How to Play

A Role-Playing Board Game to Provoke Ideas and Action for Social Change

Game Elements

1 x Teacher's Manual

1 x *How to Play* Instruction Manual

1 x Power Map (Game Board)

4 x PowerTalk Guides

- ✓ Illegal Arms Trade Scenario
- ✓ How to develop a creative Pitch
- ✓ Tips for teams who get stuck
- ✓ Campaign Demand Ideas

1 x sheet for cut out Characters - Scenario: Illegal Arms Trade

1 x sheet for cut out Characters Blank

Character Name & Description Cards for the table

It's your turn to change the world!

A Strategic Role-Playing Game

Where do we ***begin to make this world a better place***?

- ✓ **in two places.**

Firstly, ***we need to learn and understand what is really going -***

- ✓ **what are the real issues?**
- ✓ **what do different people experience and feel?**
- ✓ **what are people already doing that we can learn from or even join?**

Secondly, ***we need to act, to get together with others -***

- ✓ **to brainstorm creative ideas and test them on each other**
- ✓ **to build on each other's ideas… and then…**
- ✓ **to try them out.**

If this makes sense***, then PowerTalk is the game to get you going!***

- ✓ **it is a role-playing game**
- ✓ **actors go for and against each other around a controversial Campaign Demand**
- ✓ **characters struggle to push their interests to win or defeat the demand**
- ✓ **but they are also challenged to look for creative win-win solutions.**

The game role-plays ***social change issues and struggles***, encouraging you to be curious and creative, to think out of the box. It can be played -

- ✓ **to have fun (serious fun!)**
- ✓ **for learning and for developing real campaign strategies in an organisation movement or a group of citizens**

After all, as Margaret Mead said -

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

A quick overview

Choose an Issue

Find and choose an issue that your group feels passionate about. Discuss and research it and then formulate a ***Campaign Demand***!

An easy way to get to know this game is to first play the pre-produced scenario for which there is support material in the box. The Campaign Demand for the pre-produced scenario is:

Stop illegal Arms Trade!

Choosing the Characters

Nine different **Characters:** politicians, the UN, Youth groups, International NGOs, who are in some way involved in the issue, are identified – 9 actors maximum for the first round. These **Characters** are placed on the **Power Map**, according to how much *Influence* they have and how much they *Agree* or *Disagree* with the **Campaign Demand**.

In the pre-produced scenario, the Characters and their starting positions are preset so the teams can start straight away developing their strategies for the game.

The Judge

A **Judge** is chosen, and 4-8 teams are formed to represent 4-9 **Characters** – some of them agree with the demand and some of them disagree.

Then the fun begins!

Develop a convincing Strategy/Pitch

Each team brainstorms a creative strategy (a **Pitch**) to advance or win their side of the demand. They then describe how their **Pitch** will change the power balance, so as to move **Public Opinion** and **Characters** around the **Power Map/Board**. After collectively moving Public Opinion on the game board, each team judges the Pitch by moving their own **Character's** position on the **Power Map**.

Finding allies

After one round of **Pitches** another round begins, but this time the teams must find **an ally,** collaborating amongst each other, to catapult their cause forward.

In the third and last round the teams can reach across the divide, looking for win-win **Pitches** where even more teams can come together to come up with a strategy that satisfies all of them - or a team can create a **new Character** and bring on a game-changing strategy with it.

At the end of the game the team with the best strategy and most convincing arguments wins… but everyone will have enjoyed the challenge and deepened their understanding of the dynamics and possibilities around an important social issue.

Game Instructions

1. **Choose an impartial facilitator,** who has read the manual or played the game before and can act as Judge.

2. **Decide as a group, whether you are going to create your own scenario** based on a clear Campaign Demand or play the scenario based on the pre-produced scenario. Playing the ready-made scenario takes about 45-75 minutes depending on the size of your group (8-16 players). Creating and playing your own scenario will demand more time.

3. **Facilitator explains the learning objectives and goals** of the PowerTalk board game. PowerTalk is a strategy and negotiation game and the *learning objective* is to develop your arguing and communication skills and your ability to critically analyze power balances in society and how to influence them. *The goal of the game* is to influence other Characters and Public Opinion. When playing the pre-produced scenario players learn about the negative impacts of illegal arms trade, corruption and organized crime to peace and security, sustainable development, democracy and human rights, and possible solutions for the prevention of firearms trafficking.

4. **Choose four to eight key Characters**, each represented by a pair or a team of three players.

5. **Players choose their Characters.** If playing the pre-produced scenario, you must have at least the following four Characters to start with: Leader of Lake Land, Leader of Stone Land, Youth in Lake Land *or* Youth in Stone Land, and the UN.

6. **Players name their Characters** (except the UN Character). The name shouldn't be an existing name of a past or present leader or organization nor your own name. The names are written on a piece of paper and attached to the Character Name Cards on the table.

7. **Place Characters on the Board.** If playing the pre-produced scenario, the Characters have preset starting positions e.g. Leader of Forest Land: A3. The positions are illustrated in the scenario description.

8. **The game begins.** The facilitator gives the teams a few minutes to develop their strategy and prepare their first Pitch. The game has three rounds.

Starting positions

Characters in the pre-produced scenario on

Stop illegal Arms Trade!

Leader of Stone Land: A3

Leader of Lake Land: B5

Minister of Defence of Lake Land: B4

Leader of Forest Land: A5

The UN: F4

Arms Dealer: A4

International NGO: F3

Youth in Stone Land: F1

Youth in Lake Land: E2

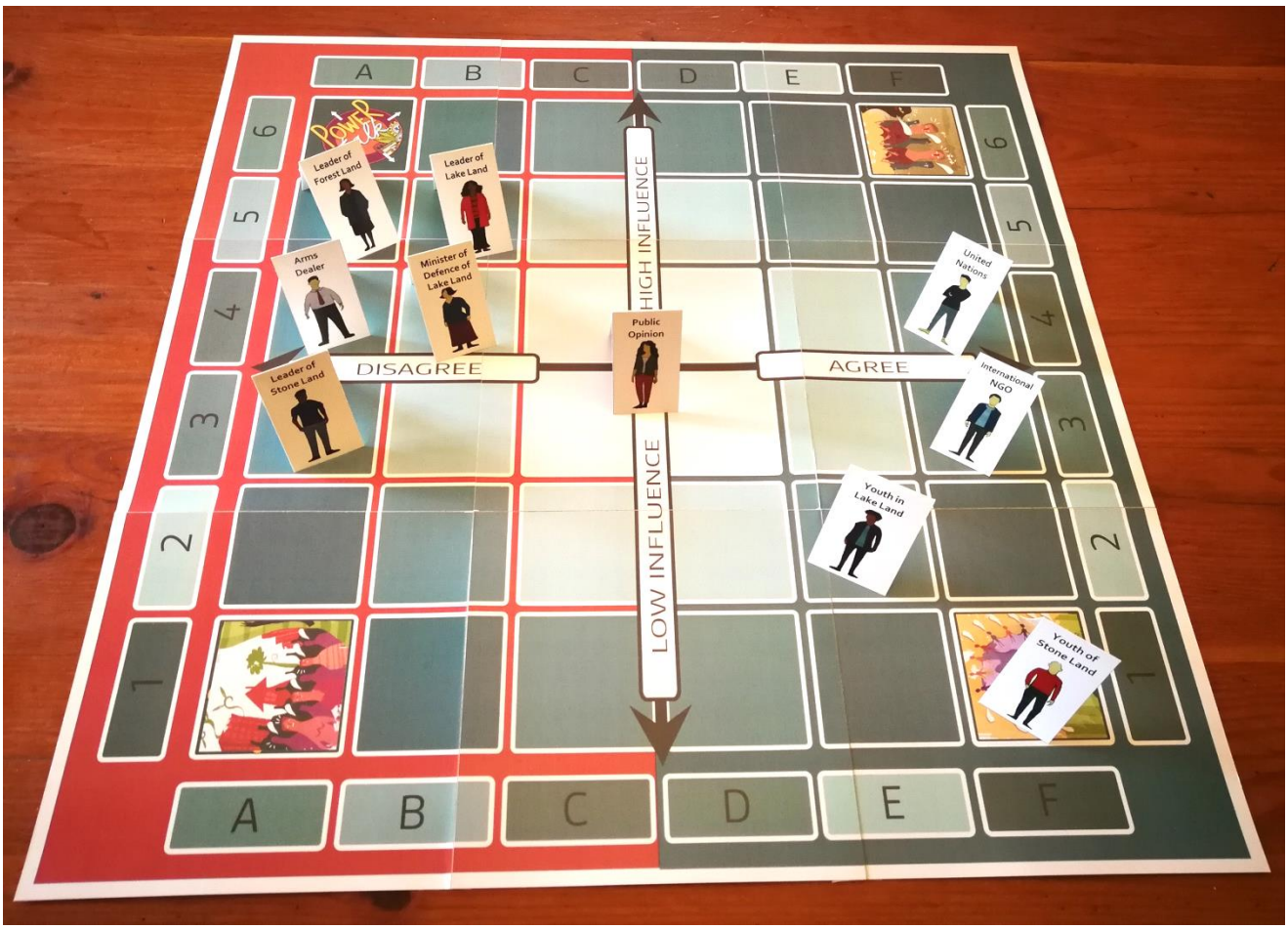

Figure 1. Initial placing of the Characters in the illegal arms trade scenario.

First round

1. **The team, whose Character is placed the highest on the vertical axis (highest influence), begins**, and makes its Pitch. A Pitch must clearly indicate how your Character will act to either advance or defeat the Campaign Demand. Your Pitch will include a proposal for how your action will move Public Opinion.

2. **After the Pitch all players assess collectively how the Pitch affected Public Opinion** and the Character Stand of Public Opinion is moved accordingly. It either moved towards high influence or low influence. In cases were teams cannot agree, the Judge makes the final decision. ***Public Opinion moves only along horizontal axis.***

3. After moving the Public Opinion Character Stand, all **players assess how the Pitch and the moving of the Public Opinion Stand affected their own Character** and move their Character Stands on the Board based on this assessment.

Please note!

Teams should always have a possibility to change their Character into a more peaceful direction i.e. the Leader of Forest Land can start peace negotiations in the first round or Arms Dealer can decide to stop committing crimes and expose the corruption network in which he/she has been involved.

Second round

1. **The purpose of the second round is to create alliances.** If playing the pre-produced scenario, it is now good time to bring in all those Characters that were not placed on the Power Map in the first round. If the first round had only four Characters, the ones, which can be added are: *Leader of Forest Land, Youth in Lake Land or Youth in Stone Land, Arms Dealer and Minister of Defence of Lake Land.*

2. The facilitator gives the players **a few minutes to form alliances** and to go and plan their joint strategy and next Pitch.

3. **Alliances make their Pitches** and Public Opinion and Characters are moved the same way as in the first round.

Third round

1. After the second round the facilitator gives the teams **a few minutes to prepare for their last round.** On the third-round teams can invent a new Character that they want to bring in. Previous alliances can be continued, expanded or dismantled.

2. **Game ends when all teams/alliances have made their Pitches** and Public Opinion and all Characters have been moved accordingly.

After the game

1. After the game, the **facilitator leads the "let-go-of-the-role" exercise** and asks participants to stand up and shake their bodies. They are then asked to close their eyes and to think of their name (5 sec), think about where they are now (5 sec) and where they will go after this game session is over (5 sec). Then participants open their eyes and sit down.

2. The facilitator asks members from the teams to **explain in their own words,** what happened in the game.

3. **The facilitator does a wrap-up** and links the game to real life through group exercises on root causes of conflicts and on conflict prevention (suggested material in the teacher's manual).

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UN Association of Finland is responsible for contents and possible mistakes.