

Choosing the Right Strategy

A lasting solution needs to get to the root causes of a problem. Problems have many causes and many possible solutions. Advocacy strategies attempt to solve a problem step-by-step by getting at its systemic causes and focusing on specific issues. Because of this, advocacy strategies are always multidimensional. They use policy and political change to address the broader socio-economic roots of exclusion and inequality.

For example, if poor healthcare is the problem, one element of your solution may be advocating to increase government resources for clinics and healthcare workers. Would this strategy solve your problem? Perhaps partially, but it is not a complete solution. Poor healthcare can be caused by many things. For example, healthcare for all may not be a national priority and there may be other issues like mismanagement, lack of health education, poor infrastructure, insufficient, expensive medicines, and poverty.

No single organization can carry out the complete strategy that addresses all of these factors. Limited resources force a group to choose which aspect to tackle and then, seek alliances with other groups to achieve a broader collective impact.

“Advocacy is a mindset. Certainty is not a given as we all know. Intuition, feel, the sense count, as does the head. ... Standards of performance and accountability should be open to learning from experience. Put another way, learning from mistakes.”

David Cohen, Advocacy Institute, USA

Choosing and planning the right strategy involves exploring and comparing the potential impact and feasibility of alternatives. This chapter presents a series of tools and exercises that help to construct and compare strategies, including:

The Factors Shaping an Advocacy Strategy

We discuss some basic ingredients, like timing, context and organizational capacity that are important to consider in designing and comparing alternative strategies.

Mapping Alternative Strategies

The *Issue Timeline* helps to trace the political history of an issue, and the *Triangle Analysis* helps to understand how policy, institutions and social values interact to perpetuate problems, and potentially, solve them.

Drafting a First Set of Advocacy Goals and Objectives

We offer basic suggestions for drafting goals and objectives to begin developing strategies.

Dimensions of a Citizen-Centered Advocacy Strategy

We discuss the key levels of citizen-centered advocacy using a matrix, *Advocacy Action and Impact* chart, which can help with both planning and monitoring results.

After applying these tools, you will have begun to define your goals, objectives and strategy. This process will surface a new set of questions and will tell you the information you will need to complete your plan. The next chapters will show how to sharpen the strategy’s policy and political dimensions.

Different Advocacy Strategies for Different Moments

The list of strategies¹ on the next page are some of the ways that groups in different countries have mobilized support and produced change. Advocacy usually involves a combination of these strategies. In Part 3, we discuss some of these in more detail.

Pilot or Model Programs

Where it is difficult to influence the public agenda, a successful model intervention can demonstrate to government a better way to solve a problem. This strategy was used especially well by the Undugu Society in Kenya. Undugu used an important international meeting to showcase its innovative housing program for the urban poor with influential delegates. By doing this, it pushed government officials to make public commitments in front of

The Factors Shaping An Advocacy Strategy

There are some key factors that shape your advocacy strategy. They differ from one place to another, as well as from one issue to another:

Context: Every political environment is different. Each presents its own opportunities and constraints. Governments have different degrees of legitimacy and power vis a vis civil society, the private sector, transnationals and international institutions. Political decisions are made differently depending on the nature of the state, politics, media, etc. In some places, the legislature has more authority. In other places, the Minister of Finance dominates policymaking. Countries have different levels of freedom and access to the public sector. People use these opportunities differently depending on literacy, poverty, social relationships, etc. A society's mix of culture, religion, ethnicity, race, and economic development affects the level of tolerance and openings to social change. In some countries, advocacy at the local or the international level may be more feasible than at the national level. (In Chapter 7 and Chapter 12 we provide tools for analyzing these elements of context.)

Timing: Each historic moment presents different political opportunities and constraints. International economic trends may make a country tighten or expand political space. Elections or international conferences may provide opportunities to raise controversial issues. At some moments, a march will draw attention to an issue. At other moments a march may provoke repression.

Organization: In designing your strategy, it is important to be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of your organization. How broad and strong is your potential support? Do you have well-placed allies? Is there a strong sense of common purpose among the leadership? Is the decisionmaking efficient and responsive? What resources can you rely on? Are your aims clear and achievable?

Risk: Not all advocacy strategies can be used universally. In some places, a direct action aimed at a key decisionmaker may be politically dangerous, or may lessen the potential for a long-term effort at change. In some countries, pushing for change that affects cultural beliefs may provoke an unmanageable backlash. Sometimes involving people who are usually excluded, like women or poor people, may cause family, social and community conflict. Challenging relations of power tends to generate conflict and organizers must have ways of dealing with this. In more closed environments, advocacy often takes the form of community action around basic needs and is not publicly referred to as political advocacy. Whatever the context, sometimes you will decide to take risks because there are no other options. In these cases, everyone involved must understand the implications of those risks.

Adapted from Miller, Valerie, *NGOs and Grassroots Policy Influence: What is Success?*, Institute for Development Research, Vol. 11, No. 5, 1994.

the visitors about addressing poverty in urban areas.

Collaboration

When there is compatibility and agreement between NGOs, grassroots groups and government, then civil society groups are likely to collaborate directly with government to design and/or implement legislation or state services. Similarly, joint citizen-government monitoring initiatives are becoming increasingly common.

Protest

A demonstration or march relies on numbers and creative messages to gain attention and support. A march of 2,000 people will not usually have the impact of one with 25,000 people. Timing is important. Boycotts are another form of protest often directed at corporations. Vigils and hunger strikes can be less confrontational expressions of protest. Protest is sometimes a tactic of last resort where more conventional strategies of influence fail to open up a policy dialogue.

Litigation

A well-publicized court case can draw public attention to a problem, and sometimes leads to legal reform or fairer enforcement. Some countries have a legal mechanism called “class-action”. Where this exists, groups of people affected by abuses of power can use a court case to fight for justice collectively.

Public Education and Media

Education and media strategies build public support, and may influence policymakers. Strategies include providing data, articles and alternative policies to the media, as well as creative messages using music, videos and songs. Alternative media strategies using theatre, posters and pamphlets are especially useful in countries where fewer people have access to radio and television. In some coun-

tries, NGOs organize public dialogues to discuss issues. See (Chapters 13 and 14.)

Research

Positions and proposals based on solid information increase the credibility of advocacy. Research provides the necessary information for planning, message development, policy alternatives, and lobbying. Depending on the methodology used, research can also strengthen alliances, build constituencies, and help develop citizenship skills. (See Chapter 8.) Where information is hard to get, research efforts can evolve into “right to know” advocacy campaigns. Advocacy usually benefits from close ties with sympathetic researchers and policy analysts that give advocates speedy access to facts and analysis in the midst of political battles.

Persuasion

All advocacy must be persuasive to a wide range of people. Persuasion has three main ingredients:

- *lobbying* - involves attempts to meet face-to-face with decisionmakers to persuade them to support an advocacy issue or proposal;
- *clout* - gained through the credibility and legitimacy of demands; by showing strength through mobilizing popular support; by working in coalitions and with many diverse allies; by using the media to inform, educate and be visible;
- *negotiation* - involves bargaining to seek common ground or, minimally, respect for disagreement. It happens between allies, advocates and constituents as well as across the table with those in power. To bargain with decisionmakers you need to know your own power and your opponent's, as well as what is negotiable, what is not, and what you will do if negotiations fall apart. (See Chapter 15)

Organization and Constituency-Building

The long-term nature of most advocacy efforts demands strong links with constituency groups. Effective advocacy requires alliances between organizations and with key individuals for leverage, legitimacy, and implementation. Organization depends on effective decision-making, shared leadership, clear roles, communication, and members and staff with analytical skills and confidence. (Discussed in Chapters 16 and 17.)

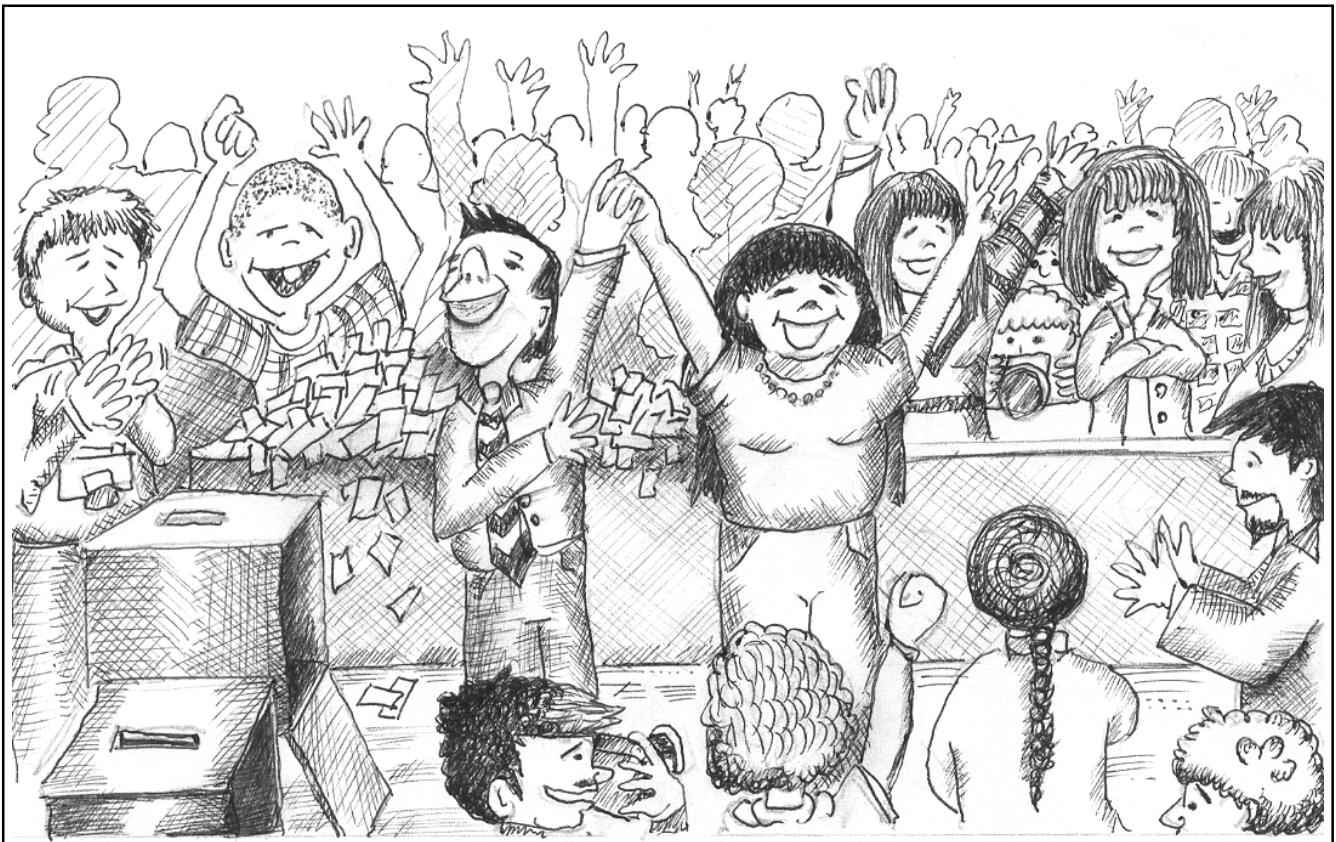
Empowerment

A vital component of all advocacy, these strategies are geared to strengthening people's confidence and understanding of power. People's awareness of themselves as protagonists with rights and responsibilities to participate in and transform political processes is the core of active citizenship.

Timing: Matching the Strategy to the Moment

Developing effective strategies requires careful political analysis of ever-changing opportunities and constraints. The following are some specific political opportunities that can be conducive to advocacy.

Elections are an opportunity to involve a broad base of citizens in public debate, raise issues, criticize officials and current policy, influence candidates, political parties, and policymakers, and present policy alternatives and people's platforms. (See Chapter 14.) The election itself usually happens over a few days. However, you can use advocacy for a year or more before the elections, as well as between elections. Unless citizens keep track of political promises by parties and candidates, and sustain pressure on those who are elected, the gains during elections may not last.





Mapping strategies during and advocacy workshop in Nicaragua, 1998

International events & policy meetings, such as UN conferences, World Trade Organization, and G8 meetings provide opportunities for transnational advocacy and high level dialogue with policymakers that can boost national advocacy. The events can give visibility to alternative perspectives about the impact and process of international policies and demonstrate broad public support for reforms.

Different stages of law or policy formulation provides groups an opportunity to voice positions and propose alternatives. But knowing the timeline for review is essential for effective intervention. Some governments have institutionalized their consultations with civil society on particular issues. While this presents important opportunities, over time it can become exclusive of other issues and people. Similarly, when a policy is debated in Parliament or when a new policy is announced, there

are opportunities for people to express support or opposition. (See chapter 11.)

A crime or other highly visible tragedy can personalize a political problem, and thus generate public attention and demand for a solution. Such tragedies can reveal that marginalized people are more vulnerable to disasters, violence, and exploitation and force decisionmakers to explore solutions.

Mapping Alternative Strategies

One of the important pieces of background information for developing your strategy is the political history of an issue. The following exercise traces when the issue came to the attention of civil society actors or powerful interests, and what, if anything, they have done to solve it.

Purpose

- To review the public history of an issue, analyzing past political dynamics, and identifying key stakeholders.
- To situate an advocacy strategy within the history of the issue.

Process

This exercise can be applied to a specific local issue, like crime, or to a more general global problem area such as women's rights or globalization.

1. Working in small groups, draw on flip chart paper a long line with ten evenly spaced marks or boxes indicating the years.

1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
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2. Discuss the important political events and shifts during the last decade. Rapporteurs should make notes on the timeline of the key moments that emerge from the discussion.
3. Map a similar timeline for the last one to two years. Divide each year into quarters or months, and note key events over this period.
4. If there is time, draw a third timeline that maps anticipated events, policy changes, and reactions over the coming one to two years.

Facilitator's Tips

- You can have up to four rapporteurs who write on the timeline, depending on the size of the paper
- You can ask a researcher or historian to guide the timeline exercise with detailed information.



Advocacy timelines from Central America and Mexico

Adapted from *Naming the Moment: Political Analysis for Action, A Manual for Community Groups* by Deborah Barndt. The Jesuit Centre for Social Faith and Justice, 1989.

Discussion

Once the timelines have been completed, discuss what this means for advocacy planning. Here are some questions to guide discussion:

- What has worked and what has failed to achieve an impact on this issue?
- Does the timeline help identify forces for and against us? If so, what are they?
- What does the timeline tell us about legislation and policy strategies?
- How can we build on past successes and avoid previous failures?

Example

The following example comes from *Naming the Moment* and the Canadian Jesuit Justice and Peace Center. The Center developed this timeline with a broad-based coalition working on a collective advocacy strategy on legislation affecting refugees.

Reviewing 10 Years

Government bureaucrats informed, not public	Unemployment ("They're stealing our jobs.")	Media campaign against refugees	McLean announced intended restrictions	New law proposed	Implemented
1978	1982	1985	1986	1987	1988
Boat People	Recession	Refugees from C. Am., Iran, Afgan.	Singh Case	Tamil Boat	Passed

Close-up 2 Years

Government introduces interim measures	C-55 introduced	National state of emergency declared	C-84 introduced	Turks deported	Bills passed	Elections	Bills implemented
Jan '87	Feb '87	Mar '87	May '87	July '87	Aug '87	Sept '87	Oct '87
			Sikh Boat				
Hawkes proposal rejected in cabinet	Formation of National Coalition for a Just Refugee/Immig. Policy				Bills stalled in Senate		VIGIL and court action

Projecting 2 Years into future

Government working out the wrinkles of the new system-few deportations		Once public attention has waned, more deportations		Court action decision
Jan '89	April '89	May '89	June '89	1990
				1991
Court action launched, Vigil network formed	Refugee Rights Day	Vigil conference	Canadian Council on Refugees Conference	

Triangle Analysis²: Mapping Legal-Political Solutions

This framework can be used for two main purposes. First, it can be used to analyze how a combination of policies, institutions, and social values and behavior contribute to or perpetuate a problem (issue). Second, the framework can be used to map and clarify strategy options to address each of the three dimensions.

The triangle framework is based on the idea that law and policy affect people's status and rights because they:

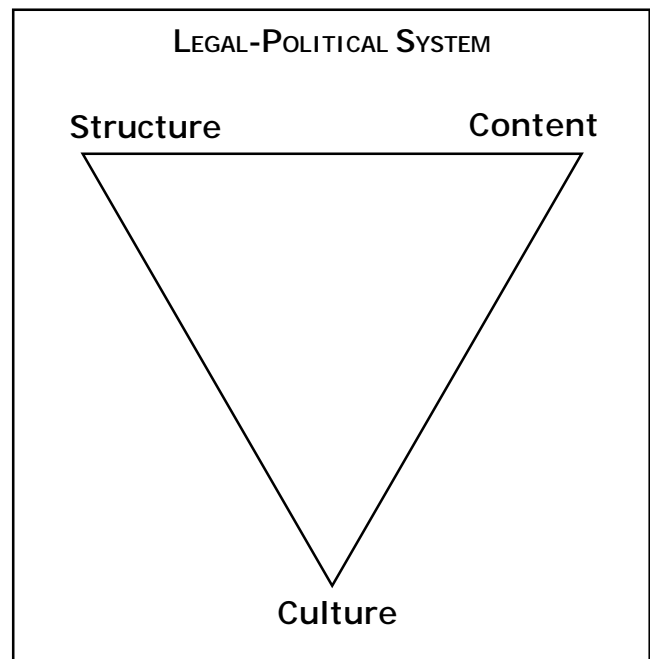
- regulate work and social relations; and
- define access to economic resources, opportunities and political power.

Laws and policies can be unjust in three ways:

- **Content:** The written policy, program or budget can be discriminatory, or contradict a basic right.
- **Structure:** Policies and laws may be not be enforced. Or, if they are, they may be enforced unfairly favoring some groups of people and neglecting others.
- **Culture:** If citizens are unaware of a policy or law, or if social norms and behavior undermine their enforcement, the law does not exist in practice. This is the case, for example, when poor people are unaware of their rights and lack the resources to pursue a legal solution.

The triangle analysis is useful because it highlights the specific aspects of the legal-political system that need to be changed. In some cases, advocacy may need to focus on the content of the law or policy. In other instances, the content may be fine but the law is not enforced, hence the need to focus strategies on getting the legal or other government

structures to implement the law. However, whatever the analysis reveals, all strategies must target culture since social norms operate behind the scenes to define power relations and access. By addressing cultural dynamics, policy reform can have a real impact on people's lives.



See Marge Schuler, *Empowerment and the Law*, 1986.

Purpose

- To identify how laws and policies contribute to a problem/issue and, potentially, to its solution.
- To understand the legal-political system as a three-dimensional arena where rights, roles and choices are shaped by the interplay between formal rules and structures of government, social values, and political power dynamics.
- To identify information gaps to complete the analysis and mapping.

Facilitator's Tips

Since this exercise has two steps, it may be easier to break up the steps with a discussion of the analysis before moving on to the strategies. If you choose to do the exercise this way, explain only the analysis task at the beginning. Once the analysis is completed, explain the strategy task. This avoids confusion.

Process

This exercise has two connected parts: (a) analysis and (b) strategy development. Each step will take from 30 minutes to 2 hours depending on how much information is available.

Part A: Analysis

1. Explain the triangle. Hand out written definitions of each of the sides of the triangle (Content - Structure - Culture). Remember that the descriptions for the analysis are different than for the strategy development.
2. Use Example #1 to illustrate how the exercise works. This example is not an exhaustive analysis of the issue, but it gives an idea of what the framework can produce. Every context would produce a different analysis, although there are some universal obstacles facing some groups.
3. The questions on the next page can help guide the analysis on the issue.

Meaning of the Sides of the Triangle for Analysis

Content refers to written laws, policies and budgets relevant to a specific issue. For example, if there is no law to criminalize domestic violence, one part of a solution may be introducing a law. Also, even if a law or policy exist, unless there is funding and institutional mechanisms for enforcement, it will not be effective.

Structure refers to state and non-state mechanisms for implementing a law or policy. This would include, for example, the police, the courts, hospitals, credit unions, ministries, and agricultural and health care programs. Structure can refer to institutions and programs run by government, NGOs or businesses at the local, national and international levels.

Culture refers to the values and behavior that shape how people deal with and understand an issue. Values and behavior are influenced, among other things, by religion, custom, class, gender, ethnicity and age. Lack of information about laws and policies is part of the cultural dimension. Similarly, when people have internalized a sense of worthlessness or, conversely, entitlement, this shapes their attitudes about and degree of benefit from laws and policies.

Example #1

Problem/Issue: Lack of access to credit for poor urban women to initiate small businesses		
CONTENT	STRUCTURE	CULTURE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The law requires collateral in the form of fixed assets for a loan. This is beyond the reach of low-income women. - Economic rights are not enshrined in the Constitution. - There is no explicit government commitment to poor women. - There is no regulation of "loan sharks" who charge high interest and harass poor lenders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creditors require the signature of a male relative because women are not seen as independent producers/ earners. - Government and NGO small-scale credit programs are geared to men because men are seen as heads of households. - Low-income people are considered a "bad investment" by private businesses and banks despite evidence to the contrary. - Small business training programs are offered at a cost that is too high for most poor women. It is difficult for women to find time to attend courses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Women do not own property in their name because it is unacceptable. The general belief is that men care for women. - Women do not see themselves as producers. Their income is often controlled by their husbands. Women's income is used to cover intangible expenses like school fees and food while the man's income covers the fixed assets, like a house or motorcycle, which can be used as collateral. - Poor people are viewed as ignorant and incapable of running viable businesses. - Poor women may have practical instincts about business, but lack formal training like accounting that enable their businesses to be lucrative.

From Kenyan women's group working on rights and development

- *Guiding questions for analysis of content*
 - Is there a law or policy that contributes to the problem by protecting the interests of some people over others?
 - Is there a law or policy that helps address the particular issue you have chosen?
 - Is adequate government money budgeted to implement the policy or law?
- *Guiding questions for analysis of structure*
 - Do the police enforce the law fairly?
 - Do the courts enable men and women, rich and poor, to find a solution?
 - Is the legal system expensive, corrupt or inaccessible?
 - Are there support services where people can get help to access the system fairly?
 - Do existing programs and services discriminate against some people (even unintentionally)?
 - Does a government or non-governmental agency exist to monitor implementation?
- *Guiding questions for analysis of culture*
 - Are there any political or social values and beliefs that contribute to the problem?
 - Do cultural beliefs contradict basic rights?
 - Do women and men know their rights? Do they know how to access their rights?
 - Do family and social pressures prevent people from seeking a fair solution?
 - Do psychological issues play a role? Do people believe they are worthy of rights?

Part B: Mapping Strategies

4. The analysis done in Part A lays the groundwork for the group to map possible solutions. Advise participants to explore all the options and not be concerned about the availability of resources at this stage. Later, other tools in this chapter can be used to choose between options. You may want to use Example #2 on the next page as an illustration.
5. After participants have mapped out all of the possible strategies in a second grid, compare this grid of solutions with the first grid from the analysis. Ask:
 - Do the solutions address all aspects of the problem?
 - Do all aspects of the problem need to be addressed or do priority solutions exist?

Facilitator's Tips

The analysis and strategy development need a clearly defined issue. The group should have a common understanding of this issue before starting this exercise.

An important outcome of this exercise is that you will find out what further information is needed to complete the analysis. Start a "Research List" to jot down information needs as they arise.

Discussion

Once the mapping is completed, discuss what has been learned from this exercise. Highlight how the interplay between formal rules and structures of government and socio-economic factors define the politics of law and policy.

The Meaning of the Sides of the Triangle for Mapping Strategies

Content responses refer to new policies, laws, or budgets, or changes in existing ones.

Example from the Credit Problem: Change banking laws to lower the collateral requirements or give special tax breaks to banks which provide low-income people with loans.

Structural responses include educating police and judges to make them aware of how their own prejudices cause injustice, introducing sanctions against discriminatory judgments, improving social programs to ensure that they reach marginalized communities, etc. They can also involve the creation of a civil society structure to hold government or business accountable to their promises.

Example from the Credit Problem: Educate loan officers about the special needs of low income people, and particularly women. Set up business training programs and support groups for those who need it.

Cultural responses include public education aimed at eliminating discrimination or abuses of rights, and the creation of support groups to help people to influence the institutions and laws that treat them unjustly.

Example from the Credit Problem: Programs to educate men and women about women's roles as heads of households and producers; confidence-building programs; using the mass media to publicize women's "invisible" contribution to the national economy; building a coalition of small-scale producers to advocate for better banking laws and fewer regulations on women's businesses.

Example #2

Problem / Issue - Domestic Violence: Women are mistreated by partners with whom they have intimate and dependent relationships. They suffer from physical, emotional and psychological abuse ranging from slaps and threats to severe physical violence.

STEP 1: ANALYSIS		
CONTENT	STRUCTURE	CULTURE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This problem falls between the family and criminal codes because there are no explicit laws applying to abuse within the home between husband and wife or unmarried partners. - A law against domestic violence exists but there are no emergency procedures such as restraining orders to offer immediate protection to women in danger. - The law regards what happens in the "home" as a private matter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The law may be adequate but judges and police see domestic disputes as a private matter and do not intervene. - Police and courts encourage couples to stay together even when a woman's life is in danger. The family and children are valued more than women's rights. - There are no alternatives for women to seek protection, for example, safe houses, hotlines, etc. - Hospitals do not report cases of domestic violence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Women blame themselves for the abuse and feel ashamed. - The public sees "wife beating" as a problem of poor, uneducated people (they do not see that it also happens among upper classes). Some believe it is caused by alcohol abuse. - Family violence is part of a cycle of violence where power is used to exert control rather than to seek peaceful resolutions. So, men beat women, women beat children, children beat each other and animals, employers abuse employees. - "Minor" abuse is seen as normal or sign of love. - It is believed that men have the right to beat their wives to "keep them in line."

STEP 2: MAPPING STRATEGIES		
CONTENT	STRUCTURE	CULTURE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reform criminal and family codes to make domestic violence a crime punishable by law. Ensure that the definition includes non-marital relationships. - Define a punishment that dissuades men from using force but does not deprive a woman of economic support unless the problem is severe. (This is a difficult task.) - Make domestic abuse a public crime but give women the right to decide what happens to the perpetrator. - Provide for emergency protection measures such as restraint orders, etc. - Allocate budget funds for legal aid, family dispute centers, safe houses, public education, hotlines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Train police and judges about the nature of domestic abuse. - Establish a women's wing at local police stations with trained personnel to deal with psychological aspects of the crime. - Set up safe houses, and hotlines for emergency protection. - Train hospital personnel to identify and handle cases of abuse. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Media campaigns, theatre, demonstrating the impact on women, men, children and society. Make people see domestic violence as a public concern and a crime. (NOTE: If you denounce domestic violence publicly, make sure that there are support services for women to seek help. Awareness-raising without support for those in need is dangerous.) - Have prominent men speak out against it publicly. Establish men's groups. - Run workshops to teach conflict resolution, confidence-building, etc. - Create community support groups and women's counseling initiatives.

Composite of analysis from Asia, Africa, Latin America and USA.

Comparing and Selecting Strategies

Once you have mapped an array of responses to an issue, you can compare your options and choose the best combination of actions to build your strategy while staying true to your mission and vision.

For example, if your NGO decides to improve girls' attendance in primary school, you could:

- carry out a public education campaign about the importance of sending girls to school;
- work with Parent Teacher Associations to monitor school attendance, and educate communities;
- launch an advocacy initiative to persuade

the national government to place more resources in girls' education.

The *best* strategy will use your organization's strengths and take advantage of external opportunities. In the next chapter we introduce tools for identifying external constraints and opportunities.

Although strategies vary according to the issue, context and moment, strategies that do not address systemic causes may alleviate some symptoms, but are unlikely to significantly address the problem. At the same time, improving the material well-being of people who are suffering from a problem by addressing the symptoms is an important element of a political solution and key to sustaining constituency involvement.

What Good Strategies Should Be

Appropriate	Will the strategy further your group's vision and mission? Will it make good use of your organization's strengths? Will it fit the community conditions where your group operates? Will your constituency be able to participate? Will it exacerbate or reduce social tensions within the community?
Adequate	Will the strategy be sufficient to address the problem given its magnitude? Does the problem justify the effort and resources you will expend?
Effective	Will the strategy achieve the stated objective? Will the strategy further your mission <i>and</i> address the problem in a reasonable timeframe?
Efficient	Will the strategy make optimum use of the organization's material and human resources? What are the strategy's costs in terms of people's time, energy, and materials in relation to benefits?
Sensitive to side effects	Will the strategy increase demand for basic services or resources? Will the strategy generate resistance due to traditions, religion, etc? How can this resistance be minimized? How will those in power respond to shifts in social relationships, demands for change, etc? What will happen if violence breaks out? Will the negative consequences be counterbalanced by the positive benefits?

Adapted from the Institute for Development Research's *Strategic Thinking: Formulating Organizational Strategy. Facilitator's Guide*, 1998, pp. 48-49.

Drafting A First Set of Advocacy Goals & Objectives

Defining advocacy goals and objectives is an ongoing planning task. The goals and objectives that you set at the beginning help you compare alternative strategies. Then, after you choose your strategy, you can refine your goals and objectives.

The terms “goal” and “objective” have many definitions. For advocacy planning, we define goals and objectives as follows:

- A *long-term goal* describes the social change you want to see. It is your realizable vision.
- A *short-term goal* describes your desired outcome or the proposed advocacy solution to a specific issue.
- An *objective* defines concretely what will be accomplished, with whom, how, and in what period of time. Advocacy strategies usually have a number of objectives that guide different activities.

SMART Objectives

Smart objectives are *Specific*, *Measurable*, *Achievable*, *Realistic* and *Timebound*.

Specific

- Watch out for jargon or rhetoric. Words like “sensitize,” “empower,” and “conscientize” are vague. They can be broken down into more clearly defined results.
- Watch out for words that can be interpreted in a variety of ways, like reproductive health, empowerment, accountability, transparency, democracy.
- Be as exact as possible about who, what, where and when. For example, an objective may state, “will educate people about their rights.” This is okay as a goal, but is too vague to be useful as an objective.

Measurable

- Words that refer to a state of mind, like “sensitize” or “empower,” are subjective and almost impossible to measure. Process objectives are appropriate for advocacy, particularly when the process is the desired outcome. For example, “bring together grassroots women in small groups to voice their concerns and define common priorities.” In many places, that is a major accomplishment. Group formation or strengthening can be a good indicator for process words like those above. When you use words that refer to state of mind, ask yourself — what does a gender-sensitized person do? What does an empowered person do? Use the answer to formulate your objective. Ask yourself: sensitize for what?

Achievable

- The more concrete you are about who, what, where and when, the more realistic your objective will be. Process goals, like empowerment, are long-term and elusive. Imagine concrete signs along the way of what an empowered person does, and make those your objectives. Feasibility is also defined by the availability of resources.

Realistic

- Changing attitudes and behavior is a very long-term endeavor. Try to be realistic when you decide which and how many people you plan to influence.
- Realistic objectives reflect the limits of available funding and staffing.
- Citizen-centered advocacy demands a balance between idealism and realism to avoid setting yourself up for failure. Objectives are realistic steps toward your greater vision.

Timebound

- Although social change objectives are often impossible to predict in terms of timing, be as precise as possible about your timeline. When do you hope to accomplish your aim?

Tips about Advocacy Goals and Objectives

Long-term goals are more abstract and tend to not change much over time. Short-term goals and objectives are always refined. The more information you have about your political context, target, issue, organization, etc, the more you can sharpen your objectives.

Since effective advocacy demands multi-dimensional strategies, it may be useful to develop objectives and activities for different levels of impact (e.g. policy, public institu-

tions, etc.). The “Advocacy Action and Impact Chart” on page ## is a guide to the different layers of influence and change.

Although objectives evolve, it helps to formulate them as clearly as possible from the start. The SMART Framework is useful for formulating objectives, but is not the only one. People have different preferences for formulating objectives. For example, some people prefer a declarative sentence like “10 citizen monitoring groups created” to one that begins with a verb like “to create 10 citizen monitoring groups.”

Objective setting is an important decisionmaking moment. Participation by the key groups involved generates buy-in and strengthens commitment, and can also be empowering. Participatory objective-setting involves dialogue, debate and negotiation.

Examples of Ways to Sharpen Objectives

A group in Southern Africa defined a multidimensional strategy to combat domestic violence. The strategy included policy reform, establishing support centers and public education. Their public education objective was not specific or measurable.

Original Objective

To mobilize and educate women and law enforcement agencies by the year 2001. Can you see from this objective what the group will do? Which women? Which law enforcement agencies? For what purpose? The group reformulated their education objective as follows:

SMART Objective

To educate rural women involved in savings clubs in three villages about domestic violence and their rights with regard to family law, and to assist them in forming violence prevention groups at the community level within thirty months.

A consumer rights group in India went through a similar process to improve their advocacy objectives.

Original Objective

To create awareness among consumers of the measures they have available to redress grievances.

SMART Objective

To increase the number of disadvantaged people who can effectively use the consumer redress laws and measures in Tamil Nadu to 1,000 by the year 2000.

Using the Triangle Analysis to Set Initial Goals and Objectives

The triangle analysis (content-structure-culture) on page ## helps define an initial set of goals and objectives. Using the example of domestic violence, some possible advocacy goals and objectives are:

Long-term Goal

To expand and promote women's legal rights and equality.

Short-term Goal

To make domestic violence recognized and treated as a crime and a violation of basic rights by society and the legal system.

Content Objective

To reform the criminal and family codes to make domestic violence explicitly a crime with procedures to protect victims and appropriate punishment.

Structure Objectives

- To provide training to police and judges about the nature of domestic violence and the particular needs of perpetrators and survivors.
- To establish "Women's Desks" in selected police stations on a pilot basis with the involvement of the four key women's NGOs working on violence.
- To persuade government to establish and fund safe houses and hotlines with strict guidelines based on research.
- To create support groups for women survivors to explore alternative ways of assisting women.

Culture Objectives

- To educate the general public through the mass media that domestic violence is a public problem and a crime.
- To establish pilot men's groups to encourage new thinking about violence.
- To conduct training and education programs for women that link human rights, personal self-worth and the elimination of violence.

Dimensions of a Citizen-Centered Advocacy Strategy

The *Advocacy Action and Impact Chart*⁴ on page ## can be used as a checklist both for planning and for monitoring and evaluation. The framework is shaped by the experience of long time social justice advocates around the world that found that advocacy success needs to produce change in five dimensions - government, private sector, civil society, political space and culture, and the individual.

The **government arena**, the most common arena for success in advocacy, includes changes in policies, programs, officials, elections, laws, processes, budgets, and regulations of public institutions, and related interna-

tional organizations such as the UN system, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund.

The second arena is the **private sector** and addresses changes in business policies, programs, and practices. It may be less familiar to some NGOs and grassroots groups, but is an important arena of action for promoting more socially responsible behavior by local and multinational corporations.

The third arena for action and impact involves fortifying **civil society**. Strengthening the authority, voice, agenda-setting and planning capacities of NGOs and popular organizations is critical to increasing their legitimacy, sustained participation and voice in public decisionmaking.

A fourth arena of activity and impact entails changes in **political space and culture**. These actions and outcomes help create an atmosphere in which political participation by disenfranchised groups can be effective and carried out, at a minimum, without fear of violence or repression. Possible impacts include increased governmental respect for people's right to participate in decisionmaking as well as increased transparency and accountability on the part of institutions of the State and the media. Other changes might involve shifts in the way society views women's and men's roles, accepting women as legitimate political actors.

The fifth and final arena involves changes at the **individual** level. These actions and changes refer to improvements in a person's physical living conditions such as better access to water or wages. They also include personal changes that are necessary for the development of a sense of citizenship, self-worth, and solidarity.

Drafting objectives for each of the five dimensions can guide planners to think through a comprehensive strategy for change. The following questions can help planners use the chart for developing objectives and activities and identifying areas for further research.

Government

- What needs to be changed in a law or policy to make it more effective, inclusive and fair?
- What institutional reforms will be necessary for the law/policy to be enforced/implemented fairly and effectively?
- What are the budget implications of implementation?
- What will be needed at different levels of government to ensure accountability?
- What structural reforms are needed to promote transparency and increase people's access to justice?

Private Sector

- What kind of corporate policy will help to address this issue?
- What reforms in business practice and behavior are necessary?
- Will training and monitoring be necessary to prevent the issue from recurring?
- How can dialogue and joint problem-solving among government, civil society and the private sector address diverse interests and needs?

Civil Society

- How can education and organizing teach people about government, politics and rights?
- How can citizens and groups engage constructively and critically with decisionmakers and promote accountability?
- What types of leadership and organization can be developed that foster inclusion and represent a broad range of constituents while retaining political agility and power?
- How can the strategy promote communication, dialogue, and horizontal networks?

Political Space and Culture

- What can be done to expand the role of citizens' groups in the formal political process? How can governments, corporations, and civil society work together to address injustice and poverty?
- What must be changed about policy formulation or enforcement to create more transparent, accountable decisionmaking?
- What information needs to be made public and accessible? What are the roles of civil society, government, and the private sector in ensuring that people know about things that affect them?

- What types of leadership and organization will be necessary to promote inclusion and consultation in all arenas?
- What public processes and policies can promote democratic values and ensure that all sectors of society are represented in decisionmaking?
- How will citizens participate effectively in public debate and policymaking?
- What material improvement will be felt by individuals as a result of the political reform process?
- What kinds of skills, information, and experiences do citizens need to be confident, active and internalize their rights?
- How can the public education component of the advocacy encourage people to respect differences and to address discrimination?

Individual

Example Goals and Objectives (developed during an African training workshop)

Issue: Inadequate health services and education for women that lead to debilitating health problems with negative repercussions for infants and children.

Long-Term Goal: To promote the enjoyment of women's rights for healthier, more productive lives.

Short-term Goal: To ensure the provision of reproductive health services, information and options to women aged 18-45 living in the northern region of Uganda.

Government Objective: To lobby for a gender-sensitive reproductive health policy in line with the Cairo recommendations. The policy should include guidelines for government and community programs serving women, and designate 24% of the health budget for this purpose.

Private Sector Objective: To call on private health facilities to designate a small percentage of their services to mobile or stationary health clinics for indigent women and children.

Political Space and Culture Objectives:

- To establish a joint committee involving NGO leadership, government, and private sector health organizations to monitor and evaluate the impact of the new policy.
- To promote public dialogue about women's rights and health.
- To use the policy to help political and business leaders better understand the value of gender-sensitive approaches, and the benefits of responding to women's needs.
- To establish community monitoring groups to ensure that quality services are provided.
- To educate the media about reproductive health issues and assist them in doing a series of stories to educate men and women.

Civil Society Objectives:

- To foster horizontal linkages between women's groups and other citizens' groups concerned with social issues through community focus groups.
- To strengthen the leadership and communication skills of development NGO networks.
- To make decisionmaking structures of women's groups and health coalitions more agile and accountable.

Individual Objectives:

- To educate women aged 13-45 through age-specific programs about their reproductive health, their choices and responsibilities and the right to demand better services.
- To improve the health of women and their ability to make informed choices about their own and their children's health.
- To promote respect and better understanding between men and women regarding the importance and differences of their health needs.

Advocacy Action and Impact Chart	
ARENA	IMPACT
1. State / Government Sector	Support for or change in a law, policy, program, practices, person, decisionmaking process, budget, enforcement, access, etc.
<i>National</i> -Executive -Agencies / Ministries -Legislative / Parliament -Military / Police -Courts -Other <i>Provincial Government</i> <i>Local Government</i> <i>International Bodies</i> -UN -IMF / World Bank -Multilateral Development Banks <i>Other</i>	<i>Actions and impacts that advance human rights, foster more equitable sustainable development and promote greater voice and power of excluded populations in public decisionmaking (e.g. women, indigenous groups, the poor, and religious, racial or ethnic minorities, etc.)</i>
2. Private Sector	Support for or change in policy, program, practices, behavior, etc.
Local / National / Multinational	<i>See actions and impacts under State / Government sector</i>
3. Civil Society	Strengthen and expand civil society's capacity, organization, accountability, and power; expand capacities and knowledge; and increase overall social reciprocity, trust and tolerance.
-NGOs -Membership Organizations -Community-based Organizations -Ally Organizations / Coalitions -Other	<i>Actions and impacts that fortify groups and alliances working to advance the rights and improve the living conditions of marginalized peoples to protect the health of societies and the planet overall.</i>
4. Political Space and Culture	Increase democratic space, expand participation and political legitimacy of civil society, and accountability / transparency of public institutions and media; transform norms, and customs that lead to intolerance, subordination, and exclusion.
-Political -Social / Cultural -Other	<i>Actions and impacts that enhance the political and social dimensions of culture in ways that promote the voice and vote of the marginalized in decisionmaking and encourage behaviors and values of cooperation, collaboration, trust, inclusion, reciprocity, and equity.</i>
5. Individual	Improve concrete living conditions and opportunities for health, education and livelihood; promote beliefs and awareness of self as protagonist / citizen with rights and responsibilities to participate in change.
-Living Conditions / Opportunities -Attitudes / Awareness -Personal Relationships, etc.	<i>Actions and impacts that improve the lives and expand the knowledge, political analysis / consciousness, confidence, solidarity, skills, and vision of marginalized populations and their allies; actions and impacts that challenge discrimination / subordination in personal and family relations.</i>



Strategic Emphasis

The *Advocacy Action and Impact Chart* can be used after you have begun your advocacy to monitor and evaluate progress. One approach to assessment is to examine whether the focus of your efforts and resources is consistent with your priorities. Resources are limited, and this analysis helps to direct activities in those areas where they are most needed and where they can have the most impact.

For more information on monitoring and assessing advocacy impact, see Action Aid's *Monitoring and Evaluating Advocacy: A Scoping Study*, by Jennifer Chapman and Amboka Wameyo.

The Advocacy Debate: Changing Policy, Changing People

Why won't policy change in itself bring about social change? Policy change can set up new rules of engagement, shift priorities and resources, or codify rights and commitments. This is significant, but advocacy concerned with social justice, basic rights, and participation has to also address values and behavior that do not change simply because law changes. Changing policy is about changing people — in civil society, government, and in the private sector. Unless strategies are aimed at people explicitly, political decisions will often not be realized on the ground. The case from Zimbabwe below may help groups understand the importance of the different dimensions of advocacy strategies.

In the early 1980s, soon after the Rhodesian apartheid state was dismantled, the new government of Zimbabwe embarked on a number of important legal and policy changes. Influenced by leading human rights lawyers, the country passed the Legal Age of Majority Act which made all women legal adults at the age of 18. Prior to that time, women were perpetual legal minors, unable to have a bank account, get a license, have custody of their children or make any other legal decision without approval from their husbands or fathers.

The passing of the Act was mired in controversy. By the time the news of the new law reached villages, especially in rural areas, many men and women rejected it outright. Many mothers (and fathers) were angry because the law meant their daughters could get married at 18, with or without their permission, and whether or not lobola (brideprice) was paid to the girl's family. There was very little public consultation about the Act, outside of the main urban areas, before it was passed. Rural people felt this was yet another imposition from city folk who did not respect custom and family. Few people — women particularly — understood the law's benefits.

Part of the reason the Act was passed quickly was that the party in power wanted to expand the number of voters; including women and men between the ages of 18 and 21, as the law also previously made men legal majors only at 21. Unfortunately, the opposition to the new law deepened resistance by women and men to all subsequent women's legal rights-related reforms. This became a serious obstacle to further progress on women's rights for the following two decades. Some people said that the law aggravated the generation gap among women, and contributed to conflicts within families. Others argued that these tensions were inevitable, and that legal change was needed sooner rather than later for such an urgent human rights matter.

The following questions provide some ideas on how to conduct discussion on this case as it relates to policy and social change.

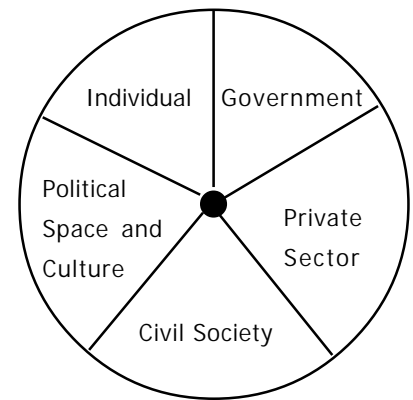
- What does this story tell us about social values and legal change?
- What does this story tell us about the impact of legal change on the public? On custom and cultural beliefs?
- What alternative legal reform strategy might lessen the possibility of backlash and resistance?

Purpose

- To identify in what dimensions advocacy activities have been developed and what their impact has been.
- To determine if and how the focus of the advocacy strategy should be adjusted.

Process

1. This exercise is done in small groups. Each group should be made up of people who have worked together on a particular advocacy initiative.
2. Explain to each group the meaning of each of the five dimensions: government, private sector, civil society, political space and culture, individual (see page XX). There may be some confusion about the fact that “culture” is a separate dimension because it is also part of all the other dimensions. Remind the group that this exercise is a tool to reflect on the focus of advocacy activities and that it is important that activities focusing directly on political culture are not overlooked.
3. Ask each group to make a list of the major activities they have carried out to effect change in each of the five dimensions.
4. Using the list as a guide, the group should estimate the comparative size of each dimension in terms of effort and resources expended and draw a pie chart to reflect their analysis



Discussion

Discuss what the analysis means for future advocacy work. Questions to guide this discussion may include:

- What dimensions have been left out of our current and past advocacy work? Should we try to address that dimension?
- Has our action in the different dimensions been consistent with our analysis of the problem?
- Have the dimensions we've been working on the most shown a corresponding impact?

The chart has five different dimensions. However, a group may decide that it is unable to impact all of these dimensions because of limited resources or because of the political context. Nevertheless, it's important not to forget that all the dimensions exist. Eventually, the advocacy effort will probably need to address each of them to produce long-term success.

Examples

The following examples were developed during a Latin American training workshop and are illustrative of how different groups divide their resources. The analysis of this exercise will involve much more in-depth questioning and detail than is shown here.

This chart was made by a group in El Salvador addressing the problem of sexist education in the school system. The impact chart shows a relative balance of activities in the five areas.

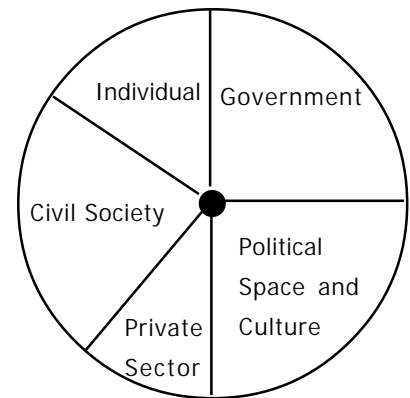
Government: Research on sexism in education; public debate with the Ministry of education; development of an urban model and materials for non-sexist education; distribution of publications and stories; mobilization and pressure.

Political Space / Culture: Public debates; group reflections; interviews on radio stations, TV and in newspapers; course on feminist debates; public campaigns; marches; parties; video fora.

Private Sector: Public and video fora; seek support for information campaigns.

Civil Society: Alliances with teachers' organizations; establishment of a documentation, information and communication center for communities and teachers; activities to encourage rural women to organize themselves.

Individual: Group reflection based on personal experiences; different kinds of impact on education for girls and boys.



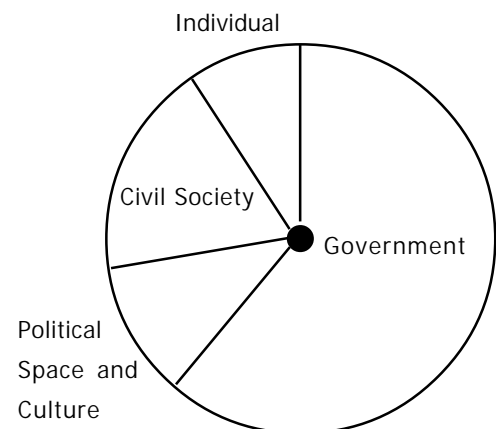
The chart below reflects the advocacy work of a group from Honduras. In their case, the National Health Secretariat had approved a policy on sexual and reproductive health. However, the policy was in danger of being overturned by powerful opponents and the group was advocating to protect. After making the chart, the group recognized that none of their activities targeted the private sector, an important potential ally, and that most of their advocacy concentrated on the government.

Government: (particularly the National Health Secretariat) Participation on a commission of "dignitaries"; preparing information for the government to use to support the new policy; lobbying and awareness-raising activities.

Political Space / Culture: Participation in radio and TV programs; distribution of information.

Civil Society: Coordination and alliances with other organizations; fora for debate and discussion; conferences; information dissemination.

Individual: provision of information to individual women and spaces for reflection and analysis.



NOTES

- ¹ Adapted from Miller, Valerie. *NGOs and Grassroots Policy Influence: What is Success?* Institute for Development Research, Vol. 11, No. 5, 1994.
- ² Adapted from Schuler, Margaret, "Conceptualizing and Exploring Issues and Strategies" in *Empowerment and the Law: Strategies of Third World Women*, OEF International, 1986.
- ³ Adapted from Institute for Development Research. *Strategic Thinking: Formulating Organizational Strategy. Facilitator's Guide*. Boston, 1998.
- ⁴ Developed and refined by Valerie Miller and Lisa VeneKlasen; see also V. Miller, *ibid*.