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Constructing Empowering Strategies

“Justice and power must be brought together, so that whatever is just may be powerful, and whatever is powerful may be just.”

Pascal

Citizen education and empowerment is a central element of advocacy. If advocacy strategies aim to empower people to be “makers and shapers,” then their participation in choosing issues and planning strategies is an important first step for advocacy. *How* education is carried out determines *what* is learned. For this reason, participatory methodologies are among the main building blocks for the approach proposed in the Guide.

Building people’s participation is also good politics in the sense that it lends the power of numbers to a cause. It is sometimes also referred to as constituency-building.

This chapter is designed to help you construct empowering learning and organizing processes for your advocacy. It begins with a discussion of constituency-building and political consciousness. We then look at how participatory learning methods strengthen citizen and rights education programs. We discuss gender as a useful way of recognizing and integrating differences in learning and organizing.

Why Is Constituency-Building Critical for Advocacy?

Constituency-building refers to the activities aimed at strengthening the involvement of those most affected by an issue in the design and leadership of advocacy. Effective constituency-building enhances the organization and

political voice of people, and lends legitimacy and leverage to change efforts.

In recent years, there has been growing interest among donors and international NGOs in building constituencies for advocacy. However, by focusing on constituencies solely for the purpose of legitimizing and bolstering policy claims without concern for the longer-term questions of power, and citizenship, some of these efforts have been criticized as “instrumentalist” and worse, have alienated communities otherwise interested in supporting change. These negative cases have shown that people may distrust anyone, not just political parties or politicians, who presumes to speak on their behalf.

A lot of advocacy support has concentrated on helping NGOs maneuver in the policymaking arena. But there has been less effort aimed at building the active involvement of the people who are meant to benefit from policy change. Not enough NGOs can say they represent anyone but themselves (although the principles

Citizen empowerment—a process of learning and action that strengthens people’s self-esteem, analytical and organizing skills, and political consciousness so they can gain a sense of their rights and join together to develop more democratic societies.

Constituency—a group of people or a community who have a common concern and whose interests are advanced by organizing and engaging in advocacy to solve that problem.

they stand for may be universal). Usually the communities that NGOs serve are not involved in setting their advocacy agenda. Although the NGOs may have policy successes, without grassroots participation, short-term policy gains are easily lost.

What Do We Mean by “Constituent?”

The word “constituent” comes from the electoral and legislative process. It usually refers to the people in a given geographic area who are represented by an elected official regardless of whether or not they voted for that person or party. Ideally, what their constituents want and need should be high on the agenda of legislators. This rarely occurs so neatly in practice. Public office is usually subject to competing demands that are more powerful than constituents. But constituents retain the ultimate power of voting their representatives out of office if fair elections are held regularly.

For example, in advocacy efforts to protect Brazilian rainforests, the constituents are first, the Indian communities whose survival is threatened by cattle ranching, industry and

In advocacy, the concept of ‘constituent’ includes:

- people who have a direct stake in an advocacy solution because they are directly affected by the problem, and will benefit from the strategy (*primary constituents*)
- people who care deeply about the problem although they may not experience it personally, and are willing to make their voices heard (*secondary constituents*)

population growth. Second, they are the people around the world who understand the ecological importance of rainforests and do not want to endanger the rich variety of species nor the lives of the indigenous communities. The Indians and the organizations that work with them are the frontline of advocacy. But the advocacy also depends on people around the world who express their support through votes, letters to the media and legislators, and funding.

How Constituency-Building Changes Strategies

The rationale for top-down, as opposed to constituency-building approaches, comes partly

The Constituency-Building Challenges of Environmental Advocacy in Chad

Environmental advocacy groups operating in Washington DC and Europe found themselves in conflict with communities in Chad who were meant to benefit from their efforts. The international advocates were trying to halt construction of a pipeline that would have caused serious environmental destruction. “When we came in, we came in too forcefully, too directly,” said a European activist. “We were saying, ‘Stop the pipeline in the name of the people’. The people were saying, ‘Maybe we can have a better life. We want the pipeline.’ So we had to step back and rethink our approach.” In the end, activists and the local constituents had to find a compromise between environmental protection and the potential economic development that the pipeline might generate. As one local human rights advocate explained, “We had to look for ways to make the project better, not kill it.” The demands that the NGOs came up with included a 2-year moratorium on any decision by the World Bank, an end to corruption in Cameroon, an environmental impact study, better compensation for peasants who would lose land or trees, and the creation of monitoring mechanisms.

Based on the Washington Post story, “Watchdog Groups Rein in Government in Chad Oil Deal”, Douglas Farah and David B. Ottaway, January 4, 2001.

from the belief that quick results justify the means and partly from the belief that “experts” should solve problems and deal with the policy world. Beyond being consulted about their grievances or mobilized in support of a policy, ordinary citizens are not seen as having much of a role to play.

In contrast, a citizen-centered or constituency approach transforms the role of ‘beneficiary’ from a passive recipient to an active agent of change. Organizations around the globe that are more citizen-centered are changing the way they operate and enabling ‘beneficiaries’ to co-direct their own development. Some programs combine service delivery with community organizing in an effort to meet community needs while empowering people to get at the root causes of problems. For example, the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) in many countries has become involved in legal rights organizing while also conducting self-help courses and other



support services to provide poor women with better opportunities.

The chart on the next page illustrates some of the ways that citizen-focused advocacy differs from the traditional development approach.

Constituency-building strategies vary depending on how constituents are affected by the advocacy issue and their relationship with the lead organization. Identifying your constituencies may not be simple. Many advocacy organizations are intermediaries whose direct clients may not be the constituents. We discuss these different relationships in Chapters 6 and 8.

What Is Political Consciousness?

Engaging marginalized communities in advocacy is not easy. Poverty, discrimination, and adversity can breed paralysis and resignation. It can also generate frustration and anger that can foster hostility and hopelessness. This is reinforced by the tendency of society to “blame the victim” and the “victim” to internalize social prejudices. For example, many landless peasants believe they are to blame for being poor because they are ignorant. Other people see

Rescuing vs. Organizing

Shifting the traditional relationship of NGOs as rescuers to organizers and partners of marginalized groups is not easy. Rescuing is simpler because the rescuer controls the process. Organizing, in contrast, means letting go of some of that power, letting the people we want to rescue decide what to do, and helping them do it. Some NGO staff say that the poor communities they work with don’t seem interested in change.

Why is it that people just don't seem to care?...they wait for us to come and help them but never initiate on their own.

Too often, NGOs mistake resistance or a lack of power for apathy.

Contrasting Views of Development and Social Change

Traditional development sees . . .

Advocacy sees . . .

Problems	→	Issues
Basic needs	→	Basic rights
Symptoms	→	Systemic causes
Poverty and welfare	→	Unequal distribution of power and resources
Projects	→	Strategies and actions
Static plans, definable results	→	Continuous planning and analysis
Mission	→	Vision for political change
Beneficiaries and clients	→	Citizens, constituents, and allies
Education and information	→	Consciousness raising and organizing
Consultation and partnership	→	Joint decisionmaking, local leadership, complementary roles, alliances
Outputs	→	Political and social change to benefit marginalized
Satisfaction of needs	→	Transformation of power relations

them as undisciplined and lazy. In reality, peasants often work long hours for extremely low wages. Similarly, in many countries, women do not seek legal redress when raped because they are ashamed. Society and the legal system reinforce this shame by insisting, “she must have asked for it.” What appears to be acquiescence may be the only option that people have to resist the psychological consequences of subordination. What does it take to help people recognize, understand, and act to address the injustice in their own lives? As Chapter 2 emphasizes, many different competencies are needed. But a core competency has to do with political consciousness.

Political consciousness—a way of seeing, caring about, and acting in the world that is guided by an understanding of rights and justice and an awareness of power, and inequity in social, political and economic systems, relations, and values.

Effective political organizers think politically. They try to be informed about the world around them, and continually question why things happen. Political thinking begins with political consciousness. These are some of the many basic elements of political consciousness:

1. knowledge about how the political and economic systems function;
2. a sense of history and current events;
3. a lens for analyzing why and how imbalances of power operate;
4. concern about how these things destroy human potential and dignity;
5. a sense of rights, responsibilities and solidarity with excluded groups.

Political consciousness is both a *tool* and an *objective* of social justice advocacy. As a tool, political consciousness motivates critical analysis of political dynamics on many levels. As an objective, developing political con-

sciousness provides the basis for the sustained and informed citizen participation necessary to hold powerful interests accountable.

Becoming politically aware can help unravel the self-doubt fostered by subordination and discrimination and enable people to recognize their individual power and link with others to address common problems.

Building Political Consciousness: Drawing on the Theory and Practice of Popular Education

Many people have contributed to the notion of political consciousness. The Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, has had an enormous influence on our understanding of how the learning process can build consciousness for social change. Freire taught literacy to Brazilian peasants and workers at a time of political repression. Out of this experience, he developed methods for nurturing critical awareness as a first step in enabling the poor to fight for

their rights. His approach became known as popular education.

Freire's influence is seen in many participatory methodologies for learning, evaluation, and planning. Educators and organizers have revised popular education theory and practice to include other axes of disadvantage besides poverty and class. They have also made adjustments for historical and contextual differences.

Levels of Consciousness

Freire talked about four different stages of awareness. The following description of his analysis is borrowed from *Helping Health Workers Learn*¹, which applied popular education methodologies to the problems of healthcare. While the categories are simple, the analysis acknowledges that the human psyche never fits neatly into boxes. The description helps us look at the different dimensions of consciousness that shape people's view of what's possible in their lives.

Freire and Legal Rights Education

"The basic premise of Freire is that the ignorance and powerlessness of the poor and by implication, women, are rooted in social structures that determine the unequal exercise of power in society. The remedy is social transformation, for which education is a prerequisite—an education that enables people to reflect on themselves and their roles in both the old and new societies and to develop the capacity to participate rationally, critically, and democratically in public life. . . . Since human beings are essentially creative beings, significant change will come from their own transforming action. The role of educator in this process is to engage in a 'dialogical praxis' with the participants, recognizing that they are equally knowledgeable, if not more so, about their own situation. Implicit in this method is a critique of traditional educational approaches, particularly extension training, which assume that the educator possesses the knowledge needed by the 'learners' and that this knowledge can be imparted to them.

". . . Empowering strategies assume that the grassroots have the capacity to understand the issues, develop the skills to articulate alternatives, and mobilize its resources to press for effective change. . . . Whether they begin with legislative change or advocacy, or another focus, they always include an educational component which progressively moves [people] from learning about rights and injustice toward an understanding of the causes of their inferior status, to the articulation of alternatives, and the development of organizing and political skills . . ."

Schuler, Margaret. "An Approach to Women, Law, and Development: Conceptualizing and Exploring Issues and Strategies" in *Empowerment and the Law: Strategies of Third World Women*, OEF International, 1986, p.33–34.



“1. Magic Awareness

At this stage, people explain the events and forces that shape their lives in terms of myths, magic, or powers beyond their understanding and control. They tend to be fatalistic, passively accepting whatever happens to them as fate or ‘God’s will’. Usually they blame no one for the hardships and abuses they suffer. They endure these as facts of life about which they cannot (and should not) do anything. Although their problems are great - poor health, poverty, lack of work, etc. — they commonly deny them. They are exploited, but are at the same time dependent upon those with authority or power, whom they fear and try to please. They conform to the image of themselves given to them by those on top. They consider themselves inferior, unable to master the skills and ideas of persons they believe are ‘better’ than themselves.

“2. Naive Awareness

A person who is naive has incomplete understanding. Persons at the naive stage of awareness no longer passively accept the hardships of being ‘on the bottom’. Rather, they try to adapt so as to make the best of the situation in which they find themselves. However, they continue to accept the values, rules, and social order defined by those on top (authorities, big landholders, etc.). In fact, they try to imitate those on top as much as possible. For example, they may adopt the clothing, hair styles, and language of outsiders, or choose to bottle feed rather than breast feed their babies. At the same time, they tend to reject or look down upon their own people’s customs and beliefs. Like those on top, they blame the hardships of the poor on their ignorance and ‘lack of ambition’. They make no attempt to critically examine or change the social order.



“3. Critical Awareness

As persons begin to develop critical awareness, they look more carefully at the causes of poverty and other human problems. They try to explain things more through observation and reason than through myth or magic. They start to question the values, rules, and expectations passed down by those in control. They discover that not individuals, but the social system itself, is responsible for inequality, injustice, and suffering. They find that it is set up to favor the few at the expense of the many, yet they see that those in power are in some ways also weak, and are also ‘dehumanized’ by the system. Critically aware persons come to realize that only by changing the norms and procedures of organized society can the most serious ills of both the rich and the poor be corrected. As their awareness deepens, these persons also begin to feel better about themselves. They take new pride in their origins and traditions. Yet they are self-critical and



flexible. They do not reject either the old or the new, but try to preserve from each what is of value. As their self-confidence grows, they begin to work with others to change what is unhealthy in the social system. Their observations and critical reasoning lead them to positive action.



In addition to the three stages just discussed, Freire describes another stage, which he calls 'fanatic awareness'. This is a step beyond naive awareness, but off the main track toward the development of critical awareness.

“4. Fanatic Awareness

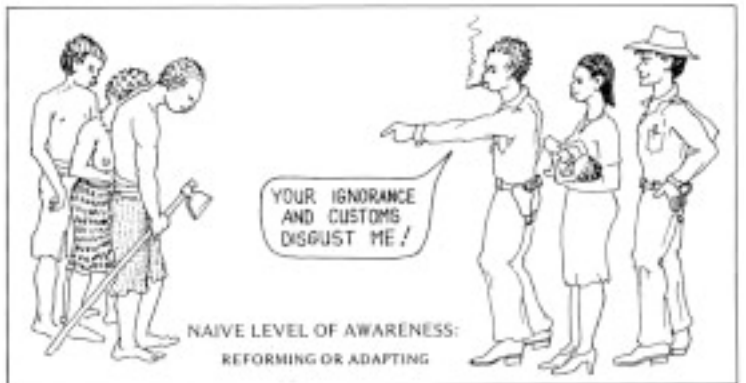
Fanatic means extreme beyond reason. A fanatically aware person (or group of persons) rejects completely those in power and everything they represent, without trying to separate the good from the bad. At the same time, he (sic) often returns to the traditional customs, dress, and beliefs, but in an exaggerated form. Whereas the outlook of persons with critical awareness is mostly positive, that of fanatics is often destructive. Their opinions tend to be rigid, not flexible. Their actions seem to

result more from hatred than from understanding. Rather than learning and communicating with others as equals, they tend to repeat the standard radical doctrines of their popular, yet powerful, leaders.

Persons at a fanatic level of awareness are not self-critical, independent thinkers as are those with critical awareness. They are captive to the ideas of their power-hungry leaders. In some ways, they are still servants and products of the social system against which they rebel. If and when they succeed in overthrowing the social order, the new system they set up may in some ways be as rigid and unjust as the old system it replaces.

“In reality, of course, no one is wholly at one stage or another. Many of us are fatalistic about some things, naive about others, critically aware about others, and at times a bit fanatic.”

But naming the stages helps us understand how power shapes our vision about our place in the world, the causes of our problems, and our ability to change them.



Werner, David and Bill Bower, *Helping Health Workers Learn*, The Hesperian Foundation, California, 1982.

Fostering Political Consciousness

A group of Latin American women's rights activists described political consciousness and how to stimulate it through the process framework they developed below.

"A politically conscious woman has an internalized commitment that inspires her to pursue change in all aspects of her life from her day-to-day existence to her political engagement; her consciousness compels her to try to be consistent in her values and beliefs in all areas of life."

"The steps in the process are not linear, but rather a recurring, interactive, and iterative process filled with conflict and difficulty as well as growth and change."

The framework includes four overlapping expressions of consciousness—passive, questioning, analytical, and critical. The chart below describes how a person moves to the different levels of consciousness.

Levels of Consciousness		
From Passive to Questioning Consciousness	From Questioning to Analytical Consciousness	From Analytical to Active Critical Consciousness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You assume gender roles and duties are "natural" - You are not familiar with other perspectives or ways to live your life. If you are, you find them threatening and you criticize them - You begin to have access to information and experiences different from what is familiar - You begin to question aspects of your life and to search for self-esteem and answers to your problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You begin to name and analyze situations that you have lived - You begin to confront and place blame; you feel angry - You begin to discover how a woman's identity is a social, cultural, economic and political construction; not a predetermined role incapable of change - You reaffirm your self-worth and potential for change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You begin to develop your critical analysis - You take political action - You face the interpersonal and social conflict that your changes generate - You create spaces to negotiate fundamental areas of life, like work (home and job), family, your sexuality and related changes

From the GWIP/CENZONTLE-Central America Advocacy Training of Trainers Workshop, held in June 1998.

Features of Participatory Learning

There are different empowering learning approaches that help people to ask questions, discover new truths and practice solving real life problems. Freire spoke about popular education as a participatory process of action-reflection-action. While popular education has spawned a myriad of participatory learning methods, the basic process always involves problem identification, analysis, and the pursuit

of solutions through dialogue, self-awareness, and organizing.

Some of the features and assumptions of participatory learning methodologies include the following:

The Political Nature of Education

No education is neutral. *How* one learns is linked to *what* is learned. Education can teach people how to conform or it can encourage independent thinking and creative change. A

learning process that validates what learners know and challenges them to examine their ideas more deeply, can empower them to think independently, seek information and act on their knowledge.

Relevance

People absorb and act on information that is directly related to their daily lives. Relevance is vital to motivation.

Linked to Problem-Solving

Adults often learn faster when the information they gain addresses the problems they face directly.

Dialogue, New Roles, and Mutual Learning

Dialogue can ensure that the learner's concerns are the focus of the educational process. By promoting a more equal educator/learner relationship, dialogue involves joint discovery and helps learners to gain confidence in their own ability.

Recognizes Differences between People while Seeking Common Ground

The same power imbalances that generate conflict in society are present in groups brought together to learn, plan and act. Naming these differences and adjusting for power dynamics is a vital starting point for empowerment. The approach contrasts with the tendency of seeing marginalized groups as homogenous, and to ignore the power differences between educators/organizers and "people from the community."

Studies show that adults remember:
20% of what they hear
40% of what they hear and see
80% of what they discover for themselves

In any education process, there are four important ingredients:

1. the learner
2. the facilitator
3. the content (the topic)
4. the process (how the content is learned)

Problem-posing and Open-ended Learning

One of the facilitator's roles is to ask questions that assist learners to examine their own situation and deepen their understanding of the problems they face. The facilitator also introduces new ideas and information to supplement and broaden the analysis.

An Iterative Process without Predictable Steps and Outcomes

Although participatory learning methods use a certain set of techniques, the process is not linear. Because the facilitator cannot anticipate how learners will think and interact, he or she must listen and engage in the process. There are no mechanical formulas for developing an empowering learning process.

Moves from the Concrete to the Abstract and Back

Traditional education, especially at higher levels, usually begins with theory and then tests the theory against reality. This is why some highly educated NGO leaders may be uncomfortable beginning analysis with a concrete description of a problem (e.g. women's health is poor due to too many children and inadequate nutrition) rather than an abstract explanation (e.g. reproductive health needs). When trainers start with a theoretical explanation, they can derail the empowering effect of analyzing and discovering things for oneself.

The Dialogue Process

Some educators refer to problem-posing in participatory learning as the “but why?” method. The facilitator’s questions encourage learners to ask why problems exist and so probe their social, economic, cultural, and political roots.

Stimulating discussion with adults who are not used to speaking up in public can be difficult. Even people who are more comfortable speaking publicly may not have much experience with critical questioning. The problems people face may be so threatening that they find it impossible to talk about them. For this reason, it may be helpful to begin discussion with relevant examples rather than asking directly about problems. Some distance allows people to get comfortable with a topic, and after discussion, they may be able to relate the analysis to their own lives more readily. For this purpose, participatory learning approaches often use “codes” to start the reflection process.

Tips for Outside Facilitators

- Know the group you are working with. Prior research and observation will give you a sense of the problems facing this particular group. Use examples familiar to them to stimulate discussion.
- Remember that political analysis involves making connections between the past and the present as well as examining how privilege, power, and disadvantage mold real-life problems. (See Chapter 7 for ways of analyzing the context and moment.)
- Give people ample time to discuss a thorny topic with each other. A participant, rather than the facilitator, can sometimes more easily challenge misinformation or stereotypes.



Problem-posing for analysis

Codes: Opening Discussion on Difficult Problems

A code can be a drawing, role play, game, skit, song or story that presents a familiar problem in a concrete way. Usually, it does not provide answers, solutions or morals. It simply depicts a situation that then becomes the focus of dialogue. The development of a suitable code requires observation and consultation. A code is especially helpful for dealing with personally sensitive problems such as rape, domestic violence, and AIDS.

Discussing Codes

The steps listed on the next page can help facilitators to guide dialogue around codes. They do not always follow a predictable sequence. Rather, the facilitator is responsible for guiding the spiraling process that takes people from the personal to the concrete to the abstract and back again.

Introductory Step: Self-Analysis and Affirmation

Dialogue requires confidence and trust-building. If participants have not developed a sense of group solidarity, encourage them to introduce themselves and get to know others. Questions like, “What inspires me?” or “What are my hopes and fears for myself, my family, my community?” can help build trust and affirm the importance of everyone’s contribution. The idea of beginning the dialogue process with personal analysis and affirmation was added to Freire’s original process by activists working with women. This is an important step because values and self-esteem are central to the way we learn and interact with the world.

Step 1: Description of what you see happening in this picture (skit, code, etc.)

Using the code, encourage participants to carefully describe what is happening—something that may be a daily occurrence for them. Often more schooled people use shorthand terminology to describe situations, such as ‘gender violence’, ‘conflict’. This step tries to avoid such abstraction by talking about concrete details.

Step 2: First Analysis—Why is this happening?

Begin to ask why people are doing what they are doing in the picture or skit. Keep asking why so that participants question as well as describe. Take advantage of the comfort people may feel in probing a situation that is not directly related to their own life. It is useful for the facilitator to know enough about the issue so as to formulate questions that help people analyze and that challenge myths, stereotypes, or misinformation.

Step 3: Real Life Comparison—Does this happen in your community? in your life?

Encourage people to give examples of how the situation in the code happens in their life.

Step 4: Related Problems—What problems does this lead to?

This step looks at the consequences of the problem. Again in this step, the facilitator can provide additional information to supplement what participants contribute.

Step 5: Deeper Analysis—What are the root causes of these problems?

This step encourages learners to probe deeper into problems. Why does this happen? Once learners have had sufficient time, the facilitator can expand with additional information. The facilitator should also challenge simplistic explanations. In Chapters 7 and 8 we present some frameworks that may be useful for this step.

Step 6: Alternatives and Action—What can we do about it?

Linking education to action is essential for empowerment, and effective advocacy. How will people use their new knowledge to change their situation? In this step, information about policies, law reform, budgets and basic rights can assist people in defining what they can do. (See Chapters 10 and 11.) Step 6 can start by asking “What can we do to address this problem here in our community?” and “How can we bring about policy change to obtain more resources or better protection?” Local solutions, like setting up community committees to monitor water use, are as important as solutions at the national or international levels. This step can serve as an initial brainstorming for a group that then can lead to further analysis and organizing. (See Chapters 13–15.)

Rights and Citizen Education Programs: Lessons Learned

A wide variety of rights and civic education programs exist worldwide with mixed impact. The low success rate of many of these programs often has to do with the programs' emphasis on information alone as the key to empowerment. Such programs typically provide pamphlets, flyers, and brief talks that simplify legal information or describe how the political process works. While information is essential for people to exercise their rights and participate effectively, it is *not only lack of information* that keeps women, poor people, and other marginalized groups from exercising their rights. Information alone will not make people engage and feel they have rights.

Some of the reasons that information-centered education programs fail to reach the people who need them most are:

- There is no clear link between the information about laws, rights, and government procedures and the concrete problems people face daily.
- Delivery of information that treats citizens as passive recipients can reinforce the perception that the law, rights, and government are too complicated and not intended for people like them.
- In places with low literacy levels, written materials reach very few people.

Making expert information simple is not enough. The more important task is making knowledge relevant to people's needs and experience so it can help them solve problems and improve their lives. Most people do not see the world through a legal or human rights lens. Making rights and citizenship real means starting with everyday problems and then making the connection to rights through analysis, confidence-building and organizing.

Tips for developing effective citizenship and legal rights education programs include:

- **Know your audience.** Assess their needs, talents, knowledge, and interests before designing materials and workshops. Gain their 'buy-in' by clarifying and negotiating goals and activities.
- **Be problem-centered, not information-centered.** For example, instead of starting by explaining laws and rights, begin by having people analyze common problems. Only then, introduce discussion of the laws and rights linked to those problems. Instead of producing a pamphlet on "Family Law," focus the pamphlet on Family Problems or Who's Responsible for Taking Care of Children (maintenance and custody) and describe common situations people face.
- **Let learners define concepts in their own terms.** In a local government support project in India, PRIA (Society for Participatory Research in Asia) conducted an educational campaign with citizens and local government officials in dozens of *panchayat* (local government bodies). The curriculum centered on three questions: "What is democratic governance?" "What are our roles in the *panchayat*?" "How can these roles be performed well?" These questions enabled officials and citizens to define how they can work together to achieve their aims, and the type of information and expertise they need to do this.¹
- **Link new information to problem-solving and daily experience.** Discussions can begin with analysis of problems, and continue with the introduction of new information prior to deciding on action.
- **Incorporate action planning as a final step of legal and civic education.** "What are we as a group going to do with this information?" "What are we as individuals going to do next?" "How can we use this information to address this problem and exercise our basic rights?"
- **Distribute written materials at discussions, street theater, or other media programs to give people something to help them remember key ideas.**

Combining Legal Rights and Citizenship: Peru-Mujer

One program that effectively combined legal rights information and strategies to promote people's participation was Peru-Mujer's legal literacy program with poor urban women in Peru. The program trained women leaders who had been elected by their grassroots association to be legal promoters. The promoters were trained in popular education techniques and the basics of the law. They used drawings as codes to generate discussions about real life problems. The discussions then went on to explore legal solutions. Mutual support groups were formed among women who decided to seek a legal solution despite social pressures, for example in domestic disputes. Eventually, the legal promoters were officially recognized by the Ministry of Justice. They were given credentials which allowed them to defend women in the lower courts on matters such as birth certificates, voting rights, marriage, divorce, custody of children, and other domestic disputes.

Other Participatory Learning Methods

Over the last 25 years, activists have built on Freire's approaches and developed methods that assist people in analyzing their own problems through participatory research. They have designed participatory tools such as maps, matrices, and frameworks that assist in gathering information about a problem, analyzing it and developing strategies to solve it. For example, communities concerned about poverty begin by mapping the individual and

collective resources in their surroundings. They then construct matrices that help analyze the data and use it in decisions about expanding community economic projects or creating new ones.

The World Bank and other international donor agencies have adapted some of the methods such as Rapid Rural Appraisal. These draw on community knowledge about problems so that agencies can design more effective development interventions. Large-scale initiatives of this kind include the Participatory Poverty

Facilitator-as-Organizer, Organizer-as-Educator: Changing Roles

Popular education originally saw the role of the facilitator as creating a process where learners could affirm their own knowledge, analyze problems and discover answers for themselves. The facilitator was discouraged from intervening and directing in any way.

In political advocacy, this role changes. A better term would be facilitator-as-organizer or organizer-as-educator. The facilitator is part of the process, not an objective outsider. In this central role, he or she has to recognize and deal with power imbalances between him or herself and the participants. For example, the facilitator has information that can help the people in their change efforts, and has the obligation to question perspectives that are based on poor information or negative stereotypes. The challenge is *how and when* to deliver additional information so as not to derail the empowering process of analysis. Facilitators need to use their information in a way that promotes critical thinking in the learning/action process.

Another responsibility involves recognizing differences among the participants, so facilitators can promote mutual respect and negotiate tensions. Acknowledging differences among people involved in advocacy helps build strong organization and quality leadership. If we understand difference, we can better divide tasks according to talents, skills, and experience. We discuss this challenge in more detail in Chapter 16.

Assessments (PPAs) promoted by the World Bank. These approaches can help planners gain an understanding of problems from a grassroots perspective, but do not necessarily lead to a critical consciousness or local control over development. This only happens if the empowerment approach is explicitly built in and people are directly involved in decisionmaking. (See Chapter 5 for more discussion about types of participation.)

Empowerment and Difference: Thinking about Gender

Understanding differences is as critical to empowerment and education as defining common experiences and interests. A gender lens gives social justice activists a way of sharpening their understanding of difference, exclusion, and discrimination. The box, *Key Gender Concepts*, on the following page offers some basics for creating a gender lens.

Gender analysis can strengthen advocacy interventions and education because it enables us to:

- understand how social problems affect men and women differently and so find solutions that are comprehensive and fair;
- identify and address different kinds of barriers to participation;
- involve both women and men by adjusting the timing and structure of advocacy activities to fit into their different schedules;
- minimize power struggles between men and women, in the private and public sphere, that are provoked by change efforts;
- understand how poverty, gender, age, location, race, ethnicity, religion, and other factors interact to shape disadvantage;

“Not so long ago, the tasks [women’s] movements faced primarily involved working to achieve better treatment for women—a squarer deal. The concentration was mainly on women’s well-being—a much needed corrective. The objectives have, however, gradually evolved and broadened to incorporate—and emphasize—the active role of women’s agency. No longer the passive recipients of welfare-enhancing help, women are increasingly seen as active agents of change: the dynamic promoters of social transformations.”

Amartya Sen , Nobel Prize Winner for Economics

- understand the visible and invisible expressions and impact of power;
- understand the meaning of justice, equity, and respect for human rights in different ways.

Key Gender Concepts for People, Power, and Politics

In this Guide we draw directly from gender theory and practice. The following key concepts help sharpen our understanding of subordination and empowerment.

Equality vs. Equity: Many people see social change as aiming at equality of opportunity. But systemic discrimination puts some people in a better place than others to take advantage of opportunities. So, if we want to address disadvantage effectively, it is important to address the underlying barriers and measure success by equity of impact, not just equality of opportunity. (See discussion of equality in Chapter 2.)

Gender as a social construct: Sex is biologically determined, and is the same across cultures and across time. But the attributes and roles prescribed for men and women, boys and girls are culturally specific. Gender is learned through a process of socialization in a particular society. From birth, boys and girls are encouraged to behave a certain way and to aspire to different life goals and perform particular roles. Parents, teachers, peers, and many aspects of culture and society reinforce these patterns. There is considerable variation in gender roles from culture to culture.

The question of power: As discussed in chapter 3, power is a critical ingredient in social change. A gender lens provides insights into collaborative and controlling forms of power. It stresses the importance of changing patterns of *power over*. We also need to be aware when our actions may increase divisions and conflict, and be sure that those who will bear the consequences understand and accept the risks.

The gender division of labor: Both men and women work, but they tend to do different work. Men's work is usually valued more than women's. Work can be divided into three categories: productive, reproductive, and community work. Productive work is the production of goods and services for consumption and trade. It normally earns money for the person who does it. Men tend to do more *productive* work than women. *Reproductive* work involves the care and maintenance of the household. It includes childcare, cooking, water and fuel collection, shopping, and family health care. Although it's crucial for human survival, and often involves many hours of labor, it is usually not considered "real" work. It thus is given little formal or monetary value. It is done mainly by women. *Community* work is the collective organization of social events and services, community projects, ceremonies, and similar events. It is done by both women and men, although they usually perform different tasks. Lack of recognition of certain categories of work distorts policy planning because much of women's labor is not counted.

Adapted from *Two Halves Make a Whole: Balancing Gender Relations in Development*, Canadian Council for International Cooperation, MATCH, Ottawa, 1991; and *Gender Frameworks* by Maitryee Mukhopadhyay, et.al. Oxford: Oxfam UK, 1997.

NOTES

¹ Dass, Purvi. *Capacity Building of Newly Elected Gram Panchayat Members in Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan*. PRIA, 2000.

Framework for the Action Guide

Putting Together the Pieces of Citizen-Centered Advocacy

This framework explains the Action Guide's logic and conceptual approach to advocacy*. We first present the framework's elements separately, explaining each as we go. Then we present the entire framework so you can see how the pieces relate to one another. All the arrows and shapes in the framework may look overwhelming. But if you take a moment to read through this section, it may help you understand the content and structure of the Guide better.

The Center Spiral

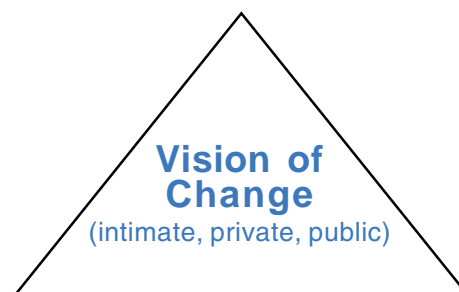


At the heart of the framework is citizenship and empowerment. This is both an individual and collective process where consciousness is shaped by reflection, new information, new experiences, participation in groups and connection with others who share the same concerns. The “Chaz!” framework in Chapter 3, and the empowerment process in Chapter 4, give more detail about this aspect. Learning and planning methodologies are also described in Chapter 4 and 5. In treating advocacy as citizen education, we seek to build new forms of citizen organization and leadership, and thereby strengthen civil society and democratic governance.

Citizenship and empowerment are both the subject and object of advocacy. The rest of the framework describes the planning and action process for achieving these core objectives, beginning with an overall Vision of Change.

Vision of Change

Effective advocacy strategies are guided by a clear vision of long-term political change (Chapter 6). This vision needs to articulate what politics and decisionmaking should look like in the public and private spheres (See Chapter 3). It goes beyond the policy and institutional reforms of policy advocacy to include the ethical demands of advocacy that affirm inclusion, respect, and democratic process. Articulating this vision creates a bond between the people and organizations involved in advocacy (Chapter 16). The shared vision can guide the necessary strategic choices a group needs to make, for example during lobbying and negotiation (Chapter 15).



* An initial version of the framework was refined and further developed in a workshop with Latin American activists in 1998.

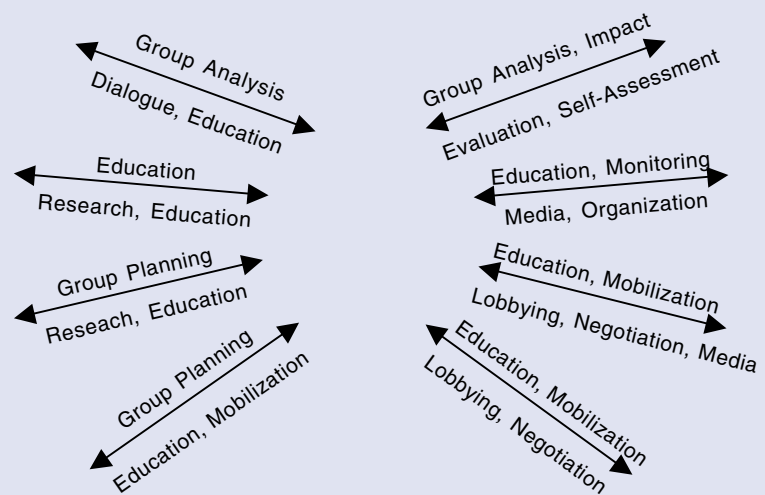
Political Context & Moment

After defining your vision of change, your choice of advocacy issues and strategies depends on your analysis of the political situation. Historical, demographic, economic, cultural and other factors make each situation unique (Chapter 7). This macro-analysis helps you identify the political opportunities, obstacles and risks facing your advocacy strategy. Your map of the political landscape will be refined once you choose the focus of your advocacy (Chapters 7, 10, 11).

Analysis of context and power relations

How to Follow the Two-Way Arrows that Connect the Outer Circle with the Central Spiral

These arrows describe the diverse processes and activities that take activists and constituents from one phase of advocacy to the next. They serve as a reminder that the way each step is achieved has everything to do with whether the advocacy effort actually strengthens participation. Constituents must be involved in advocacy planning for them to learn from and own the advocacy and gain skills, consciousness and organization.



Phases of Advocacy Planning and Action (the outer circle)*

The key phases in the advocacy process are arranged counterclockwise around the central spiral. Although the steps imply a linear sequence, the reality is not linear. As Chapter 5 describes in detail, strategies evolve in an iterative way—the consequences of each action provide insights that help refine the next action. This is why the arrows are two-directional. This means that the original plan may change considerably as the advocacy progresses.

We have tried to make the notion of different phases of advocacy easier to understand by dividing them into three parts. But in practice, each step and phase are not so neatly divided. The three parts are:

- Planning (steps on the left side of the circle)
- Citizen organizing and influence strategies (the bottom, center box)
- Policy action and impact (at the bottom center and on the right side)

* Throughout Part Two we break down advocacy planning and action into more specific “moments” that do not directly correspond to the broader phases described in the framework.

Planning

Defining Problems

Advocacy involves finding policy solutions to concrete problems. Engaging constituents in defining the problem begins the process (Chapter 8).

Analysis of Opportunities, Priorities and Issues

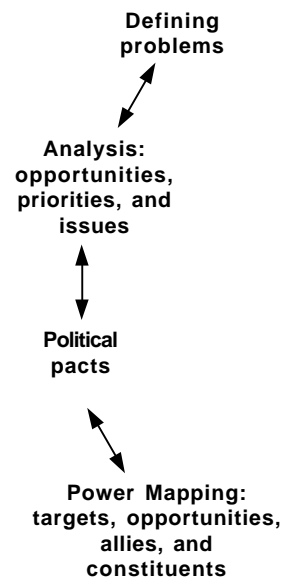
After an initial analysis, the problem can be broken down into a manageable issue—one slice of the overall problem (see Chapter 9). For example, rape is one slice of the larger problem of violence against women. Analysis of opportunities and priorities will guide your choice of issue. What issues have the best chance of being addressed and which are the most important for constituents? Describing the issue in a way that convinces both the general public and the political players is important because it sets the stage for mobilizing and negotiation. Identification of the “policy hook”—the aspect of the policy arena that needs to be changed—is vital. (See Chapter 11).

Political Pacts—Agreeing on Roles and Goals

Early on in advocacy, the roles of organizers, lobbyists, planners, etc. begin to take shape. The organizations and individuals involved need to reach an agreement with each other and with constituents on goals, strategies, and roles. This agreement expresses the trust that allows advocates to represent constituents and must be reaffirmed at various times throughout the advocacy process. (See Chapter 16). Communication among the different advocacy actors is the basis of trust and representation in sustainable citizen organization.

Power Mapping -- Who are the players?

The players include targets, opponents, allies, and constituents of your advocacy. Who is the primary decisionmaker with the power to solve the problem? Who will support and resist you? What is the power of the different players relative to one another? What are their interests with respect to the issue?



Action Strategies and Activities: “Doing Politics”

- Research
- Development of policy proposals
- Lobbying
- Protest - cooperation
- Alliances, coalitions
- Outreach, education
- Media
- Awareness-raising and appropriation of rights
- Litigation
- Negotiation
- Modelling innovations
- Etc.

Citizen Organizing and Influence Strategies

Step 5: “Doing Politics”

The box at the bottom of the framework shows different advocacy activities. These actions move your issue on to the political and public agenda. Most of the strategies are discussed in Part 3. The exception is research and education, which is used throughout advocacy, and dealt with in many chapters of the *Guide*.

Policy Action and Impact

Political Pact for Negotiation

As the advocacy advances and you engage in lobbying and negotiation, it is important to find common ground among supporters about what is being proposed. A pact or agreement on what is negotiable and non-negotiable gives negotiators both the mandate and the flexibility to maneuver when there is no time for consultation.

Lobbying and Negotiating Change

On the strength of your earlier steps, eventually the advocacy reaches the negotiation stage when you discuss and bargain over solutions face to face with politicians, bureaucrats, or other decisionmakers.

Accountability Mechanisms

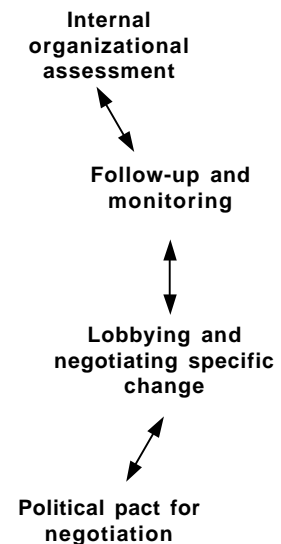
Policymakers and politicians do not always keep their promises. Mechanisms for accountability are needed. In some cases, citizens act as independent watchdogs. In others they work side-by-side with government. In some places, there are laws that mandate citizen monitoring of government decisionmaking.

Follow-up and Monitoring

Ideally, you measure the success and failures of your advocacy all along the way. But at this stage, groups should formally measure how far things have gone and what needs to be done to take things forward. The Advocacy Action and Impact Chart in Chapter 10 is a useful tool for measuring progress, as well as for setting objectives.

Internal Organizational Assessment

In addition to measuring the success of the advocacy, for sustained organizational commitment and cohesion, it helps to do an internal assessment of how far you have come, what has or has not gone well, whether you have effective organizational decisionmaking mechanisms, whether there are sufficient opportunities for new leadership, representation, etc.



Framework: Citizen-Centered Advocacy

