

Visual actor mapping—part 2

Purpose & Output This exercise builds on [Exercise 2.3a](#) by denoting relationships among the actors in the map, identifying the allies, opponents, and neutral parties.

The resulting map can then be used to identify and analyse specific actors in your context who may represent intentional (or unintentional) sources of threats.

Input & Materials

- A basic actor map (from the previous exercise)
- Paper and coloured markers or pens
- Coloured dot stickers

Format & Steps **Written/drawn visualisation**

Considering all the actors you have brainstormed so far:

1. Denote actors based on the nature of their relationship to your work (ally, adversary, neutral, unknown). This can be done by assigning a coloured dot to each type of actor, different coloured post-it notes, or different locations (allies on the left, opponents on the right, neutrals in the middle, etc.).
2. Draw a circle around each actor on the map. Its size can correspond to its **power and resources** in the socio-political context (see legend below).
3. Starting with yourself on the map, you can make connections to any actor with whom you have a relationship.

Use the legend on the next page to represent the different types of relationships that exist between the actors on the map.

Examples of relationships to include here are:

- Close relationships: where actors enjoy a positive relationship with each other.
- Alliances: where actors coordinate their activities with one another and act as one.

**Format &
Steps**

- Weak or unknown relationships: relationships with little contact, or where the nature of which is unknown.
 - Conflict: where two actors have an antagonistic relationship with one another.
 - Violent conflict: where the relationship is characterised by physical (potentially armed) violence by one or both parties.
 - Compulsion: where an actor has power over another one and can make them do something, e.g. a paramilitary group which is controlled by the armed forces.
 - Interdependent: where two entities are bound to each other in some manner.
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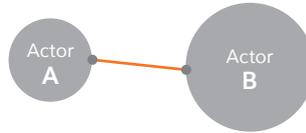
**Remarks &
Tips**

It is useful to periodically revisit and reflect on the map you created and make any additions, subtractions or changes that occur to you. Remember, it is important that this is re-evaluated and updated regularly, especially before a new action.

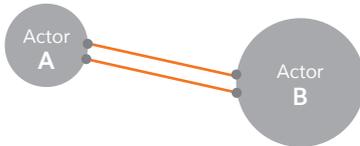
Legend²



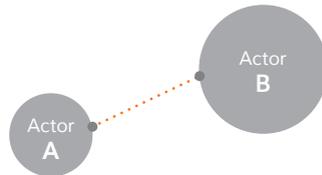
Different sized circles represent differences in power



A solid line represents a close relationship
You can also 'break' the line (by crossing it in the middle) if there is a broken relationship



A double-line represents an alliance



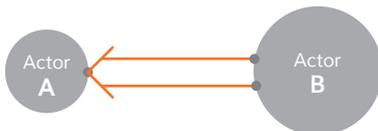
A dotted line represents a weak or unknown relationship



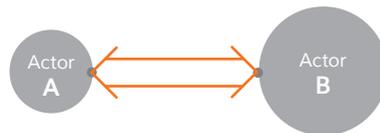
A jagged line represents conflict or a bad relationship



A double jagged line represents violent conflict



A double-line with an arrow represents domination, control or compulsion (where one actor acts under orders of another)



A double-line with an arrow in both directions represents interdependence

² Adapted from KURVE Wustrow (2006) Nonviolent Conflict Transformation. A Training Manual for a Training of Trainers Course. Centre for Training and Networking on Nonviolent Action KURVE Wustrow e.V., Wustrow. (pdf: <http://www.trainingoftrainers.org/>), pp.45-46.

Additional actor information sheet

For each of the allies and opponents (but prioritising the active ones), you can elaborate on the nature of their relationship to your work, and create an information sheet that provides further information on their motivations, their interests, the history of their relationship with you and their resources (material, financial, relational or other).

This information sheet will help you to:

- identify the underlying interests and relationships that motivate their stance. Why are they 'with' or 'against' you?
- identify the resources and strategies they possess and employ which they may use to help or hinder your work. Reflect also on their position within the broader socio-political context and which privileges and resources they might draw from that position.

It is important to note that these motivations and resources will change over time. This analysis should be updated regularly as new information emerges. Furthermore, it's very important to consider sources of information about this trustworthy: be it through personal contact, informal networks, local media or other.