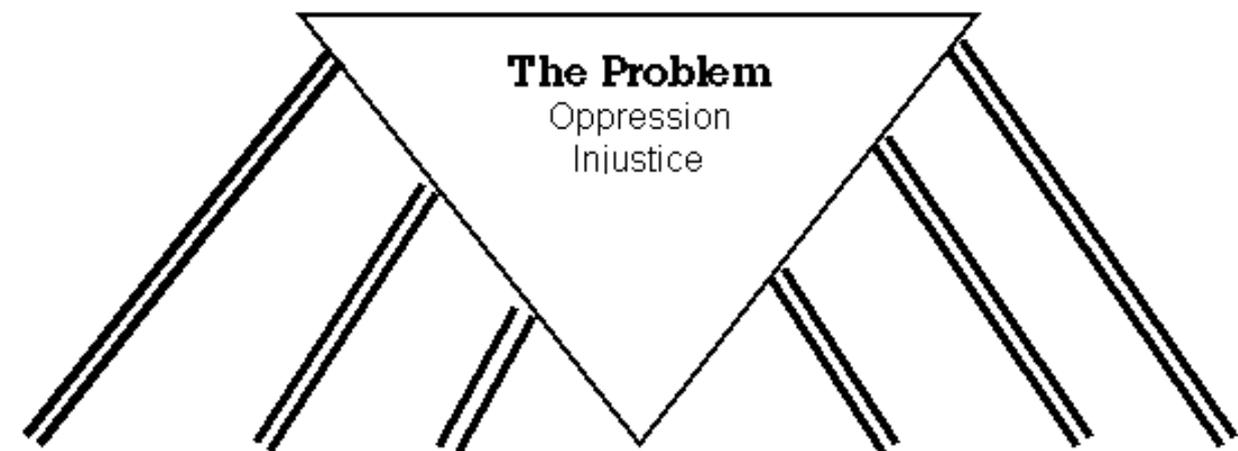
Flipchart, various coloured pens

Related tools

Social speedometer

Preparation

Prepare a flip chart with the pillars of power (below). It's vital to practice with the tool on your own beforehand with an issue you're familiar with.





How to use Pillars of power

- 1. Identify the problem or power situation you are trying to change.** Be as specific as possible. It could be a government policy, a violation of human rights, climate chaos, etc.
- 2. Think about what forces, beliefs or other factors sustain this situation.** These could be ideological or needs for security, etc.
Write one sustaining factor on each pillar. Be specific, e.g. “fear of...”, “belief in...”, “compliance with...”
- 3. Ask: how might these pillars be weakened or removed?** List your ideas for each pillar. If you have trouble identifying ideas, then the problem is still too big, so choose a different pillar to work on.
- 4. Ask: On which of the pillars can you be most effective?** Consider your own resources, strengths and capacity.
- 5. Draw another diagram,** this time with the chosen pillar as the problem in the triangle.
- 6. Repeat the process,** drawing more pillars to identify what forces or factors sustain the problem. Break the problem down at least three times, until you reach a level that you know you can affect. Keep going through the levels, each time taking an individual pillar and naming it as the problem.

Note: When repeating the process, avoid naming the bigger things you have already named: the idea is to break it down to a manageable size where your actions can be effective.

Description

Explain the purpose of the activity. Introduce the tool, perhaps using the example you've practised. Make sure to break the problem down into at least three stages.





Invite the group to divide into small groups of 4-5. They will choose an issue and work through the sequence as above.

Remind the participants to keep going through the levels, taking pillars propping up a bigger problem until they reach a level they can affect.

Debrief

Back in the whole group, invite each small group to share how they used the tool. Then ask:

- ⇒ **How was that?**
- ⇒ **Is this tool useful?**
- ⇒ **How will you use this tool in the future?**

