

Handout 3:

4-power framework

Power is the ability to create or resist change. It can be held by individuals or groups.

Power held by individuals relates to their autonomy, which can be less visible.

Power held by groups relates to set structures and rules in any given context.

There are four types of power:

- Power over** This is domination, often a negative use of “power over” other people. It can be exploitative and repressive. It can be used to control resources and opportunities for influencing decisions. However, “power over” does not have to be negative. It can just mean having access to and control of financial, physical and knowledge-based assets. It can also mean having control over other people to protect their interests.
- Power to** This means being able to choose what to do and being able to do it. It includes resisting or creating change. It means being able to make decisions (within the household, community or more broadly) and to shape one’s life.
- Power within** This refers to the knowledge, capability, self-esteem and self-belief of any individual to enable them to bring about change in their life. It promotes personal dignity. It is often influenced by cultural or religious norms.
- Power with** This is the ability of people with different interests to find common ground and act collectively, based on a sense of solidarity and mutual support, to build collective strength.

Source: VeneKlasen L, and Miller V, ‘Power and empowerment’, *PLA Notes*, 43: 39–41, 2002, and Comic Relief Maanda Initiative, *A framework for women and girls’ empowerment: Guidance for Maanda applicants and grantees*, Comic Relief, 2014.