

Mapping the Social and Political Background

Purpose: This exercise aims to help a group share assumptions about what is going on in society and identify factors likely to affect the achievement of their goals, as well describe the context in which they are developing their strategy.

Time: 45 minutes

Preparation: Flip chart paper and pens. Prepare flip charts with headings of names of social sectors. We suggest media, local/national political structures, public opinion/current preoccupations, movements and new ideas, and other. Check that the group agrees these are the most useful headings and amend as necessary (Alternatively you could ask the group to generate these headings, but remember to allow more time if you choose this option). Hang the sheets well spaced out around the room.

Facilitator's note: This is a particularly good exercise to do in a group where people do not know each other, and near the beginning of the day to loosen things up, and to give everyone a chance to see where they coincide in their thinking. Do be aware though, the usefulness of the exercise is limited by the knowledge and awareness of the group. In the plenary you may have to flag up things that are simply wrong and the lead the group in discussing/deciding whether something is appropriate or not.

Description of Exercise:

- Divide the group into small groups of no less than 3 and ask them to discuss and make a list of what they think should go on each sheet. Allow at least 20 minutes for this, longer if possible, and certainly if the groups are larger than 3s.
- Once groups are ready, give each a pen (different colours if possible) and ask that each group to go to different flip charts and write up the main points from their discussions. After an adequate amount of time, ask that every group shift to another flip chart. If a group has the same answer they can note with a tick or some meaningful symbol after the already listed answer.
- Rotate until all groups have written answers on all sheets, and do one last go around so everyone can review all groups answers.
- Move from small groups back to plenary, check whether any contributions need clarification, and then review what they have come up with. Ask for disagreements and comments, and guide discussion so that all areas are covered. Summarise the main findings.