9.4 ACTIVITY

Power Mapping
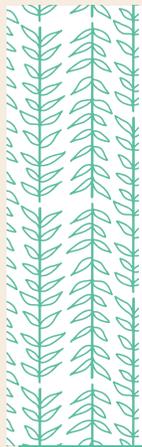
Objectives
» Think strategically about your project's supporters and detractors
» Understand how power operates in your community
» Analyze who can help you make change and figure out who you should focus on with your action efforts

Time Needed
45 minutes

Materials
» Markers
» Flip chart paper
» Power Mapping Matrix Sample Flip Chart *(see attached)*
» Power Mapping Example *(see attached)*

Introduction

As you and your team decide on the type of action you'd like to take and begin to develop your plan, it's important to think strategically about your key audience. If you haven't done so already, this is a critical time to clarify who can help you make the changes you're recommending and who you need to influence.

With power mapping, you create a visual chart and map out the different stakeholders and decisionmakers in your community and the power relationships between them. This chart can then serve as a planning tool to help your team strategize its next moves.

It can be useful to do this activity at many different stages in the YPAR process, like when you're first brainstorming your final product and your key audience in Stepping Stone 4, or when you're finishing your final product and preparing to present your findings in Stepping Stone 8.
Here in Stepping Stone 9, you've been building relationships throughout the course of your project and you've already presented your recommendations to members of the community, so you should have an even clearer sense of who supports you and who doesn't at this point.

Instructions

» Draw the power mapping matrix on a piece of flip chart paper. (Refer to the Power Mapping Matrix Sample Flip Chart to see how it should look.)

» Explain to the group how the matrix is organized and how you'll be using it:
  · As you can see, this power map is basically a graph measuring two things:
    – how much a person/organization supports or doesn't support our cause
    – how much power that person/organization has to push our change forward or hold it back
  · Today we will brainstorm all the different people and organizations in our community and place them on our power map based on how much they support us and how much power they have. This will help us figure out who can help us make change and who we should focus on with our action plan.

» Start by brainstorming a list of people, groups and organizations in your community:
  · Who are the key people who make the decisions related to our issue?
  · Of these people, who is already connected with our project?

- Who are the people who are engaged in our issue area?
- Who benefits from things staying the way that they are?
- Who would benefit from the recommendations we are proposing?

» Place each person, group and organization on the power mapping matrix. As a team, figure out where to locate them on the chart based on their level of support for your effort and their level of influence/power on your issue. (Refer to the Power Mapping Example to see how to fill it in.)

» Once you've placed everyone, look over your power map as a team. How is everyone distributed between the four sections of the chart? Use the following points as a guide to help you strategize next steps for your action plan:
  - **People/organizations that are supportive but not powerful (upper left section of the chart):**
    – Keep them informed about your project and its progress so you can mobilize them when the time comes. Do any of them have powerful allies they can help you connect with? How could they build their power?
  - **People/organizations that are supportive and powerful (upper right section of the chart):**
    – Keep them engaged and make sure you maintain their support. Engage them in taking action when the time is right. Can they help you win over any powerful folks who don't currently support you?

- **People/organizations that are not supportive and not powerful (lower left section of the chart):**
  – Keep an eye on them but don't spend too much energy here. Can winning over anyone in this section help you connect with more powerful folks you need on your side?
- **People/organizations that are not supportive but powerful (lower right section of the chart):**
  – These may be the main folks standing in your way and blocking your changes from happening. Focus on engaging very closely with people and organizations who are not supportive but you think can be influenced.
  – For those who are actively opposing you and you don't think you can convince to support your cause, think about ways to limit their impact instead of wasting time trying to win them over.

» Use these questions as a guide to help you develop your action strategy:
  - What's the best way to mobilize our network of supporters?
  - Who do we need to energize to take action on our recommendations?
  - Who do we know that has a strong relationship with the person and/or organization we need to influence?

### Debrief

Debrief the activity with the following questions:
» How does it feel to see those who support us and those who don't support us laid out like this?
» Did this activity change your thinking at all about the right action approach for our effort? Why or why not?
» How can we use this power map to help us develop our action plan?

Our Issue: _____

Our Goal: _____

Very Supportive

Keep Informed

Keep Engaged

Not Powerful

Very Powerful

Monitor Lightly

Engage Closely

Not Supportive
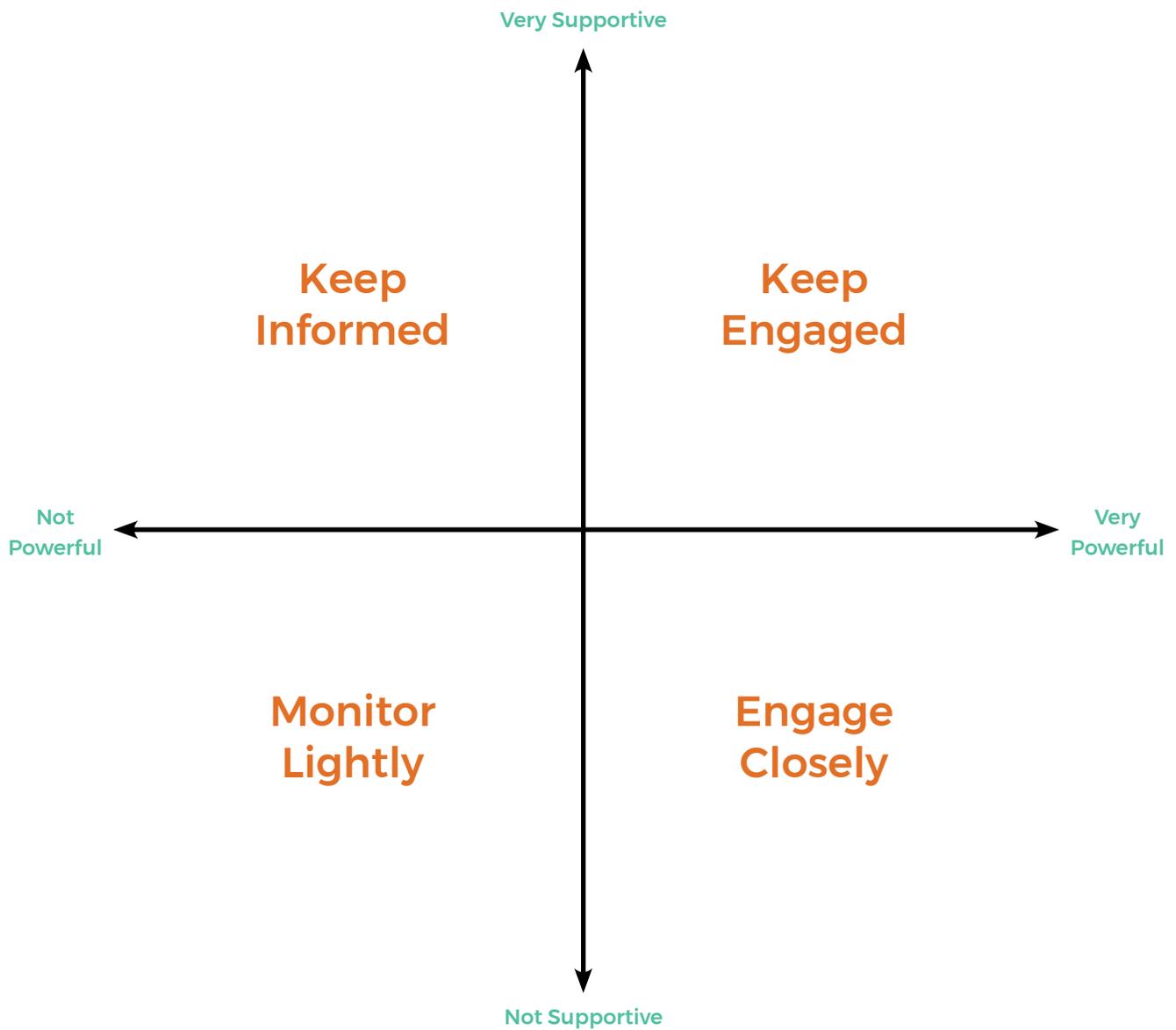
Power Mapping Example

Our Issue: Lack of opportunities, support and services in our city for youth

Our Goal: Create a Children's Fund in the city's budget to support youth services and programs

Very Supportive

City Councilmember Rodriguez

Neighborhood Association

City Youth Commission

Not Powerful

Very Powerful

PTA

Superintendent Jones

City Councilmember Yee

Not Supportive