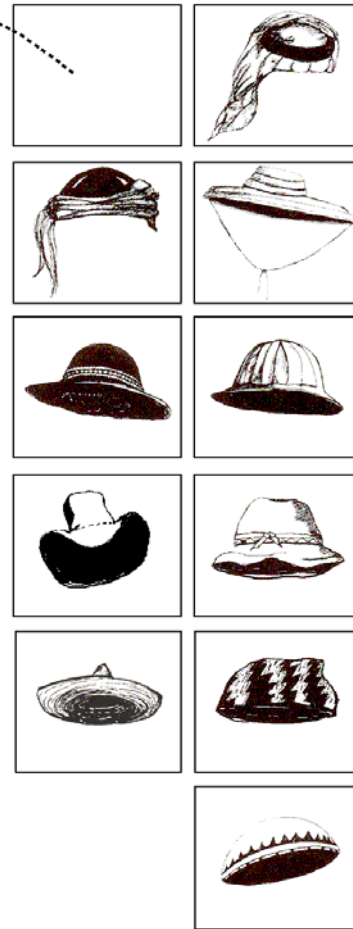




United Nations
Centre for
Human Settlements
(Habitat)

10 The Councillor as Power-Broker

Training
Materials
Series



The Councillor as Power Broker

Handbook 10

Training for Elected Leadership

ISTANBUL, 1996 – "THE CITY SUMMIT"



**UN-HABITAT
United
Nations
Human
Settlements
Programme**



The Councillor as Power Broker

Handbook 10

Training for Elected Leadership

**Training
Materials
Series**

**The
Councillor as
Power Broker**

**Training for
Elected
Leadership**



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FOREWORD

As shown by results of training needs assessments conducted by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), training needs of local government elected officials (councillors), or of local politicians, appear among the most urgent world-wide and, at the same time, the least attended areas of capacity-building for local development and municipal management.

In the last few years, a number of countries as varied as Nepal and Poland or Uganda and Paraguay have embarked for the first time in several decades, and in some cases for the first time ever, on a process of electing their councillors and mayors. Training needs of local-government elected officials are also at the top of the agenda in established municipal democracies such as Ecuador, India, and the United States of America.

To respond to these needs, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) has developed and tested a series of training handbooks to assist councillors to represent the citizens, provide civic leadership and effectively work with central government and with the management, technical, and professional staff in local authorities and other local institutions. The handbooks cover policy and decision making, communication, negotiation and leadership, attending, managing and conducting meetings, councillors' enabling and facilitating activities, financial management and other related needs.

This handbook, *The Councillor as Power Broker*, is one of the series of 12 and is intended for use primarily by trainers in national training institutions for local government or training units within local governments themselves. As an additional assistance for trainers using these handbooks, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) has published a companion *Trainer's Guide for Training of Elected Officials* containing trainer's notes and information prepared exclusively for the benefit of these trainers in planning workshops for local elected officials based on the handbooks.

It is expected that this training handbook will contribute greatly to strengthening the capacity of local governments through the introduction of good Leadership leadership practices, one of the major objectives of the 1996 United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, Habitat II.

I wish to thank Dr. Fred Fisher and Mr. David W. Tees for preparing this and other handbooks in the series in collaboration with the staff of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) Training Section within the Centre's training programmes supported by the Government of the Netherlands. I also wish to acknowledge the contribution of the trainers and local-government officials in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Kenya, Lithuania, Romania and Uganda who assisted in the field testing of these training materials.

Dr. Wally N'Dow
Assistant Secretary-General
United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

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About the hat

The hat worn by the figure to the right and shown on the pages to come was selected to symbolize the councillor role featured in this handbook.



**Fibre hat worn by
Yemen camel drivers**

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HOW TO USE THIS HANDBOOK

This training handbook on *The Councillor As Power Broker*, like other handbooks in the series, can be used in several ways.

Self-study

The essay that opens this handbook is intended for self-instruction. All you need is a quiet place to think, some time, and something to write with. For best results, we encourage you to write down your answers to the questions raised from time to time in the essay. The learning value of the information is multiplied many times for the reader who takes the time to do this.

Workshop training

The trainer's notes and exercise materials in this handbook are intended for use by experienced trainers in a training workshop for councillors from different local governments. We have included various types of learning activities and formats to provide trainers with considerable flexibility in adapting a workshop to the specific needs of participating councillors. It has been our intention in developing this handbook to encourage you to incorporate your own experiences as a trainer to heighten the learning value of these training materials for participating councillors.

As a trainer, you may decide to use the materials in the handbook in the exact order and manner presented. If you prefer, however, you may rearrange or modify the materials as needed to meet the objectives of a particular training situation. You may choose to offer three hours of training by using key exercises and activities included in the handbook. Or you may take advantage of the many materials in the handbook supplemented by content of your own to extend the length of the programme to a full day.

This handbook is one of 12 in a series for training in elected leadership. You might decide or be requested to provide a workshop that requires you to use more than one or all of these handbooks over a longer period of time. While each handbook can be used independently of the others, their use in sequence can provide a powerful, unified learning experience for participating councillors.

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Team training

These materials also can be used, preferably with the assistance of an experienced trainer/facilitator, to improve the performance of councillors who serve together on the same governing body. When training councillors who serve together, we believe the facilitator must be prepared to organize the training activities in this handbook in different ways. There may be occasions where you, as facilitator, will choose to add new activities depending on the situation and the characteristics of the group. We hope in situations like these you will view this handbook as a “tool kit” containing many optional training ideas to be mixed and matched, modified or abandoned, as suggested by the situation.

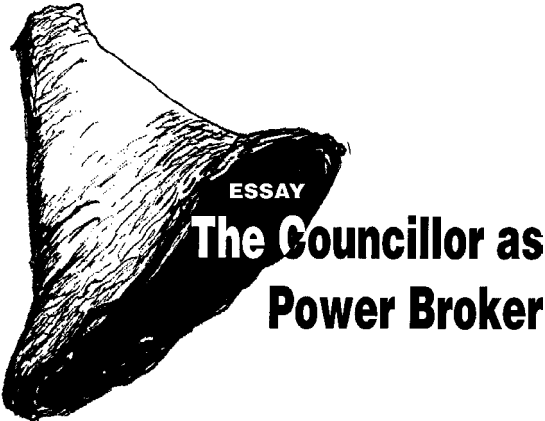
You have many options to choose from with these training handbooks. We hope you take full advantage of them.

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PART I



The Councillor as Power Broker

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Essay

Definition

The councillor, in the role of POWER BROKER, uses his or her own personal sources of power, as well as the power of official position, to get things done.

Summary

This essay will look at the complex topic of power as it relates to your position as an elected official. We will review some of the more traditional definitions of power and explore ways that elected officials can be more effective as power brokers. We will also raise the concern that this is the role with the greatest potential for abuse.

Reflection

When I think of myself as a power broker, the following things come to mind:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Concepts and ideas

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The definition we have given your role as power broker defies the complexity it embodies. One political scientist likened power to “one of those awful big tent concepts under which a three ring circus - at least - is going on.” Max Weber, the German sociologist, who is known best for his description of the bureaucratic phenomena, once said:

Power is the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will, despite resistances, regardless of the basis on which this probability exists. ⁽¹⁾

Essay

We could go on at great length attempting to define power but we're not sure how useful that might be.

Some might even question the wisdom of addressing this issue in a set of training materials such as these. There is a tendency to view power in the following terms:

"The topic is too political."

"Local politicians have more power now than they can use responsibly."

"Power is evil, maybe necessary, but evil. I don't think we ought to talk about it."

"The last thing councillors need is more power. Don't give them any more ideas!"

Unfortunately, these kinds of statements have a "ring of truth" to them. We don't have to go very far to find examples of the abuse of power by local elected officials, or misuse of the authority that is vested in the office. We would be naive to think that no one runs for public office because they "want to get rich," or because they "have a political score to settle." Local corruption of power may even be the most heinous abuse of authority because it is against one's neighbour. At least at the national level of government, the faces of our neighbours become more blurred, less recognizable, and the abuse of power more impersonal.

We all know you have the potential to abuse your position as councillor. But there is another side to that coin. The power that you assume when you take on the authority vested in your office as an elected official is also the greatest source of latent energy you have to get things done for your community. You may have noticed that we used the word "authority" in our attempt to describe your power base. Some would argue that power and authority are the same, but we think they are different, at least different enough to spend a few moments sorting out what we think the differences are.

Authority is the legal framework within which you and other councillors work to get things accomplished on behalf of your community. Authority is the system that is put in place to implement collective values. Authority is consent legitimately given to you and the council to direct certain activities and to utilize certain resources to achieve collective or community purposes. Your authority, as a councillor, is your legitimacy or formal source of power, but it's not the only source of power you can draw upon to get things done.

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Essay

Power has been a topic of fascination to politicians and academicians alike for as long as either has been able to think about it. And, the academicians have been trying to categorize the sources of power for as long as politicians and others have been putting them to the test. French and Raven are two who have managed to define the sources of power as well as any. Here are their categories:

1. Reward power is based on my belief that you can provide rewards promotions, favours, recognition, access to material and other resources;
2. Coercive power results from my perception that you have the ability to punish - to inflict pain, reprimand, demote, and take away privileges;
3. Legitimate power is based on the official position you hold in the community. This position gives you the right to exert power over me and others;
4. Referent power comes from my identification with you as someone who possesses personal traits that engender such responses as respect, obedience, and allegiance;
5. Expert power is based on my belief that you possess some special knowledge, skills, or expertise; and
6. Information power results from my belief that you have information, or access to information, that is important to me. ⁽²⁾

To the six categories of power described by French and Raven, we want to add two more we believe are common to the experiences of elected officials. They are:

7. Connection power is based on my belief that you, as a councillor, have connections with influential or important people; and,
8. Catalytic power results from your ability to combine two or more of your bases of power, each of which by itself may be insufficient to produce results.

Let's look at these potential sources of power in more depth. The first three sources (reward, coercive, and legitimate) are based on your official office. These are potential sources of power that come automatically with your election as a councillor. They also provide you with the ability to change someone else's behaviour despite their resistance to your efforts. Now, that's real power!

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Essay

The next four sources of power (information, referent, expert, and connection) are only available to use if other people believe you possess them. In other words, if you believe you are an expert in some area of specialization but no one else thinks you are, it is hardly a source of power for you to exploit. Now, you could turn that around if you convince us that you really are an expert. The same is true of the others. For example, you may in fact have "connections" but they don't translate into a source of power if those you are "connecting with" don't reciprocate. In other words, these sources require a transactional relationship between you and others before they become empowering options you can employ to get things done.

The final source, catalytic power, depends on your creative talents to visualize how various combinations of power sources can provide you with the resources you need to do what you want to do. Once envisioned, of course, you also need the ability to put them together effectively.

When spider webs unite, they can tie up a lion.

- Ethiopian proverb

Individual or collective?

Another way to look at the issue of power is whether you can act unilaterally or whether you need to act in concert with others. We have dealt with one aspect of that, based on your legislated powers. While these powers are individually conferred to councillors, they rarely can be exercised by individual councillors. This is not necessarily the case with the mayor or other individuals who hold an office with its own source of legislated powers. But, let's look at only those sources of power that are conferred to you as a member of a larger body. On the whole, your ability to reward someone or some collective group, or to punish someone or group (coercive power), or to use your legitimate source of power, legitimately, is either non-existent or severely limited by the fact that you are only one member of the legal body that has these powers. Given this, your real source of power with your peers is not in the reward-coercive-legitimate categories but rather in the use of the others. If, for example, you have personal traits that other councillors find attractive and they are inclined to not only agree with you but cast their vote in your favour because of these personal traits, then you have increased your power quotient.

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Essay

The same is true of expertise. If your colleagues know you know more than they know about some topic under consideration, they may defer to your judgement I making decisions as a collective body. This would increase your power to get things done. But, it's not a given, is it? We've all seen situations where someone has considerable expertise but no one wants to listen to them because they are otherwise unattractive, or have damaged their credibility as an expert, for one reason or another.

Information and connection power sources are more difficult to assess when the individuals operate within a system where power is collectively distributed. If you have information that others don't, and you use it judiciously and at the right time, it may give you considerable leverage (power) with your peers when it comes time to vote. One of the authors had an experience as a city manager that demonstrates this point. The city council was about to extend a very lucrative water-use agreement to a local foundry based on some dubious criteria when the city manager informed the council that the foundry had been using city property illegally for years (property that figured into the new agreement). That information effectively changed the council's vote from one in the foundry's favour to one that was against it. (We might also add that the disclosure nearly got the city manager fired from his job. It turned out the owner of the foundry had more "connection power" with the council than the city manager.)

Catalytic power is one which has more promise and potency than most of us realize. Often the legal authority of the council is not sufficient to achieve complex projects or to initiate services that may be controversial and complicated. In these cases, it may make sense to review systematically the sources of power we've identified to determine if there are opportunities to use a combination of power sources to accomplish your goal.

The power of the individual takes on an ironic twist if the council is split into two factions and one councillor is sitting in the middle of this split with no commitment to either side. This "middle person" may not be particularly powerful in his or her personal attributes. Nevertheless, persons in this situation can, and do in many situations, wield a lot of power they wouldn't possess otherwise. Again, we would like to draw from our own experiences to demonstrate the point.

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One of the authors lives in a small community where some citizens organized a coup to take over the local board of education because of rising costs and other concerns. ("Coup" makes it sound very mysterious and a bit romantic.) Actually, the citizens were able to get five people elected on a last minute write-in ballot. Since the board has nine members, this meant they were successful in gaining the majority, or the power to control the votes and the agenda. Victory, yes - but only temporarily. One of the newly-elected board members decided he liked the incumbent board members better and moved across the aisle. He, in effect, negated all the success his former board members and their supporters were able to garner in a hotly contested election for control of the school system. Now, that's power!

Essay

Before we continue, we want to give you an opportunity to reflect for a few moments about your efforts in the council or in other situations when you were in a position to exercise power.

Reflection

Recall a time or two recently when you felt particularly "Powerful" as a councillor. What was the situation? What kind of power do you think you were using? What were the consequences of your use of this source of power? If you could re-experience this situation, would you do anything differently? If so, what and why?

Now, consider a situation where you felt "powerless." What was it? Why did you feel this way? Who did have the power in that situation? What kind of power source do you think they were using? If you had a chance to re-live that situation, what might you do differently to have more influence?

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Some miscellaneous thoughts about power

1. **Why is it that elected leaders who have so much formal power have so much trouble getting things done?** Aggravating, isn't it? One possibility is the belle (or is it a myth?) that power really does come with the office or position of "The city charter says I can do this and I can do that. But, when I do these things, nothing much happens." Is it possible that those who are "not in power" (the powerless) are refusing to accept the definition of oneself that put forward by those in power? Elizabeth Janeway, in her provocative book *Powers of the Weak*, says the "ordered use of the power to disbelieve is the first power of the weak." ⁽³⁾ And, their grasp of power begins when they reject the definition that those in power have given themselves.

Centuries ago, in ancient Greece, Demosthenes counseled his people:

There is one common safeguard in the nature of prudent man, which is a good security for all. What do I mean? Mistrust. Keep this, hold on to this; preserve this only, and you will never be injured.

Perhaps a bit overstated, but he provides insight into the dilemma that many public officials face when there is an aura of mistrust. The economically and socially disadvantaged, and we might add the politically disenfranchised, have a great capacity to disbelieve what comes out of city halls around the world, particularly in the way of policies. This disbelief, or mistrust, is often well earned and one of the biggest stumbling blocks to effective local government.

2. **Power is often perceived as a top-down phenomenon to be exercised by those in authority when, in reality, power flows in all directions.** This can be a humbling lesson for many who aspire to "positions of power" only to realize that their power resides largely in the capacity of others to believe in them. For, the councillor who represents the community, it should be reassuring, to know that the potential to empower the community is everywhere.
3. **Power relationships are dynamic, not static, and subject to constant renegotiation.** The council's need to keep in touch with the community doesn't stop with election to public office. It may, in fact, become elevated to a higher level of interaction and bargaining. As soon as you take office, your source of power is not in the "office" you hold; it's in your ability to maintain trust and connections with those who permit you to use the power of your office effectively.

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Essay

4. **The absence of power is often more pervasive within local elected bodies than the use of power.** Sometimes, elected bodies are reactive and not proactive even though rapid changes are taking place that are predictable.
5. **These power voids make individuals and communities vulnerable to their environment.** When those we elect to lead us don't elect to lead us, we feel vulnerable, and often cheated. Power is a curious commodity. When it's not exercised, its absence is sometimes felt more strongly than its presence.
6. **Because of this, it may be more effective to fill those power vacuums, and manage them, than to initiate new power surges.** There's a well known problem-solving approach that says it is more effective to remove the constraints that are keeping the problem from being solved than to reinforce those forces driving for a solution. It may also be true of the use of power.
7. **Given these assumptions, the exercise of elected leadership power is a process of interaction and cooperation, involving constant negotiation between those who perceive they have power and those who perceive they don't.** Part of this negotiation process is to assure the elected leaders that their use of power is within the bounds of acceptability within a relationship that sanctions its use and validates its right.
8. **Sharing power is not the same as giving it away.** Some hold the belief that power is a zero-sum game., In other words, there's only so much to go around. If I give it to you, or lose it to you in a bargaining process, then don't have it. From this viewpoint I've lost. But power is like love. If you share it with someone, you haven't lost it. In fact, you probably have more than you started with.

You and your hired help

We've been talking mainly about the relationship between you and the community or your constituents. As an elected leader, this is your primary focus. But, there is another critical relationship you must think about, as a councillor, in terms of power and authority. We are talking about your relationship with the local government officers and staff. Your power as an elected official (your ability to get things done) comes from the electorate through the ballot box but your ability to deliver the attributes of power is largely in the hands of those you employ and those who are employed by other units of government that provide services and programmes within your jurisdiction.

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Essay

More often than not, the weak link between policy and the delivery of the “goods” of policy decisions is the ability to manage and implement them. Many local governments are weak. They often lack the managerial, technical, and professional knowledge and skills to carry out your policies and your budgets. All too often they lack the power and authority to get on with the job you have given them. While there are many strategies you can use to develop more effective implementation systems, we want to limit our discussion to the topic of this unit, your role as a power broker.

Many of the things already said about power generally, and with reference to the community more directly, apply to your power relationship with the local government’s officers and staff. You have legitimate, reward, and coercive power at your disposal, and these should not be dismissed lightly in any superior-subordinate relationship. On the other hand, your subordinates are not without their own power base. Let’s take a brief look at some of these power tools.

1. The staff often represents skills and experience that are difficult to replace.
2. On the staff are those with specialized knowledge and information about the organization, its operation, and the community that are invaluable to the ongoing implementation of programmes and services.
3. Local-government employees are in a unique position to mobilize a network of friends and supporters who can be used against the council if the employees think you are being unfair in your use of power.
4. Those who work for local government have a multitude of ways they can divert or sabotage the good intentions of council-enacted programmes and services.

When you are an anvil be patient, when a hammer, strike.

- Arabian proverb

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Forging an effective partnership

The working relationship between a council and the employees of local government should be seen as an interdependent partnership. You need each other to be successful, and your goals should be largely congruent. This doesn’t mean there won’t be disagreements or conflicts, but they should be addressed in the spirit of mutual trust and respect. Here are some thoughts on how to keep the power partnership between these two arms of local government fine-tuned and operating effectively.

Essay

1. First and foremost is the need to empower the officers and staff to do what you want them to do. All too often, elected leaders put muzzles on their staff. They fail to give them operating authority and the necessary freedom and resources to make day-to-day decisions. Local government's initiative is stifled when the staff has not been given sufficient authority and freedom to perform the duties and responsibilities they have been assigned.
2. Keep the channels of communication open between you and the staff. Try to minimize "surprises" on both sides of this relationship.
3. Be goal-directed with your programmes and services and direct in your relationship with the staff. The staff needs to know "where you're coming from" and what you want done. Nothing undermines the achievement of local governments more than the lack of clear direction and consistency in the way directions are communicated.
4. Recognize that acts of coercion invite acts of resistance and retaliation. They are both attempts to unbalance or re-balance the power relationship, and they rarely work.
5. Again, it is important to mention that sharing power is not the same as giving it away. Councils generally seem reluctant to share the power of the public trust and responsibility with others, particularly those who work for them.

Power is a complex topic. Whenever it is raised as an issue in the development of elected officials, the discussion is clouded with emotions and self-doubt. One of the most familiar quotes about power is that "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." What we ought to remember about power is Disraeli's comment that "All power is a trust; that we are accountable for its exercise; that from the people and for the people all springs, and all must exist."

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Essay

Key points

- The power broker role is the one councillors perform that is most prone to abuse.
- It is also the one that can help them be most effective in bringing about community change.
- It is also the most complex to manage, individually and collectively.
- Authority is the legal framework, and power base, within which councillors work to accomplish changes on behalf of the community.
- Councillors have many different kinds of power sources they can tap to get things done.
- The individual councillor's greatest power contribution is refraining from exercising power for personal gain and directing it to help the council be more powerful on behalf of the community.
- Power is not just a top-down phenomenon. Power flows in all directions.
- Power is dynamic, subject to constant renegotiation between those who think they have power and those who don't.
- It is more important to fill power voids in the community than to engineer power surges.
- Managing the power relationship with the local-government staff is as important as managing power relationships within the community. However, it may not be quite as interesting.
- The first thing to do in any power relationship is to see that your adversary is empowered.
- Sharing power is not the same as giving it away. This is the first maxim of power brokering.

References

- (1) Weber, Max, *Theory of social and Economic Organization*, translated by A.M. Henderson and T. Parsons (New York, Oxford University Press, 1947), p. 152.
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- (3) Janeway, Elizabeth, *Powers of the Weak* (New York, Alfred A Knopf, 1960), pp. 157-167.

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PART II



**The Councillor as
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Purpose

The word “Power” has a negative connotation in many languages and cultures. This may be because of a universal inclination to associate power with negative acts - corruption, manipulation, coercion etc. Actually, power is neither good nor bad apart from the motives and actions of the people who use it. In fact, without power, nothing important gets done by anyone. Councillors with an appropriate power base and skills in the effective use of power will be far more successful in meeting the needs of their constituents.

It is the intent of this workshop to provide participants with insight into the sources of power available to them to get things done. Participants will gain an understanding of the power sources they use most often and how they can create more effective power relationships with those on whom they depend to get things done.

Contents

A brief description of each learning activity is shown below with an approximation of the amount of time required. If you wish to change the order, to omit something, or to add training material of your own, feel free to do so.

10.1 Warm-up exercise: The powerful town council

Brief discussion of the word “power” as participants might associate it with the city council in the town where the workshop is being held. Sharing of points of view by councillors from other cities and councillors who serve the host city. (30 minutes)

10.2 Mapping power relationships

Participants recall critical situations in their experiences as councillors. Based on these, they prepare personalized maps showing relationships with others in the community who needed to be considered by the council in handling the situation. Relationships are rated as positive, negative, or neutral, and these are discussed in small groups. (60 - 75 minutes)

10.3 Trainer presentation

Brief presentation on the role of councillors as power brokers. Draw on materials from the preceding essay to explain the difference between authority and power and describe eight potential sources of power of councillors. Discuss power relationships of elected leaders and particularly relations between councillors and the community. (30 minutes)

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Workshop

10.4 **Self-assessment: Personal empowerment questionnaire**

Participants complete a questionnaire on the sources of power available to them as councillors and which of these sources of power each wants to strengthen for greater council effectiveness. (60 minutes)

10.5 **Exercise: Critical incidents in the use of power**

Using a handout containing nine critical incidents in the use of power, participants discuss each of the incidents and identify the source of power being used. (45 minutes)

10.6 **Skill transfer exercise**

Ask councillors to reflect privately and then to share with others what they intend to do after the workshop with what they have learned about the effective use of power at the workshop. Encourage personal commitments to change. (30 - 45 minutes)

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Workshop

Trainers Notes

10.1 Warm-up exercise: THE POWERFUL TOWN COUNCIL

Time required: 30 minutes

Objective

This exercise is to stimulate spontaneous reactions to the term “Power” when used to refer to a town council and to encourage a lively discussion.

Process

Open the workshop with a statement (in the box below) followed by three questions. Ask for responses from participants to each of the questions.

Statement

On my way to the workshop this morning, I heard someone say that the city council in this town is very powerful.

Questions

1. When you hear the word “power,” how does it make you feel?
2. Those of you who are on the council in other towns, what do you think was meant by the word “powerful”?
3. Those of you who serve on this town’s council, what do you think was meant?

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Workshop

Trainers Notes

10.2 Exercise: MAPPING POWER RELATIONSHIPS

Time required: 60 - 75 minutes

Objective

This exercise is to help participants become increasingly aware of the power sources in their communities which they do or should consider in accomplishing community or council goals. A further purpose is to help participants evaluate the influence of each potential source of community power on goal achievement, whether positive or negative.

Process

Ask participants to recall a recent situation in which their council had to take a position or make a difficult, perhaps politically disagreeable, decision that involved many interests and groups in the community. Ask them to be very specific about the situation and who was involved.

When participants have recalled a situation, ask them to complete the Power Relationships Map on the following page. Tell them to begin by placing the council in the circle at the centre of the map and entering in the satellite ovals the names of community interests and groups whose needs and concerns were considered by the council or should have been. Suggest that they place the most important power sources in their situation in the ovals closest to the council and the less important ones in the more distant ovals.

Finally, ask participants to go back over their completed map and label each of the power sources in the situation as follows:

+ = A positive power source

- = A negative power source

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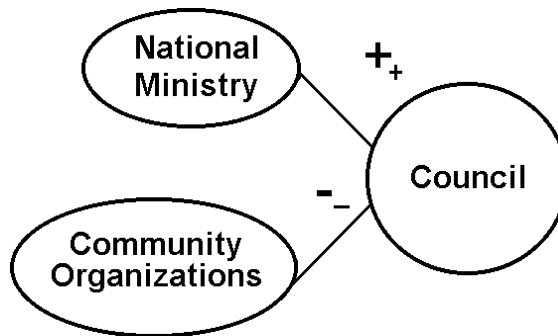
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Example:



When participants have completed their individual *Maps*, divide them into small groups of three to five each. Encourage sharing of information and reactions. In each case, useful discussion questions might include:

1. What support or assistance was given by those who you listed as positive power sources? What might you do to get even more help from them in the future?
2. What did those listed as negative do to disrupt or work against you in the situation? What might be done to eliminate or reduce their influence in the future? Could their opposition be turned into support? How?
3. What might be done to empower others in the community to support you and the council in the future?

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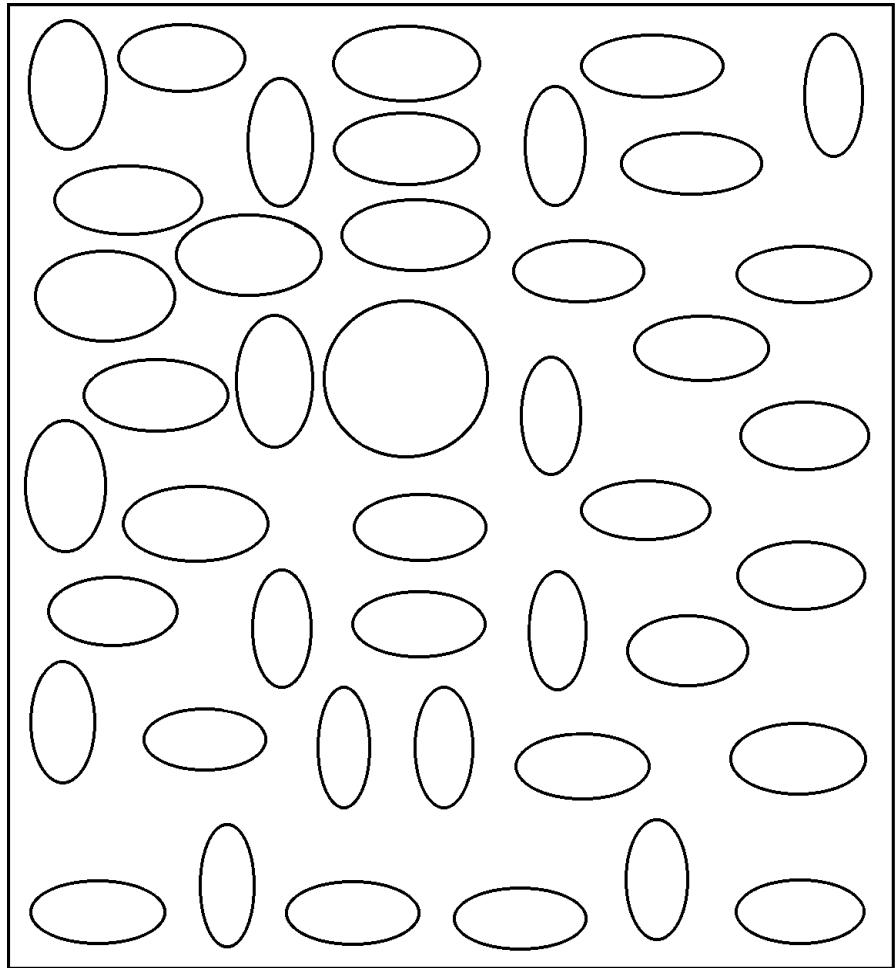
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POWER RELATIONSHIPS MAP

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Exercise



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10.3 TRAINER PRESENTATION

Time required: 30 minutes

Objective

This presentation is to provide participants with ideas and perspectives on the power broker role and a conceptual foundation they can use for the individual and group exercises included in this workshop.

Process

Prepare the presentation based on information from the preceding essay on the power broker role. Include an explanation of the difference between authority and power and describe eight potential sources of power of councillors. Discuss the power relationships of elected leaders and particularly relations between councillors and the community.

Outlined information on note cards may help you cover the information systematically and stay on schedule. Ask questions from time to time during the presentation as a check on participant comprehension and to hold their attention. Augment the presentation with visual aids including pre-printed newsprint sheets and overhead transparencies as a further aid to comprehension.

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10.4 Self Assessment: PERSONAL EMPOWERMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Time required: 60 minutes

Objective

As one of us has said about power in an earlier publication, power is like a pile of miscellaneous clothes at a hawker's stall. It is hard to know what it feels like or if it fits until you try it on. French and Raven have come up with several categories of power to which we have added one more of our own. Of these sources of power, three (reward, coercive, and legitimate power) focus on the power holder and his or her ability to change the behaviour of others despite their resistance. The other four types (expert, information, referent and connection power) place part of the success of the power holder on the perceptions that others hold of him or her.

This exercise is to acquaint participants with the sources of power available to them, the extent to which they use each of the sources, and which sources they want to work on to increase their own empowerment.

Process

Furnish each participant with a copy of the *Personal Empowerment Questionnaire*. Read the instructions at the top of the questionnaire out loud while participants read along silently. Ask participants to complete the questionnaire working alone. This should take no more than 15 minutes.

When participants have completed questionnaires, divide them into groups of three. Suggest that participants, in their groups, share what they have written with each other and offer suggestions on how individual participants can make more effective use of their selected sources of power. As time permits, reconvene participants and invite them to share something of value they have obtained from the exercise.

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Exercise

PERSONAL EMPOWERMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Instructions

Each of you, as councillors, has sources of power available to you in varying degrees to, help you perform effectively. This questionnaire is designed to you assess the kinds of power you have available and the extent to which the source of power can be increased to improve your effectiveness. To complete the questionnaire, place a check mark in one of the open squares opposite each of the seven power sources that corresponds with the use you intend to make of that source as a councillor.

	Not at all	To some extent	To a considerable extent
--	------------	----------------	--------------------------

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. REWARD POWER
Others believe I can reward them through such things as board appointments, favours, recognition, access to information and other resources. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. COERCIVE POWER
Others believe I can punish them through such things as demotions, dismissal, and the removal of privileges. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. LEGITIMATE POWER
My position gives me the right to exert power and influence over others. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. REFERENT POWER
Others see me as a person who possesses personal traits that suggest that I am worthy of respect, obedience and loyalty. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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	Not at all	To some extent	To a considerable extent
--	------------	----------------	--------------------------

- 5. **EXPERT POWER**
Others believe I have special knowledge, skills, or expertise that can help them accomplish what they want more effectively.

- 6. **INFORMATION POWER**
Others believe I have information or access to information that is important to them.

- 7. **CONNECTION POWER**
Others believe I have connections with influential or important people that can be useful to them.

Review your responses to each of these sources of power. Consider the extent to which you would like others to regard you as having more of any one or more of these power sources. If so, what steps might you take to increase your power and influence as a councillor?

- 1. Identify below the sources of power you would like to work on to increase your personal power and influence as a councillor.

- 2. List below a situation or two in which you would like to increase your personal empowerment.

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3. Would your increased power and influence be directed primarily toward (check one or more of the following):

Other councillors _____

The local-government staff _____

Community groups _____

Other _____

4. What actions might you take to increase your personal power in order to meet these expectations?

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10.5 Exercise: CRITICAL INCIDENTS IN THE USE OF POWER

Time required: 45 minutes

Objective

The intent of this exercise is to give participants practice in recognizing the sources of power being used in several incidents that occur frequently in a community.

Process

Give each participant a copy of a handout (see following pages) containing critical incidents involving the use of power. Ask participants to read the incidents.

When participants have read the incidents, divide them into small groups. Ask each group to discuss each incident, identify the source or sources of power being used in the incident, and enter their choices in the space below each incident.

After about 20 minutes, reconvene the participants and ask for reports a comparison of results.

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Exercise

Nine Critical Incidents

Incident No. 1

There was a need to introduce a market in Bwera as a way of raising revenue for the district. The district had no means for constructing the market even though the technical staff recommended constructing the market in phases using district funds. The council decided to allocate the plots to enable businessmen/traders to construct the market with their own funds and paid for them over a 10-year period.

Type(s) of power:

Incident No. 2

The council adopted an ordinance restricting drinking hours to between 6.00 p.m. and 10.00 p.m.

Type(s) of power:

Incident No. 3

Women were convinced to contribute \$US 100 per year per adult female to pay for the construction of a women's vocational training centre.

Type(s) of power:

Incident No. 4

An idea was introduced to plant trees to protect the environment. A secondary school took responsibility for planting the trees.

Type(s) of power:

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Exercise

Incident No. 5

The council introduced a revolving fund to promote individual women as entrepreneurs.

Type(s) of power:

Incident No. 6

After their election last year, two new councillors found that embezzlement of council funds was commonly accepted by old council members. They requested the council to appoint a task force to probe the financial transactions of the district. When the issue became public, the council had no choice but to appoint the task force and conduct the investigation.

Type(s) of power:

Incident No. 7

The council has successfully tackled the problem of too many animals grazing along main roads by passing a law imposing a fine of \$US 5000 or imprisonment (1 month) for offenders. This practice has reduced road accidents by two thirds in one year.

Type(s) of power:

Incident No. 8

A councillor has taken the initiative to convince all of the councils in sub-counties of the district to give or buy a plot of land for use by women in the trading centres.

Type(s) of power:

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Exercise

Incident No. 9

A councillor was able to persuade the executive to make on-site visits to primary health centres which became very useful in gaining his support for budgeting more funds.

Type(s) of power:

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10.6 SKILL TRANSFER EXERCISE

Time required: 30 - 45 minutes

Objective

This exercise is to help participants transfer the learning experiences of the workshop into their real-world activities as elected officials. The focus of this exercise is on raising expectations, engaging in realistic planning and making personal commitments. Most of the work is done on a personal basis with some interpersonal sharing.

Between knowing and doing there is a wide chasm.

It is generally agreed that the purpose of training is to improve the way people do things by showing them a better way. In fact, the success of a training experience can be measured by the amount of personal growth and change that takes place both during training and after the training is over.

Training rarely has the impact on workshop participants that trainers hope it will have, particularly after an exposure of only a few hours. The exhilaration of the moment fades quickly when the trainee is confronted with old work habits and the resistance of work associates who have not shared the training experience.

On the other hand, commitments to learning and change made at the close of a workshop can help participants overcome learning resistance in themselves and in the work environment. A trainer can help learners make a successful transition from the world of learning to the world of doing through a few simple planning exercises. Think about it this way. The time taken to encourage learning transfer could be the difference between a brief exposure to ideas and a life-changing experience.

Process

Spend at least half an hour at the end of the workshop to focus the attention of participants on important learnings and encourage them to continue experimenting with these learnings in their council activities. Begin by giving participants about 15 minutes to work independently on a simple learning transfer questionnaire.

When participants have completed the questionnaire, ask them to share quickly with the group two or three things they intend to do differently in their council roles as power brokers to close the workshop.

Workshop

Exercise

A LEARNING TRANSFER QUESTIONNAIRE

Take a few minutes to reflect on the role of the power broker, the new ideas you encountered in this workshop, and how you feel about them. Then, in the space below, write a sentence or two to describe something interesting you have learned about yourself during this workshop.

Based on what you have learned about yourself and the many possibilities for change presented by this workshop, what two or three things do you intend to do differently in your council role as power broker?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Finally, what obstacles in yourself or in your work environment do you expect to experience during your efforts to implement these changes? What will you do to remove or minimize these obstacles?

Obstacle	Action to remove the obstacle
1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____

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If you can learn it, you can do it.