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CRITICAL WEBS OF POWER AND CHANGE

RESOURCE PACK FOR PLANNING, REFLECTION AND LEARNING IN PEOPLE-CENTRED ADVOCACY

SUMMARY BOOKLET AND CD ROM

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CONTENTS OF SUMMARY BOOKLET

INTRODUCTION

This booklet is intended for development practitioners, activist organisations and their supporters. It pulls together practical ideas and experiences from organisations involved in social justice and advocacy work in four countries, as well as building on the experiences and struggles of other groups around the world.

Between 2002 and 2005 ActionAid International, an international non-governmental organisation (INGO) working in more than 42 countries, supported action research by community groups, coalitions, NGOS and social movements from Brazil, Ghana, Nepal and Uganda. Issues ranged from land rights, women's rights, housing rights and, in Nepal, *Dalit* rights[1].

Action research is a process that combines learning and action to produce more effective change. When focused on empowerment, it helps people set their own agenda and learn from their experiences so they can take those lessons and improve their work and lives. It assists people in investigating and studying their actions, reflecting on them and developing ways to increase their effectiveness and impact. As a result, it promotes deeper understanding and learning, and greater commitment to the changes being pursued.

Our research was initially aimed at developing better ways to monitor and assess the impact of people-centred advocacy. But as it progressed we began to realise that in order to do this effectively we could not look at monitoring and impact assessment[2] in isolation from planning. And to carry out planning for advocacy effectively we needed to develop better understanding of how change and advocacy happen in different places and circumstances. We also needed to focus on how planning, monitoring, and learning processes can better support advancing the rights and leadership of the poor and marginalised and transforming power relations.

During the course of the research we explored the application of various tools, frameworks and methods for people-centred advocacy with our partners. Some of these were adapted and refined, some were rejected and new ones developed. More often than not our work has challenged us to ask further questions. Overall, we found that:

- people frequently do advocacy without paying enough attention to how power operates, how change happens and how it is sustained
- too often advocacy strategies and resources focus almost exclusively on developing solid policy analyses and arguments as a way to influence governments and international bodies. The assumption that information is the principal way to promote change goes largely unexplored. Policy-driven advocacy work tends to ignore the voice and role of the marginalised and excluded.

[1] Dalit is the name given to a group of people who over the centuries have been labelled as unclean and untouchable and thus have been marginalised from making decisions in society or exercising their rights

[2] Impact assessment is a broad understanding of change, and can be done throughout the lifecycle of an intervention and the different effects of these changes on people's lives. After completion, an assessment of impact looks at the lasting effects an intervention has had

IF WE WANT THE DARKNESS TO FLOWER, IF WE WANT TO ESTABLISH LANDS OF DIGNITY AND INTEGRITY,...LANDS WHERE PEOPLE CAN LIVE IN LIGHT AND JUSTICE, THEN OUR GUIDING STARS MUST BE STRUGGLE AND HOPE

PABLO NERUDA, CHILEAN POET, 1904–1973
NOBEL PRIZE ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

- it is very hard to carry out meaningful monitoring, evaluation and learning processes without good initial planning – indeed, in many instances impact assessment and learning tends to be seen in isolation from planning
- too much emphasis is put on **what** method, framework or tool is used and not enough on the **process**: who is involved, whether they are really thinking, questioning, learning and using the learning.

This booklet is primarily aimed at those working on people-centred advocacy themselves. However, while we worked with local organisations on local issues and not international or northern campaigns, we feel there are many insights arising from our collaboration that are also very pertinent to:

- those involved in campaigning internationally or in the north
- those accompanying or supporting local organisations in their struggles
- those working on development education to build a worldwide movement for social change.

Our work has shown a real need to change the focus and purpose of traditional planning, monitoring and evaluation systems if we really want to support people-centred advocacy. We need to develop planning, assessment and learning processes not as technical responses but as genuine empowerment processes that strengthen individual and organisational knowledge, hope and creativity, so that impoverished and marginalised people can take their rightful place in decision-making and efforts to bring change.

But if we really do this it has profound implications for INGOs, particularly when working with partners:

- It means we have to start seeing reporting and accountability processes as development interventions and therefore political acts in support of the rights and empowerment of people living in poverty and facing injustices. They need to be negotiated with more care and attention paid to relationships and power differentials.
- The development of planning, assessment and learning systems has to go at the pace that works for the organisation concerned, not a pace that suits the INGO. This means more investment in staff time and capacity, and a lighter hand regarding frameworks, methods and tools.
- We need to pay more attention to the interpersonal and critical analysis skills of those involved in impact assessment and their understanding of how power and change operate, and put less emphasis on technical knowledge of particular methods.
- We need to give a lot more attention to who is involved, who assesses, who learns, whose opinion counts and who has access to information.

WHAT THIS BOOKLET IS

We have tried to synthesise our lessons about advocacy and learning which we share in this booklet. The booklet covers the overall concepts and processes for planning, monitoring and assessing the impact of people-centred advocacy work. Each section links the concepts and ideas closely to case study material and the approaches and tools that were developed and used during the research.

Introduction to the key concepts underpinning a people-centred advocacy approach

This gives a brief overview of some of the concepts that we found to be critical to our work:

- social change
- power
- rights-based approaches
- gender and women's rights
- empowerment

Ideas for planning, reflection and learning

This gives some practical ideas, examples, methods, frameworks and tools to support planning, monitoring, review and reflection processes.

Essential building blocks in a planning, reflection and learning process

This provides a brief overview of some of the building blocks that we believe are integral to people-centred advocacy planning, reflection and learning processes:

- critical thinking
- participation
- facilitation
- questioning and listening
- democratisation of information
- sharing and accountability

Additional resources

Throughout the booklet we point you to additional resource materials that can be found on the accompanying CD Rom that contains:

- **Critical Webs of Power and Change – A resource pack for planning, reflection and learning in people-centred advocacy** (hereafter called main resource pack.) This main resource pack draws from the action research and provides additional reading material on concepts, processes, tools and methods. It also provides case study material and ideas for workshops and reflection exercises.
- **Working papers –** these longer papers look at particular topics or cases arising from the action research.
- **Other useful resources –** a selection of other resource materials produced and developed by ActionAid International on learning, rights-based approaches and people-centred advocacy.

A detailed guide to the CD Rom can be found at the back of this booklet in the appendices.

HEALTH WARNING IDEAS ONLY, INNOVATE AND LEARN!

THIS RESOURCE PACK IS NOT A MANUAL OR A TOOL KIT. THE INSIGHTS, EXPERIENCES AND IDEAS WE PRESENT IN THIS BOOKLET AND THE RESOURCES ON THE CD ROM ARE NOT INTENDED TO GIVE THE READER PRESCRIPTIONS OR SPECIFIC ANSWERS. INDEED SOME OF THE IDEAS AND APPROACHES WILL ALREADY BE WELL KNOWN TO YOU. NEITHER DOES THE RESOURCE PACK CLAIM TO BE COMPREHENSIVE OR EXHAUSTIVE. BUT RATHER WE HOPE TO STIMULATE YOUR THINKING AND IDEAS ON HOW THE CONCEPTS, PROCESSES, METHODS AND TOOLS DESCRIBED HERE MIGHT BE CHALLENGED OR ADAPTED SO THEY CAN BE TURNED INTO SOMETHING USEFUL FOR YOUR OWN WORK.

WE HOPE THAT YOU ENJOY THESE MATERIALS AND THEY CONTRIBUTE SOMETHING TO YOUR OWN PROCESS FOR FIGHTING FOR GREATER JUSTICE AND EQUITY IN THE WORLD.

For additional reading and resources on CD Rom see:

Main resource pack:
Why and how we developed this resource pack
Introduction to resource pack

Working Paper 1: Summary of Learning

KEY CONCEPTS

INTRODUCTION

Before we start to look at the details of how to carry out planning, reflection and learning in people-centred advocacy, it is helpful to begin by examining some key concepts. This can support us in thinking about our work in ways that help us to understand it more deeply and develop new and creative ways to approach it.

SOCIAL CHANGE

Advocacy is often undertaken without real understanding or critical analysis of how change occurs in a specific context – and in particular what kind of changes promote justice and how those changes can be sustained. Social change is of course happening everywhere constantly, driven by a whole variety of positive and negative forces. To ensure that as activists and development workers we choose effective strategies that take these dynamics into account it is important for us to be clear and realistic about how we believe social transformation can happen and be sustained over time.

The combined experience of activists from many places over many years shows us that policy change on its own is never enough. Change to make society more just and equitable will only be viable in the long term if it alters the balance of power in our societies and transforms inequitable access to rights and resources.

Dimensions of social change

The following framework tries to synthesise different areas of change that we have found necessary for long-term sustainable social transformation aimed at ensuring the rights of the impoverished and marginalised. As with many frameworks, it attempts to synthesise complex processes and relationships and thus is never quite complete. We present it in the hope that it will be useful in stimulating your own discussions on the dynamics and key factors shaping change.

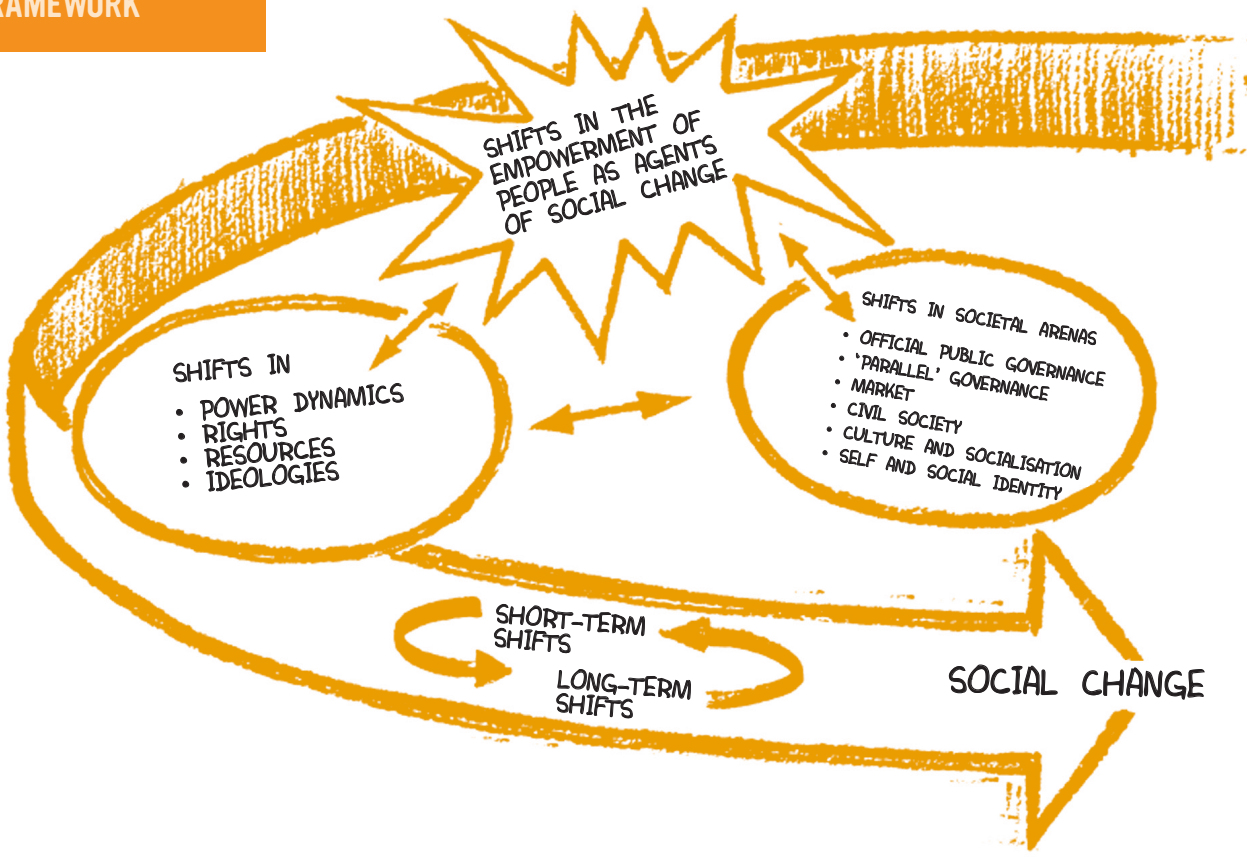
At the core of the framework are positive shifts in the *empowerment of people as agents of social change,* able to undertake collective action (as shown in the starburst). The engagement of marginalised groups in public debate and decision-making allows them to participate fully in the struggle for rights, it helps challenge the historic domination by a few and reinforce the concept that all people, in particular the excluded and women, are citizens with rights and responsibilities. Strengthening their collective action, critical consciousness and leadership should always be a crucial strategy within people-centred advocacy, but will rarely be the only strategy.

IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO DREAM.

IT IS NECESSARY TO KNOW HOW TO BUILD DREAMS.

PAULO FREIRE, BRAZILIAN EDUCATOR AND RADICAL 1927-1997

SOCIAL CHANGE FRAMEWORK



We also need shifts and transformation in various *societal arenas* including[3]:

- **Official public governance:** changes in unjust laws and policies and in public institutions responsible for implementing those changes (in their structures, practices, and staff values and attitudes).
- **Parallel governance:** changes in the 'parallel' and unofficial structures of power and decision-making which affect people's lives, for example, drug gangs in Brazilian shantytowns or the councils of elders in some African communities.
- **Market:** changes in the capitalist market system to counter the way it works to concentrate wealth, power and resources, and undermine the environment. Advances in worker rights and the accountability of corporations.
- **Civil society:** changes in the organisations of the poor and excluded, and organisations that support them - in their strength, their leadership, their ability to collaborate with others and in members' capacities and attitudes.
- **Culture and socialisation:** changes in processes of socialisation and overall societal values and beliefs that support and reproduce inequality and discrimination. This will include changes in attitudes towards women's rights and position in society and in the household.
- **Self and social identity:** changes in people's lives – eg their ability to earn a fair living, get an education, make decisions about their own lives, and their sense of individual and collective self-worth and rights and responsibilities.

These arenas are interconnected and self-reinforcing, so we may need to adopt strategies to promote change in several at the same time. Even if we choose to act in one arena alone we still need to understand how the others affect the power dynamics in our struggle.

We also the need *shifts in power dynamics, access to rights, resources, and in ideologies:*

Shifts in power dynamics to break the structures of dominance and impoverishment, in all the ways power operates: shaping norms, values and consciousness; shaping the political agenda; determining whose voice is heard; and framing formal decision-making and implementation of public policies (see section on power page 13). Power dynamics between men and women are an important element of this.

Shifts in rights and resources to guarantee quality of life and political participation of the poor and excluded, in particular women.

Shifts in the ideologies that reinforce inequities, changes that challenge belief systems such as patriarchy and neo-liberalism and develop alternative world views.

Often people-centred advocacy requires focus on a complex mix of all these dimensions – promoting changes across the many factors and arenas necessary for social transformation.

The major changes we want to achieve in our work will undoubtedly take a long time. They build on smaller changes that occur as we take action. Our framework illustrates this political process in which *long-term shifts* and *short-term shifts* are interconnected:

- **The long-term shifts** correspond to our vision that another world is possible, where the root dynamics of social injustice no longer block the fulfilment of people's rights.
- **Short-term changes** can be seen as the strategic steps that open doors and create bridges for the long-term achievement of our aims. While they may seem insignificant, these small shifts need to be recognised and celebrated as important milestones.

At times success will be seen in terms of defending existing rights or stopping an unjust project or development.

[3] This builds on the work of Valerie Miller and Lisa VeneKlasen *A New Weave of Power* www.justassociates.org/ActionGuide.htm

Short, medium and long-term changes

CENSUDI in Ghana, works with communities and formal legal structures to achieve change in women's rights. Community discussions classified changes as short, medium and long-term. Short-term changes are ones they felt community members, individuals or families could, with support, make themselves. This includes activities such as sending girls to school.

Medium-term changes involve shifts in individual beliefs, gender roles and stereotypes that do not need formal permission of elders, but which are culturally more challenging. For example men rarely prepare meals from fear of being seen as 'less of a man'. These sorts of changes are likely to need collective discussion and conscientisation.

Long-term changes involve the more difficult influencing of local power structures and societal practices – also ingrained in belief systems. Cultural and religious practices, such as marriage and funeral rites, are viewed as integral to the way the community operates and would need the approval of chiefs to change.

CENSUDI is simultaneously working to achieve all these types of change. They hope that success in the issues they see as short and medium-term will help influence change in those they see as longer term.

Of course, whether or not families actually do start to send girls to school, and how many years they are able to complete will be influenced by many other factors such as the economic implications and patriarchy.

MANY ADVOCACY EFFORTS ARE BASED ON INSUFFICIENT UNDERSTANDING OF HOW CHANGE TAKES PLACE AND HOW LONG IT MAY TAKE

Questions for reflection

Think about a major change – positive or negative – that has happened in your society over the past ten years

1. What do you think were the drivers of change?
2. Do you think this change will be sustained?
3. How might activist or development organisations have been (more) effective in ensuring that this change works to the benefit of poor and marginalised people?

See also Treatment Action Campaign case study in Section 4 of the Main resource pack

For additional reading and resources on social change on CD Rom see:

Main resource pack:
Section 1

Social change: Vision, values and action
Power over table
SUCAM: complexities of change (case study)
Rights-based development approaches: combining politics, creativity and organisation.

Section 3

Some ideas to support planning: methods and tools

Section 4

Workshop case study materials: CEDEP's work to Stop Violence Against Women in Ghana

Social Change and Empowerment in a Brazilian shanty town.

Most advocacy strategising is focused on short timeframes of action with a requirement to produce cost-effective and quickly measurable results. There is a subsequent danger of losing sight of how power dynamics undermine social justice on many levels and how long it takes to produce the changes we desire. As a result, selected strategies and actions may neither promote the changes necessary for addressing the root causes of problems, nor build toward the goals we are ultimately trying to achieve.

POWER

Thinking critically about power is vitally important when planning effective people-centred advocacy. But what kind of 'power' are we talking about? There is a tendency to view power almost exclusively in sinister or oppressive terms and as something that is unchanging. Such a perception of power can paralyse people since it seems to indicate there is no hope. Yet power is not static, but rather constantly shifting, providing opportunities for action. Nor is it intrinsically negative or positive. Its value depends on how it is structured and used in each context. For some it may mean control and coercion, but for others it means the capacity to fight for justice.

These different ways of understanding power show us that:

- it is always established through human interaction
- it works at many different levels
- it is found everywhere in public and private, in the workplace, market and family, in relations with friends and colleagues and even at a very personal level within each individual.

The dynamics of power (who has *power over* others, who can build *power with*, who can exercise their *power to*, who can feel powerful within or not) is defined within each context and each relationship. For example, a small farmer living in poverty is vulnerable to the power and sometimes violence of vast estate owners and multinational agribusiness. Yet this same farmer may establish an authoritarian and violent relationship with the women and female members of his family since he is immersed in a patriarchal and macho culture.

In historical terms, access to resources, rights and decision-making has been monopolised by a few. This concentration of power has contributed to widespread poverty, marginalisation and the violation of human rights. It is crucial to reverse this pattern and bring previously excluded groups and individuals into arenas of decision-making, while at the same time transforming how power is understood and used.

Different ways of understanding power

The most common way of understanding power tends to be negative:

Power over other people: using coercion or force to control resources and decision-making processes.

Alternative ways to understand and use power focus on collaboration and affirm people's capacity to act creatively and work together for a better world:

Power to act: the unique potential of every person and social group to shape their life and world and create more equitable relationships and structures of power.

Power within ourselves: people's sense of self-worth, values and self-knowledge, central to individual and group understanding of being citizens with rights and responsibilities.

Power with others: finding common ground among different interests and building collective strength to challenge injustice.

Power relations are not always evident at first sight. They can be:

- visible – the most well known and obvious: observable decision-making processes and structures, both formal and informal, such as legislatures, parliaments, or councils of elders or village chiefs etc.
- hidden – the behind-the-scenes dynamics that shape who participates in the visible decision-making processes and whose voice is heard, as well as what issues are deemed legitimate for consideration as part of the political agenda
- invisible – the socio-cultural systems and related ideologies that shape people's consciousness – their beliefs about the world and themselves, and their beliefs about their own capacity to participate in decision-making processes.

[Veneklasen and Miller, 2002]

Power over operates in various ways to maintain the status quo and discourage poor and excluded people from exercising their rights. Sometimes it is visible and other times it is hidden or invisible.
Power over operates by:

- **shaping norms,** values and consciousness. Influencing how we, as individuals and groups, perceive the world and the roles of government, market etc, as well as our own self-value, status and worthiness to be agents of change and holders of rights.
- **shaping the political agenda.** Defining which rights or issues are priorities for public debate and policy decision-making, and which are not legitimate. Controlling the production of, and access to, information to give credibility to some issues over others.
- **determining whose voice is heard in decision-making arenas.** Defining who is able to participate in, and to influence, the shaping and implementation of public policies by privileging certain groups and de-legitimising others.
- **framing formal decision-making and implementation of public policies**. Setting the structures and mechanisms for governance that benefit some members of society over others.

Many advocacy approaches do little to change power structures or dynamics; instead they assume that policy change – with its focus on lobbying and pressuring governments – is the best route to achieving real change in people's lives. While these are important strategies for change, such efforts rarely examine or address how power plays out in a society to affect which policies are passed or implemented. Similarly, they also frequently neglect how cultural and social factors of power influence the ways people view the world and behave – profoundly shaping their willingness to take action.

Multiple strategies are required to counter the different ways *power over* operates. These strategies tap alternative forms of power – *power with* others, *power within* self and *power to* act individually and collectively. The table below summarises strategies that can be helpful to counter the different ways *power over* acts to control participation and maintain the status quo.

Strategies to counter the different ways *power over* operates

Strategies to counter power that shapes and maintains unjust and inequitable norms, values and consciousness	Strategies to counter power that keeps our issues off political agendas	Strategies to counter power that excludes voices of poor and marginalised people from being heard	Strategies to counter power that prevents formal political decisions and implementation working to favour the poor and marginalised
Consciousness-raising: Challenges ideologies and belief systems that perpetuate injustice through participatory analysis and awareness-building, work to promote self-esteem, confidence, sense of rights and responsibilities (citizenship), political awareness, analysis of problems, sense of solidarity, collaboration, respect etc.	**Research and dissemination:** Investigation, action research and sharing of information that uncovers concealed data, develops alternatives and legitimises and values the issues and agendas of excluded groups. **Organising and mobilising:** Building active critical constituencies and movements around common problems, concerns and injustices. Promoting and supporting efforts of poor and excluded people to act together and with others. **Changing public opinion:** Through radio shows, campaigns etc.	**Strengthening capacity:** Strengthening poor people's organisations, skills & access to information. **Nurturing organisations and leadership building:** Strengthening constituency organisations, coalitions, social movements and democratic accountable leaders and structures. Mobilising around shared agendas. Participatory research & dissemination of information that legitimises excluded groups & strengthens their knowledge.	**Public and policy influence strategies:** Lobbying, advocacy, campaigning, monitoring; negotiation, litigation; public education, media; policy research, policy alternatives; marches, demonstrations, vigils. Voting, running for office. Collaboration, modelling and promoting development alternatives, etc.

Given the complex dynamics of power, strategies that only address formal decision-making processes and rely solely on good information and reasoned arguments will almost never result in long-term favourable social change. Informal decision-makers such as chiefs and religious leaders also need attention as do strategies that address all other forms of *power over*.

Assessing entry points: questions about policy engagement

Although a key advocacy goal is to create opportunities for citizen's groups to directly engage in policy processes, engagement does not always impact policy decisions in the end. It is easy to believe that access to policy makers will translate into influence, but in practice this is rarely true. Policy makers sometimes construct these policy spaces to educate citizens about the choices they have made or to appear consultative and thus diffuse public criticism. But they may have no intention of changing their agendas. For this reason, many activists or development practitioners worry about being 'co-opted' by policy engagement. Some NGOs that work closely with governments are criticised for losing their independence and connection with people at the grassroots, particularly if working with government starts to consume all their energy and time.

Deciding when and how to engage with policy processes is not straightforward or simple. Many different factors have to be considered and weighed against each other. Once the decision is made to engage it must be reassessed continuously as the process unfolds. A plan to engage should include the option to disengage if the political costs start to outweigh the benefits. Among the many questions to explore and revisit periodically are:

- Is the policy space 'created' or 'invited'?[4] If you come to the decision-making table as a result of political pressure generated by your efforts – a created space – you may be in a stronger position to influence policy choices. In contrast, when policy makers invite citizens' groups into the policy process, transforming the space into a meaningful opportunity for change will often involve demonstrating your power once you get there, which many groups find very difficult.
- What are the opportunity costs of engagement? How much time and resources will the meetings, research and other activities consume? To what alternative activities could those resources be dedicated?
- Are you making, or likely to make, an impact on policy priorities and choices? As groups involved in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers have seen, influencing a policy document does not necessarily have a real impact on policy. It may be the first step in a long process of change, or it may be a waste of time.
- Can the policy opportunity be used to educate people about their rights and the political process, and to build your constituency for the long-term? Although you may not have a real impact on policy, the opportunity to engage may stimulate dialogue and give your organising efforts increased focus, public visibility and credibility. However, people may expect something concrete from the process beyond learning and organising, and can become disillusioned.
- Will the policy opportunity translate into real change on the ground? If the opportunity to engage leads to new programmes, new opportunities and new resources, then the risks of engagement may be counterbalanced by these gains.

While these questions can help you to think more deeply about the benefits and risks of engagement, there is no substitute for strategic, critical thinking. As groups engage with power, they should be vigilant and may need to remind themselves to whom they are ultimately accountable in order to make sure the process is worthwhile.

[Shortened from Lisa VeneKlasen with Valerie Miller 2002 page 208]

[4] See Brock, Cornwall and Gaventa 2001 and IDS 2000

Understanding how power affects housing rights in a Brazilian shanty town

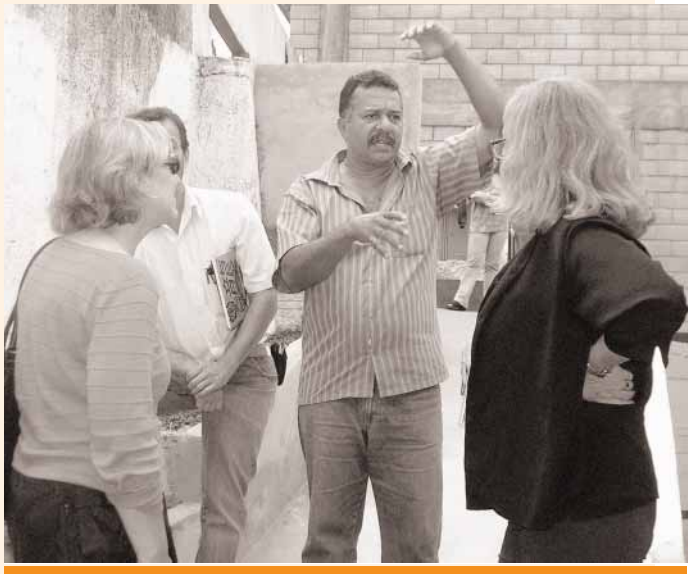
The first social movements in the Brazilian shantytown of Heliópolis were formed by people gathering together to find ways to overcome their common problems – especially around housing. UNAS (the Union of Heliópolis' Residents' Associations and Centres) was created in 1986 as an umbrella body for these movements to build a stronger collective force to demand fair and democratic public housing policies.

As a Latin American grassroots movement, UNAS links its concrete problems and needs to the ongoing struggle for justice and rights. For these movements, understanding how power relations affect their struggles is essential. To address the realities of living in a shanty-town UNAS had to learn how to deal with the *visible* and official structures of power (where public housing policies are decided and implemented) and also build strategies to address strong parallel structures of power inside the shanty town – the drug traffickers.

In discussions, UNAS identified and analysed the main forces *(power over)* denying its members' right to have proper homes and live with dignity. For decades the population of Heliópolis has had to struggle against local government agencies that use the police force to try to expel them from their community so that profitable modern housing developments can be built. UNAS leaders are aware that real estate operators and building contractors work against them, behind the scenes often *hidden* from view, to influence the local government.

The leaders of UNAS did not use any sophisticated framework or academic theory of power to achieve this understanding. Years of struggle have imbued many of them with an intuitive understanding of power dynamics and the need to pose critical questions about how such forces affect their lives. When the residents of Heliópolis first came together to discuss the problems of living conditions and the lack of public policies to develop the area, they started to ask themselves some simple questions: *Why is this happening? Who has the power to guarantee or to block our housing rights in Heliópolis? How are public policies on housing decided? Who makes these decisions? Who might profit by the denial of our housing rights?* The answers to these questions drove the debate deeper, generating more questions and shaping their political strategy.

At the same time residents started to develop their own power to advocate for their rights. They asked themselves: *What will we do about it? How can we face these forces? How can we guarantee our right to have a proper place to live with dignity?* Through this process of coming together *(power with)* they started to build their sense of citizenship and rights *(power within)* and organise themselves (*power to*) to confront efforts to expel them from the shanty town. As they proceeded they also realised they needed to address *invisible* power dynamics related to class, patriarchy, gender roles and housing ownership. They started to insist that wherever possible housing titles were given in the name of an adult female and to address issues of socialisation within their youth work.



JOÃO MIRANDA, UNAS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DEBATING HOUSING RIGHTS WITH GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

Analysing context and power

The following two exercises can help us think about context and how power operates.

Naming the moment

Ask yourselves:

- Who are the major powerful players (in the economic, political, civil society and cultural/ideological sectors) that we think are with us, against us and uncommitted on the issue? Include those at different levels from the international and the national to the local where relevant.
- Of these players, who are the key groups, organisations, institutions and personalities leading the organising and actions for and against – both publicly and behind the scenes?
- What are the real and expressed interests of the major players?
- What are the most critical relationships and tensions between these players?
- What are the strategies used by different sides and how effective do you think they are?
- Who do you consider your allies and opponents?
- What key international and national trends or events are affecting your issue? How are they affecting it?
- In the current context, who's winning and who's losing?
- What does this analysis tell you about possible opportunities and risks for action on your issue?

Adapted from Deb Barndt 1989 and VeneKlasen & Miller 2002

Naming the powerful

This tool concentrates on naming major decision-makers that have power to respond to your advocacy issue. It can be used to map their interests in a particular context and help you decide who you want to target in your advocacy strategies. Separate columns are drawn, each one representing one question to be discussed (see chart below). This exercise is useful for both surfacing key information for planning and can help you assess your achievements.

What are the main institutions, organisations, or agencies making decisions on your issue/right?	**Who are the most influential and powerful leaders or officials in these bodies?**	**What are the main interests they are promoting?**	**How do they promote their interests and block those of others on this issue?**

There are other ideas in Section 2 on planning in this booklet. Also see the Main resource pack Section 3: Analysing power and context for further questions and exercises on Faces of Power and Factors of Exclusion, Subordination and Privilege, which are useful for looking at other ways in which power operates.

Questions for reflection

Think about the advocacy issue that you are involved in…

1. In what ways does *power over* operate in this issue? Refer to the table on *power over* and consider the questions that UNAS asked themselves.
2. How are you working to counter these different forms of *power within* your own work? Consider the ways power works to: shape norms, values and consciousness; shape the political agenda; determine whose voice is head in decision-making arenas; and frame formal decision-making and implementation of public policies.
3. In what ways are you working to develop more positive forms of power: *power within*, *power to* and *power with*?

For additional reading and resources on Power on CD Rom see:

Main resource pack:
Section 1

Power: understanding how it works and how to use it positively.

Power over table

UNAS: Understanding how power affects housing rights in a Brazilian shanty town (case study)

Promoting justice and solidarity: the Treatment Action Campaign (case study)

Section 4

Workshop case study materials:

The struggle for land tenancy rights in Nepal: a case study from the Community Self

Reliance Centre

ULA: Moving from policy advocacy to also working at the grassroots

The struggle for Dalit rights in Nepal: the anti-carcass throwing campaign

Short case study on analysing power and choosing strategies

Short case study 2 on analysing power and choosing strategies

Working Paper 2: Rights-Based Development: The challenge of Change and Power

Other useful resources: Communication and Power - Reflect practical resource materials

RIGHTS-BASED APPROACHES

Many social movements and NGOs have recognised the importance of integrating rights work into development work as an essential part of a holistic change process. Here we unpack what we mean by rights-based approaches.

Rights have been articulated, defined and legalised by the collective efforts and struggles of people over generations, and will continue to evolve (or be lost) as time goes on. This collective *human struggle to win and protect rights* is a vital element of rights-based approaches to development. Rights are not cold legalistic formulae to be arbitrated by well-meaning, well-educated and sophisticated experts on behalf of the majority. Rather they can only be made real by the involvement and empowerment of the community at large, particularly those whose rights are most violated. Efforts to gain legal acceptance of new rights are part of a never-ending struggle for justice.

Rights-based development incorporates a *vision of ethics and inclusiveness.* Value-based, it is grounded in the belief that impoverished and marginalised people everywhere have rights and responsibilities. Many of these economic, social, cultural and political rights have been enshrined in UN conventions and procedures that encapsulate universal aspirations for freedom and fairness and provide a set of guiding principles. Other rights are not enshrined in law but are moral entitlements based on values of human dignity and equity. Rights are indivisible, ie there is no hierarchy of rights.

A rights-based approach is inherently a *political justice approach* – one that takes into consideration power, struggle and a vision of a better society as key factors in development.

Rights-based approaches to development fulfil their promise when they *integrate the political, organising, practical and creative aspects of work* on poverty and injustice. The *political* aspect focuses on making legal frameworks more just and supportive of impoverished and excluded peoples, advancing their rights. The *organising* side builds people's organisations, leadership, political analysis and synergy for collective struggle. The *practical and creative* side supports capacity building, solidarity and innovations in development alternatives that give meaning to rights and lay the basis for challenging oppressive practices and paradigms.

In some organisations that have adopted rights-based development approaches there has been a tendency to see any type of 'service-delivery' as an outmoded and inappropriate intervention. This ignores the role that service delivery efforts can play in strengthening empowerment processes, local organisations, leadership development, alternative development models, trust-building and concrete changes in people's living conditions. Indeed in many cases these types of effort are a necessary prior condition before any work on rights is conceivable. The question is not so much whether service-delivery work is done at all but *how* it is done, by *whom*, and how it will build in the long-run to more transformative work.

There is a fundamental difference between services controlled by others and provided to the poor as victims, and service and development efforts intended to support the planning, management and leadership of the poor and disenfranchised as protagonists and active members of society. Depending on how service-delivery approaches are carried out, they can be charity and disempowering or can contribute to empowerment and community control.

In rights-based approaches, power analysis and developing an understanding of how change can happen and be sustained in a particular context becomes much more central in our work.

Main features of rights-based approaches from a people-centred perspective

- Identifying and clearly taking sides with poor and marginalised people who confront injustice in their daily lives.
- Attempting to address not only the effects of poverty, marginalisation and injustice, but also their causes.
- Facilitating and supporting poor and marginalised people's own empowerment, leadership, organisation and action to restore and advance their rights and promote social justice.
- Affirming that individuals and civil society have both the right and the responsibility to define, defend and advance people's rights; the state has similar obligations and, most importantly, the fundamental responsibility to ensure justice and the application of those rights fairly across society.
- Recognising that making rights and development real in people's lives requires changes in deeply engrained attitudes and behaviours at all levels of society.
- Understanding the inextricable links between rights, development and power, and the resulting need for integrated strategies that address the policy and political aspects of making rights and development meaningful, as well as the organisational and creative side which involves leadership development and testing, and promoting concrete development alternatives.

Developed from ActionAid Asia 2000

Rights and development from a village perspective

In 1994, the Community Self Reliance Centre (CSRC), a Nepali NGO, carried out development appraisals in two areas. These showed that a large proportion of inhabitants were tenant farmers and that insecurity of tenure was a major cause of poverty. The area's landlords collected large portions of the harvest as rent and could change the amount at will. Landlords could also transfer permission to cultivate from one tenant to another, forcing tenants to farm with short-term perspectives, resulting in low productivity and increasing poverty.

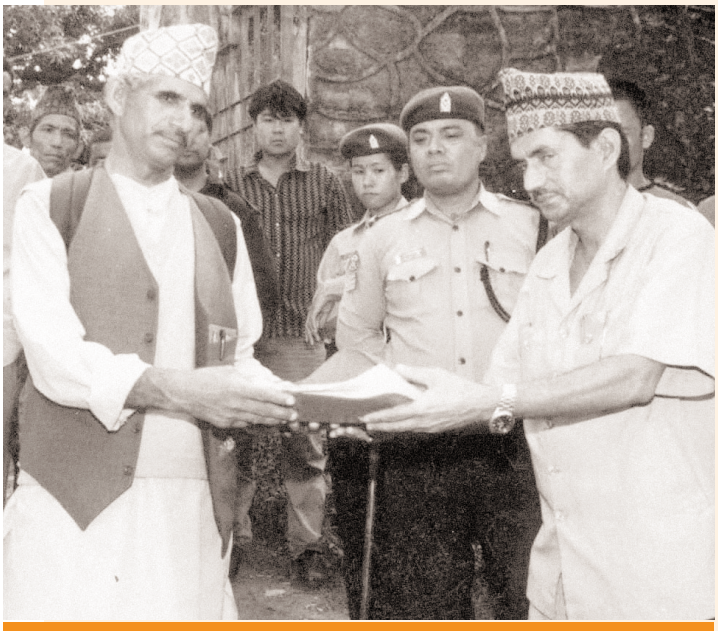
CSRC subsequently held village meetings to discuss and plan a development programme. Initially CSRC offered to support the development of irrigation to increase productivity. The response was not enthusiastic, as tenants feared benefits would go largely to the landlords. Their need for land security took priority over water systems. So instead of irrigation, CSRC began work with communities on the land issue and tenant rights – supporting local groups in exploring their problems further, linking them to the concept of rights, strengthening their leadership and eventually backing a grassroots campaign which spread to other villages. By December 2003, over 3,000 tenant farmers had received tenure rights to their land and could no longer be arbitrarily removed from their parcels; almost 1,000 received full land ownership titles.

Having achieved security of tenure, farmers are now showing considerable initiative in improving the productivity of their own land. As one farmer said:

"*I had never dreamt of getting my own piece of land. I feel a sense of dignity now I have gained ownership. I got my land after two years of struggling for my land tenancy right. I used it as collateral at the local agricultural development bank and got a loan to buy a buffalo. Now I sell milk and earn Rs 3,200 a month. I want to pay the debt in one year's time. The buffalo will then be mine and I will get more benefit from the milk sales. I am meeting the household expenses. For me, ownership of land has encouraged me to increase the productivity of the land and grow more grains to meet the needs of my family.*"

Questions for discussion

1. CSRC showed great flexibility in responding to people's concerns and switching their work from irrigation to problems of land tenancy and lack of rights. Do the systems and strategic plans of your organisation support or hinder such responsiveness and links between practical problems and rights?
2. How can we ensure we are addressing major causes of problems?
3. In your own work, what are some strategies your organisation or partner groups use that combine rights and empowerment and that support people's concerns, voice, political action and livelihood?



A GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL ACCEPTS A LAND TENANCY RIGHTS PETITION FROM THE LEADER OF A LOCAL FARMERS' ORGANISATION, NEPAL

Questions for reflection

1 What do you consider to be the essential differences between rights-based development approaches and needs-based development approaches?

2 In what way can they complement each other?

3 Do you think your work takes a rights-based approach (does it empower people and respond to root causes of poverty and marginalisation)? If not why not? How could it change?

For additional reading and resources on rights-based approaches on CD Rom see:

Main resource pack:
Section 1

Rights-based development approaches: combining politics, creativity and organisation

Section 4

The struggle for land tenancy rights in Nepal: a case study from the Community Self Reliance Centre (case study)

Working Paper 2:
Rights-Based Development:
The challenge of Change and Power

Other useful resources:

ActionAid Asia Operationalising a rights-based approach to development, 2000

ActionAid in practice – Understanding & learning about methods and approaches in rights and empowerment, Ethiopia, 2003

Modules for learning about rights,
Luis Morago

WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUITY

Inequities based on whether you are a man or woman are one of the most challenging dynamics of power and a critical factor in all situations of poverty and injustice. Women have suffered systematic discrimination, violations and exclusions throughout human history. In many cases, they are denied rights and opportunities in all economic, political and social structures from the workplace and government to the family. Thus how women are perceived and treated in society needs to be a central concern in any people-centred advocacy to achieve justice.

There are at least two useful lenses for understanding and reflecting on women's position in the world: women's rights and gender. Each has a slightly different emphasis and hence leads our analysis and activism to focus in slightly different ways. Whichever perspective is taken, there are two key sources of the inequality and domination that women face in today's world: patriarchy and a variety of fundamentalisms (see box below).

Patriarchy and fundamentalisms

Patriarchy is a social arrangement where a male is viewed as the head of the household and men dominate public decision-making and political affairs. In some cultures patriarchy is so ingrained that women are viewed by society and law as permanent minors (children) without the ability to make informed decisions on their own behalf. Patriarchy is a very strong influence on gender relations in all spheres of life: the public, the private and the intimate. Common implications for women include not being allowed to own property, keep the money they earn, access education or make their own decisions about who they marry or how many children to have. This lack of power can be literally life threatening. Women denied the right to negotiate safe sex are more likely than men to become infected with HIV during unprotected intercourse. Other implications are internalised and affect how women and men view their own worth and position in society.

Fundamentalisms can be defined as the use of religion, ethnicity or culture to mobilise and gain political power in a society. Though inherently political, adherents seek to place these ideologies above the possibility of open political debate, on the basis of divine sanction or by appealing to supreme authorities, moral codes or philosophies that cannot be questioned.

Fundamentalist movements are commonly seen as backlash against change, gaining strength by playing on people's fear of change and existing prejudices – whether racial, ethnic or sexual. Among the major preoccupations fundamentalist movements appear to have in common are gender issues. They attempt to regain social/male control over what many perceive to be women's growing autonomy in general, and over women's sexuality and reproduction in particular.[5]

[5] Sources: Keslet 1996, Berer & Ravindran; no date

Looking at issues in terms of *women's rights* helps us recognise that the goal of advocacy work is to advance the rights of women and girls. It also makes clear that these are political issues and that there is an internationally accepted baseline set out in international agreements. Organisations that adopt a rights-based approach often look through the lens of women's rights for their strategising and planning. This may lead some to a deeper analysis of power using the notion of gender as a way to clarify and address inequalities between men and women.

Despite recent setbacks, women's struggles for rights have produced some important advances. The world's governments have committed themselves to promoting and protecting women's rights at all UN conferences held in the past two decades, including the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994, and the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995.

As originally conceived, looking at issues in terms of *gender* relationships leads us to focus on the unequal power relationships between men and women, girls and boys. The socialisation process and women's oppression and subordination often mean that women themselves believe that they are inferior while men believe in male superiority and privilege. These power dynamics – often referred to as *invisible* power – are difficult to address because they are deeply embedded in all of us. Each individual's experience of power and powerlessness will also be influenced by factors such as race, caste, class, age etc.

The concept 'gender' is useful in that it makes clear that the unequal relationship between men and women is not natural, universal or fixed, but can and does change over time and across cultures. A gender lens also allows us to see how patriarchy constrains men's options and behaviour. Unfortunately, as with so many other concepts in development, it has become depoliticised over the years and is sometimes treated as a separate add-on to programmes, or is 'mainstreamed' and largely forgotten. Whilst careful gender analysis in development projects can improve interventions, on its own it doesn't necessarily lead to an improvement in women's rights.

Sex and gender

A person's sex – whether they are male or female – is determined at birth and is the same across all cultures: for example women have wombs and thus women, not men, are capable of getting pregnant.

In contrast, gender refers to the set of roles and characteristics that different cultures and social groups prescribe for women and men, girls and boys. It is thus a culturally determined phenomenon that can change over time. Gender is learned through socialisation in a particular society. From birth, boys and girls are encouraged to behave a certain way, to aspire to different goals and perform particular roles. Societies communicate that certain roles are acceptable and appropriate for men and women while others are not. For example, nearly all societies give the primary responsibility of caring for and raising children to women and the responsibility for military service and defence to men.

There is considerable variation in gender roles from culture to culture but almost always men's perceived roles are valued and rewarded more than those seen as women's. Gender roles are also influenced by other factors such as class, caste, race, disability, age, etc.

Our own socialisation

Gender identity is one of the most fundamental influences on our sense of who we are and where we fit in the world. We have all been brought up in societies where concepts and prejudices around gender, race, age, caste, class and sexuality are very strong. We would be less than honest if we claim that these have not affected us in any way.

In order to do effective advocacy on issues of women's rights and gender – or indeed on any issue of social exclusion – it is important to also look inwards and ask ourselves difficult questions about our own prejudices and reactions to these issues. Only by acknowledging our prejudices is it possible to start to work on them and change ourselves. This is important both as individuals and within our organisations. It is unfortunately common to see oppressive power relationships based on gender, class, race or caste even within social justice organisations.

Questions to reflect on as individuals:

1. In what ways has your culture and upbringing influenced your own behaviour and attitudes towards a) what is possible and necessary for your own sense of well-being b) women and c) men?
2. How do you consciously try to overcome the negative aspects of the above?
3. What would you like to change in your own attitudes and behaviours? And in society? Why?
4. Can you think of examples in which you have already challenged and changed your own attitudes and behaviours? What happened? What did you learn from this? How did this affect your personal, home and work lives?

Questions to reflect on as organisations:

1. In what ways does the organisation mirror or reproduce unjust aspects of gender relationships and women's position prevalent in the wider world?
2. Who holds power in the organisation in terms of sex, race or other axes of difference?
3. What type of behaviour and working style are rewarded in the organisation? Do people only get noticed or promoted if they are confident, self-promotional or assertive etc?
4. How does the working environment and culture support women?

Asking questions about other prejudices such as race, age, disability, language etc is equally vital.

CENSUDI: Working with women in Ghana

The Centre for Sustainable Development Initiatives (CENSUDI) has observed many examples of the socialisation process (invisible power) affecting how men and women view themselves in the Bolgatanga district of Ghana, where CENSUDI works. There it is commonly accepted that at every gathering women should sit at the back and be the last to speak – if allowed to speak at all. No one asks the women to sit at the fringes of the meeting but that is where they are. This custom perpetuates a low level of confidence in women and has excluded women from the decision-making process because they believe they do not have any thing good to offer, or if they do their ideas may not be listened to.

CENSUDI found that men also feel pressured to show their masculinity, which in some cases is expressed through violence.

CENSUDI is working to improve self-awareness and confidence in women through education, workshops and discussions. Women are now able to make contributions in meetings and, in some cases, take central roles in organising such meetings. These efforts are preparing women to participate more actively in advocacy and public decision-making.

Questions for reflection:

1. In your advocacy work, how do you work to ensure all relevant women feel able to get involved and contribute?
2. How do you pay attention to how race, class, age and education affect women's confidence and ability to get involved?

CENSUDI HAVE FOUND STREET THEATRE TO BE VERY EFFECTIVE IN THEIR WORK ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Key questions to ask about women's participation and gender at different moments of people-centred advocacy

Key moments	Women's full participation	Adoption of gender lenses
Planning	Did we create the best possible conditions for the participation and active involvement of women? Did we provide women-only spaces that were organised and facilitated by women? Did we ensure their voice was heard, respected and taken into account?	1 Is gender taken into account in: a our contextual and power analysis? b in our strategies and workplan? c in the indicators and guidelines for monitoring?
Review and learning		1 Is gender taken into account in our reflections and learning from our advocacy work? 2 Do our indicators help deepen our analysis and understanding of how gender inequalities affect our struggle for rights? 3 What lessons are we drawing from our work that will help others promote women's and girl's rights? 4 Is our work increasing women's power over their own lives and decision-making?
Sharing and accountability		1 Are our discussions, plans, reports and the results of our advocacy really addressing gender issues effectively? 2 Are we investing enough resources to address gender issues? 3 Are we fully engaging women in our governance systems?
Democratisation of information	When we plan how to share information do we consider gender issues? Are the methods we choose user-friendly to women?	1 Does the information we share reflect and explain gender issues in an easy and accessible way? 2 Do we make sufficient attempt to ensure everyone engaged in the advocacy understands the gender issues in it?

For additional reading and resources on women's rights and gender equity on CD Rom see:

Main resource pack:

Section 1

Women's rights and gender equity

CENSUDI: Work on violence against women in Ghana (case study)

Section 3

Addressing gender and women's rights

Section 4

Workshop case study materials:

CEDEP's work to stop violence against women in Ghana

The struggle for land tenancy rights in Nepal: a case study from CSRC

CENSUDI working on violence against women in Ghana

Short case study on analysing power and choosing strategies

Short case study 2 on analysing power and choosing strategies

Other useful resources:

Communication and Power

ActionAid International Gender and women's rights framework

THE MOST POTENT WEAPON IN THE HANDS OF THE OPPRESSOR IS THE MIND OF THE OPPRESSED.

STEVEN BIKO, BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS LEADER, SOUTH AFRICA 1946-1977

EMPOWERMENT

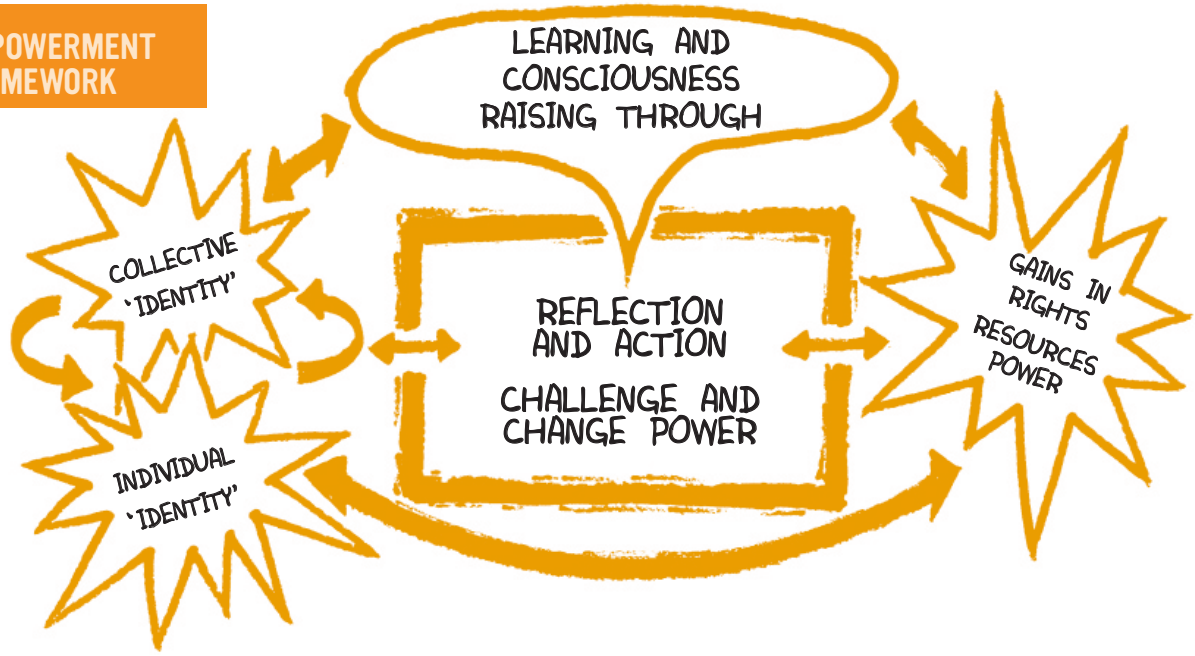
Empowerment puts the notions of 'people' and 'power' at the centre of the struggle for rights and justice. It is rooted in a people-centred perspective of social change, in which the main force of transformation is the action and active reflection of the individuals and social groups most affected by poverty and social injustice.

Empowerment is all about how we build and deal with our perception of ourselves (our self-worth and our capacity for action and activism) and of the world (whether it is possible to challenge systems and power dynamics, and promote change). At its best the process helps strengthen the abilities, confidence, analysis and power of impoverished and excluded people and their organisations so they can challenge unjust and authoritarian power relations. For women especially, however, it is sometimes painful because it can involve examining power relationships in the family and with their spouses. Raising questions about such relationships may mean that their sources of emotional and economic support may be threatened and their place in the community jeopardised.

At the core of empowerment are processes of *reflection and action* that *challenge and transform inequitable power relations.* These reinforce, and are reinforced by, learning and consciousness-raising, which in turn affect changes in individual and collective identity and together eventually produce *gains in rights, resources and power.*

Empowerment in people-centred advocacy will always have as its main aim strengthening the political awareness of individuals and groups and their potential to become active protagonists in the struggle for rights. The most appropriate focus at any particular time will depend on the context. In certain moments and places it might be building collective action to influence public policy, whilst in others it may be building individual consciousness and a positive sense of self-worth. In the long-term however it is vital for empowerment strategies to translate consciousness-raising *(conscientisation)* into action, where people collectively challenge and work to change the power dynamics that produce poverty and social inequalities.

EMPOWERMENT FRAMEWORK



Developed by authors with the contribution of Jorge Romano, ActionAid International Brazil

RAISING AWARENESS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE IN HELIOPOLIS, BRAZIL

Empowerment approaches in people-centred advocacy closely link the personal with the community dimension. Individual change should encompass both a positive sense of self but also a sense of solidarity, community, democracy, social justice and respect for difference, and make a connection with a communal perception of rights. So, depending on the context, both 'individual' and 'collective' dimensions should be used as entry points to develop empowerment processes.

'Empowered people' perceive themselves as progressively stronger and more confident to struggle for rights in a collective process. Empowerment will be manifested in different ways: in their capacity to understand and challenge power dynamics, in a positive shift in the way they view their own identify and position in the world, in their openness to review their values and beliefs, in their ability and confidence to mobilise and take action. In other words, *empowerment is people building power within themselves and linking it to power with others in order to exercise their power to promote justice and change.*

At the heart of empowerment is the development of political consciousness, or as it is sometimes called, critical consciousness – a way of seeing, caring about and acting in the world. Guided by a commitment to rights and justice, it is developed, in part, through an understanding of how power and inequity operate in social, political and economic systems, in cultural values and in human relationships. It's meaning comes from the Greek word 'polis' which meant city-state; the term political had to do with the life of the community. For us, political consciousness, therefore, involves caring about community and coming together in a mutual quest and struggle for dignity.

Adapted from Veneklasen & Miller 2002

Developing individual and collective consciousness

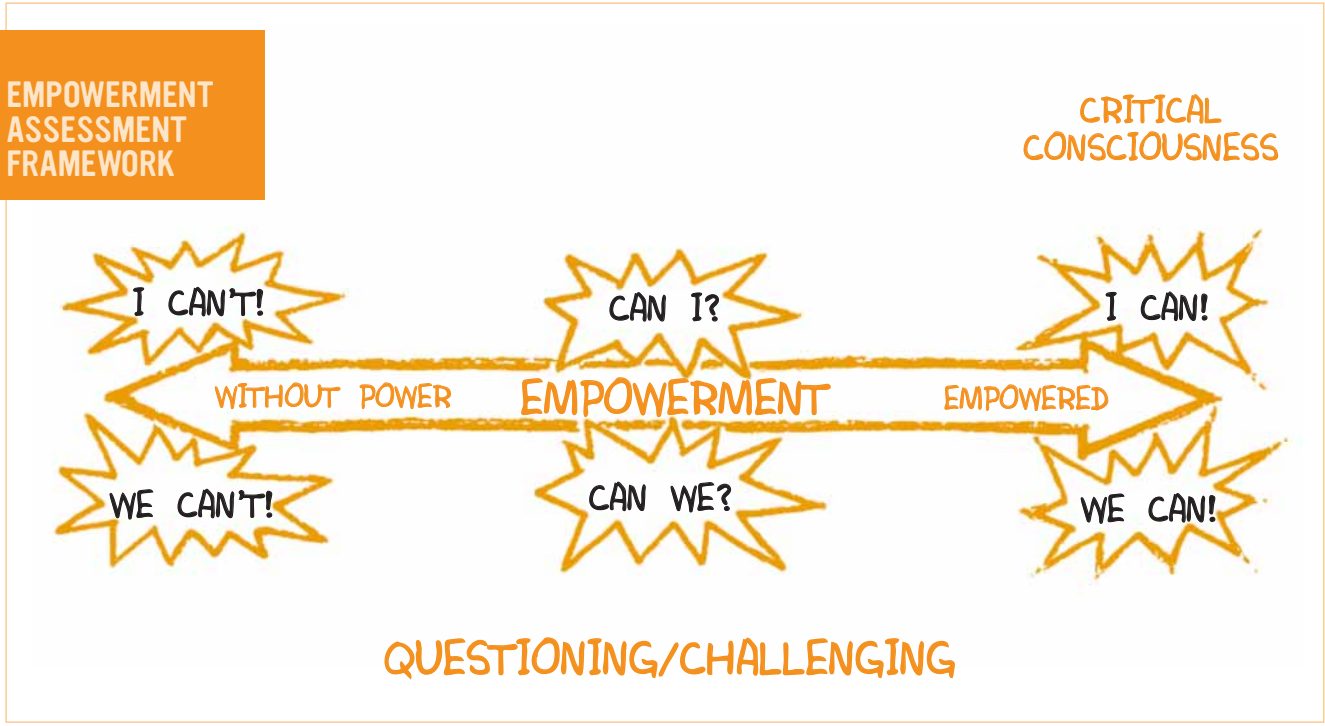
Dalit women in Nepal developed individual consciousness and critical awareness through involvement in REFLECT circles that gradually evolved into a powerful collective consciousness within their entire community.

When discussing the root causes of their marginalisation, women in one circle concluded that the traditional job required of them by the caste system was at the core of their exclusion from society. As part of the 'untouchable' class, they were required to dispose of dead animals – universally seen as a demeaning, dirty and unhealthy task. They shared this new realisation with the leaders and men in their community who agreed with their analysis. Subsequently local *Dalit* leaders began to mobilise dalits to organise against untouchability and caste-based discrimination. They made a collective decision to stop disposing of animal carcasses altogether, a powerful symbol of the community's unwillingness to support a system that oppressed them. From this decision, a campaign grew that included *Dalits* from other communities and resulted in *Dalits* in that area no longer being forced to carry out their traditional occupation of carcass disposal.

Empowerment assessment framework

Sometimes we can critically assess whether empowerment is taking place by paying attention to changes in the way people talk about themselves and what they can or cannot do. The shift in perspective from "can't" to "can" is a significant sign that empowerment is taking place along with the development and strengthening of political consciousness.

The empowerment process is shown in the centre of the assessment framework below, evolving from a stage where a person is 'without relative power' to one where they are 'empowered' – having a sense of confidence, solidarity with others, critical analysis skills and a willingness to act. Above the arrow is the individual perception of a person's capacity to change and to make things happen, and beneath it the collective dimension needed to ensure the development of political consciousness and a belief that social change is possible. Underneath – functioning as the driver of the empowerment processes – we find two key elements: the questioning and the challenging of our individual and collective assumptions. These include assumptions about: who we are, what we can do, what sources of positive power we can tap in our struggles and what forms of oppressive power we need to confront in order bring about social change and justice.



Developed from Amboka Wameyo 2001

Questions to ask ourselves about empowerment processes in our advocacy work during moments of planning and review, reflection and learning

Planning	Learning and reflection
What are the main power dynamics to be addressed by our advocacy? In particular how does power operate to suppress certain people's participation?	What shifts (positive and negative) have taken place in power dynamics since our last power analysis – in particular power dynamics that suppress or facilitate people's participation?
Who are the people and groups that we are supporting in their empowerment? How can we deal with the inevitable challenges and potential conflicts that empowerment presents for people, especially women, at all levels of their lives, from the intimate and private to the community and public? What backlash might occur at all the different levels, including the household? How will we deal with the different issues that might occur? What support can we offer those affected?	Who has attained certain levels of empowerment as a result of our support? Are we helping to open space for new leadership? Are people's differences (especially related to power and gender dynamics) being respected and valued? Are tensions and conflicts being addressed? What backlash has occurred? Is there any way this might have been avoided? How are we dealing with it? What support are we offering the people affected?
How can we increase collective action to promote desired social changes? What are the most appropriate strategies to build "*power within*" and link it with and strengthen "*power with*" and "*power to*"?	Were we able to create links between the individual and collective dimensions of empowerment processes? Are our empowerment strategies creating a better environment for collective action? Are they facilitating more synergy and partnership with other groups facing the same or similar problems?
What are the most appropriate strategies for empowerment taking into account contextual challenges and the need to challenge diverse faces and dimensions of power?	What strategies seem to be working the best and why? How are our empowerment strategies challenging and changing the diverse faces and dimensions of power?
How will we monitor, assess and share our work on empowerment, in order to improve it? How can we make the process itself empowering?	How can we show the results and impacts of the empowerment processes? Do we have good case studies and stories to share?
	Are the empowerment strategies really increasing – as much as possible – access to and exercise of rights, as well as access and control of resources for poor and excluded people?
How can the dimension of gender be addressed in our empowerment work?	How is gender, and specifically its impact on women and girls, being addressed through our empowerment strategies?

Empowerment indicators

Gender and development practitioners suggest the following indicators as possible measures of empowerment:

- Freedom of mobility
- Involvement in major household decisions
- Relative freedom from family control
- Positive self-perception, sense of dignity and rights
- Political and legal awareness
- Involvement in community and political activities
- Economic security
- Awareness of choices
- Awareness of own health
- Participation in groups
- Desire for information and new experiences

These ideas could help you develop your own indicators relevant to the context and people you are working with.

[From Veneklasen and Miller, 2002, p 57]

For additional reading and resources on empowerment on CD Rom see:

Main resource pack:
Section 1

Empowerment

Section 3

Empowerment: Some ideas to support planning, assessing and learning

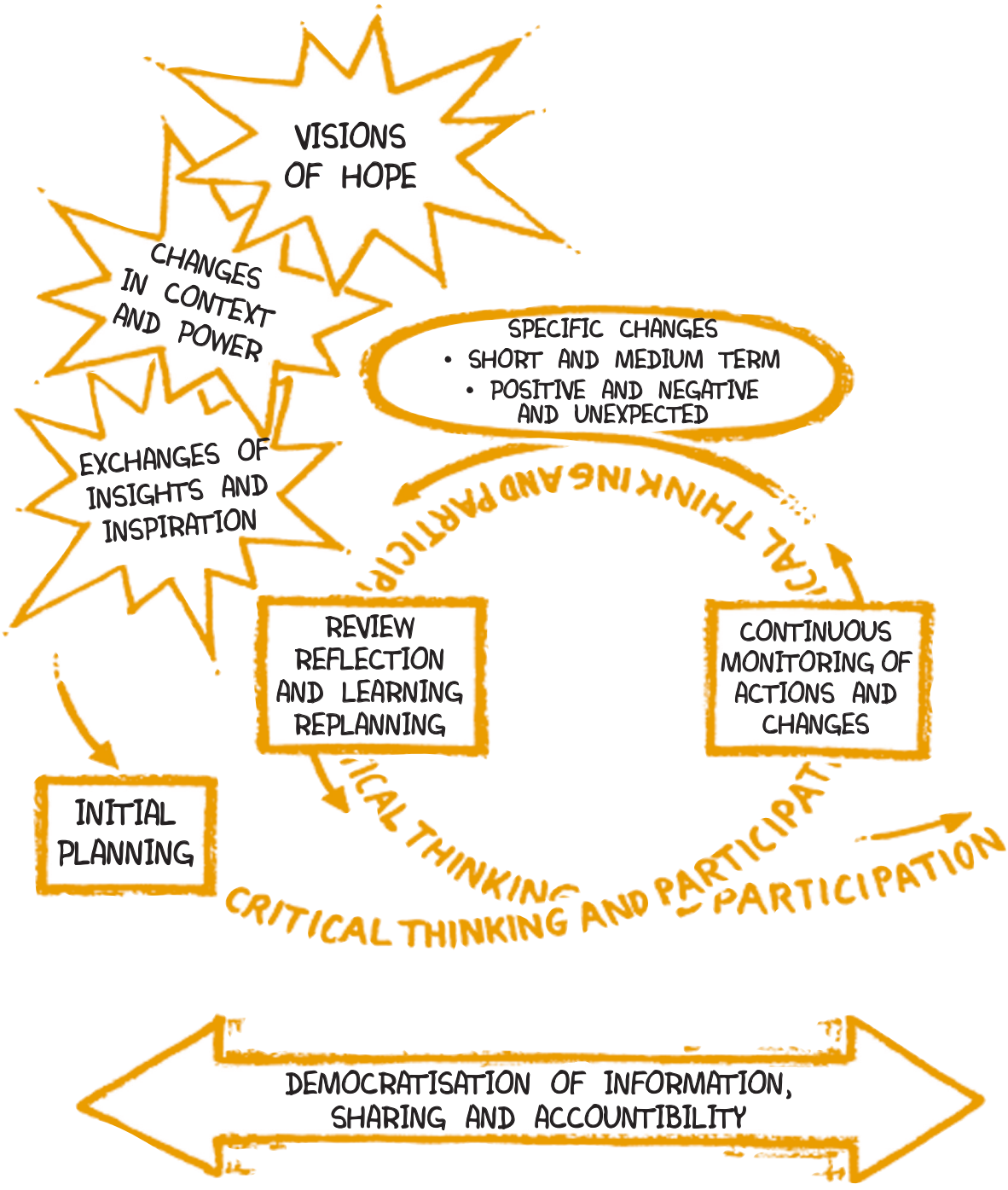
Monitoring empowerment: SCDF's struggle for *dalit* rights (case study)

Section 4

Workshop case study material:

Social change and empowerment

IDEAS FOR PLANNING, REFLECTION AND LEARNING



ANOTHER WORLD IS NOT ONLY POSSIBLE, SHE'S ON HER WAY. AND IF YOU LISTEN CAREFULLY ON A QUIET DAY YOU CAN HEAR HER BREATHING."

ARUNDHATI ROY, INDIAN ACTIVIST AND NOVELIST

INTRODUCTION

This section presents ideas on how to carry out processes of planning, monitoring, and review and reflection. In people-centred advocacy these are not neutral technical processes, but ones that in themselves should be empowering – helping build the voice and power of people who have been marginalised by poverty and discrimination.

The diagram on page 36 represents the overall planning, reflection and learning process. It has three key elements (depicted by boxes)

a initial planning

b continuous monitoring of actions and changes

c review, reflection and learning which then leads to replanning.

This section gives you an overview of each of these processes. Further information and ideas can be found in Sections 2 and 3 of the *main resource pack* on the CD Rom. All of the ideas shared here are intended to stimulate thinking, not to provide a rigid blueprint to follow. We hope they will contribute to your own analysis, questions and learning and allow you to innovate and probe more deeply as you go.

Questions for reflection

1. What does development mean to you?
2. In what way might planning, monitoring, and review and reflection processes support or hinder development?
3. To what degree do our planning, monitoring and review and reflection processes support our aims of empowerment, alliance building and transforming power?
4. How do our answers influence the way we carry out these processes?

Before we start it is very important to introduce a note of caution. Tools and frameworks may be incredibly effective when used by skilled facilitators with an understanding of power dynamics and a commitment to promoting the voices of the disenfranchised. Yet they can also become another way of abusing or manipulating power when used carelessly or by someone without the same commitments or values. Over and over we have seen the need to concentrate more on developing the qualities and skills of the practitioner and less on the specific tools they use. Tools can only support us in our work – they should never become an end in themselves. In the box we suggest three simple questions that should always be at the back of our minds as we carry out planning, monitoring, and review and reflection processes.

PLANNING

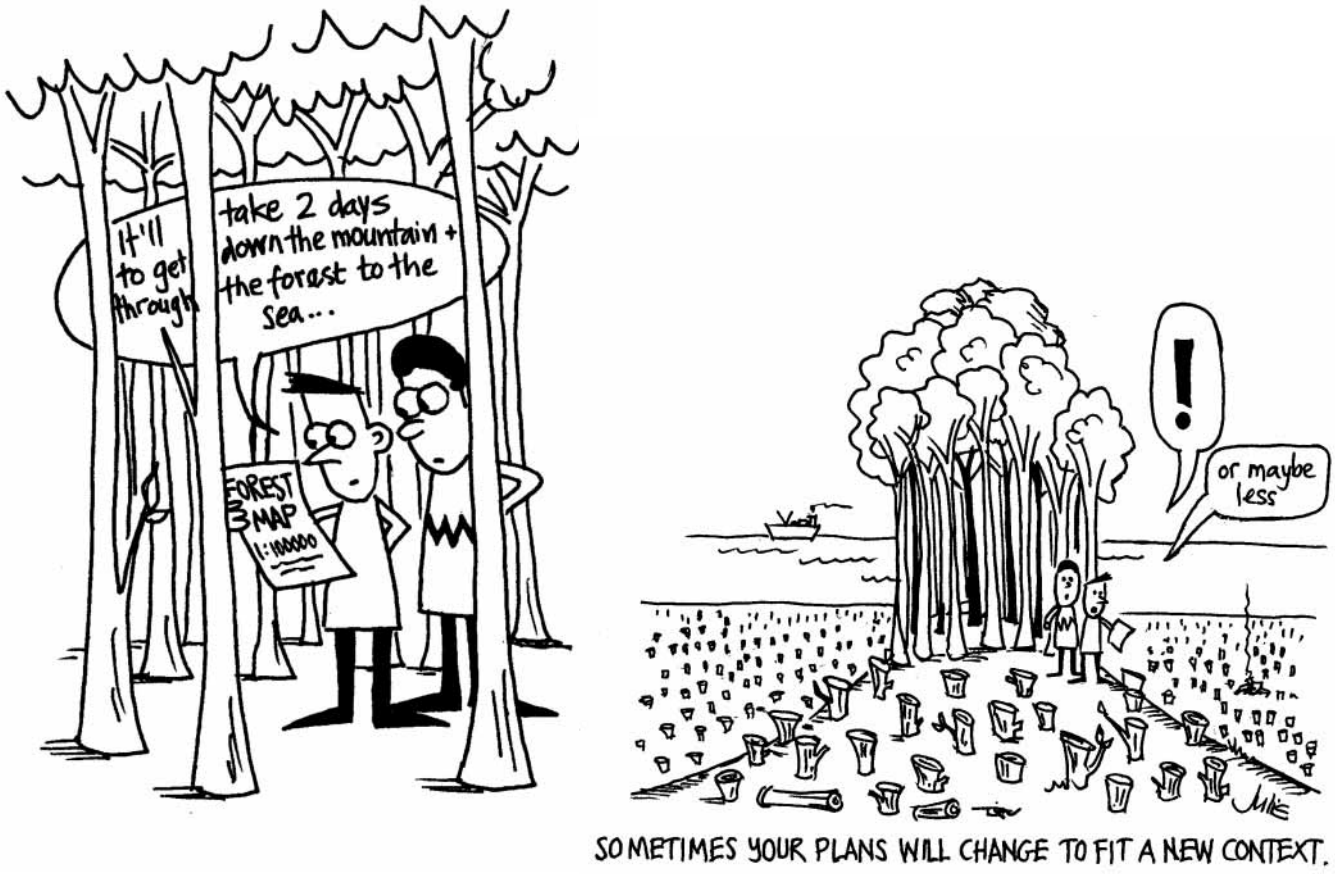
At its most basic, planning should help us:

- identify the key changes we want
- develop effective strategies to get what we want and
- design ways to monitor their progress
- determine what resources and knowledge are required
- ensure our work is cost-effective.

Planning for people-centred advocacy, however is participatory and also seeks to increase the capacity of marginalised groups, strengthen their organisations and alliances and deepen their leadership by involving them in the process as analysts and decision-makers (see box).

Allowing sufficient time and attention to properly plan advocacy work is frequently neglected. Often organisations rush into planning and decide on a whole set of activities without paying enough attention to the opportunities and threats of the current context, or to how power operates at different levels in their society. They haven't examined how the particular strategies they have selected actually respond to these dynamics or to the assumptions behind them about how change happens. Contextual and power analysis should be key stages in the process to ensure more effective actions.

How we carry out planning in people-centred advocacy depends on the size and type of organisation or organisations involved and the type of advocacy being done. A process that is appropriate for a large international network or national coalition is unlikely to suit the planning requirements of a small grassroots organisation.



Participatory planning for people-centred advocacy, with its joint analysis, agenda-setting and decision-making, can help:

Build organisations and networks of the poor and marginalised: Participatory analysis and decision-making helps strengthen leadership and communication within and among organisations and reaffirm values of solidarity, equality and respect.

Promote political awareness and confidence: By developing critical analysis and deepening knowledge about power and politics, people can develop greater understanding of power dynamics as well as a sense of their rights and responsibilities (citizenship), and self-esteem.

Strengthen planning for negotiation: By developing a clear idea of the changes that people want and a map of interests and levels of power among the key players, activists can better prepare for potential negotiation and the give and take of power in advocacy.

Expand constituencies: When we reach out to people in our advocacy – particularly those suffering most from the problem – more people will be informed, motivated and active thus giving the campaign more legitimacy and clout.

Advocacy planning is cyclical process so people and communities who were not involved in initial stages of planning can be included later when plans are being reviewed and modified.

When should planning take place?

Because advocacy has its own rhythm shaped by many external factors, planning should fit this rhythm and NOT the rhythm of a project cycle or donor financial year. This timeframe will depend on the context. For example:

- The food rights campaign in ActionAid International decided its planning cycle should be in step with the UN cycle of International Conferences on World Trade as these were key international advocacy events.
- The SUCAM campaign in Kenya, which initially was trying to influence an upcoming parliamentary Bill, found its planning cycle had to be very short – only a month – as the external context was changing so fast.
- The Uganda Land Alliance in its grassroots work on mediation and education on land rights has found the context is not changing very rapidly and a cycle of a year usually works quite effectively.

In every case, unforeseen events and circumstances can lead to the need to change plans, alter or postpone activities, implement actions more quickly or invest in new initiatives. For example, the announcement by the Government of Uganda that it was going to acquire land for foreign investment became a priority advocacy issue for the Uganda Land Alliance even though it was not in their strategic plan for the year. While this affected their national level work, it did not immediately impact their grassroots activities.

Analysing power and context

There are many methods and tools that can help us understand how power operates in the context of where we work. Sometimes we just need to add some new questions or dimensions to the frameworks and methods we already use.

Questions that can help us include:

- What is the specific problem and issue we are working on and what right or rights are being denied or violated in the situation? What is their current status, eg are they recognised in law? If so, are they being enforced?
- What has blocked poor and marginalised people from exercising their full rights on this issue?
- How do these power dynamics impact on gender relations in this situation, and more specifically on the guarantee of rights of women and girls?
- What societal players are involved in discussions on this matter? Who are the potential allies that we wish to develop? Who are the adversaries that we need to face or challenge? Who has not yet established a clear stance on the matter?
- What proposals and interests are being defended and challenged? Who will these proposals benefit, and whom will they affect negatively?

We can then go deeper to investigate strategies:

- When you look at all the forces undermining the guarantee of this right, what is the main leverage point that could make a real difference in power dynamics? What could unleash a process of change in public policies in this area? What, if not achieved as quickly as possible, will work against the changes we wish to obtain over the medium and long-term?
- How can we address the specific impacts of these unfair power relations on women and girls?
- Taking into account the realities of the players engaged in the struggle, where should we concentrate our energy and resources? Where can we really make a difference in reversing the power relations that are blocking the access to rights and resources?
- What is our current power to make a difference and promote social change (both as an organisation within networks)? How can we develop power in the short and long-term to make our advocacy more effective?

See Main resource pack Section 3: Analysing Power and Context for Exercises on Naming the Moment, Naming the Powerful, Faces of Power and Factors of Exclusion, Subordination and Privilege which are useful for looking at other ways in which power operates. See also section on Power in this booklet.

Moments of planning can include:

Developing a vision of long-term change

Developing a common vision of a better world can help generate commitment, solidarity and a sense of purpose. Often this is done in terms of power relations – envisioning ideal decision-making processes or more egalitarian relationships at different levels – from families to communities, NGOs, social movements or governments. Sometimes it is focused on the specific problem a group is facing such as housing rights. Visioning can be done by just talking and sharing ideas or through short plays, drawings, songs and other creative methods. Such visions are helpful to groups when they enter into negotiating processes as they give them direction about what is negotiable and what is not.

Looking at ourselves

By clarifying our individual and organisational perspectives, values and ideas about change and justice, we can explore differences in a respectful way and strengthen our sense of community and synergy. Similarly we can challenge ourselves to be more consequent with our commitment to overcoming poverty and discrimination. We can do this by exploring the forces that have shaped us as well as our personal and organisational histories, political assumptions and values.

Analysing the context, problem and power dynamics

This includes assessing the current situation (often called a baseline or assessment study) and analysing the context, problem, possible issues and related power dynamics. A variety of questions can be useful:

- *To narrow down the problem to an issue:* What are some of the key causes of the problem we are trying to overcome? Which of these can we best tackle given our resources and the current context?
- *To understand the context and overall power dynamics:* What do we think are the most important forces, players, trends and events affecting this particular issue either to our advantage or disadvantage? (See box on Analysing power and context for more detail).

Developing an overall long-term change strategy

With the specific problem and issue in mind, this moment identifies the concrete changes and results we want to achieve in the long-term - changes in people's lives and in the relations and structures of power. Here we also critically examine our assumptions, concepts, underlying ideas (theories) and perceptions about how change happens and how power operates to begin to outline the mix of strategies appropriate for achieving the desired changes. Exercises such as pathways of influence can be useful here (see page 45).

Developing a time-bound plan

Here we discuss what we want to achieve in the medium and short-term to provide direction for each advocacy initiative we undertake. Again we focus first on the concrete changes and results we want from our work in this timeframe and then we develop our specific strategies and activities for the initiative.

Questions to ask might include:

- Taking into account the long-term changes, we want to ask what changes are possible and important in the short and medium-term?
- Being more specific, what changes are needed in empowerment and organisation of the impoverished and marginalised, and in government, business, civil society organisations and alliances, culture and ourselves?
- Who in power can make the decisions that will help bring about these changes?
- Who will oppose us and who will support us?

Again the pathways of influence exercise can be useful (see page 45).

Deciding on strategies, tactics, actions or activities for the short and medium-term.

Once we are clear about the changes we want and how context and power dynamics may affect our work we can better assess which type of strategies, tactics and activities are most appropriate. We will need to revisit our analysis of power to assess any risks or potential backlash that our actions may incur. After we have set forth a variety of potential activities and actions, we then need to stand back and reflect on what is actually possible given the context and resources. Prioritising becomes crucial.

The following questions can be useful:

- If we are correct about the situation, our analysis of power, and the short and medium-term changes we want, what actions and activities do we think will contribute to these changes? What hidden and invisible forms of power may affect our success and how do we address them?
- Why do we think those actions will deliver those outcomes in that situation? Do they really address the way power is operating to prevent change on this issue?
- What level of resources would these actions require in terms of time and money?
- Given our resources and the overall context, which ones can we do most effectively?

Using contextual analysis: Nepal's Dalit Federation

Activists from the *Dalit* NGO Federation (DNF) used a contextual analysis to analyse the power structures, forces and trends in Nepal that cause discrimination against *Dalits* as a way to provide useful information for planning and strategising future advocacy.

They used a Venn diagram to map different structures and forces with the size of the circle representing relative power and overlaps suggesting relationships.They then discussed the following questions:

- Does one force or structure seem to be more important in affecting *dalit's* lives?
- What challenges and opportunities does that pose to us for advocacy and change?
- What does the diagram say to us about our advocacy opportunities, obstacles and potential risks?

They identified culture (both religion and tradition) as the most important influence perpetuating caste-based discrimination and untouchability in Nepal's predominantly Hindu society. This is also seen as responsible for the sub-caste stratification that exists among *dalits* and for sustaining the schism between and among different *dalit* groups.

Next the activists identified specific institutions and organisations within the power structures in their Venn diagram and identified the key decision-makers within these organisations, pooling their knowledge on the opinions of these people regarding the *Dalit* issue. They were able to draw up a list of their key allies, supporters and strong opponents, along with the main decision-makers and those with the most influence (visible or invisible) in the decision-making process. This was then used to identify opportunities and challenges for advocacy work.

MEMBERS OF DNF CARRYING OUT CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Some suggestions for developing strategies in international campaigns

Strategy development should be undertaken by all members of the campaign team working together and should be based on processes that encourage joint agenda-setting, analysis and decision-making with national and local groups as much as possible. It should include:

- Analysis of the issue. Breaking the issue into its component parts and assessing which is most important. How does the issue affect the people you are working with/for – what changes do they need or want to see?
- Selecting the most strategic issue for advocacy by exploring the root causes of the problem and analysing what needs to change for the problem to be resolved.
- Clearly defining what it is you want to see changed. What solutions are being proposed by you and others?
- Analysing the decision-making space. Which institutions can make decisions regarding the issue? Who decides and when? Identifying primary and secondary 'targets' for advocacy and policy influencing – those who can make the decision and those who can influence these decision makers.
- Thinking about the opportunities that exist to influence the issue. When are policies reviewed? Are there other events that could be used to influence the debate?
- Identifying potential allies for this work. Prioritisation amongst allies and methods needed to bring them together.
- Identifying potential opponents. What arguments will they make, how can these arguments be dealt with?
- Analysing your institutional capacity to undertake the advocacy, alongside the capacity of allies. Who will do what? When will human and financial resources be needed? Brainstorming solutions to address any weaknesses.
- Developing a strategy for influencing the primary and secondary targets, using various activities – lobby meetings, seminars and conferences, policy briefings and research documentation, exposure visits, media coverage, campaigning, etc.
- Agreeing clear goals/aims and objectives and planning activities and individual responsibilities. These should all be SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound.

From: Hilary Coulby Guidance note on planning and monitoring international campaigns in ActionAid International 2005 Advocacy Action Research Working Paper 3, ActionAid (see CD Rom)

UNAS: a social movement and participatory planning

UNAS, a grassroots movement in Heliópolis, Brazil, has been undertaking action learning to strengthen its planning. They started by revisiting why it is so important to plan their advocacy work. The answer was clear: to make their struggle for housing rights in Heliópolis more effective. Past experience showed clearly that lack of careful planning had resulted in wasting energy, time and resources on activities that hadn't led to the desired changes. As one leader said:

'We started to see that if we do not invest our time in thinking before we act, we can just run around a lot without arriving anywhere.'

UNAS decided to base their planning exercise on some simple but important questions:

a What do we want? For this year, what is really fundamental for us to achieve in our struggle for housing rights?

b Who makes decisions? Who are the key players with power who can block or support the changes we want to promote this year?

c How to do this? What are the best strategies for dealing with these players and gaining the changes in our housing rights?

Starting from these questions the debate flowed very easily, with all participants able to contribute. They had interesting debates on power and gender – drawing on Brazil's long history of social struggle. But they also started to feel that something was missing. So, three further questions were added:

d Who among us will do it? Who, specifically, in UNAS and Heliópolis would be in charge of ensuring each strategy was actually carried out?

e Are we close or far? How will we know if we are near or far to achieving what we want?

f What have we already achieved?

Using these questions UNAS found they used less time to build a better and clearer plan, compared to previous experiences when they had used a complicated framework which many did not understand.

One line of UNAS's planning summary chart

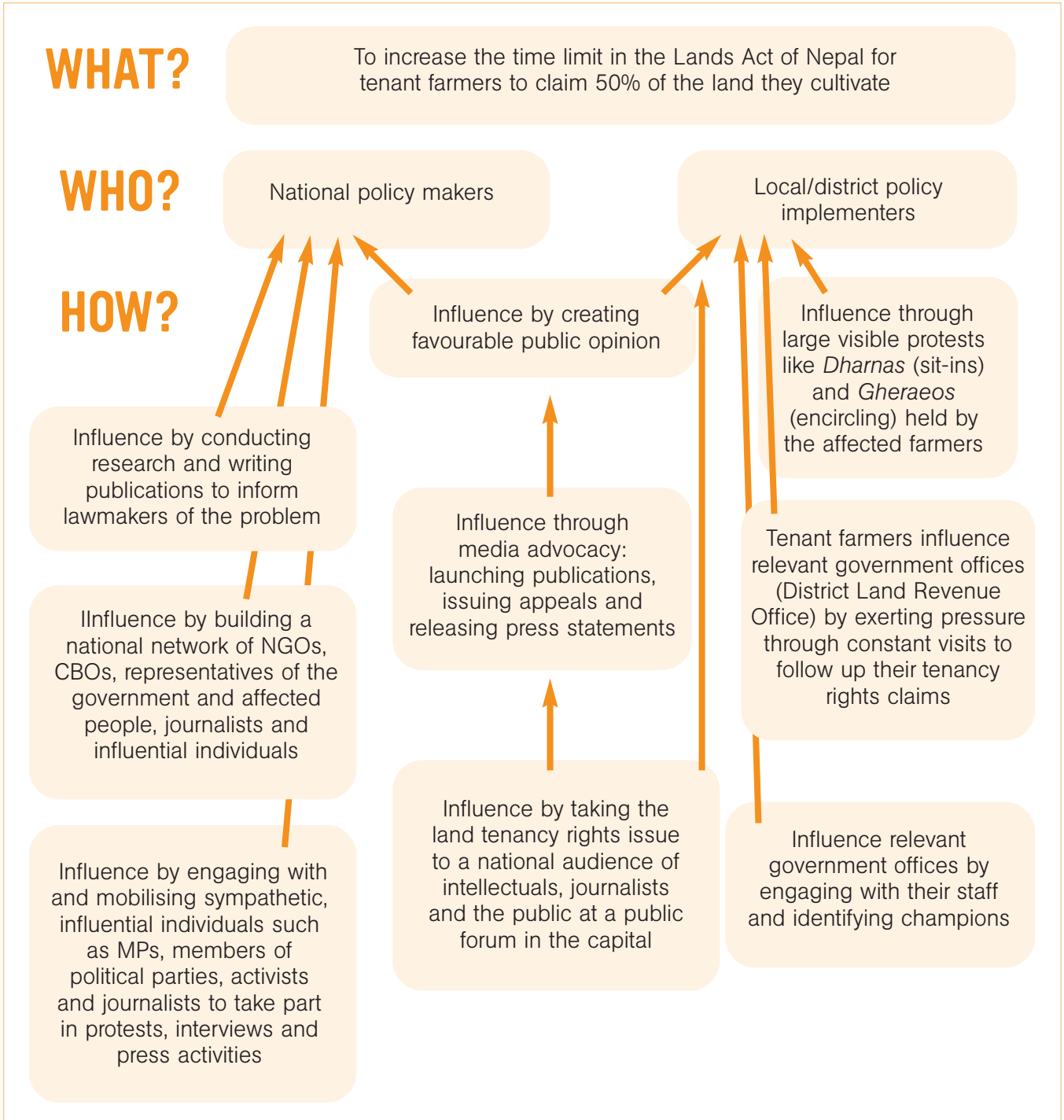
What do we want?	Who makes decisions?	How to do this?	Who among us will do it?	Are we far or close?	What have we achieved?
Influence local government to implement demanded public housing policies	Local government Architects and contractors Population of Heliópolis	Participate in Housing Forum where projects are debated; meet with local government Inform and mobilise community	UNAS Housing task groups and Heliópolis Homeless Movement will lead Groups of mobilised dwellers in project areas	**Meetings** to monitor progress *Weekly:* UNAS Housing task groups *Monthly:* Resident's assembly **Indicators:** • is government implementing project as approved by community? • are residents supervising project?	Agreed design of housing project with local government Project incorporates community supervision of implementation Project houses to be registered in name of one adult female

Pathways of influence[6]

This builds on questions for developing an overall changes strategy in a more visual way to show how influence on social actors may be achieved by more indirect routes. We ask ourselves:

- **what** are we trying to achieve (this could be in the short or long-term, but the long-term change desired should always be clear first, and we should examine if the short-term changes we seek will actually build towards it)?
- **who** are the main social actors that we are trying to influence?
- **how** we will go about this (given the activities and strengths of ourselves, partners and other agents)?

The flow diagram below illustrates a sample of some of the pathways of influence used by the Community Self-Reliance Centre (CSRC) and tenant farmers in Nepal to put pressure on the government to amend and implement land tenancy policies that protect their rights.



[6] Ros David cited in Chapman & Wameyo 2001 Monitoring and Evaluating Advocacy, A Scoping Study, see CD Rom

Risk analysis

Challenging power is always risky, with potential for backlash and conflict. To some extent this is unavoidable, however in any advocacy effort there are a range of strategies and actions open to us. Which ones we select will depend on a number of things – risk among them. Carrying out a structured risk assessment can help in selecting strategies, or thinking through how to minimise risk (see box below).

Risk analysis

Questions that you might ask yourselves in a risk analysis include:

1. What are the risks? What are the major things that might go wrong with this strategy or action that might endanger people's lives, provoke a backlash or place people's health, the advocacy effort or your organisation in jeopardy?
2. What is the potential impact of this risk? (How serious would it be to us, the people we are supporting, or the issue, if it happened?) Decide whether the answer is high, medium or low according to the categories below.
3. How likely is it that this negative situation will happen (the likelihood)? Again, decide whether it is high, medium or low (see below).

You might just discuss the questions or you can use cards to calculate risk more systematically. For example, you can brainstorm risks and write each one on a different card (question 1). This is followed by a discussion of the rest of the questions as they apply to each card. You can then place the cards on a risk grid such as the one given in the Main resource pack Section 3: Risk Analysis (page 93) and ask another set of questions that probes what strategies you can develop to counter or mitigate any dangers or risk.

For risk cards that have high impact or high likelihood you should then go on to discuss:

1. What could you do to reduce the risk and to protect the group, organisation and yourself if your actions didn't work as planned?

Impact	Likelihood
High – catastrophic, threatens future existence of organisation or group, endangers people's lives, or could lead to significant reversal in issue	**High** – likely to happen in next x years/months (depending on time of analysis you select) or is currently occurring
Medium – damaging, substantial effect but not threatening future	**Medium** – could happen in next x years/months
Low – noticeable but little effect on our advocacy	**Low** – surprising if it happened in next x years/months.

For additional reading and resources on planning on CD Rom see:

Main resource pack:
Section 2

Planning

UNAS: A social movement and participatory planning (case study)

Section 3

Some ideas to support planning: methods and tools

- Setting up a monitoring system

Some ideas to support monitoring: methods and tools

- Indicators
- Facilitation skills and qualities
- Questioning and listening
- Analysing power and context
- Using contextual analysis: Nepal's *Dalit* Federation (case study)
- Addressing gender and women's rights
- Empowerment: some ideas to support planning, assessing and learning
- Risk Analysis

Working Paper 3:
Planning an International Campaign

Other useful resources

Notes to Accompany ALPS: Section on strategies. See box 3 Strategy planning, Elimu campaign
Monitoring and Evaluating Advocacy: A Scoping Study

MONITORING

Monitoring is about knowing the positive and negative aspects of our advocacy efforts. It is the regular and ongoing collection and analysis of information on the progress of our work.

Monitoring is helpful when:

- the information generated by the process is both **USEFUL** and **USED**
- it supports empowerment and collective action
- It is **NOT** too time consuming.

We monitor the following things in people-centred advocacy:

1 the actions and activities we planned

2 the changes that we hope to achieve as a result of our actions – changes in people's lives, in their rights and in power structures and relations

3 the empowerment of those affected and the alliances they are successfully building

4 any unintended consequences of the strategies and tactics we use

5 and as part of this, we monitor how the overall context in which we do our advocacy is changing

6 the resources we have invested: time, energy, money

All this monitoring contributes to our ability to review, reflect and learn from our work so that we can apply that learning to improve our actions going forward.

Before thinking about designing and setting up a monitoring system it is important to be clear about what changes we are trying to achieve and how we believe social change actually happens and can be sustained. When these are clear, the sort of information that will tell us whether or not we are on track becomes much more evident (see Section 1 – Social Change). Therefore, thinking about monitoring has to be part of the planning process itself when we are deciding on the actual changes we want to promote with our advocacy. In this way, we can connect the changes we want to achieve with the development of possible markers or indicators of success.

What does monitoring involve?

Monitoring involves setting up and then using a system of information. A monitoring system is a series of steps and procedures that details how relevant information will be collected and provided to the right people at the right time to make decisions. All monitoring systems should try to be clear, simple and useable. They will often involve different steps that lead up to their use in decision-making about how to improve current strategies and design new ones.

Monitoring can be both *formal* (where information about the progress of our work is written down and recorded in reports) and *informal* (impressions from key players and from our own observations). Unfortunately there is often a disconnect between *formal* monitoring which is usually just done for donors and the *informal* monitoring we do all the time as we make continual judgements about how well our advocacy is going. This was shown clearly at a workshop on planning, reviewing and learning from advocacy held in Africa during the action research:

> *As discussions at the workshop progressed, it emerged that there was a 'mental divide' in the minds of some participants between the idea of formal monitoring and evaluation, and the type of ongoing reflection that they undertook as a matter of course. The majority of participants were able to mention changes they saw in attitudes and power dynamics at community levels. However, this information was generally based on ad hoc observation and did not appear to be written down. There is perhaps the perception that these types of observation are too 'obvious' to warrant writing down*[7].

[6] Earle 2005

Design and set up

The following steps to establish a monitoring system are best carried out during *planning*:

- identify who should and wants to be involved
- clarify participants' expectations of the monitoring process, and in what way each person or group wants to contribute
- define the priorities for monitoring and reviewing advocacy; think about what changes are to be achieved
- identify what information is needed to best monitor actions and changes you want to achieve (this may include indicators)
- agree on the methods, responsibilities and timing of information collection.

It can be very helpful to include financial staff at the initial stages of setting up your monitoring system. Managing and monitoring financial performance is an essential part of all monitoring activities and sharing information about how much particular activities cost is a key part of accountability.

Steps in the process

Here are some ideas to support setting up and using a monitoring system for gathering key information on the progress of our work.

When establishing participatory monitoring systems, several steps are important to consider. These are set out below. While they are presented in a sequence of steps, the reality of the process and participation by communities and allies will inevitably be very different according to circumstances. Some steps will be jumped, others maybe repeated. All systems will be different depending on the type of organisation and the advocacy being undertaken.

Keeping advocacy diaries and process documentation have made it much easier to keep records of events and activities, and then critical reflection has helped to examine our own past experiences and activities and to learn from them for future advocacy campaigns.

Shrestha 2005 Nepal Evaluation

Gathering and managing information – reflecting critically to improve action

These next steps are carried out *continuously* once you begin your advocacy actions:

- collect the information and continue to monitor activities and changes
- analyse the information, looking at context, power and gender, etc.
- agree on how the findings are to be used and by whom
- apply findings and modify strategies and actions as necessary; clarify if monitoring should continue as before.
- the information supports you in your reflection, reviews and learning and in your efforts to share the information within the organisation and share it with others beyond your group. It also is a basis for your accountability with colleagues, partners, supporters and donors.

The experience of UNAS in Brazil suggests that beginning a basic process of monitoring contributes to improving both strategies and future planning efforts. UNAS's monitoring involved keeping a central written record of events, decisions made at meetings and notes of changes that seem to be appearing as a result of their actions.

For organisations the key to monitoring is to also have regular meetings (every 1-3 months or after a major advocacy event while events are still fresh in people's minds) to monitor your work. These 1-2 hour monitoring meetings enable you to reflect on your plans and actions, ask questions about the work, share lessons and challenges, review budgets and variances and make any adjustment to ongoing plans. A record of these meetings should be made. This can be in the form of notes, a short progress report or whatever is appropriate. This information supports you in your reviews and learning and enables you to share it with others beyond your group for both learning and accountability purposes.

In advocacy it is very important in addition to seek feedback on a regular basis from our allies and others doing similar work. It can be helpful to organise this before we carry out a particular event or advocacy activity so that the people in question are primed to pay attention to detail. Similarly when we are involved in major advocacy activities involving a big delegation of people it can be useful to arrange for one person to pay particular attention to monitoring. This may involve making notes about the language and behaviour of advocacy targets.

Qualitative descriptions of our work must also include quantitative measurements of the resources and services delivered through the intervention. While not pretending to draw direct causal relationships between the two, it is important to identify any patterns that might emerge. Comments and trends regarding patterns of expenditure and costs need to be analysed and discussed at all levels.

What to monitor

The types of information to be collected need to be thought about carefully. Most systems produce far too much information and as a result are not used for learning or for adjusting and improving plans and strategies.

A good starting point is to determine what basic information is required to support empowerment, decision-making, learning, communication needs and accountability requirements to constituencies, allies and partners. It will be important to make sure that any information you intend to collect links to the decisions that you need to make.

The challenge is NOT to collect lots of data but to develop systems that are manageable and actually used – systems that allow us to look at the real changes we see resulting from our advocacy strategies and plans. In particular for people-centred advocacy we need to capture the shifts achieved in power relationships affecting our issues, including gender relationships. As we do this we always need to include a new look at contextual factors. We also need to monitor and analyse our finances on an on-going basis.

As part of the monitoring effort it is important to also select the most appropriate language, format and ways to handle, store and share information to ensure it can be accessed and used by all those engaged in advocacy. It is not enough to just gather information; we also need to ensure that it is understandable and accessible to all key players. When we talk about information we need to consider a broad range of possible communication methods: writing (eg diaries, short reports, stories of change), talking, drawing, acting and video, among others.

Example of a simple reporting format (ActionAid Uganda Alps guidelines, 2000)

Quarterly report for.... (Programme).....for (period)

- Planned activities/objectives for the last quarter.
- Progress against these activities/objectives.
- Other achievements during the reporting period, including any innovation.
- Failures/challenges met, and reasons.
- Are we making a difference? What difference?
- For whom?
- Main learning points (including those arising from quarterly fora).
- What "works" and what doesn't?
- Proposed changes for next quarter; suggestions for the future.

Above is an example of a simple reporting format that ActionAid Uganda developed for their ongoing learning and monitoring processes.

Once monitoring has begun, a good test for checking if types of information should continue to be collected is whether or not it is being used in decision-making and/or reporting. If it is not, you should ask yourself why not and whether it makes sense to continue to collect that information.

Monitoring changes in power and gender in ActionAid Brazil

The [monitoring] system should make it possible to analyse how [advocacy] is affecting power relations, i.e. observing who is being empowered in organisations, communities and society. It should also assess whether conditions are being created in which project participants can develop their own capacities for analysing power. Useful questions include:

Poverty – In order to break the cycle of increasing social inequities and poverty, what power relations must be changed? In what way are our actions contributing to these changes?

Gender – What power relations generate inequalities between men and women? In what way is our work contributing to changing these inequities?

Participation – What channels and spaces of political participation exist in the communities for encouraging interaction with public power? In what way are our actions helping the local population to feel capable of occupying these spaces? Why are people participating? To what degree o participants feel empowered by the way we do advocacy?

Adapted from Silva, A 2003

Choosing indicators

There is a trend towards indicator-less advocacy where we ask ourselves key questions rather than using pre-set indicators. When used with critical thinking, indicators can help give us an idea of how much progress we are making in our efforts to improve people's lives, to change power relations and to promote the rights of the poor and marginalised. But they are not the only way to do this. Coming from the words to *indicate* or to *show,* indicators are information that shows us how we are doing. They are used in monitoring systems as a concrete way to collect and organise information.

On one level, an indicator is information that helps show us what changes are occurring as a result of our actions. For example, are landless farmers getting land titles? Are women inheriting their homes when their husbands die? Are girls going to school past 2nd or 3rd grade? Are school books portraying *dalit* girls in active positive roles in the community? Are NGOs sharing decisions with grassroots groups in setting advocacy agendas? Answering these types of questions gives us information that indicates whether our work is leading to the changes in people's lives, power and rights that we want to achieve.

PARALEGALS OF PAKCHORWA IN UGANDA COMMUNICATING THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS THROUGH SONG

On another level, indicators can also tell us whether the activities and actions we have planned are actually happening as we intended. For example, they can tell us how many workshops were held with how many participants, how many of the planned visits to officials were made, etc. These help us monitor whether we are doing what we planned but do not give us an idea of what changes we might be producing as a result of these actions. That's why it's important to monitor both the implementation of our actions and the changes that we think are being produced as a result, both the positive and negative changes as well as the unintended consequences.

Indicators only indicate – they do not tell the whole story. For example, indicators do not explain why progress did or did not occur. It should be remembered that they are only one among many reflection and learning tools that help us evaluate our efforts. Advocacy goals often shift as the context changes and as we learn more about power and what changes are needed to transform it and advance people's rights. This means that pre-set outcomes may not be the best yardstick by which to measure or assess our progress. Indicators of success may need to change accordingly. An indicator that was relevant at the start of a particular advocacy strategy may lose its relevance as the advocacy widens or shifts its focus.

In many cases setting out key questions in the monitoring framework is a better guide to identifying the information needed for regular learning and reflection purposes.

Points that are useful to keep in mind when selecting indicators:

- Keep them simple.
- Don't select too many – you are unlikely to actually use them if you do, they wont help you in focusing your advocacy work, and if you do try to collect information on all of them you will waste a lot of time.
- It is important that indicators do not generate a lot of extra work in their collection. If they are already available – that is they can be collected from existing sources of information – then it will save time in collecting extra information.
- If the information is not already available, the cost and effort in collecting it should be taken into account.
- Does the indicator measure what you want it to?
- Is the indicator clear for everyone involved in your people-centred advocacy work to understand? Will it motivate them?
- Can the indicator be measured over time by different people?
- Can the indicator show how social changes are affecting different social groups such as men and women or by age or caste?

Developing indicators by an NGO in Nepal: Community Self-Reliance Centre (CSRC)

MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY SELF-RELIANCE CENTRE IN NEPAL DEVELOPING INDICATORS

Activists from CSRC recognised the need to develop a more specific set of indicators for monitoring their land tenancy rights campaign to replace the very general indicators they had been using for annual reporting purposes. They wanted more helpful and concrete indicators to:

- monitor how close they were to achieving their campaign goals and to help identify the changes needed in strategies to support their goals
- periodically analyse progress and measure change in the lives of poor and marginalised people
- promote discussion and debate about what was happening at grassroots, district and national levels, to form the basis for further planning and action
- generate relevant and useful information to enable decision-makers to make better decisions to improve the quality of their work.

Developing indicators

Activists from CSRC and the tenant farmer community first discussed which advocacy strategies were most important to monitor with indicators. Each participant proposed and argued for the strategies they saw as the most significant. It was important that the tenant farmers, not CSRC, made the final decisions. After identifying the strategies and prioritising them, participants worked to identify indicators that would tell them whether the strategies were producing the changes they wanted.

The facilitator had to give careful consideration to power dynamics in the group to ensure that everyone was heard and that the indicators could be understood and used by people at grassroots levels who would apply them. The discussions generated a long list of possible advocacy strategies and related indicators. It was important to help the tenant farmers focus and prioritise these. Throughout the process, they were asked to critically reflect on how they would use the indicators. The process gave participants a sense of ownership and made the indicators more relevant and practical to use.

The example indicators below were developed for the changes that one prioritised advocacy strategy was intended to produce – contributing to building the capacity of grassroots activists:

Quantitative	Qualitative
• number of tenant farmers aware of rights • participation of women and other marginalised castes or ethnic groups in campaign	• increased mobilisation of affected communities • sense of ownership of the campaign • enhanced confidence of tenant farmers in activists' work

Monitoring international campaigns

Improvements in the lives of people and communities are the ultimate criteria for measuring success of an international campaign. However, since achieving changes in policy and ensuring these are translated into practice takes a considerable amount of time, it is important to set interim objectives that can be monitored year-on-year. Having a clear set of objectives and change objectives is the key to effective monitoring of campaigns. Thinking through the monitoring process and identifying indicators for success is best done while strategies are being developed.

Six inter-related elements should be considered in setting aims and objectives against which the campaign will be assessed:

- Policy gains: changes in institutions, policies, legislation, behaviours and practice that promote the rights of impoverished and marginalised groups and address their problems.
- Political and democratic gains: getting the issue on the agenda for public debate; gaining increased recognition for civil groups as legitimate actors; increasing the democratic space within which civil groups can operate; improving access to national governments and international institutions.
- Individual gains: specific improvements in the lives of the disenfranchised – their livelihoods, their sense of confidence, and their ability to exercise and advance their rights.
- Civil society gains: strengthening cooperation (rather than competition) between civil groups; strengthening the leadership of the poor and marginalised and their organisations; the development of skills needed to successfully hold governments and international organisations to account.

Related to gains in civil society are:

- Partnership gains: strong relationships built between groups in the South, and between the South and the North that: enable sharing of experience and knowledge from different regions; allow a division of labour and less duplication in activities; form the basis for long term cooperative action; and thus create alliances that can reach a wide variety of policy-makers, donors and media to create a larger 'voice'.
- Organisational gains: development of a strong campaign; increases in cross-programme learning and interaction; organisations involved regarded as serious players by decision-makers and those that influence them; organisational profile increases; awareness of the issue amongst supporters increases; supporters become more active on the issue; fundraising/ donor support for the issue improves.

Adapted from Working Paper Number 3 - Guidance note on planning and monitoring international campaigns in ActionAid, 2005 Hilary Coulby

For additional reading and resources on monitoring on CD Rom see:

Main resource pack:
Section 2

Introduction to monitoring

Section 3

Ideas, methods, frameworks and tools

Some ideas to support monitoring - methods and tools

Case studies

- ULA: Monitoring the work of paralegals at the land rights information centres
- Developing Indicators by an NGO in Nepal; Community Self Reliance Centre
- Developing Indicators by a grass roots organisation - UNAS

Other useful sections relevant to monitoring:

- Facilitation
- Questioning
- Some ideas to support planning, assessing and learning from empowerment
- Gender analysis
- Networks

Section 4: Workshop case study materials

UNAS: the challenges of information

Working Paper 3: Guidance note on planning and monitoring international campaigns in ActionAid, 2005, Hilary Coulby

Other useful resources

Notes to accompany ALPS

Monitoring and Evaluating Advocacy - A Scoping Study 2001, ActionAid, Jennifer Chapman and Amboka Wameyo

Reviews, impact assessment and evaluation

Reviews are processes that include assessing and making judgements on our work – they are sometimes also called impact assessment or evaluations. From one perspective reviewing is a process we should be doing all the time as we implement our advocacy. However there is great value in setting aside specific time for this to allow us to probe more deeply.

To avoid confusion we have chosen to only use the term review to refer to these set-aside moments of review and reflection, not for the on-going critical thinking that we should be undertaking continuously. For many organisations review and reflection processes are ones that they do regularly themselves with the participation of those they work with to learn from their work and improve their planning, whereas impact assessment is a term used for more occasional and systematic processes that involve outsiders looking back at our work over the longer term.

REVIEW AND REFLECTION FOR LEARNING AND RE-PLANNING

To help learn from their experiences, groups *review* what they are doing and accomplishing and *reflect* on them in a critical way. These processes contribute to *learning* and when done in a participatory manner, empowerment. They allow us to draw lessons from our actions that build our knowledge about power, change and advocacy. With these insights we can decide which *strategies* and *actions* need rethinking or discarding and readjust our plans accordingly.

Reviews, reflection, learning and re-planning should make our advocacy more effective. If we don't take time to reflect and learn, there is a real danger that our advocacy activities will not be able to respond to the ever-changing world around us and the power dynamics that shape our work. We will risk making similar mistakes more than once or not seize opportunities that present themselves.

In advocacy, it is always important to ask ourselves hard questions about our work and our ideas about power and social change. To do this, we need to support and challenge each other to think critically and creatively about what we have done, what we have been able to accomplish, and what we have not. As we do this, we need to step back and analyse the shifts and changes in the context and power relations that have occurred over the time of our work. Often this step is overlooked, yet it is crucial both to assessing our impact and making adjustments in strategies.

The need for a supportive environment

Carrying out these moments of reflection, learning and re-planning can be challenging. Because they explore failures and successes and ask us to be critical, we can find them threatening unless there is openness to questioning and constructive criticism in the group. Analysing our own work or that of our colleagues can also raise interpersonal issues and tensions. Power dynamics need to be considered and addressed at these times – both to ensure that all can participate fully and that these moments provide opportunities for accountability. To do this, we need to balance dual roles. While trying to be fair in our assessments of our organisation's work and our individual performance, we are also trying to hold each other accountable to high standards of performance.

Organisational leadership plays a special role in seeking and creating a climate and space for frank discussion and learning – a space where we can feel safe in raising questions and making judgements. Creating a learning organisation is never easy and must be done with sensitivity and honesty and a genuine spirit of inquiry. If not, it can lead to cynicism, fear and alienation. For example, once a participatory process has recommended a given strategy or action, it should be heeded unless another open review warrants rethinking those judgements. Otherwise people will see their efforts to review the organisation's work and directions as meaningless.

When should this process happen?

Reviewing, reflecting and learning should be constant processes incorporated into every aspect of advocacy. However, to ensure that we really manage to set aside enough time to do this properly, it is often best to think of them as a particular 'moment' in the advocacy loop. When we have carried out advocacy actions, we should set aside time to review what we have done and reflect and learn from those actions. In that way we can use the learning to feed into our re-planning and make our work more effective. This should be done after each major advocacy action. For many organisations or campaigns – particularly ones that are bringing together people from different locations, the most practical way to do this is to use one meeting to first reflect and assess what has worked, and then use these insights to adjust the plans during the same meeting.

Making the process effective

There is no one right way to do reviews, reflection and learning – these are processes that you should carry out yourselves for your own learning, so working out what works best for your organisation or team is most important. As much as possible processes should be light, interesting and fun – but they also need to take account of power dynamics within the group and examine failures and problems. There may be times when the process is confined to a small internal group of activists, at other times it can be very valuable to ask someone external to the advocacy struggle, but who shares your values and political commitment, to carry out a formal (often called an impact assessment) or informal review.

All this involves using critical thinking skills of analysis and questioning to dig deeper and test our judgements and learning so that the knowledge we are developing can be applied to re-planning and improving our actions. Most importantly in people-centred advocacy these moments involve the critical thinking and participation of poor and excluded groups in analysing what has happened and drawing lessons that strengthen their own knowledge, sense of empowerment and ability to exercise their rights.

Individual and collective abilities and experiences in critical thinking will make a difference as to how much learning our reflections produce. Other considerations to take into account are:

- **the time and place in which reflection occurs:** Whether a group can easily establish an appropriate mental state for critical reflection is linked to the time and place chosen for review and analysis. If the participants are distracted by other responsibilities such as worrying about child-care, or constant interruptions, the task will be more challenging. It is important to find a comfortable, quiet place as it will be harder to concentrate if the space is too hot, cold or noisy etc.
- **interpersonal environment:** Reflection and learning requires an atmosphere of trust and respect. It is much harder in hierarchical situations or where a particular group – for example women – are not expected to speak up in public because of cultural traditions and patriarchy. People have to feel that their opinions will be valued and that it is possible to question the assumptions and suggestions of others. If there are power plays going on between two camps or individuals, critical reflection and learning becomes very difficult. We need to work constantly to overcome unjust power differences and cultural barriers. There may be times when it is important to create a special environment that allows people to open up more about issues that concern them – this may mean holding reflection meetings in groups with only women or only men for example.
- **prior preparation:** Serious thought needs to be given to planning the meeting. The way questions are worded and the sequence in which they are discussed will affect the success of the learning and reflection. The depth and detail of the key questions you reflect on will depend on many factors such as who is involved and their experience in critical thinking and reflection processes. Two example sets of questions are provided in boxes, one quite simple for when we only have a short time, the other, which compliments the short list, encourages us to probe our assumptions in much greater depth.
- **facilitation:** It isn't necessary to have an outside facilitator, it is possible to designate a particular person as facilitator within the group, but it is important that someone takes responsibility for this role.

- **information:** Reflection after a set of actions has been implemented is helped by careful observation of what happened during the activities (monitoring) – it can help to designate a particular person inside or outside the team to take the lead in this – and good planning, being clear what we are trying to do and, in particular, the surfacing of assumptions before the actions are carried out. It is important to think about what the most useful amount of information on a subject is. Sometimes we need to collect extra information in addition to on-going monitoring to ensure the review process has sufficient information to allow good reflection. This will depend largely on the scale and type of people-centred advocacy work being undertaken. For campaigns with significant scope such as international efforts it can be useful to carry out some form of information gathering exercise such as:
  - *consultations with partners, allies and communities.* These can range from the very simple (asking a few key people questions face to face, via email or over the phone) to the complex. For example, AAI carried out a survey as part of its 2004 global review which involved an outside company sending anonymous questionnaires to staff, partners and other relevant players worldwide.
  - *social audits.* A social audit goes further than a survey of relevant players since a key purpose is public accountability. They are intended to make organisations more accountable to the social goals they espouse and can also be used for an organisation's own learning and accountability processes. A social audit must include the experience of the people the organisation is intended to serve, and it looks at all aspects of the organisation's work: financial, management, programme, strategy, behaviour etc.

It is important to remember that the targets of our advocacy may not answer questions about our influence honestly. They may not wish to admit that they can be influenced by us, or alternatively they may lead us to believe we have had more influence than we actually have. We need to use our critical thinking to help us interpret such information, and wherever possible compare information from different sources (triangulation).

Once a supportive climate is created, these learning and re-planning moments can be relatively simple and effective. At their most basic they mean setting aside time to ask ourselves some key questions about what we are doing, why we are doing it, and whether we think we are being effective.

Sample key questions for when we only have a little time

- What were we trying to do? (Refer back to plans)
- What changed as a result? Who benefited and who didn't?
- What could we do better?
- What will we change?

Examples of tools for reflection and learning processes

Various participatory tools can be useful for reflection and learning purposes. As always HOW the tool is used and the questions that are asked around it is more important that WHAT tool is used.

Timelimes can be used to reflect and learn from events and actions carried out over a short or long period by asking questions such as: what were the major turning points? Why do you think things evolved as they did? What problems did you encounter at this point? How did you overcome them? How did things occurring in your organisation, community or the wider world at this moment in the timeline affect your work? How did you respond? If you were to start all over again what would you change?

Case studies from different partners or other allied groups can provide more detailed learning we can draw from.

Exchange visits can probe case studies in more detail and allow for critical questioning and mutual learning (see Box on learning from Indian organisations)

Venn diagrams can show changes in power relations between groups, institutions and individuals.

Matrix scoring can compare activists' preferences for particular courses of action.

Flow diagrams can show direct and indirect changes and relate them to causes.

Oral histories can show changes in organising, people's lives and power relationships over time.

Network diagrams can show changes in the type and degree of contact between the group and other activist groups, or the services providing the right the group is advocating for.

Sample in-depth questions

1 Did we get the changes we wanted? Or, more realistically, what were the changes we got, and how well do these match those we sought?

- To the extent that we didn't get them, why not?
- What have we learnt?

2 In our contextual and power analyses and planning, in what ways has our understanding about the situation deepened or changed? In what ways is it still the same?

- Why have we changed our analysis?
- What relevant changes have happened in the wider context?
- Do we need to revise any of our assumptions?
- What have we learned? What might we do differently in future?

3 In what ways might we have been more effective in our selection of strategies and tactics?

- Did the tactics work? Why/why not?
- What unintended impact might the tactics have had?
- With the deeper understanding we now have would we have chosen different strategies or tactics?
- What have we learned? What might we do differently in future?

4 Did we succeed in carrying out the planned actions? If not, what prevented or discouraged us? What have we learned about ourselves, our skills, our attitudes etc?

- If we did carry out the actions, did they have the effect that we expected? Do we need to revise any of our assumptions about how change happens? Do we need to revise any of our assumptions about how power operates?
- How did our opponents and supporters view our advocacy work?
- What was the financial cost of our different activities? Which represented value for money?
- What have we learned? What would we do differently in future?

5 How well are we including others in our advocacy planning, reflections and actions?

6 How well are we addressing all the different ways that power operates on this issue to maintain the status quo and prevent positive change?

Adapted from Dick, B. 2002

Learning from Indian organisations

Members of three Nepali organisations involved in land rights and *dalit* movements, the *Dalit* NGO Federation (DNF), the Community Self-reliance Centre (CSRC) and Saraswoti Community Development Forum (SCDF) visited civil society organisations and communities in India as part of a learning exchange. The visit helped them to reflect on their own work and the context in Nepal.

Reflecting on the work of the Indian Network of Voluntary Organisations of Kurnool district (NOVAK), the visiting party found that the Indian organisations were more ideologically clear about the direction of their movement, where they are now and where they want to get to, than the Nepali organisations. The Nepali visitors noted that NOVAK actively encourages the inclusion of both men and women in discussions and campaign actions. Perhaps as a result of this inclusion, the visiting party found that all groups of people were equally aware of their problems and rights, and of the movement and its strategies. In Nepal, only the family heads are included in the activities of the movement and these family heads are usually male.

The exchange raised thought-provoking questions for the Nepali group about the scope of their work and who is involved. The intention is to use the learning in developing strategies to broaden participation, particularly of women.

PARTNERS IN NEPAL USING A TIMELINE TO REVIEW THEIR WORK

Uganda Land Alliance review and reflection workshops

The Uganda Land Alliance (ULA) organised a review and reflection workshop for ULA paralegals and Land Rights Desk Officers in Kapchorwa District. It was the first opportunity for the paralegals and desk officers to share their working experiences since the establishment of the Kapchorwa Land Rights Centre almost three years earlier.

The paralegals are a group of people selected from the community to be agents of social change with a specific focus on land issues. The ULA train them in land laws, human rights, mediation skills and gender. The paralegals then educate the community on their land rights, mediate land disputes and refer cases beyond their jurisdiction to the Land Rights Information Centres. Land Rights Desk Officers run the Land Rights Information Centres and manage, monitor and support the paralegals with technical guidance.

In this forum participants shared their expectations and thereafter were divided into groups to discuss:

- What are the good or successful stories you have seen in your land rights work?
- What problems have you been encountering in the course of your work at different levels eg community, sub-county, district, or within your organisation?
- What are the major challenges you face in your land rights work?

After plenary presentations and discussion the paralegals and the desk officers again split into groups to discuss:

- How can paralegals, the community and the ULA monitor evaluate our work on land rights?
- What would you suggest to be monitoring indicators in land rights work?

This was shared in plenary where the groups used different methods to give their feedback, among them songs, role plays, poems and flip-chart presentations. The meeting then went on to discuss:

- What is the way forward based on the learning generated at the workshop?

As a result of this meeting the ULA adopted various new courses of action:

They have started to hold official launches of paralegal work at sub-county level to try to gain political recognition from others working on land related issues. One finding that emerged from the workshop was that there had been considerable tension between paralegals and local and traditional authorities over who had authority and expertise on land issues.

ULA also redesigned its capacity-building activities to take place twice a year, instead of only once, and to focus on areas of need suggested by the paralegals, instead of only ones decided by the ULA. Areas where further capacity building was requested included mediation skills and gender sensitisation and analysis.

This initial review and reflection proved so successful that ULA decided in future to hold them annually as one way to take stock across the organisation.

For additional reading and resources on review and reflection CD Rom see:

Main resource pack:
Section 2

Review and reflection for learning and re-planning

Section 3

Some ideas to support reflection:

Uganda Land Alliance review and relection workshops (case study)

Facilitation skills and qualities

Questioning and listening

Analysing power and context

Addressing gender and women's rights

Empowerment: some ideas to support planning, assessing and learning

Critical timelines

Timelines as a tool: the case of the Benet (case study)

Using critical timelines in the Nepali struggle for land tenancy rights (case study)

Exchange visits

Advocacy networks

Other useful resources:

Notes to Accompany ALPS: Section on Reviews and Annual Reflection Processes

Monitoring and Evaluating Advocacy: A Scoping Study

Self-assessment methodology for ELIMU campaign

Cancun Evaluation - report and key questions

Stories of Change

Taking the Horizon

ESSENTIAL BUILDING BLOCKS

This section briefly introduces some of the essential building blocks that help to shape our planning, reflection and learning processes in people-centred advocacy:

- CRITICAL THINKING
- PARTICIPATION
- FACILITATION
- QUESTIONING AND LISTENING
- DEMOCRATISATION OF INFORMATION
- SHARING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Further information and ideas can be found in Sections 2 and 3 in the main resource pack on the CD Rom.

CRITICAL THINKING

Critical thinking is about how we approach new information, ideas, problems, questions and issues. It is a process that involves constantly examining our world and our place in it – asking questions, testing ideas, using information, interpreting evidence, making judgements and probing under the surface to determine how best to respond to the ever-changing realities and challenges of life. In people-centred advocacy, it also involves assessing who benefits and who loses from society's structures and relations of power as well as probing our visions and values.

Importance of critical thinking

When the Uganda Land Alliance developed a programme of local paralegals as a way to help the community, in particular women, to access their land rights, they made certain assumptions. They thought that by accessing the formal legal structures and using paralegals, community members would gain their rights.

When they started to look at their work more critically, however, they realised that they had ignored the local role that clan leaders play in mediating land cases. They developed new strategies to address this discovery.

Similarly, partners in Nepal found that they rarely examined their assumptions about change. They discovered that processes of critical thinking were useful in reviewing their strategies and considering new directions.

DO NOT BELIEVE IN ANYTHING SIMPLY BECAUSE YOU HAVE HEARD IT.

DO NOT BELIEVE IN ANYTHING SIMPLY BECAUSE IT IS FOUND WRITTEN IN YOUR RELIGIOUS BOOKS.

DO NOT BELIEVE IN ANYTHING MERELY ON THE AUTHORITY OF YOUR TEACHERS AND ELDERS.

DO NOT BELIEVE IN TRADITIONS BECAUSE THEY HAVE BEEN HANDED DOWN FOR MANY GENERATIONS.

BUT AFTER OBSERVATION AND ANALYSIS, WHEN YOU FIND THAT ANYTHING AGREES WITH REASON AND IS CONDUCIVE TO THE GOOD... OF ONE AND ALL, THEN ACCEPT IT AND LIVE UP TO IT.

SIDDHARTA, FOUNDER OF BUDDHISM, 563–483 B.C.

Why is critical thinking so important?

The importance of critical thinking is evident when we look at its role in promoting effective planning, reflection, learning and action.

- **It helps us interpret information.** An important skill for activists and advocates includes the ability to critically analyse newspapers, television, radio, speeches, actions and even body language. It enables us to recognise propaganda or misinformation and to become active citizens rather than always accepting information from those in power.
- **It helps us see what is not so evident and obvious at first glance,** eg how forces of socialisation and ideology can prevent people from participating in change; and how real power often does not lie in formal decision-making structures.
- **It encourages us to think about our own prejudices** so we can be more aware of when we are reproducing the negative power relations that we are trying to challenge.
- **It challenges prevailing social, political, cultural and technical ways of thinking and acting** that undermine the leadership of impoverished and excluded groups.
- **It encourages us to go beyond rationality,** using our creativity to go outside the traditional boxes of knowledge and understanding.
- **It helps us to critique,** reject or adapt tools and methods.
- **It assists us in making better decisions** about our actions.

It is important to stress that critical thinking is not about being critical in the sense of attacking or demeaning other people's arguments. In people-centred advocacy, it is rather about exploring our assumptions and ideas with an analytical lens of power and gender, challenging ourselves to think more deeply and working together constructively to build more complete knowledge, analysis and action.

A key time for using critical thinking is during planning and learning processes as well as specific programme reviews but in reality, critical thinking needs to be part of everyday life and action, and not relegated to particular moments of organised reflection.

Ways to develop skills in critical thinking

There are a number of ways in which groups can work to develop their individual and collective skills in critical thinking. These include:

- Strengthening capacities to question and challenge assumptions in a constructive way – asking ourselves questions about our work and assumptions, challenging each other respectfully and seeking out others who have developed and fine-tuned such skills to assist us.
- Carrying out action research efforts where the group consciously sets out to learn and draw lessons from its work by reflecting on its actions.
- Participating in programme reviews and reflections.
- Engaging in exchanges, activities and debates where people share and discuss lessons, questions and challenges they face.
- Encouraging an atmosphere of debate, learning and support in the organisation.

For additional reading and resources on CD Rom see:

Resource pack:
Section 2

Critical thinking

Other useful resources

Communications and Power –
Reflect Practical Resource Materials

PARTICIPATION

Participation is defined and used in many different ways. Meanings of participation can range from *people participating as informants,* to people being *actual decision-makers.* Participation is also defined as a right – the right of impoverished and marginalised groups to participate in decisions that affect their lives, from elections to decisions about resource use and personal relationships. When part of an empowerment process, participation is about involving and expanding the power and voice of those who are impoverished and marginalised as thinkers, decision-makers and leaders. It is about ensuring they have the opportunity to analyse their realities and express their priorities and provide their knowledge and wisdom to develop strategies and undertake action. In people-centred advocacy, this type of participation is fundamental to both *how* we plan, monitor, reflect and learn, and *who* is involved in each moment of the process.

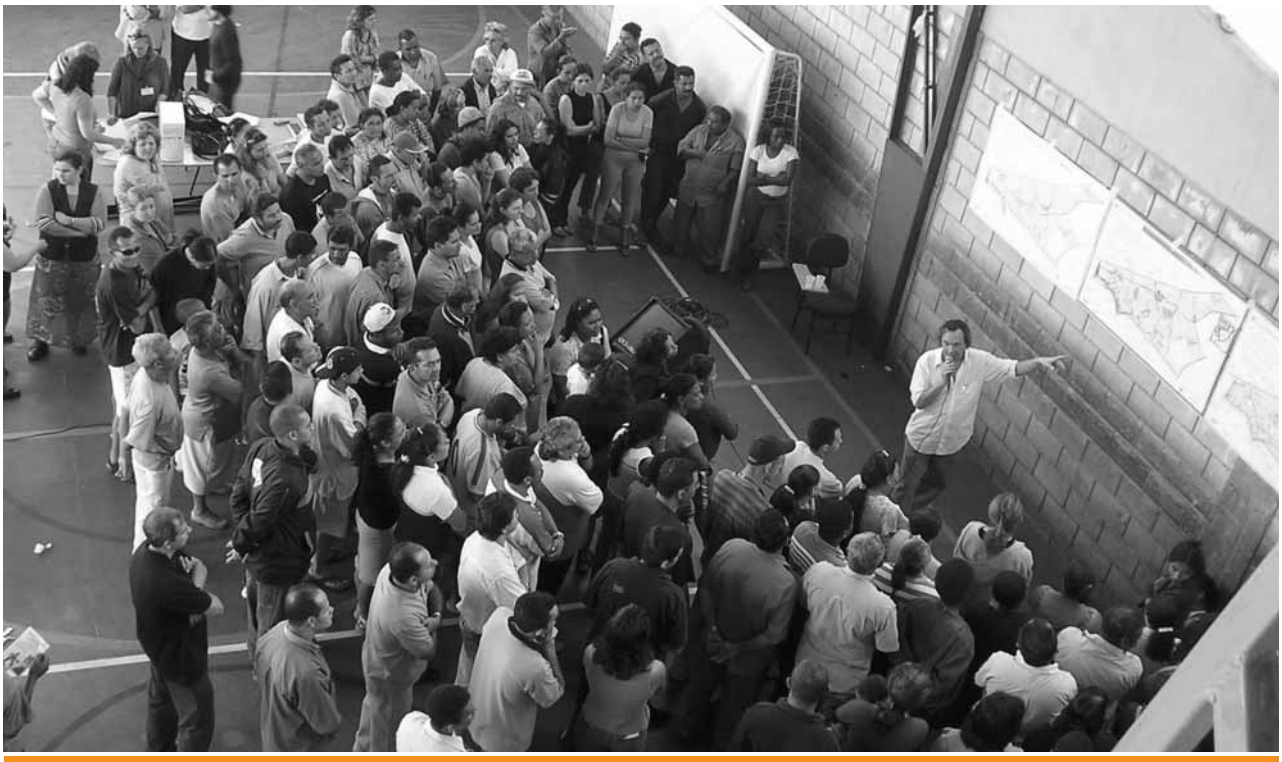
Participation means sharing power, legitimacy, freedom, responsibilities and accountability. Participation is both a principle and a means to include as many people as possible in the process of social change. Built from deep interest for plurality, tolerance and dissent, it also involves an ability to understand and appreciate differences. Transparency is a pre-requisite for true participation. In people-centred advocacy, participation is a crucial means to initiate, inform and inspire change in all arenas of advocacy. A deep sense of participation and communication help promote solidarity.

Samuel, John, 1996

How can we ensure participation is effective?

Effective participation involves much more than opening a space and inviting people to join the discussion, it involves addressing multiple dynamics of inequality and discrimination. For example participation can concentrate power and decision-making into the hands of men and local elites. It means proactively finding ways for different people to be heard and part of discussions, and decision-making process at different levels. Neither does it mean everyone needs to be included in everything. So when we think about 'who' and 'how' we need to consider many things:

- **Location and time:** Often 'where' and 'when' meetings are held can impose serious constraints on who participates. These need to be addressed as you plan meetings so they will not stop people from participating effectively. In some cultures, for example, women cannot enter certain public spaces, or are unable to venture outside the home after nightfall. Also women are often too busy with childcare or other tasks. Even when women are invited to attend meetings they may not speak out, or necessarily raise issues that are important to them, so there should usually also be women-only forums. You will nearly always need to have multiple sources of outreach and involvement – don't rely JUST on meetings.
- **Language:** The language used in the meeting will also affect who participates. When a language is spoken that people involved in the struggle cannot understand and use with confidence, their voices and participation will be limited. This is not just which language, but the vocabulary used – especially if you throw around terms like 'RBA" or even 'advocacy' without ensuring people understand.
- **Recording the process:** How will the discussions, quotes, ideas and decisions be recorded? It is likely that a range of methods and materials will be needed and might include notes, diagrams, video recordings, drawings etc.
- **Facilitation:** How a meeting is conducted also greatly affects participation. Facilitation is a key factor that can either make people feel comfortable and willing to actively engage in discussions, or discourage them from speaking.
- **Agenda setting:** Poor and excluded groups should be involved as full players and decision-makers not as an audience or workforce for the decision-making of 'experts.' This means negotiating together around issues of agenda setting, strategy and shared power, and recognising that different groups have different types of knowledge and authority.



GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT AND DISCUSS A PUBLIC HOUSING PROPOSAL WITH RESIDENTS OF HELIOPOLIS, BRAZIL

- **Quality of participation:** We need to monitor the quality of participation. Power relations are everywhere, even between those engaged in struggles to transform unjust relations. Both formal expressions of power (top-down relations related to line management or social status) and informal or less visible expressions – especially cultural hierarchies of power (such as gender, caste, race and age, among others) – make an enormous difference in the dynamics of participation. For they define not only who speaks, but also who is listened to and ultimately who is seen as worthy of making decisions. Similarly, we need to encourage ourselves and our allies in the NGO community to examine our own attitudes and exercise of power.
- **Being clear what level of participation and decision-making is on offer:** The fast pace of advocacy further complicates participation when decisions are sometimes required immediately in order to respond to unanticipated openings or threats. Often we need to choose to work with smaller groups or steering committees to facilitate deeper debate and timely decisions. Of course selecting who will participate to ensure representation and to balance power is an enormous challenge. In these cases it is important to clearly define the limits and the role of the steering team and their relationship with other leaders and the wider constituency. Similarly it is fundamental to find ways to expand the discussions beyond a central core of people as a way to educate and gain the input of the broader constituency, as well as accountability and transparency mechanisms. Whatever the situation, we have an obligation to be explicit and clear about our intentions in our communications with those involved.

Questions for reflection

Think about the advocacy work you are currently involved in:

- In what way has your work promoted the active engagement and agency of people who have been denied justice?
- How have you managed to ensure that different perspectives are heard in your participatory processes?
- What have you actively done to bring the perspectives, voices and actions of the poor to the core of advocacy and campaigning initiatives at all levels?
- What extra value have you brought (eg information, knowledge, research, analysis, convening power, networks, capacities) to assist people to advance changes in their favour?

For additional reading and resources on participation on CD Rom see:

Main resource pack:
Section 2

Participation and Democratisation of Information

Other useful resources

Notes to Accompany ALPS

Transforming power workshop 2000

Participation – A promise unfulfilled?
CD Rom of three-year ActionAid action research in Malawi and Sierra Leone. CDs available from: SServices@actionaid.org

Communications and Power – Reflect Practical Resource Materials

FACILITATION

At its core, facilitation means *to enable, to make something easier.* We believe that facilitation – and its accompanying skills of promoting critical thinking, questioning, and collaboration – is key to all aspects of advocacy, from planning and monitoring to assessment and learning. Facilitation is of special importance to people-centred advocacy since it can help groups collaborate and learn from one another more effectively. This collaboration contributes to building *power with* others, deepening people's analysis, and strengthening their ability to plan, reflect and learn.

Facilitation can be placed in the hands of one person or a team, depending on the size of the group and complexity of the task. However, a particular person taking the role of facilitator is not necessary for every meeting that a group holds.

UNAS FACILITATING YOUTH MEETING

Having one can be particularly useful when you are:

- trying to plan your advocacy work
- reflecting on experiences, reviewing your progress, or drawing lessons from your work
- attempting to address difficult power dynamics operating in a group
- trying out a particular method, framework or tool that is new to you.

Facilitation in people-centred advocacy is not neutral. It is a process of support and accompaniment in efforts to transform power relations and build alternatives to current structures and ideologies that underpin poverty, privilege and discrimination.

The facilitator should encourage participants to critically examine and build on their existing knowledge, attitudes, skills and assumptions. In people-centred advocacy, this will mean challenging people in particular to question and deepen their ideas about how change happens, how power operates and what this means for relationships in the group and for their advocacy strategies. Since outside facilitators often bring valuable experience and knowledge, their role also can involve providing ideas and opinions where appropriate, but never to dominate the conversations. In this sense, they also serve as resource persons.

QUESTIONING AND LISTENING

Why are good questions so important?

All processes in planning, reflection and learning for people-centred advocacy involve the use of questions. But, what questions we ask ourselves, and how we ask them can make an enormous difference to the quality of our critical thinking and to our ability to develop a critical consciousness – both of which strengthen empowerment and improve planning and learning. Critical consciousness in this context refers to a spirit of inquiry and curiosity, a willingness to question and be self-critical, an awareness of how power operates and a commitment to work with others to bring about justice.

Good questioning can allow us to think more deeply, and create knowledge by building on what we already know[8]. It can be empowering since this new knowledge stays with the person or group of people answering the question. It can lead us to think in new creative ways and help us overcome challenges and obstacles. And it can generate energy and buy-in. However it is important to note that the ability to ask good questions or co-create dialogue depends on your or the group's ability to listen[9]. Good questions come from really listening to what other participants are saying. (See section 3 – Questioning and Listening in Main Resource Pack for more ideas on how to word questions).

[8] Fran Peavey no date

[9] ibid

Effective listening

Effective questioning needs to be combined with effective listening. Usually we do not listen deeply to each other – often our minds are full of reactions, distractions, fantasies and judgments, all of which prevent us from hearing what the other person is actually saying.

Part of the challenge is really paying attention and really hearing what is being said, but difficulties also arise due to the different frames of reference held by speaker and listeners – particularly in groups bringing a range of people together. Our knowledge, concepts, vocabulary and way of thinking derive from our own individual past life-experience, socialisation and education.

If we do not allow for the fact that the other person has his or her own, perhaps very different, frame of reference, it is all too easy to misunderstand each other, or to assume a level of understanding which is not real. We continually run the danger of over-complicating or over-simplifying what we hear. To avoid this danger we need to surface and clarify different perspectives, putting ourselves in the speaker's place and understanding 'from their point of view' what they are saying. This means paying attention to power and gender dynamics among other things.

To open ourselves to another's point of view, we have to be prepared for the possibility of letting our own ideas shift. We need to be prepared to suspend our own opinions and judgment at least until we really understand their point of view.

Some tips to being an effective listener

Concentrate on what is actually being said, not what you think the other person is saying or what you want them to say.

Be attentive to important or 'a-ha' moments in the conversation, and then ask questions about them. 'A-ha' moments can be those good or bad moments, breakthroughs, or points of confusion (a useful way to think about 'a-ha' moments are times when you think to yourself in the moment: 'All right!' 'Oh no!' 'Finally!' 'I don't follow,' 'What do you mean by.....?').

Pay attention body language, attitude and comportment (ie what is not being said) as a way of listening to the conversation.

For additional reading and resources on CD Rom see:

Resource pack:
Section 3

Questioning and listening

ASKING GOOD QUESTIONS IS HALF OF LEARNING

MUHAMMAD, FINAL PROPHET OF ISLAM, 570–632

Examples of the types of questions you might want to include in your advocacy planning, learning and reflection processes

Contextual and problem analysis

To understand the context and overall power dynamics: What do we think are the most important forces, players, trends and events affecting this particular issue either to our advantage or disadvantage? (Key tools might include context and power analysis and gender analysis).

To narrow down the problem to an issue:

What are some of the key causes of the problem we are trying to overcome? Which of these can we best tackle given our resources and the current context?

Developing a time-bound plan

- Taking into account the long-term changes we want to see what changes are possible and important in the short and medium-term? Being more specific, what changes are needed in government, business, civil society, culture and ourselves?
- Who in power can make the decisions that will help bring about these changes? Who will oppose us and who will support us?

Deciding on strategies, tactics, actions or activities for the short and medium-term

- If we are correct about the situation, our analysis of power, and the short and medium-term changes we want, what actions and activities do we think will contribute to these changes?
- Why do we think those actions will deliver those outcomes in that situation? Do they really address the way power is operating to prevent change on this issue?
- What resources will this require?
- Given our resources and the overall context, which ones can we do most effectively?

Setting up a monitoring system

- What questions and information will we need to tell us what is happening as we implement our actions?
- What are the desired changes we are hoping to see as the result of our actions in the short/medium/long-term?
- What types of information and processes will help us know if we are making progress or not?

Review, reflection and ongoing learning

- What did we set out to do? What did we do?
- What happened? What changed as a result (positive/negative)?
- Have there been shifts in power relationships and if so what have been the results/changes of this shift?
- Who benefited and who didn't? How?
- What was our role? What other factors contributed to the change (positive/negative)?
- What did we spend? Could we have done things more cost-effectively?
- What could we have done differently?
- What did we learn?
- What will we do differently in the future?
- How will our learning affect our future plans and actions?

DEMOCRATISATION OF INFORMATION

Information is important to support our critical thinking in different moments of people-centred advocacy.

The democratisation and sharing of information is an important step towards creating the ambience and conditions needed for people to engage critically in discussion and learning so they can build their own knowledge and understanding of themselves and the world.

Information is important for:

- **planning:** to help us understand the particular context shaping our advocacy so we can develop effective strategies (especially in relation to power and gender)
- **monitoring:** to support us in understanding how well our work is going and to help us recognise if we need to change our strategies
- **reflection:** learning and re-planning: to record and reflect on our struggle for rights, and to use our successes and failures to improve our advocacy work
- **sharing and accountability:** to create synergy, trust, solidarity and engagement with others in our struggle for rights, to allow open debate around our ideas and transparency on how we make decisions and use resources.

Information is key to learning, building knowledge, developing leadership and improving action. Accessing, understanding and using information are strategic sources of power. They facilitate social change and strengthen popular organisations and NGOs capable of defending and advancing the rights of impoverished and excluded peoples.

However, ensuring equitable access to information is an enormous challenge. Much effort is put into producing and handling information to meet the upward reporting and communication requirements of big players (donors, international organisations etc) rather than being structured to support learning processes within activist or grassroots organisations. It is still unfortunately common for information to be:

- **centralised** – being concentrated in the hands of few
- **not accessible and hard to locate** – being stored in inaccessible places
- **not understandable** – being developed in difficult, or foreign, languages and complicated frameworks
- **not usable** – being presented in long, wordy and unfocused formats, or in forms that people cannot utilise.

What is democratisation of information?

For us, democratisation of information is the process of working towards more democratic and inclusive ways of developing and accessing, understanding and sharing information. In our advocacy efforts, we work to democratise information in order to:

- ensure all people and groups engaged in advocacy have sufficient quality information to support their active inclusion in debates and decision-making processes. This is a pre-requisite for effective participation and working towards more equitable power dynamics
- share relevant information beyond those directly involved in the advocacy work in order to build visibility and solidarity with the struggles being undertaken, to support informed public debate and to create synergy with allies. To gain support for our struggles people need to see, understand and identify with our advocacy efforts
- enable impoverished and marginalised people to actively participate in collecting information and creating knowledge related to the struggle for their own rights. This in itself represents a strategic step in the promotion of social change, as lack of information and knowledge are drivers of marginalisation and oppression

Open information sessions – The Benets of Uganda

For the Benets (a landless minority group in Eastern Uganda) litigation is an important strategy to regain their land rights. The Benet leaders understand that they have an obligation to give feedback to the communities about what is happening each time they attend and observe a case in court. They see this as important to:

- keep unity within the group experiencing the problem
- ensure trust between the advocacy leaders and the community.

However the Benets have found it challenging to convince donors who are backing their court case how important it is to also provide funds for supporting their travel to villages and ongoing communication with affected communities.

FEEDBACK TO THE LANDLESS BENET COMMUNITY IN UGANDA ON THE PROCEEDINGS OF A RECENT COURT CASE

In people-centred advocacy, democratisation of information is directly related to how effective we are in:

- developing equitable power relations among the different people and groups engaged in advocacy
- promoting effective participatory processes
- building and sharing learning and knowledge
- making our struggle for rights visible and creating solidarity and support (inside and outside our constituency) for the changes we want to promote.

For additional reading and resources on CD Rom see:

Resource pack:
Section 3

Democratisation of information

SHARING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The struggle against poverty and injustice requires us to build synergy and collective action with others who share our concerns. Dialogue and trust become important drivers of people-centred advocacy since they help ensure coordination, cooperation and responsibility among the people and organisations involved. Both formal and informal sharing and accountability mechanisms can support and strengthen these crucial aspects of our work.

Sharing and accountability processes require us to go beyond the borders of our own everyday work to actively engage with others. They can provide ways to build trust, responsibility and reciprocity and also provide challenging and rewarding opportunities for learning. Accountability systems are also important as a check or balance to unaccountable *power over* and is a way of building *power with.* Activists, caught up in the fast pace of advocacy, may not always give it as much attention as it requires. However, history shows the dangers of this oversight with many examples of progressive movements reproducing prior patterns of unaccountable power over after they have overturned oppressive regimes.

Sharing and accountability processes are linked but distinct.

Moving towards more accountability with communities

During the action research CEDEP has moved towards keeping the community much better informed about what is happening in their efforts to overcome violence against women. In the past, CEDEP held meetings with the community mainly to get information for funding partners but the focus is now changing to sharing, learning and joint strategising. They are now holding monthly meetings with communities, including school children, to discuss issues of violence and strategy.

CEDEP works with local teams that help mediate conflict between couples. These teams know that they have the right and responsibility to hold CEDEP accountable to community needs. If CEDEP does not deliver what communities see as the organisation's duties to them, they have been informed that they can notify The Gender Centre, a NGO in Accra that provides the funds for CEDEP's work on this issue.

CEDEP has also brought various state agencies mandated to stop violence against women into communities to also encourage downward accountability in the state agencies. These visits by the agencies help to enlighten communities on what the roles and obligations of the agencies are and how they can be held accountable by reporting their conduct to their superiors in the regional capital, if services are not provided.

IF YOU MEET A PERSON WITH POWER ASK THEM FIVE SIMPLE QUESTIONS TO DECIDE IF YOU CAN TRUST THEM: WHAT POWER HAVE YOU GOT? WHERE DID YOU GET IT FROM? ON WHOSE BEHALF DO YOU EXERCISE IT? TO WHOM ARE YOU ACCOUNTABLE? AND THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION IS, HOW DO WE GET RID OF YOU?

TONY BENN, LONGEST SERVING MEMBER OF UK PARLIAMENT

What is sharing?

For us, sharing involves exchanging stories, analysis, insights and information about our work with colleagues and people outside our organisations who have similar concerns about justice. Through sharing we can promote critical dialogue with others to encourage learning, collaboration and synergy for collective action. Sharing opens up opportunities for mutual questioning and peer debate that can help challenge and improve our ideas, cooperation and actions and lead to the development of more universal knowledge about social change. By sharing what groups have done, organisations can review and enrich their strategies, strengthen the capacities of their staff and constituencies, and recharge their energy for the struggle.

What is accountability?

Accountability focuses more on governance issues around how decisions are made and who controls resources. It also focuses on how resources and actions are monitored, accounted for and judged to be effective or not. For us accountability is about responsibility, reciprocity and relationships among those directly engaged in the advocacy. In situations where advocacy groups are speaking on behalf of people who are not actively involved in campaigns, there is usually not as great a sense of responsibility to them or an awareness of the need for such accountability.

Our understanding of accountability therefore focuses on the need to find effective ways to develop greater levels of reciprocity between key players so we can hold each other accountable – NGOs, community groups, social movements, donors and those ultimately benefiting from the advocacy. This type of reciprocity means being as open as possible with partners, trusted allies and donors about our advocacy actions, from planning strategies to assessing achievements, with special attention given to processes of decision-making and use of resources. Through accountability mechanisms, organisations can review the way they lead, make decisions and account for expenditures.

Challenges of sharing and accountability

Sharing and accountability have common challenges that need to be taken into account

Despite the widespread rhetoric of participatory and empowering approaches in the development community, *processes for sharing and accountability tend to remain top-down, set by those who have more power or money.* While mechanisms are needed to ensure transparent and responsible use of donor resources, we need approaches that take into account the mutual responsibilities and challenges faced by the parties involved and negotiate major differences. Conscious efforts, in particular, need to be put into developing accountability systems that enable impoverished and excluded people and local groups to hold those who have more power or money accountable.

The main methods, tools and materials used for sharing and accountability processes tend to be written and designed in unnecessarily technical, wordy and unfriendly ways, making them hard to access and understand by all. Whilst reports are an important means of sharing and accountability we need to encourage and develop more creative expressions of communication such as video, radio, art, posters, theatre etc. Ways that will inspire and engage people in a more inclusive way.

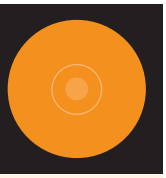
NGOs need to increase their transparency and be more open to external assessment and peer criticism. This is not easy when the pressure on NGOs is to demonstrate results in short time frames. Countering this trend requires us to not only share the more positive dimensions of our work but also the difficulties and challenges – and what hasn't worked. We need to have the courage to communicate the often slow and difficult reality of promoting social change.

Despite these various challenges, many organisations doing advocacy are working to improve their efforts at sharing and accountability. All of the organisations involved in the action research have considered these processes important and have worked to find ways that will strengthen their ability to share learning and increase their accountability within their organisations as well as with others (see the UNAS example on page 77).

Try to be creative

Sharing and accountability don't need to be boring. Rather than only using standard reports, try experimenting with posters, role-plays, theatre, song, music etc. The more attractive and engaging the means, the more you will encourage people to pay attention.

For additional reading and resources on sharing and accountability on CD Rom see:



Resource pack:
Section 2

- Sharing and accountability
- Democratisation of Information

Case studies:

- SUCAM
- Accountability towards the local community: an example from CSRC
- UNAS' sharing and accountability mechanisms

Section 4

Workshop case study materials

- Censudi working on violence against women in Ghana

Other useful resources

- Notes to accompany ALPS chapter on downward accountability. See Peoples in Orissa, budget analysis
- Rhadamani's Story
- Stories of Change: Brazil/SUCAM
- Going against the flow

UNAS' sharing and accountability mechanisms

For UNAS, a community based organisation in a Brazilian shanty town, sharing information and being accountable are crucial challenges in its advocacy on housing rights. To meet the needs for accountability and sharing and to support political debate within the community, UNAS has developed interesting participatory means of communication within Heliópolis.

At the middle and end of each year UNAS holds a large event with as many people from the community as possible to debate what is happening in their struggle for rights and to present what their main achievements have been. The venue is a large public square in the centre of the shanty town. Part of the time is used for sharing information and strategic debates on how to improve their advocacy work. The rest is dedicated to accountability, showing the community and other relevant people how UNAS has used resources and explaining the governance system and how decisions were made.

Between these big events, UNAS also holds a series of small meetings in different localities of the shanty town. These are intended to keep people's activism alive and their understanding of what is happening up-to-date so they can be involved in informed discussions. This helps them better hold their leaders accountable and elect new ones when warranted. These small meetings are focused on sharing and monitoring advocacy work and serve as a two-way feedback process – providing residents with important ideas about the progress and challenges of their advocacy from the leadership perspective and getting community views that reflect neighbourhood perspectives. The leaders of UNAS, who are those most engaged in the day-to-day activities of advocacy, have also learnt the importance of holding their own regular meetings to share, strategise and re-strategise their struggle for rights.

Though the large and small meetings described above are important, UNAS is aware that they are not enough to accomplish the necessary sharing and accountability. It is also important to reach out to residents that do not choose, or are not able, to attend them. Increasingly UNAS is exploring how other communication tools and artistic approaches can be used to improve its sharing and accountability. The community radio (managed and run by people from the shanty town) is increasingly being used as a means for community dialogue on the struggle. UNAS is also starting to use music, theatre, drawings and dance to pass information and stimulate debate. They have also started to paint walls along the streets and in the buildings of the shanty town with images and slogans to motivate and mobilise the community. UNAS also publishes a free bimonthly journal that contains notices and pictures of its advocacy work. On special occasions, when some important and specific information needs to be shared, UNAS also produces and distributes posters, placing them in key areas of the shanty town.

GUIDE TO CD ROM

THE FOLLOWING IS A GUIDE TO HELP YOU FIND YOUR WAY AROUND THE ACCOMPANYING CD ROM. THE CD ROM IS PACKED FULL OF ADDITIONAL READING MATERIALS ON CONCEPTS, PROCESSES, TOOLS, CASE STUDIES, WORKSHOP IDEAS AND REFLECTION EXERCISES. THE CD ROM INCLUDES THE MAIN RESOURCE PACK AND WORKING PAPERS ARISING FROM THE ACTION RESEARCH. IT ALSO INCLUDES A SELECTION OF MATERIALS PRODUCED AND DEVELOPED BY ACTIONAID INTERNATIONAL IN COLLABORATION WITH PARTNERS AND ALLIES ON LEARNING, PEOPLE-CENTRED ADVOCACY AND RIGHTS-BASED APPROACHES.

Title	Details
CRITICAL WEBS OF POWER AND CHANGE – BOOKLET	A word and PDF version of this publication with links to additional resources
CRITICAL WEBS OF POWER AND CHANGE – RESOURCE PACK FOR PLANNING, REFLECTION AND LEARNING IN PEOPLE-CENTRED ADVOCACY	Main resource pack drawn from the action research (see details below)
Introductory section	• People involved in the research • Audience for the resource pack • Why the research was developed and brief description of how research team worked • An overview of some of the main ideas underpinning the work • The global context in which advocacy and rights work takes place • Some of the challenges, relationships and power dynamics inherent in planning, evaluating and learning for advocacy • Suggestions about how to use the resource pack
SECTION 1: Concepts	Key concepts underpinning the work
Introduction	• Brief introduction to concepts section
Social change: vision values and action	• A view of social change • Framework of social change with explanation • Case study: SUCAM complexities of change – lessons from Kenya Sugar Campaign for Change

Title	Details
Rights-based development approaches: combining politics, creativity and organisation	• Our understanding of rights-based approaches • Implications of a rights-based approach • Role of NGOs in a rights-based approach • Case study: Rights and development from a village perspective – CSRC
Power: understanding how it works and how to use it positively	• Different ways of understanding power • Why thinking about power is important in people-centred advocacy • Reflecting critically on power and advocacy • The role of empowerment strategies • A value-based concept of power • Power framework • Case study: UNAS – Understanding how power affects housing rights in a Brazilian shanty town • Case study: Promoting Justice and Solidarity – the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC)
Women's rights and gender equity	• Chapter exploring different perspectives and understanding of gender, women's rights, patriarchy, fundamentalisms and hidden power • Case study: CENSUDI – work on violence against women in Ghana
Empowerment	• Our understanding of empowerment • Empowerment framework • Common challenges for empowerment
SECTION 2: **The planning reflection and learning process**	Brief introduction to processes covered in this section. Introduces the planning, reflection and learning loop framework and explanation.
Planning	• What is planning? • What does planning advocacy work involve? • Challenges in planning • Case study: UNAS – a social movement and participatory planning
Monitoring	• What is monitoring? • What does monitoring involve? • Why is monitoring important? • Challenges in monitoring • Case study: What monitoring means for UNAS
Review and reflection for learning and re-planning	• What do we mean by review, reflection and learning? • What do they involve? • Why are review, reflection and learning processes so important? • Challenges of these processes

Title	Details
Critical reflection	• What is critical reflection? • Elements of good critical thinking • Why is critical thinking so important? • Constraints to critical thinking • Ways to develop skills in critical thinking
Participation	• What is participation? • Why is participation so crucial in people-centred advocacy? • When should participation be particularly enhanced? • Who should participate? How can we ensure their participation is effective? • Challenges
Democratisation of information	• Information in people-centred advocacy • Problems and challenges of information • What is democratisation of information? • Why is it important for people-centred advocacy? • How to democratise information • Case study: UNAS
Sharing and accountability	• What is sharing? • What is accountability? • Challenges of sharing and accountability • Case study: Sharing for learning and action: Uganda and Kenya • Case study: Accountability to the local community – an example from the Community Self Reliance Centre (CSRC) • Case study: Accountability – Kenya can strengthen our advocacy • Case study: UNAS's sharing and accountability mechanisms
SECTION 3: **Tools and Methods**	This section gives some ideas, methods, frameworks and tools to support planning, reflection and learning in advocacy.
Some ideas to support planning: methods & tools	• When should planning take place? • How to carry out effective planning • Moments in the planning process • Goals and objectives • Contextual problem analysis • Developing an overall change strategy • Developing a time bound plan • Deciding on strategies, tactics and actions for the short and medium term • Case study: Short, medium and long term changes – CENSUDI example • People-centred advocacy strategies to counter the different ways *power over* operates • Some suggestions for developing strategies for international campaigns

Title	Details
Some ideas to support monitoring: methods and tools	• Suggested steps to consider for participatory monitoring • What to monitor • Indicators • Case study: Uganda Land Alliance – monitoring the work of paralegals at the land rights information centres • Case study: Developing indicators by an NGO in Nepal – Community Self Reliance Centre • Case study: Developing indicators by a grass roots organisation: UNAS
Some ideas for review, reflection and learning	• When should this process happen? • Making the process effective • Useful questions for deeper reflections • The use of metaphors • Example tools for reflection and learning purposes • Case study: Making time for reflection in the SUCAM Campaign – SUCAM example • Case study: Uganda Land Alliance review and reflection workshops
Facilitation skills and qualities	• Role of the facilitator • Key facilitation skills, qualities and methods • Useful guidance (tips for facilitators)
Questioning and listening	• Why are good questions so important? • How to set the environment for good questioning • How to word questions • Listening • Levels of listening • How to improve your skills in questioning and listening • Fran Peavey's 7 features to shaping a strategic question
Analysing power and context **Addressing gender and women's rights**	• Planning – understanding the context for Action • Strategising: guidelines for action and reflection • Points to consider in doing power analysis • Contextual analysis • Naming the moment • Naming the powerful • Faces of power • Factors of exclusion, subordination and privilege • Case study: Using contextual analysis – Nepal's Dalití Federation

Title	Details
Addressing gender and women's rights	• What are gender lenses and how can we use them? • How to address gender in our advocacy work • Key questions to ask at different moments • Gender and empowerment advocacy spiral • Chains that bind us • Access control profile
Empowerment: some ideas to support planning, assessing and learning	• Provocative questions to improve empowerment processes in our advocacy work • Unpacking our understanding of empowerment • Empowerment assessment framework • Changes in awareness and perceptions framework • Case study: Monitoring empowerment – SCDF's fight for Dalit rights
Critical timelines	• What are timelines particularly useful for • Ideas for making critical timelines • Useful questions to ask around timelines • Case study: Timeline and scores as a tool – the case of the Benet • Case study: Using critical timelines in the Nepali struggle for land tenancy rights • Case study: Using a timeline as a means of mobilisation – UNAS
Exchange visits	• What exchange visits are • What's required to make exchange visits successful? • Case study: Participants and planning Uganda Land Alliance exchange visit with Kenya Land Alliance • Case study: Learning from Indian organisations
Risk analysis	• Risk analysis exercise • Questions that you might ask yourselves (when taking part in a risk analysis exercise) • Risk chart
Advocacy networks	• What is a network? • Common challenges advocacy networks face in planning, reflection and learning • Planning, reflection and sharing in advocacy networks • Questions to reflect on how well a network is being managed and led • Tips to support different moments in network advocacy processes • Drawing out our desires – exercise to help networks reflect on how they work together • Assessing teamwork • Conflict resolution role play • Channels of participation

Title	Details
SECTION 4: Case studies	The cases included in this section are a mix of those drawn from the organisations involved in the action research, from other advocacy struggles and a few short fictional ones that are based on a compilation of experiences from a number of sources. Each case study is followed by suggested questions to investigate an issue. To assist you in using this material we include a guide to the type of issues that the questions cover.
Long case studies (over 3 pages)	**1** CEDEP's work to Stop Violence Against Women in Ghana – short and long term change, violence against women, conflict, mediation and community ownership **2** Social change and empowerment in a Brazilian shanty town – looking at social change, gender & environment **3** ULA: Moving from policy advocacy to also working at the grassroots – contextual and power analysis, broadening strategies **4** The struggle for land tenancy rights in Nepal: a case study from the Community Self Reliance Centre – power analysis, gender issues: power, strategies and gender **5** Promoting justice and solidarity on the issue of AIDS: The Treatment Action Campaign – analysis of core problems, strategies **6** UNAS: the challenges of information – the challenges of democratisation **7** The struggle for *Dalit* rights in Nepal: the anti-carcass throwing campaign – can power be challenged without conflict? Advocacy and risk
Short case studies (less than 2 pages)	**1** CENSUDI working on violence against women in Ghana – downwards accountability on gender issues **2** Short case study on analysing power and choosing strategies **3** Short case study 2 on analysing power and choosing strategies **4** Challenges of advocacy networks **5** DNF: Invisible power in Nepal – how invisible power operates and strategies to counter this.
APPENDICES	• Summary of learning • Glossary • References
ACTION RESEARCH WORKING PAPERS	These longer papers look at particular topics or cases arising from the action research
Working Paper 1	Action Research on Planning, Assessing and Learning in People-centred Advocacy: summary of learning, Jennifer Chapman, Almir Pereira Junior, Laya Prasad Uprety, Sarah Okwaare, Vincent Azumah, Valerie Miller
Working Paper 2	Rights-Based Development: The challenge of Change and Power, Jennifer Chapman in collaboration and dialogue with Valerie Miller, Adriano Campolina Soares and John Samuel
Working Paper 3	Guidance Note on Planning and Monitoring International Campaigns in ActionAid, Hilary Coulby
Working Paper 4	Advocacy in Africa, A Unique Experience, Jane Ocaya Irama
Working Paper 5	Rights-based Advocacy Against Caste-based Discrimination in Nepal: A Case Study of the Grassroots Anti-Carcass Throwing Campaign of Saraswoti Community Development Forum, Laya Prasad Uprety, Indra Rai, Him Prasad Sedhain

Title	Details
Working Paper 6	People-centred Advocacy for the Land Tenancy Rights in Nepal: A Case Study of the Community Self-reliance Centre's Grassroots Campaign Laya Prasad Uprety, Indra Rai, Him Prasad Sedhain
OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES	Includes a selection of materials produced and developed by ActionAid International in collaboration with partners and allies on learning, people-centred advocacy and rights-based approaches
ActionAid case studies on rights	A series of case studies written between 2003-2004 by ActionAid staff in collaboration with partners • Rights-based approach case studies: • People Organization: An Approach for Building Alternative Power Structure, Rezaul K Chowdhury, May 2003, COAST • An experience of networking in the social struggle for the human right to alimentation and sustainable nutrition: "Mutirão" to combat infant malnutrition, ActionAid Brasil • The struggle that never ends: Tasnoor narrates her life, Khawja Shamsul Huda, Syed Masiul Hasan, Zaki Hasan ActionAid Bangladesh • The fight of rural women workers for the preservation of and free access to a natural resource: Assema and the Babassu Law, Contact Person: ActionAid Brasil • National Campaign For a GMO-Free Brazil: the case of the Citizen Juries, AA Brasil • The Titanium Mining Campaign along the Kenyan Coast 1, Elphas Ojiambo AA Kenya • Homelessness in India Rights of people who are illegalized and criminalised, AA India • The Titanium Mining Campaign along the Kenyan Coast 2, Elphas Ojiambo
Advocacy	Monitoring and Evaluating Advocacy: A Scoping Study, Jennifer Chapman, Amboka Wameyo January 2001 This paper sets out to document the various frameworks and approaches that international agencies are using to assess the value of their advocacy work Advocacy and M&E: A note on the need for clarity, Ros David 1999
Campaigns	Learning from Cancun: External stakeholders perspectives 2004
	A rapid assessment undertaken by the action research team to get stakeholder perspectives on AA's role at the WTO Cancun Ministerial meeting in Mexico Some tools for an ELIMU self-evaluation Ideas for conducting an auto-evaluation of ActionAid's education campaign ELIMU in 2001
Communication and rights	Communication and Power: A series of practical resources by Reflect practitioners to facilitate analysis and capacity building in communication and use of communications ICT for Development: Empowerment or Exploitation – Hannah Beardon 2004. Mid-term publication of the Reflect ICT Project which outlines the key issues regarding information communications technologies in a development context, including practical resources to facilitate participatory planning for ICT for Development projects.

Title	Details
Empowerment	Background Paper 1: Empowerment: Putting the power first to fight poverty together, Jorge O. Romano, ActionAid Brasil August 2002
Gender and women's rights	ActionAid International gender and women's empowerment framework
Modules for learning about rights	Participation and empowerment: insights for evaluation – a summary of a study of evaluations of Reflect, which highlights issues and learning around evaluating participatory work Learning about Rights – contains a set of five learning modules around rights and humanitarian standards in emergencies. Module One: Rights, Law and Society – Basic Concepts Module Two: Rights-Based Humanitarianism – Assorted Principles for a Common Project Module Three: Law and Rights in Emergencies Module Four: Women and Human Rights in Emergencies Module Five: Rights-Based Emergency Work – Analysis and Practice
Notes to accompany ALPS - ActionAid's Accountability, Learning and Planning System	Notes to accompany ALPS, 2001 Written for ActionAid staff in 2001, Notes to Accompany ALPS provide examples of processes for participatory appraisals, planning and reviews, and for thinking through the practical implications of power, gender, accountability and transparency in development work.
Organisational learning and development	The Taking of the Horizon Lessons from ActionAid Uganda's experience of changes in development practice, Tina Wallace and Allan Kaplan, 2003 A paper exploring the practical implications of an NGO shifting to a rights-based approach Going against the flow – Rosalind David and Antonella Mancini, 2004 History and challenges of implementing ActionAid's Accountability, Learning and Planning System
Power	Transforming Power – ActionAid Participatory Methodology Forum 2001 An ActionAid workshop that evolved into a space for the analysis of power relationships

Title	Details
Rights-based approaches	ActionAid in Practice: Understanding and Learning About Methods and Approaches of Rights and Empowerment 2003. A workshop organised to bring Action Aid practitioners together, including external people to share learning and experiences of implementing rights-based work Operationalizing rights approach to development ActionAid Asia. Regional Workshop 31 July–4 August, 2000 Bangkok This paper is the outcome of a shared reflection by ActionAid Asia staff in the town of Hua Hin [Thailand] from 31 July to 4 August 2000, to explore what constitutes a rights-based approach Will our Rights-Based Wishes let the Genie out of the lamp? One tale and seven reflections around rights-based approaches to development practice. Luis Morago-Nicolás Questionnaire for Assessing the Status of Rights-Based Approach in ActionAid Country Programmes Supporting Guidelines Rights-based Approach: ActionAid India's experiences with regard to vulnerable groups and people claiming their rights, Sandeep Chachra 2003 Bibliography: Rights and Empowerment Methods and Approaches Suggested Supporting Materials
Rights and Emergencies	• A rights-based approach to emergencies 1: Rights-based analysis in practice, Luis Morago-Nicolás • A rights-based approach to emergencies 2: Setting the scene, Luis Morago-Nicolás
Social audit	SAMAJIK SAMIKHYA A Social Audit Process in a Panchayat in Orissa, Mohammed Asif, 2001
Critical stories of change	In-depth case studies that look explore the complexity of change through a rights lens: • Bolangir to Hyderabad – the choice of death in paradise or life in hell, Koy Thomson and colleagues in India, 2005 • "Love of the Heart": Tales from Raizes Vivas, Brazil, Andrea Cornwall, 2005 • The Sugar Campaign for Change (SUCAM) An inside history of success and continuing struggle, Kenya, David Harding, 2005

GLOSSARY

IN RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT WORK MANY TERMS HAVE CONTESTED MEANINGS. THE FOLLOWING ARE THE MEANINGS THAT ARE TAKEN IN THIS BOOKLET.

Action research is a process that combines learning and action to produce more effective change. When focused on empowerment, it helps people set their own agenda and learn from their experiences so they can take those lessons and improve their work and lives. It assists people in investigating and studying their actions, reflecting on them and developing ways to increase their effectiveness and impact. As a result, it promotes deeper understanding and learning and greater commitment to the changes being pursued.

Critical thinking is a process that we should be engaging in all the time and describes how a person or group can choose to approach new information, ideas, problems, questions and issues. Critical thinking is essentially an active process – one in which you individually, or in a group, think thoughts through for yourself, raise questions yourself, find or interpret relevant information yourself and come to your own conclusions or evaluations rather than passively accepting information or decisions from an outside source.

Development is increasing people's possibility and capacity to make the most of their potential to live as full creative human beings and to come together to build caring, supportive and accountable societies.

Empowerment is a process that strengthens the abilities, confidence, analysis and power of poor and excluded people and their organisations so they can challenge unjust and authoritarian power relations.

Fundamentalism is the use of religion, ethnicity or culture to mobilise and gain political power in a society. Though inherently political, adherents seek to raise these ideologies above the possibility of open political debate on the basis of divine sanction or by appealing to supreme authorities, moral codes or philosophies that cannot be questioned.[10]

Good governance is open and participatory governance that pays particular attention to promoting the voice of excluded members of society.

Impact is lasting or significant changes positive or negative, intended or not brought about in peoples lives by a given action or series of actions.

Impact assessment is a broad understanding of change, and can be done throughout the lifecycle of an intervention. After completion, an assessment of impact looks at the lasting effects an intervention has had. Impact assessment can measure both tangible and intangible results of activities on the lives of people and on society.

Indicators are signs or signals of progress that can be observed or measured. They provide information that help give us an idea of what changes are occurring as a result of our actions, whether activities and actions are actually happening as we intended and the progress we are making in our efforts to improve people's lives.

Learning involves reflecting on experiences to identify how a situation or future action could be improved, and then using this knowledge to make actual improvements. This can be individual or group based.

Monitoring is about knowing the positive and negative aspects of our advocacy efforts. It is the regular and ongoing collection and analysis of information on the progress of our work.

Neo-liberalism is a political-economic philosophy that de-emphasises or rejects government intervention and regulation of the economy, believing instead that progress can be achieved by encouraging free-market methods and fewer controls on business operations and economic development. It benefits corporate interests and tends to be supported by the powerful and rich. In practice it has led to growing inequalities and the loss of workers' rights.

[10] Kellet 1996 Religious fundamentalism: questioning the term, identifying its referents. (unpublished)

Participation is both a means and an end, a way we try to do our work and a goal of that work. When it as part of the empowerment process, participation is about involving and expanding the power and voice of the impoverished and marginalised as thinkers, decision-makers and leaders. Participation helps us build solidarity between people concerned about the rights of poor and disenfranchised groups and can form the basis for strong movements to advance rights.

People-centred advocacy[11] is a set of organised actions aimed at influencing public policies, societal attitudes and socio-political processes that enable and empower the marginalised to speak for themselves. Its purpose is social transformation through the realisation of human rights – civil, political, economic, social and cultural.

Planning is intended to help us identify the key changes we want, develop effective strategies to get what we want and design ways to monitor their progress. Planning for people-centred advocacy, however, is not only a process to design effective change strategies. It also seeks to increase the capacity of marginalised groups, strengthen their organisations and deepen their leadership by involving them in advocacy planning and decision-making. It is about learning, creativity, action and building new forms of power.

REFLECT is a literacy process that encourages people to reflect on their circumstances in order to improve them.

Reviews, reflection and learning are moments that help us look back on our experiences, assess and judge their effectiveness, and draw lessons from them so we can fine tune our strategies and re-plan. In people-centred advocacy, these moments challenge us to reflect critically on our work and analyse how shifts in power and context are affecting both our strategies and the changes we are trying to achieve. This analysis helps us figure out what is working and what is not. They help us assess and evaluate our impact. With these lessons we can decide which strategies and actions need rethinking or discarding and readjust our plans accordingly.

Rights-based approaches There is no one rights-based approach, but rather a range of approaches that tend to show most of the following features:

Identifying and clearly taking sides with poor and marginalised peoples suffering injustice and severe denial and violation of their rights.

Attempting to address not just the effects of poverty, marginalisation, injustice, denial and violation of rights, but also their causes.

Facilitating and supporting poor and marginalised people's own empowerment, leadership, organisation and action to address injustice and restore and advance their rights.

Affirming that individuals and civil society have both the right and the responsibility to define, defend and advance people's rights; the state has similar obligations and, most importantly, the fundamental responsibility to ensure justice and the application of those rights fairly across society.

Recognising that making rights and development real in people's lives requires changes in deeply engrained attitudes and behaviours at all levels of society.

Understanding the inextricable links between rights, development, and power, and the resulting need for integrated strategies that address

- the policy and political aspects of making rights and development meaningful
- the organisational and creative side which involves support for strengthening organisations and leadership and creating, testing and promoting concrete development alternatives.

[11] Definition taken from John Samuel, 1997 People-centred advocacy, National Centre for Advocacy Studies, Pune, cited in VeneKlasen and Miller 2002

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Critical webs of power and change is intended to:

- assist groups who want to support and do advocacy in ways that expand the voices and leadership of the marginalised
- strengthen the ability of development workers and activists to plan, evaluate and learn from their advocacy experiences.

In response to requests from staff and partners for better ways of understanding and doing advocacy planning and evaluation, ActionAid International, an NGO with affiliates in over 40 countries, has developed this resource pack.

Between 2002 and 2005, ActionAid International supported action research initiatives by community groups, coalitions, NGOs and social movements from Brazil, Ghana, Nepal and Uganda working on land rights, women's rights, housing rights and dalit rights. This work was funded and supported by ActionAid International, Comic Relief, Just Associates and the UK Department for International Development (DfID).

Our efforts were aimed at developing better understanding of how change and advocacy happens in different places and circumstances, and how planning, reflection and learning can better support the changes that we seek – changes that are advancing the rights and leadership of poor and marginalised people and transforming inequitable power relations. This pack incorporates lessons drawn from this research and from the experiences and struggles of other groups around the world.

ActionAid International is a unique partnership of people who are fighting for a better world – a world without poverty.

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