

Who has the power?

Aims:

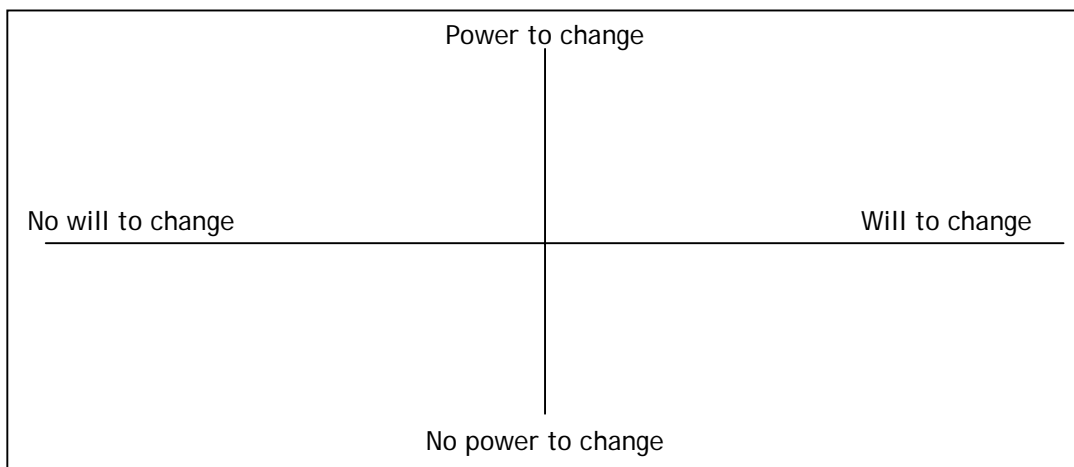
- To get the group thinking about who influences them and has power over them at local and national levels.
- To help the group identify who they should be aiming to influence, as part of their social action project.

Time: 30 minutes

Equipment: Computer with internet (if possible), flip chart and coloured paper, scissors, pens, post-it notes.

Method:

- A major part of making changes is about convincing people, and to do this the group needs to influence and persuade. Ask the group to make a list of people who have power or influence over them. What is the difference between power and influence?
- Visit www.oultwood.com, click on UK and then click on your borough/council/area - this gives direct links to local authority sites. Other useful sites include www.parliament.uk to help find local MPs, and www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk for local youth councils that may be worth approaching.
- Draw the following on some flip chart paper.



- Give each participant a couple of pieces of paper (or post it notes) cut into shapes of people. Ask them to write on them the names or jobs of some of the people who they said have power or influence over them. This should include some key people in the local community, such as faith leaders.
- Ask the young people to place these figures on the flip chart according to whether they have the will or the power to change.
- If for example, your social action project is about tackling environmental issues, through running an awareness-raising campaign about wasting electricity, then the media has a lot of power to help the campaign by including articles and publicity. But does it have the will? On the other hand your best friend may be very supportive, but probably doesn't have that much power to change the wider situation.

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- The most important people to target may be those who are powerful, but who are not yet convinced that they want to change things. However, remember to encourage the group to make their aims realistic.
- Next give each participant a blank post it note and ask them to choose one of these people and to write down what they would like them to do to help with the project.
- The challenge is then to find a way to persuade them to do this!
- You are now ready to start making a difference to your local community members. Good luck!

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