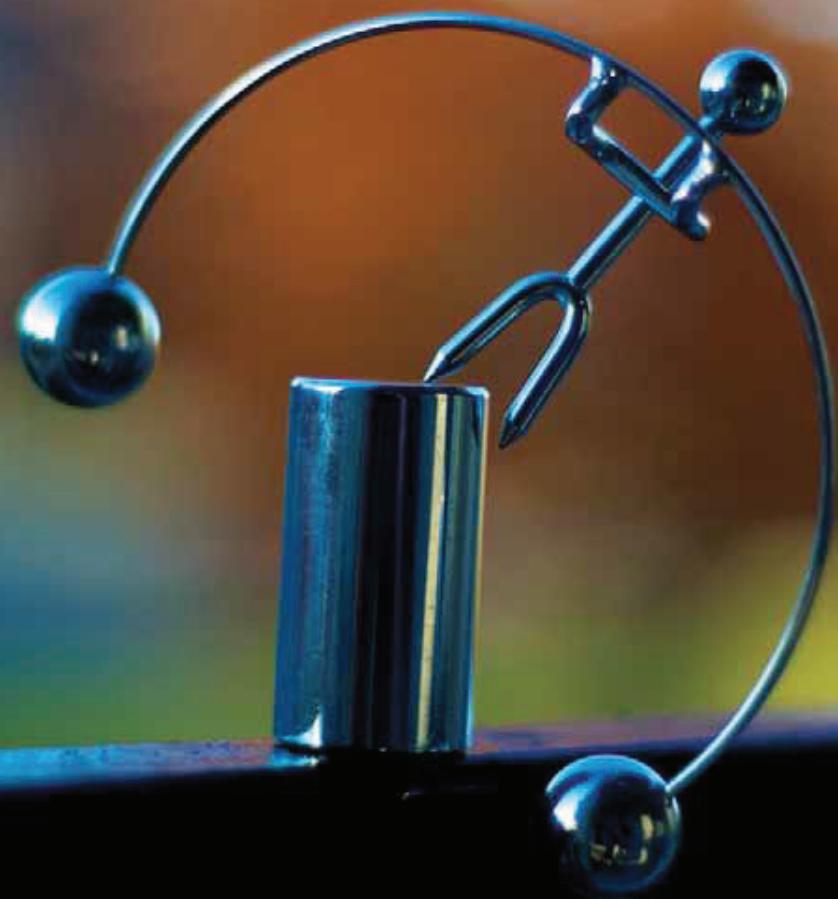




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# **Advocacy and Policy Influencing for Social Change**





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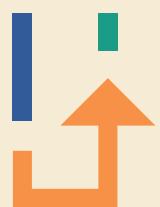
# **Advocacy and Policy Influencing for Social Change**





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## Foreword

## FOREWORD

With activities in eight countries of the Western Balkans and Turkey *Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organisations* – TACSO – is providing support and opportunities for the development of a strong and influential Civil Society sector. This investment in Civil Society is based on our conviction that in the context of EU affiliation ongoing political, economic and social processes require an engaged and well-functioning Civil Society as an important precondition for democratic developments.

An important project component of TACSO is Capacity Development of CSOs with the main objective being to increase the capacity of CSO representatives in a number of key areas by offering them new knowledge on contemporary methodologies and techniques as well as the opportunity for exchange and practical knowledge.

During the spring of 2010 TACSO implemented five Regional Training Programs targeting experienced and well-established CSOs and their representatives. Following the successful completion of these Training Programs and in order to further strengthen the capacities of CSOs, TACSO has decided to develop five manuals as follows:

- Fundraising and Accessing EU Funds;
- Civil Society Organisation Management - Practical Tools for Organisational Development Analysis;
- Developing and Managing EU Funded Projects;
- *Advocacy and Policy Influencing for Social Change*;
- Citizens' Participation in the Decision-Making Processes.

The present Manual *Advocacy and Policy Influencing for Social Change* is aimed to increase the CSOs advocacy skills as well as the influence on public policies in order to contribute to social transformation.

We sincerely hope that you will find the Manual useful for your work.

*Palle Westergaard*

Team Leader

In contemporary society, the amount of subjects and issues open to change, as well as the different and diverse opinions of actors and stakeholders makes it increasingly complex to govern, to consolidate or to bring about change. Entrepreneurs cannot develop their products and services without looking at the wishes of their clients, regulations from the government and increasingly opinions of pressure groups or social movements. Similarly, governments cannot formulate laws, rules and regulations without a thorough knowledge of the issue and the respective needs of its citizens and the interest of different stakeholders in society – entrepreneurs and civil society organisations alike. Finally, civil society organisations cannot bring about change by just demanding or claiming their rights without the empowered voices of its constituencies, the in-depth knowledge of existing laws and regulations, the interests of contradicting stakeholders and the proof or evidence of negative or positive implications on their beneficiaries or constituencies.

In briefly, we have to become interdependent if we want to achieve sustainable change and to consolidate empowered change.

Therefore nowadays Advocacy and Policy Influencing is crucial to every entrepreneur, politician or civil society group. It is a challenge to bring together different stakeholders to discuss, to inform and to influence decision makers as broadly as possible on different backgrounds and interests, in order to take an informed decision. Without advocacy and policy influencing, the quality of decision-making will suffer.

This Manual will help you to improve the quality and the effectiveness of your advocacy and policy influencing in a credible, legitimate and accountable way.

## APPROACH TO THE MANUAL

In order to make this Manual as practical as possible the theoretical part has been supplemented with case studies and practical tools. The case studies are mostly from the work of Civil Society Organisations (CSO) from the Western Balkans and Turkey. This approach is chosen in order to complement the knowledge of CSOs about the field of advocacy and policy influencing and to make it directly applicable in their everyday work.

The core of the Manual is the Advocacy and Policy Influencing Cycle, which reflects steps of the Project Management Cycle. Our experience with this cycle is that the most common error made in projects is that organisations tend to identify a problem and head directly to implementing possible solutions. Many essential planning steps are thus omitted. Such an observation can also be made for policy influencing; a problem is identified and actions are directly undertaken.

Developing a *Theory of Change* for your organisation clarifies how the *vision and mission* of your organisation is achieved, and how your programmes and projects contribute to that mission and vision. Policy Influencing can be part of that. When your organisation uses

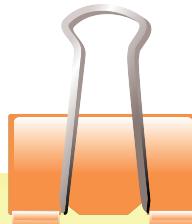
policy influencing as an important intervention, it should make clear *how policy influencing is embedded* in your organisation's *theory of change*. Thus policy influencing is not something you do at the margins as a side-activity, or ad-hoc when you meet a politician – no –it is a clearly defined strategy linked to your other interventions, in which it is clear to everyone as *one of the ways* to contribute to the mission and vision of the organisation.

Undertaking a *Theory of Change* exercise – with stakeholders you want to cooperate with in your policy influencing – strongly increases your legitimacy, credibility and effectiveness. It means that you identify *together with them* the ultimate goal (vision), the concrete changes you will focus on in order to contribute to the vision (outcomes or mission) and how you think you will get there. Doing it with other stakeholders assures a common understanding of the wished-for change you seek to achieve with policy influencing. It also clarifies how specific changes you work on affect the changes other stakeholders work on. Without success in one area you may not reach change at all. In sum, it clarifies why you are undertaking a joint effort and what the responsibilities of each of the stakeholders are.

Many CSOs undertake policy influencing activities, either as part of projects or as core business. This Manual will focus on the various phases before actually undertaking policy influencing activities. Therefore, much of the focus will be on planning for those actions in such a way that activities are relevant and achieve the highest possible impact.

The knowledge and skills in this Manual represent years of experience by MDF and the authors, combining their knowledge on advocacy and policy influencing, theoretical as well as practical, and knowledge on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation.

## STRUCTURE OF THE MANUAL



The Manual is build up in five major parts as follows:

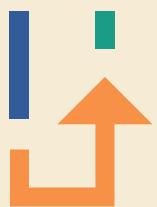
- Part 1** Introduction to Advocacy and Policy Influencing
- Part 2** Birth of the Early Message
- Part 3** Alliance Building and Action Plan
- Part 4** Implementation and Learning: Delivering the Final Message
- Part 5** Toolbox





## **Part I**

# **Introduction to Advocacy and Policy Influencing**



## **Politics and Policy Influencing – Key Concepts**

## INTRODUCTION

What do we actually talk about when we talk about policy influencing, lobbying or advocacy? These terms are used by different people to refer to different kinds of activities. For the sake of better understanding it is important to differentiate between these terms and we present below a short overview of the differences and overlaps of some of these terms.

### WHAT DO WE MEAN BY POLICY INFLUENCING?

When people talk about politics and policies they use the words in mixed meanings, sometimes confusing ways. Politics is mostly defined as the actions and interactions taking place in discussing and negotiating amongst stakeholders in which power, status and influence of the people involved play the most important role.

Politics (from Greek *πολιτικός*, “of, for, or relating to citizens”), is a process by which (groups of) stakeholders try to make collective decisions. The term is generally applied to the art or science of running governmental or state affairs. It also refers to behaviour within civil governments. However, politics can be observed in other group interactions, including corporate, academic, and religious institutions. It consists of “social relations involving authority or power” and refers to the regulation of public affairs within a political unit, and to the methods and tactics used to formulate and apply policy.

A *policy* is typically described as a principle or (set of) rules to guide decisions and achieve rational and predictable outcome(s). Policies are generally adopted by government bodies and parliaments, or the board of or governance body within an organization or companies.

Throughout this Manual we use the general term policy influencing when talking about all possible actions designed to influence policies, as it can be easily translated into most languages, is accepted in most political cultures in many countries, and can address all kinds of actors ranging from civil society organisations, government or to the business sector.

Every respected entity has a vision, a mission and defined policies, and influencing these policies is day-to-day work.

For the purpose of this Manual we use a working definition of policy influencing as follows:

#### **Working definition of Policy Influencing**

Policy Influencing is the deliberate and systematic process of influencing the policies, practices and behaviour of different targeted stakeholders who have most influence on the issue in question, involving beneficiaries and increasing their ownership and capacity of the issue. Activities can be singled out, or a mixed strategy can be applied, in which joint forces and concerted action increase the effectiveness of any policy influencing interventions.

The above definition contains two elements that may need additional emphasises, namely, behaviour and stakeholders:

Policy influencing is about changing the behaviour of certain stakeholders. Changing behaviour is a prerequisite to changing policies. Just changing policies should not be the intended result of policy influencing, as you also want something to change in practice. To achieve this it is important to change behaviour. In the Manual different tools and approaches will be described that focus on changing the behaviour of different actors in the policy influencing process.

The definition above refers also to “different targeted stakeholders that are most influential”, instead of the more common term “decision makers”. The main reason is that not all people referred to commonly as decision-makers are the most influential stakeholders on a particular issue. Much will depend on the outcomes of different analyses presented in this Manual.

## So what is advocacy, lobbying and activism?

Common terms used when referring to policy influencing are lobbying, advocacy, and activism. Definitions of these terms are not clear-cut and agreed upon and it might seem that the meaning of these terms and the activities they entail overlap. It is possible to have an inherent sense of what activism is about, or what advocacy and lobbying entail without being able to clearly define these terms.

What further adds to the confusion about these terms is that often they are defined through particular activities. Thus a meeting with politicians is considered by some to be an activity that may fall under lobbying. Getting a press release published may be considered more like advocacy. Demonstrating or organising a sit-in would fall more under activism. Distinctions based purely on the type of the activities they do or do not entail are not very useful as one activity may be considered lobbying, advocacy or activism depending on the context, the intent of the organiser and the way it is perceived by the other party.

To use this Manual it is important to be able to differentiate between these terms, but we will not be offering clear-cut definitions, rather allowing the reader to be able to tell the difference between them through the given explanations.

### Lobbying

Lobbying has a negative connotations for some people. It conjures up images of men in suits making obscure deals with politicians in back offices. The connotation is so strong that the European Commission prefers to use the term “interest representation”. There are obviously cases in which lobbying is done by professionals hired by clients who need to be represented in some way. It is often those cases that come to mind when the term lobbying

#### Lobbying elements:

- Consensus-driven
- Negotiation
- Dialogue
- Different parties

is used. Whatever you feel about the term, it does cover a number of activities most CSOs sometimes undertake consciously or sub-consciously. Since lobbying is the term most people have heard of, it is the term we will use.

The fact is that lobbying often entails some work that is not directly transparent. This means that it is a challenge to make lobbying accountable. Lobbying entails, at the very least, some form of dialogue between parties. Also, the different parties will be more or less consensus-driven. This means there is some room for negotiation. If this is not the case, you may want to lobby and have an ongoing dialogue at the same time, but this is unlikely to be successful and the dialogue will be very one-sided.

### Examples of different definitions

"Interest representation" activities (...) are defined as activities carried out with the objective of influencing the policy formulation and decision-making processes of the European institutions"

(Source: European Commission Code of Conduct for Interest Representatives)

"An organization is attempting to "influence legislation" when the communication:

- is directed towards a legislator or employee of a legislative body;
- refers to specific legislation;
- reflects a view on that legislation".

(Source: IRS Definition of direct lobbying)

Grassroots lobbying occurs when the communication:

- is directed towards the general public
- refers to specific legislation
- reflects a view on the legislation AND
- "encourages the recipient ...to take action with respect to the legislation."

(Source: IRS Definition of grassroots lobbying)

### MOST, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

The MOST citizen's organisation, as an electoral monitoring organisation, has successfully lobbied for reform of the electoral code in Macedonia by, among other things, lobbying key representatives in ministeries and parliamentarians at various stages of the elaboration process of a new electoral code. Their work is highlighted in more detail in the chapter on scanning the policy process.

### Advocacy

Advocacy is often used in the same sentence as policy influencing. That is because they overlap a lot. As is the case for lobbying there really is not one uniform definition of advocacy. Many definitions are almost alike to the working definition of policy influencing. However, there is one important distinction between policy influencing and advocacy, namely the possible character of the activities. Advocacy refers to non-violent activities designed to influence policies, practices and behaviour. It includes lobbying (non-violent by nature) and other activities that are not lobbying, but are non-violent and considered legal.

#### Examples of different definitions:

- Advocacy is changing practices and policies of people in power, affecting disadvantaged people (CAFOD).
- Citizen-centered advocacy is an organised political process that involves the coordinated efforts of people to change policies, practices, ideas, and values that perpetuate inequality, intolerance and exclusion

(Action Guide for Advocacy and Citizen Participation).

#### Foundation Combating Soil Erosion, Turkey

A good example of an advocacy activity that is not also lobbying is the activity of the Turkish Foundation Combating Soil Erosion (TEMA). In their lobby for approval of “The Law on Soil” Protection and Land Improvement”, they also applied pressure by launching a petition campaign and getting over 1 million signatures.



Advocacy is best described, in the context of this Manual, as all non-violent and legal activities designed to influence policies, practices and behaviour.

## Activism

When we think of activism it is often linked to demonstrations, standing on the barricades, as well as funny and creative activities designed to draw attention to an issue. Mostly such activities are not designed to create or propose consensus. They are set up to convince or inform others, for example to get popular support for an issue or place an issue on the agenda. By undertaking such activities pressure can be put on particular stakeholders to change, using third parties such as the public. Activism in that way is often seen as opposite to lobby and/or dialogue which are more seen as passive, non-visual and consensus driven activities. It is important to understand that activism can be something positive, legal and non-violent, but also something illegal and violent. Violence is always a possibility within activism since activities are designed to be confrontational.



*"The way Greenpeace takes action makes a lot of people uncomfortable - and it should, as the things we bring attention to don't feel good."*

(Greenpeace)

### Example of Definition

Activism consists of intentional action to bring about social, political, economic, or environmental change. Activism can take a wide range of forms from writing letters to newspapers or politicians, political campaigning, economic activism such as boycotts or preferentially patronizing businesses, rallies, street marches and strikes, both sit-ins and hunger strikes (Wikipedia).

### Youth Educational Forum, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Activism increasingly works through the use of social networks, such as Facebook and Twitter, as well as the use of new media, such as YouTube. Among CSOs several members use such means to raise awareness of the public and put pressure on decision-makers. An example of a CSO using social media in their activism is the Youth Educational Forum in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. They work on issues regarding social inclusion of young people and anti-corruption in higher education. They upload short videos (amateur clips, podcasts and graphics) on YouTube and/or Vimeo which provide them with free space. They already have a large online community on Facebook and Twitter. This community then votes and comments on the materials, either directly or through the social networks. These platforms then offer plenty of opportunities to share.



These activities are used to mobilise people for events, attract politicians and/or authorities who are present on the social networks and provide more signatures for online petitions when these are done. This provides input for other activities to influence decision-makers, such as lobbying activities.

A specific success in the use of social media is in the use of Flash Mobs to share the message: "Include Young People in the Decision Making Processes". The first public Flash Mob attracted more than 100 people and was filmed, posted on YouTube and shared across social networks. It reached enormous popularity with young people in schools in Macedonia. This resulted in a second Flash Mob being organised. This attracted more than 200 young people in more cities in Macedonia. It increased sharing across internet communities, and is a good example of mobilisation via the internet.

When we talk about illegal activities we bear in mind that illegality of activities is subjective and differs from country to country. In some countries it is illegal to protest for example. In the context of the Manual 'illegal' refers to activities that intentionally harm others, such as violence and bribes.

In the context of this Manual a distinctive feature of activism is that activism entails activities directed towards third parties (e.g. the public) and may be non-violent or violent and illegal.

## AWARENESS-RAISING AND POLICY INFLUENCING

The term awareness-raising is very often mentioned in combination with policy influencing, advocacy, lobbying and activism, as well as on its own. For many it describes a set of activities or a strategy. In some cases awareness-raising is an end in itself.

Awareness-raising is a pre-condition of all policy influencing activities. It is a mutual exchange of information between different stakeholders involved, either beneficiaries or decision makers. You could say that awareness-raising, and keeping awareness raised, is a continuous process throughout the intervention.

Many projects, such as policy influencing projects, contain an element of awareness-raising. In lobbying for example, organisations provide information to decision-makers, thereby raising their awareness about a certain issue. In many advocacy and activism-related activities the awareness of the general public, or specific groups, is raised with a view to mobilising them to put pressure on decision-makers. You can also raise the awareness of beneficiaries of your intervention. This is often the first step towards making them more powerful and making their participation in your intervention possible.

As such awareness-raising is often part of your intervention. However, awareness-raising should only be a means to a more specific objective. You always must be conscious of the reasons for awareness-raising. In our experience many organisations indicate that one of their objectives is to raise the awareness of others in their policy influencing interventions.

We believe that awareness-raising is part of policy influencing, but we also believe that awareness-raising alone cannot achieve policy and behavioural change. Thus awareness-raising cannot be an objective of your policy influencing intervention. Awareness-raising is a series of activities such as distributing brochures, providing background materials to decision-makers, or having certain informative speeches at a conference. The outcome of that being that certain people have increased awareness of a certain topic. This then should contribute to the higher objective, outcome or result, which is behavioural change regarding the specific topic. You must focus on what the new awareness leads to, namely what is the change you want to see once people's awareness is raised.

Raising awareness through certain activities is done to:

- provide information in order to put something on the agenda;
- mobilise groups or the general public in order to put pressure on others to change;
- undertake a first step towards empowerment of beneficiaries.

### **Centre for Development of Non-Governmental Organisations (CRNVO), Montenegro**

CRNVO works on the issue of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and changing the behaviour of business, NGOs and Government. They want these actors to work together on CSR and ultimately also the Government to take responsibility in making the environment conducive for CSR. A first step is to raise awareness among all actors about the



importance of CSR and the fact it can work, as well as raising awareness about the possibilities of cooperation and mutual benefits from that. A major step in this was the organisation of a conference on CSR best practices and the publication of a book of best practice. All of these events were also mediated in order to sensitise the population to CSR. CRNVO continues providing trainings to various actors on CSR and, most notably, partnerships. They are also using the raised awareness to start lobbying for a more conducive environment for CSR.

### **Albanian Helsinki Committee, Albania**

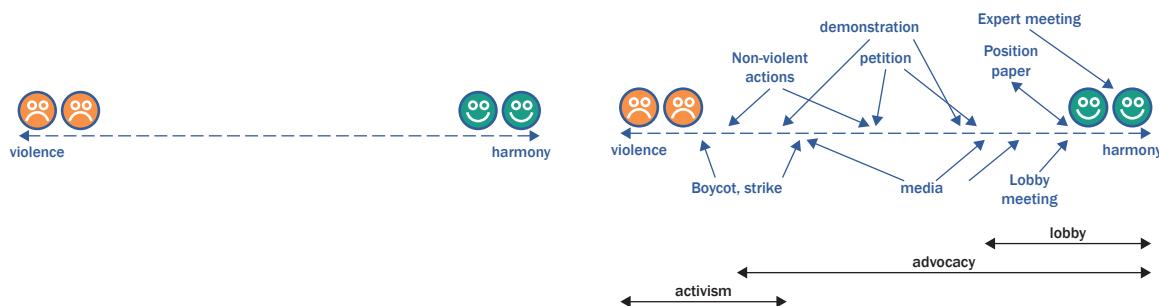
The Albanian Helsinki Committee uses awareness-raising of different actors so that these actors can play a role in successfully implementing the new anti-discrimination law in Albania. Thus legal aid providers, local human rights organisations, barristers, young human rights activists, representatives of trade unions and scholars were trained on the new law in order for those actors to use it in their work. Through this work it is anticipated that the implementation of the anti-discrimination law is more successful. A follow-up of this awareness-raising project focuses on getting specific jurisprudence by making use of the law.



## POLICY INFLUENCING CONTINUUM

As noted above, it is not the intention of this Manual to distinguish the different terms through definition. The reasons for this are that there are no common definitions and many definitions merely show the overlap between the terms. Another important reason is that an activity can fall into each of the categories depending on the context and its timing. In order to differentiate and understand the terms we have created a *Policy Influencing Continuum* in which the terms are presented as forming parts of a continuum under the generic term: policy influencing. Filling in the Policy Influencing Continuum helps you think about the different activities you undertake and whether they would fall more under the description of activism or lobbying and whether they can be considered advocacy. It is probable that most activities will be advocacy activities at the very least and many will fall under lobbying.

The continuum presented below presents a line with two extremities. You can place policy influencing activities on the continuum depending on whether the activity is more or less harmonious. The term ‘violence’ indicates the level of physical and psychological violence. Another term you could use is illegal or confrontational.



**Policy Influencing Continuum**

You can fill in the continuum with various types of activities you undertake such as meetings with politicians, expert meetings, writing press releases, demonstrations, bribery, strikes, boycotts, petitions, reporting etc. These activities are either more or less harmonious or violent. You may well find that one type of activity could fit on the continuum on different places depending on what your intention was and how it worked out. Apart from allowing you to work out what your intention is in regard to a certain activity, the continuum can also help you think about how the activity is likely to be perceived by your counterpart(s).

As activities have been placed on the continuum some distinction can now be made between activities that would fall under activism, advocacy and lobbying. In the Toolbox of this Manual an exercise with the Policy Influencing Continuum is proposed (Tool 1).

## TIPS for practical application and facilitation

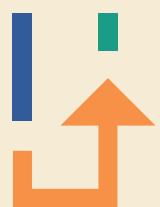
The terms introduced in this chapter are not set in stone. There is no a single definition provided. It is also not very important to know exactly what lobbying, advocacy or activism is. It is much more crucial to understand that there are differences between terms that are used by many people in different ways. When you facilitate discussions about terminology be sure to get distinguishing factors out in the open in order to make people understand that there are differences between types of activities. In the end, once there is consensus on those differences, it makes it easier to think of types of activities you can undertake at various stages of policy influencing intervention. Some will realise that it is not just about lobbying or about campaigning. In fact it is often a combination of those activities whereby you engage on different levels with different people.

We have also found discussions on terminology helpful to make a distinction between how you perceive a certain activity and how it is perceived by the recipient. On starting any form of activity it helps if it is made clear what kind of reaction you anticipate.

## QUESTIONS for further reflection

- Is policy influencing a democratic instrument for developing policies, laws and regulations? Is it accepted or tolerated as such, or is it an official democratic instrument?
- Can policy influencing be democratically controlled so that transparency is guaranteed? If so, how would you like to see it controlled? Is regulation in place in your country or elsewhere that you know of?
- Does policy influencing in different political and cultural contexts, or other kinds of democracies, take place in the same way, or would you have to use different tactics or strategies?





## **CLASP Principles**

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

*“Who do you represent, how many are you, and how do I know that you tell the truth – or are you just voicing your own personal ideas?”*

Mr Pascal Lamy, WTO

Policy Influencing is about influencing the behaviour of representatives in government, business or CSSs, namely, those with decision-making power. If they take decisions, these decisions have an impact on larger groups or society as a whole. If you influence these decisions, you become co-responsible to a certain extent. Decision-makers, on the other hand, require reliable information. Most decision-makers apply a set of principles, consciously or unconsciously, in order to define if they have to take the person or organisation seriously.

The questions that have to be answered for both you as policy influencers, and your political targets, the decision-makers from government, private sector or CSOs and beneficiaries, are:

- why would people trust you?
- who or what gives you the right to interfere?
- how can you be transparent towards decision-makers, donors, constituency, and beneficiaries alike?
- how are you being helpful, and do you focus on win-win solutions?
- what is your power base and how do you use it?

The answers to these questions are translated into five so called PI-principles, abbreviated in the acronym CLASP, that stands for:

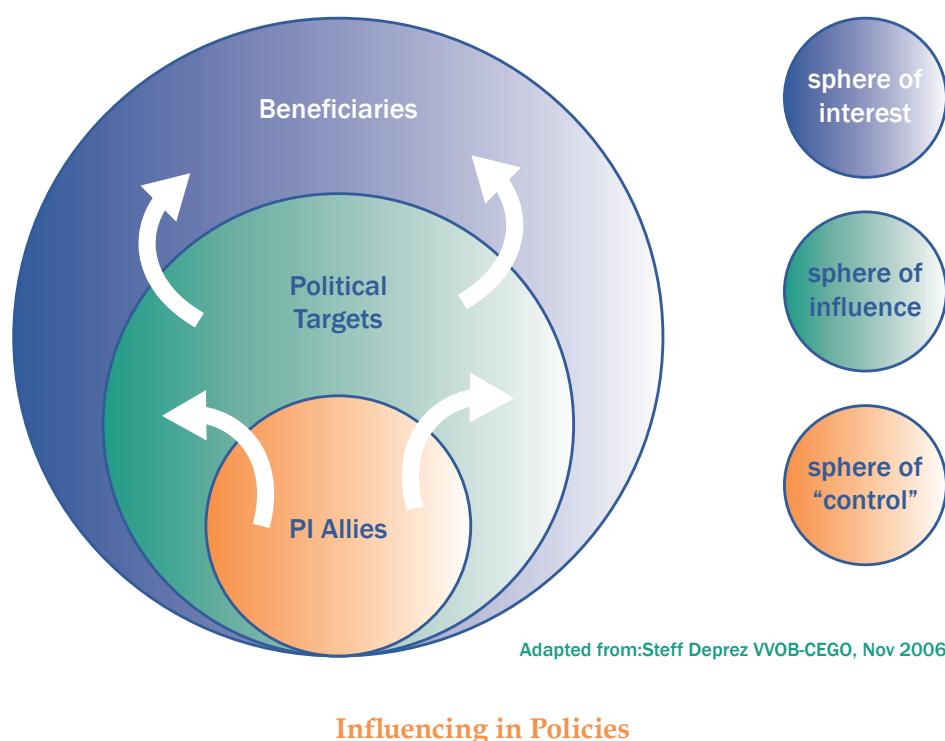
- C** ⇒ Credibility
- L** ⇒ Legitimacy
- A** ⇒ Accountability
- S** ⇒ Service - orientedness
- P** ⇒ Power based

In this chapter we will look at what PI-principles refer to and how we can prove to be CLASP-proof in policy influencing.

Influencing is obviously the key to policy influencing. It is mostly directed towards those actors you believe can change the lives of beneficiaries. One way of thinking of what and why you are influencing is by distinguishing different spheres of policy influencing. We will refer back to these spheres at times in the Manual.

- **Sphere of control** is the sphere where you will find your own organisation and your allies. You can, more or less, control their behaviour even though you may need to undertake special interventions for this such as influencing within your organisation or through alliance building, as presented in the Manual;
- **Sphere of influence** refers to the sphere in which you try to influence the behaviour of the political targets with the actors in the sphere of control. You cannot control their behaviour, or their reaction to your influencing. However, you can try to do this, as this is the result you want to achieve with your policy influencing intervention;
- **Sphere of interest** is relevant for CSOs as you believe that influencing the actors in this sphere will bring desired changes in the lives of your beneficiaries. Their change represents your interest. Your intervention is unlikely to bring about the desired change but it will contribute to it.

You must be aware, coming back to CLASP, that any change you effectuate, especially in your spheres of influence and interest, may also have an impact on others.



## CREDIBILITY: WHY WOULD PEOPLE TRUST YOU?

Credibility refers to the objective and subjective components of the believability of a source or message, also referred to as evidence-based advocacy. It has become an important topic since the mid 1990s, as the internet has increasingly become an information resource although obviously not all information is reliable. You can distinguish two key components:

1. trustworthiness is based more on subjective factors, but can include objective measurements such as established reliability;
2. expertise can be similarly subjectively perceived, but also includes relatively objective characteristics of the source or message (e.g. credentials, certification or information quality).

Secondary components of credibility include source dynamism (charisma) and physical attractiveness (see also Power in CLASP).

Credibility is about the trustworthiness of your organisation in other people's eyes and may relate to the information and data you use. You can increase your credibility by doing proper fact finding and research on the issue. In addition, you as a person believing in your message (based on facts and conviction) while bringing the message across is an important component.

### Indicators of Credibility

- constituency participation in fact finding and research;
- creating availability of data on your constituency;
- providing evidence and fact finding in a scientific way;
- doing research on policy and effects on your constituency;
- budgeting for credibility.

### Kosova Rehabilitation Center for Torture Victims, Kosovo under UNSCR 1244/99

A baseline study on torture and other human rights violations in places of detention is conducted by Kosova Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims (KRCT) – self-made checklists, experts, methodology used, indicators, scientific and evidence based data are used. Credibility is based on facts encountered in an established reality (trustworthiness) and data gathering was scientific and of high quality (expertise). This case presents a good example of credibility.

## **LEGITIMACY: WHO OR WHAT GIVES YOU THE RIGHT TO INTERFERE?**

The general definition of legitimacy as used in political science is the popular acceptance of a governing regime or law as an authority. Legitimacy is used:

- when describing a system of government, private sector and society itself—where government may be generalized to mean its wider “sphere of influence”;
- something becomes legitimate when one approves of it. Issues of legitimacy are linked to those of consent (the provision of approval or assent, particularly and especially after thoughtful consideration). For example, an institution is perceived as legitimate if approval for that institution is general among those people subject to its authority.

Legitimacy is considered a basic condition for rule, the argument being that without at least a minimal amount of legitimacy, a government will encounter frequent deadlocks or collapse in the long run. On the other hand, the government is not legitimate unless it is run with the consent of the governed.



Legitimate policy influencing therefore is based on *changing the behaviour* in the sphere of influence of the system based on the change of consensus of its citizens.

In policy influencing legitimacy looks at how legitimate or representative you are or your organisation is in taking a certain position. It also looks at if and how you have involved the people on behalf of whom you are allowed to speak. Governments and the commercial sector increasingly pay more attention to the legitimacy of lobbyists and campaigners.

In order for your organisation to be legitimate, you should set up the policy influencing process in such a way that it is done:

- by the beneficiaries and marginalized;
- with the beneficiaries and marginalized;
- for the beneficiaries and marginalized, guaranteeing previous involvement in defining the policy position, and given feed-back on the achieved results.

This means involving beneficiaries from the start of the process (planning). In chapter 7 (Beneficiary Participation), and 8 (Strategising With the Early Message) there is more information about how to include beneficiaries. However, at this point we would recommend that beneficiaries are increasingly made responsible for parts of the policy influencing process throughout your intervention.

### Indicators of Legitimacy

- involvement of your constituency in planning and implementation, but also in monitoring and evaluation;
- involvement of beneficiaries in planning and implementation, but also in monitoring and evaluation;
- joint positioning;
- meetings for preparation and feedback which could be referred to as awareness-raising;
- budgeting for legitimacy.

#### Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion, Turkey and Avalon, Serbia<sup>1</sup>

Legitimacy is based on the involvement of volunteers and beneficiaries in petitions or research, and the presentation of the report by one of them. The registration of the NGO's guarantees the presence of a board and members involved as the constituency.

Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion (TEMA Foundation) worked with volunteers to collect one million signatures.

The environmental association "Avalon Serbia" and United Women of Banja Luka conducted a research in 13 municipalities of northeast BiH centred around 20 women per municipality in the surveys. The main goal of the project was to inform women from urban and rural areas about their social rights and empower them to use these rights. The report was presented in a public meeting by women's representatives of the research.

(Example on Legitimacy)

<sup>1</sup> See also beneficiary consultation

## ACCOUNTABILITY: HOW CAN YOU BE TRANSPARENT TOWARDS STAKEHOLDERS?

Accountability is a concept in ethics and governance with several meanings. It is often used synonymously with such concepts as responsibility, transparency, answerability, blameworthiness, liability, and other terms associated with the expectation of account-giving. As an aspect of governance, it has been central to discussions related to problems in the public sector, non-profit and private and corporate worlds.

In *leadership* roles, accountability is the personal acknowledgment and assumption of responsibility for actions, to explain and be answerable for resulting consequences. This covers products, decisions, and policies including the administration, governance, and implementation within the scope of the role encompassing the obligation to report.

Accountability is the way you prove to all stakeholders that you are reliable as an organization or a person. This proof must be made accessible to your stakeholders.

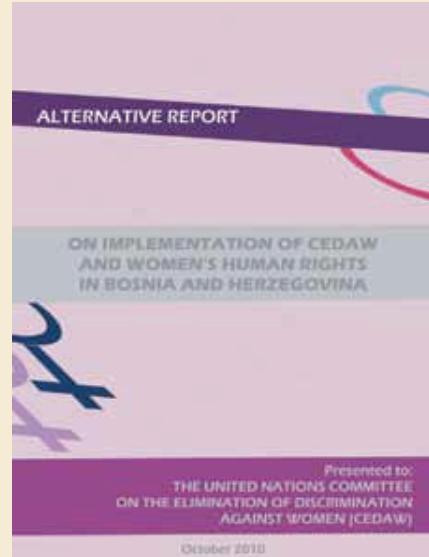
In general people distinguish between backward and forward accountability.

- **Backward accountability** takes into account the consultation and involvement of your constituency, beneficiaries, members and board or alliance. In order to realize that you will have to organize meetings at different levels, in order to get a mandate, prepare policy influencing positions and feedback on results of interventions;
- **Forward accountability** is about being transparent about your constituency, board, relations with other stakeholders outside your direct sphere of control, organisation, network or alliance. It takes place in the sphere of influence in which you want to bring about behavioural change. It has to be supported by publishing of verifiable data, objective certification, transparency on membership and budgets and spending, and be accessible for the world outside your organisation or network. The following information should be provided in the public domain in an easily accessible forum such as a website:
  - facts and figures;
  - reports and research;
  - financial data and audits reports.

### Lara, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Lara, an organization of women, organizes 'Women on Wednesday' meetings with women and local officials, an example of downward accountability, and thus proof of legitimacy, where they present reports and facts, providing proof of credibility on the issues debated on to officials. This represents upward accountability. The donors and board of Lara receive half-yearly reports on all progress and finances - upward accountability - which are also published on the website for the broader public, members and beneficiaries, which constitutes downward accountability.

*(Example on Accountability)*



### Indicators of Accountability

- your credibility can be proven by public statements that can be supported by verifiable data, fact sheets and research reports;
- your legitimacy can be proven by information on beneficiaries, constituencies and boards;
- involvement of beneficiaries can be proven by related activities which are public;
- your financial data are public, sound and transparent;
- you are budgeting for accountability.

## SERVICE ORIENTEDNESS

Service orientedness is more than just delivering a service, it is also your attitude when influencing policies and, thus, representing your beneficiaries. It is about you taking up the role of a leader. It also has to do with your attitude towards your political targets by respecting their personal integrity and fulfilling part of their needs.

Service orientedness therefore finds its origin in theories on servant leadership in which the leader has a serving attitude in serving its followers for the sake of a 'greater good'.

*"The servant leader is servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. He or she is sharply different from the person who is leader first. The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served." (Greenleaf, 1970)*

Nevertheless, in service delivery towards all stakeholders involved, such as beneficiaries, volunteers, constituencies, political targets, companies and the donor community, it is crucial that you do not disappoint them, simply by following some rules of politeness. These are areas of cultural sensitivity and can, of course, vary dramatically between countries, regions and social classes.

This means that you stick to your word.

### Indicators of Service Orientedness

#### Attitude indicators:

- serve your constituency, beneficiaries or citizens you represent;
- do not treat your targets as your enemies;
- leave your pride at home – be a servant leader;

#### Performance indicators:

- do as you promise, i.e. deliver promised facts, details, information, reports, and answers to questions that are relevant to your constituency and political targets;
- make your deliverables of high quality;
- deliver the information in time, so that your beneficiaries can still respond, and your political targets are able to reflect and use the information.

### **Women Action, Montenegro**

Women Action contributed to the MDG 3 report from Montenegro by participating in and designing a report about women's positions, challenges and plans. It was a detailed, official and concrete report delivered in a timely manner.

Service-orientedness is shown in the exact description of the role of Women's Action: not more, not less. The report added value to an official UN report and was delivered on time.

(Example on Service Orientedness)



## POWER BASED

*“Power can be defined as the ability to achieve a purpose: whether it is good or bad depends on how you deal with the powers you have.”*

Martin Luther King

*Power* is an integral part of life, yet power turns out to be a difficult topic to address and work with. Power exists in relations between people, between organisations, in friendships and relations, in marriage, in networks and alliances, in political parties – and most certainly in the dynamics of politics.

Power can seem especially monolithic and impenetrable for people who have lived under regimes that deny or repress citizen participation. Our experience has shown that people engaging in politics for the first time, and even more seasoned activists, often see power as sinister and unchanging. Such a one dimensional perspective can paralyse effective analysis and action.

In reality, power is both dynamic and multidimensional, changing according to context, circumstance and interest. Its expressions and forms can range from domination and resistance to collaboration and transformation. This is good news.

However, programmes promoting policy influencing rarely incorporate an understanding of underlying power relationships and interests despite the importance that analysts place on these dynamics. The failure to deal with the complexities of power can lead to missed opportunities and poor strategic choices. Worse, it can be risky and counterproductive not only for advocates, but also for donors and others promoting development and democracy. Experts and practitioners in the fields of conflict resolution and democracy-building increasingly stress the importance of incorporating power into their analysis and actions.

Demystifying and revealing the many faces of power will give you the chance to deal with power in a conscious and responsible way. We look at power as an individual, collective, and political force that can either undermine or empower citizens and their organisations. It is a force that alternatively can facilitate, hasten, or halt the process of change promoted through policy influencing.

### Four Levels of Power

*Power based* means that you have to prove how strong you are in terms of how many people do you represent and how confident you are with regard to your policy influencing issue.

It is helpful to analyse power by looking at four levels of power, based on Ghandi's teachings:

*Power Over* is the most commonly recognized form of power. It has many negative associations for people, such as repression, force, coercion, discrimination, corruption, and abuse. Power

in this sense is seen as a win-lose kind of relationship. Having power involves taking it from someone else, and then using it to dominate and prevent others from gaining it. In politics, those who control resources and decision-making have power over those without it, the powerless.

When people are denied access to important resources like land, healthcare, and jobs *power over* perpetuates inequality, injustice, and poverty. In the absence of alternative models and relationships, people repeat the *power over* pattern in their personal relationships, communities, and institutions. This is also true of people who come from a marginalized or “powerless” group.

When they gain power in leadership positions, they sometimes imitate the oppressor. For this reason, advocates cannot expect that the experience of being excluded prepares people to become democratic leaders. New forms of leadership and decision-making must be explicitly defined, taught, and rewarded in order to promote more democratic forms of power. Practitioners and academics have searched for more collaborative ways of exercising and using power.



Three alternatives, namely, *power with*, *power to*, and *power within*, offer positive ways of expressing power that create the possibility of forming more equitable relationships. By affirming people’s capacity to act creatively, they provide some basic principles for developing empowering strategies in your policy influencing intervention.

*Power with* refers to finding common ground among different interests and building collective strength. Based on mutual support, solidarity, and collaboration, power with multiplies individual talents and knowledge. Power with can help build bridges across different interests to transform or reduce social conflict and promote equitable relations. Advocacy groups seek allies and build coalitions drawing on the notion of power with.

*Power to* refers to the unique potential of every person to shape his or her life and world. When based on mutual support, it opens up the possibilities of joint action, or power with. Citizen education and leadership development for policy influencing are based on the belief that each individual has the power to make a difference.

*Power within* refers to a person’s sense of self-awareness and self-knowledge. It includes an ability to recognize individual differences while respecting others. Power within is the capacity to imagine and have hope. It affirms the common human search for dignity and fulfillment.

### Examples of Four Levels of Power

**Power over:** anybody in a formal hierarchical position in society, like the president, the political leader or the head of an organisation.

**Power to:** all the research and reports mentioned are examples of this.

**Power with:** all the beneficiary consultation, the collaboration with volunteers, the alliance building and networking, the involvement of boards and constituencies are all examples of this.

**Power within:** the power of believing in your own message, and to convince others.

### Indicators for Power Based PI

- Power over: the position you have in society, an organisation or in politics, which is most commonly referred to as the only power base, increases and maintains the image of your organisation and its relation with its constituency and beneficiaries;
- Power with: your beneficiaries and allies, working together in joined and concerted action, a stronger way of working than doing it all by yourself, and participating in or collaborating with networks and alliances on your PI issues;
- Power to: your knowledge on the policy topic, and development of evidence-based research with beneficiary involvement;
- Power within: your attitude, reliability and self-confidence, and having a servant leadership style of working as a networker and as a policy influencer;
- Budgeting for preparing and strengthening your power base, through networking and alliance building, communication and transparency on websites, research etc.

In the final part of the Manual there are a variety of tools and frameworks for mapping and analysing power and interests.

## TIPS for practical application and facilitation

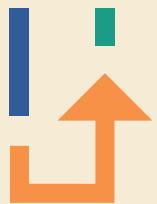
Looking at the different cases presented by TACSO members, it becomes clear that most organisations use some CLASP principles as a matter of course. This chapter helps you to become aware which principles you use, so that you can use them deliberately, and which ones you still have to work on. By analysing your ways of working based on CLASP you will make your policy influencing more effective immediately.

Using the principles of CLASP in all PI preparations and deliverables will make you well prepared in most situations. It is at the heart of the PI Cycle and must be applied in every step of the PI Cycle. CLASP must be part of your preparation or when you prepare yourself for a lobby conversation, media exposure or expert meeting. Opponents always try to tackle you on a weak point, so be prepared.

Budgeting for CLASP principles is crucial to any effective and CLASP-based policy influencing. Organisations frequently simply forget to budget for things that support CLASP-based policy influencing. If you do not create the means and prove that you need the means to support your policy influencing, the lack of budgeting is proof that you do not take CLASP seriously yourself and this then undermines your credibility, legitimacy, accountability, service and power base. CLASP-based budgeting, to the contrary, supports your policy influencing.

## QUESTIONS for further reflection

- When you think of your opponents or political targets – the people you want to influence – what would be the difference if you do use CLASP principles, in comparison to interventions of other organisations that do NOT use CLASP? And why?
- How can you convince your managers and donor organisations to create a budget for CLASP-based policy influencing?
- How can you show to the outside world - your audiences – that your work is CLASP-based? What would you use and when?



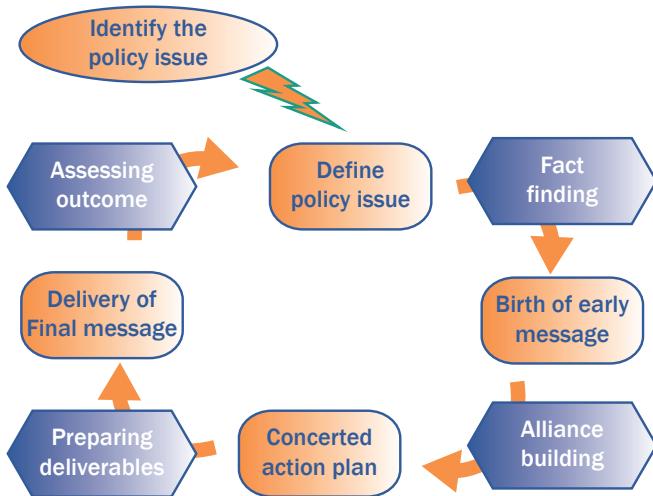
## **Introducing the Policy Influencing Cycle**

## INTRODUCTION OF THE POLICY INFLUENCING CYCLE

*“A cycle is a road map that you can and have to walk time and time again; then you will enjoy the landscape fully.”*

Ger Roebeling, MDF Training & Consultancy

This Manual is constructed along the lines of the Policy Influencing Cycle (PIC). The Policy Influencing Cycle has a number of interlinked steps and deliverables to be achieved after each step. It is complemented by tools in order to achieve these deliverables. The PIC is presented below:



In the orange boxes you will find the products or deliverables, while in the blue boxes you will find what you need to do in order to get to the product or deliverable. The products are the bricks on which you build your policy influencing intervention, while the things you have to do is the mortar keeping it all together.

In this Manual we will present the products, as well as what you have to do to get there. Obviously, this is complemented by how you get to the products by introducing a number of tools and approaches. Ways of using these tools and approaches in trainings or planning workshops are introduced in the Toolbox to this Manual.

In Part 2 of this Manual we will focus primarily on preparation and planning for policy influencing, which is the first quadrant of the cycle. In part 3 we will look at the second quadrant and in part 4 quadrants 3 and 4 will be discussed.

## USING THE POLICY INFLUENCING CYCLE

A cycle like the PIC gives the reader structure and provides a useful road-map. At each stage you know what to do and what sequence to do it in. However, as with each cycle, the Policy Influencing Cycle is a graphic representation of a complex and often irrational process. Within each step the process is non-linear. This means that you will be presented a number of tools in a particular sequence. For example, in step one you will end with an early message and we will present ways of getting there, presenting elements of beneficiary consultation, stakeholder analysis and policy process mapping. These are presented in a linear way, but as you go from one tool to another you will have to re-visit previous tools and the results stemming from their use. Thus you may have identified a policy issue very early on, but with the additional information you have from the beneficiaries and stakeholder analysis you may have to redefine the policy issue.

Where possible we will note this process of going back and forth throughout the cycle. However, at this point it is important to note that a cycle is a handy way of grasping processes, but it is by no means an exact blueprint of the planning, monitoring and evaluation process of each policy influencing intervention.

At the centre of the PIC is CLASP. The reason for this is that at each stage of your intervention, whether in planning, implementation or evaluation, you will need to check whether you still fulfil CLASP principles. A major issue is, for example, that you keep consulting the beneficiaries and including them in your intervention in some way. If not, you will have a legitimacy gap. This gap is one that we have identified quite often. We will make sure this continues to be highlighted at the start of each chapter, when indicating what part of the cycle we are at.



## RATIONALE BEHIND THE POLICY INFLUENCING CYCLE

There are two main reasons for having a structured cycle like the PIC:

- ↳ **In many cases, organisations start policy influencing activities without proper planning**

Organisations undertaking policy influencing interventions often do not set up a strategy to understand the intended results or even impact of activities and fail to cooperate effectively on results. The same problems can be identified for project management. The underlying problem is that naturally when a certain problem is first identified organisations jump towards finding solutions and executing activities with a view to solving the problem. Just think of how many times you have seen organisations in their projects and policy influencing interventions jump from the ‘identification of the policy issue’ to ‘delivering the final message’ without going through the other steps. Using the PIC forces you to think about planning, but also about keeping your beneficiaries on board and such things as budgeting for policy influencing and monitoring and evaluation.

- ↳ **It makes organisations aware that a policy influencing intervention is part of a larger development strategy**

In our experience too many policy influencing interventions are done in total isolation of other types of interventions working towards the same goal or they stop at a point where true change has not been achieved yet. For example a law is passed, but there is no follow-up on its implementation. In the following chapters you will be introduced to planning methods, the most important of which is the Theory of Change. A Theory of Change allows you to understand a policy influencing intervention in the larger context of other interventions to achieve true change in the lives of beneficiaries.

## TIPS for practical application and facilitation

The policy influencing cycle is helpful to getting started with a policy issue. It is not a road map that you can follow, expecting that you are going to be successful after having closed the circle at the last step. The red bricks are the concrete stepping stones, and the green mortar is the work that you have to do in order to reach the next brick: it connects the stepping stones.

In the cycle you will address all the different steps repeatedly, and you will use all the tools alongside the cycle in order to keep aligned and effective in your policy influencing. Use CLASP as your quality check list, and your effectiveness will increase.

## QUESTIONS for further reflection

- Does your organisation identify policy issues while developing its vision, mission and strategy?
- Is time and budget reserved in your organisation to go through all steps of the policy influencing cycle?



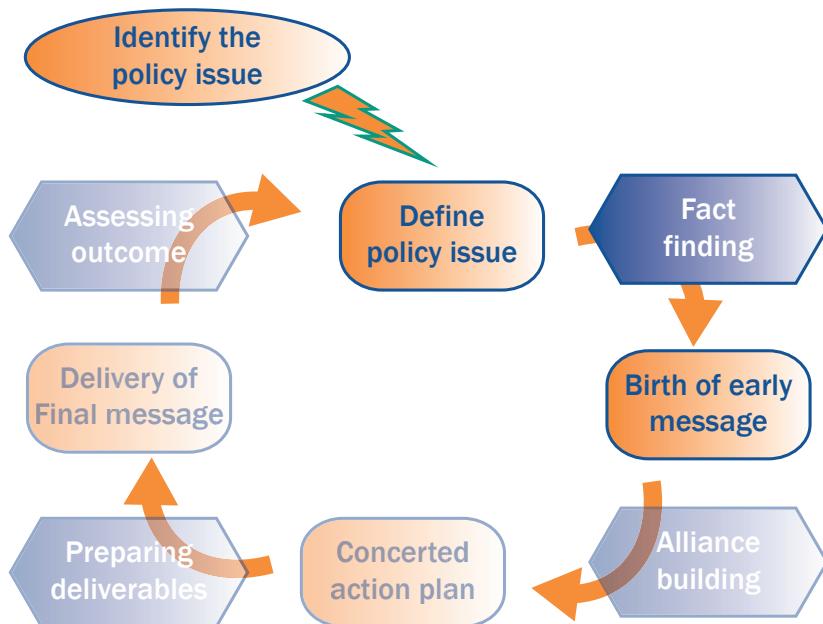
## **Part II**

# **Birth of the Early Message**

## INTRODUCTION: WHERE ARE WE IN THE POLICY INFLUENCING CYCLE?

*“Truth is compared in Scripture to a streaming fountain; if her waters flow not in a perpetual progression, they sicken into a muddy pool of conformity and tradition.”*

John Milton



A commonly heard question about policy influencing is, how does one decide to do policy influencing on a particular issue? How does Amnesty International decide to take up a worldwide campaign on the rights of women, or how does Fair Food decide to lobby for sustainable production of soya? How do you decide to start influencing policies and behaviour with regard to access to official documents in Kosovo or try and influence stakeholders to have better implementation of laws protecting women from domestic violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina?

There really is not a simple answer to this. However, it is the preliminary step towards working on policy influencing. Somehow you decided there is a situation that needs changing through policy change or the behavioural change of decision makers. And you have decided that you will work on this, instead or besides other ways of working on the issue. For example, in the case mentioned above of domestic violence you may also work on psycho-social assistance for women, or work on educating women further so they have perspectives on the labour market to become economically independent. These would not entail policy influencing per se.

We will start by exploring how you can identify and define a policy issue. It is useful to bear in mind the somewhat complex and opaque nature of these steps. Identification never just pops up, neither is it a purely rational process that can be placed in tools and approaches. We will present the most common sources of identification (chapter 5). Then we will present a way to further define the policy issue through Theory of Change (chapter 6). This planning methodology will help you throughout the cycle. The birth of the early message is a further refining of the policy issue and it is essential to start strategising with it. We will go through a number of essential steps: beneficiary consultation (chapter 7), stakeholder analysis (chapter 8) and mapping the policy process (chapter 9). You will need to go back and forth in these steps in order to end up with a clearer picture of the policy issue: the early message.



*The manifestation NGO Days 2011, Pula, Croatia*



## **Identification of the Policy Issue**

## IMPORTANCE OF THIS STEP

*"If the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear to man as it is, infinite. For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thru' narrow chinks of his cavern."*

William Blake

Credibility refers to the *objective* and *subjective* components of the *believability of a source or message*. Credibility is thus a mix of *Trustworthiness* (as based more on subjective factors, but can include objective measurements such as established reliability like research and facts), *Expertise* - also referred to as *evidence based advocacy* - (which can be similarly subjectively perceived, but also includes relatively objective characteristics of the source or message (e.g. credentials, certification or information quality) and finally the *persons' charisma and physical attractiveness* (which is a subjective factor only)).

It has become an important topic since the mid-1990s, as internet has increasingly become an information resource though not all information is reliable.

At some point in time you deliberately decide to intervene by influencing policies. Either as a result of a more or less rational process, an obstacle you find in your path or otherwise based purely on feelings. There is absolutely no clarity yet about what you will be focusing on specifically or how and with whom you will do it. In order to be able to start doing that, you will need to define the issue further.

### **Example of identifying policy issue**

Sanitation in rural areas in Ukraine is a problem due to the deterioration of the plumbing and sewerage after communism, and the use of pit latrines in densely populated villages. Ground and drinking water is polluted, and babies die of blue tongue disease. The solution is to install *ecosanitation toilets* – a closed system in which the detriments are collected in containers and used as fertilizer after compostation.

Unfortunately, no regulation is in place in the country, and therefore it is forbidden to build these eco-toilets.

You have to decide now: to *change the policies and regulations* related to sanitation and drinking water in Ukraine, or find another practical solution within the limits of the law.

Secondly, policy influencing interventions look for solutions of large scale and complex problems in society. The success of your policy intervention depends on how you select your issue, with whom you select your issue, know who else cares about your issue and how well it is understood by all. Both facts show the importance of this step of taking a conscious decision to influence policies. It is not easy, it is serious business, and it has to be well performed.

In organisations, the process of identifying and defining the policy issue (following chapter) in many cases will go hand-in-hand. However, we deliberately separate them to show that deciding on policy influencing is something you do consciously and plan for consciously. It is not a side-activity – it is part of a bigger organisational goal, as will be shown in this Manual. You should assure that others within your organisation, especially director(s), manager(s) and board support you. As you will see in the rest of the Manual, policy influencing takes time, costs money, and its results are often long-term and quite difficult to measure. For this you will need their support: their conscious decision.



## SEVERAL WAYS OF IDENTIFYING AN ISSUE

To identify a Policy Issue is an important step. The reasons to start a policy influencing initiative can differ. It can be a personal issue, or programmatic obstacles can occur, or policy regulations change which effect the implementation of your activities. Broadly, you can distinguish policy influencing as:

- an institutional activity;
- a result of specific policy decisions and violations or lack of fulfilment of citizens' and human rights.

### Policy influencing as an institutional activity

As an organisation you work towards a certain vision and mission and you contribute to that by implementing certain activities as part of your strategy. In your projects and programmes you aim to contribute to the mission and the vision. In sum you have a *theory* on how *change* occurs in your context and on the topic(s) you work on. One step in that *theory of change* may be to influence policies and to change behaviour of decision-makers. Thus in the way you look at how change will happen, you believe that policies and decision-makers need to be changed. If you have made a conscious choice to undertake such policy influencing and changing of behaviour as an organisation, as a way to achieve your mission and vision, this then becomes an institutional activity.

For example, a programme on food security may leave you needing to address new ways of getting food, as well as having better protection for local farmers through policy changes nationally and internationally. The important point here, for this Manual, is that you make a conscious decision to focus your work also on changing policies.

Developing a Theory of Change for your organisation, based on your vision and mission helps you think about strategies, such as policy influencing, and their position in your organisation. In the next chapter the Theory of Change as a planning tool for your intervention will be presented. Be aware that you can also use the Theory of Change methodology for analysing your organisation, its vision, the way the mission seemingly contributes to the vision, and the subsequent strategies in your organisation to achieve mission and vision.

### Philanthropy, Serbia

Philanthropy made a conscious decision to undertake policy influencing activities (advocacy) for the terminally ill. Philanthropy is a faith-based organisation linked to the Serbian Orthodox Church. They have worked on assisting and supporting vulnerable groups and the marginalised for two decades. In the beginning this was done mainly through direct assistance. The Church realised they should be working more holistically and pro-actively to support the vulnerable and marginalised. Due to their unique position and with their potential to locate, recruit and gather representatives of local stakeholders and social partners, they realised they were well placed to raise awareness on discrimination and stigmatisation. The awareness-raising on specific issues has led to advocacy in decision-making processes. One of the ways they work is by emphasising more beneficiary participation in decision-making processes, and also through capacity building of those beneficiaries. Thus, the content of the work, namely work for vulnerable and marginalised people was always part of the mission of Philanthropy. But the decision to work on decision-making processes and actively advocate for change was motivated by expertise built up in work and the realisation that change would occur when doing this. A conscious decision was made to have advocacy as an institutional activity.

### Policy decisions and human rights

The external political environment sometimes changes due to the creation of new rules and regulations, or even laws. This can take organisations by surprise. When these decisions create an obstacle, policy influencing on these changes and their consequences will be considered. A popular example is the reaction by many states to the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, known as 9/11. One reaction was to bring in strict anti-terrorism laws. In many cases these laws also affected freedom of association, freedom of movement and freedom of expression of legitimate CSOs. Many CSOs were thus forced to start influencing government policies with regard to anti-terrorism measures. Not doing so put their work in jeopardy. There are organisations that take such a change, especially when it is long-lasting, and make working on this core to their work. Then policy influencing becomes an intervention among others and the organisation's identification of the policy issue becomes an institutional activity as noted above.

#### ***Example of identifying policy issue on human rights***

Often the two ways of identifying a policy issue start in a much less rational fashion. An injustice takes place and one person or several people decide to take action on this based on their own feelings. Amnesty International started that way, but is now, obviously, taking a more systematic approach to policy issue identification. While not being a separate category of policy issue identification in this Manual, we recognise that this is often how it starts!

## TIPS for practical application and facilitation

There are so many organisations nowadays who feel they need to work on policy influencing as a complement to their 'normal' work. Inversely there are many organisations already working on policy influencing without ever naming it as such. The important thing here is to realise that policy influencing should be a conscious decision for an organisation.

A good way to find out on what basis organisations are undertaking policy influencing is simply by asking why they are doing it and why they believe they should be doing it and not someone else.

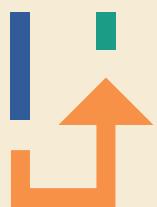
Common answers to the 'why' questions are:

- we got information from stakeholders/beneficiaries about problems;
- we discovered a problem in earlier projects;
- we had the feeling something should be done on this;
- we have been working on the issue for so long.

Those answers are often linked to the two types of identification described above. However, in most instances the first time policy influencing came up as an activity will be largely based on pure instinct and guts feeling. Identifying where an issue comes from becomes crucial as a starting point for further identification and formulation of a first message or position. Reflect back on this part once this has been elaborated upon more.

## QUESTIONS for further reflection

- How many policy influencing issues are being taken up in your organisation? How many are taken up rationally as a policy influencing issue? Did you think about these issues as being policy influencing issues? If so, what made you take them on as an organisation?
- Is the policy influencing issue embedded in the organisation? And is policy influencing in itself embedded in the organisation?



## Defining the Policy Issue

*"If you don't know where you are going, any road will take you there."*

Lewis Carroll

We have just indicated how you identify a policy issue. Now you have an abstract idea about what you will be working on, but that is insufficient. You need to have a clear and concrete message. Without such a message it becomes very difficult to strategise, identify who you will target and how. The first step to take after the identification of the policy issue is to further define the issue.

While, in theory, the identification could be an exercise you undertake yourself, as an individual or organisation, the further identification needs to be done in a more participative manner. In order to further define the issue we propose you make a contextual analysis by analysing actors, factors and your own organisation.

You can then use these elements further to determine a Theory of Change. This approach will help you identify how you believe change will occur regarding the issue you are working on and how policy influencing interventions are part of a larger strategy.



## HOW TO FURTHER DEFINE THE POLICY ISSUE

As explained above the PIC does not present a linear process and the different steps cannot always be distinguished. Thus, you may already have done quite a lot of refining of your policy issue when identifying the issue as presented above, in particular when the policy issue is part of your institutional activity.

In that case you have probably made quite an elaborate analysis of the problems and the context you operate in, leading you to see that, in order to achieve results in your area of work, you may need to undertake particular policy influencing interventions.

We propose that the further definition of the policy issue is done through a planning method called Theory of Change. Before being able to do a Theory of Change you must have a thorough understanding of the context in which you operate and the context in which you will work on the identified issue.



## CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

The contextual analysis presents the baseline of your work. It is the departure point for planning your future interventions. Having a good contextual analysis allows you to make informed choices for your interventions. The contextual analysis presents the situation as it is now and provides the basis for thinking about how the situation should be. It is here that you start understanding more about the issue you work on, thus making it more precise, and elaborating on what and who to change and why this change should happen.

A contextual analysis should contain at least three types of analysis that sometimes overlap:

- analysis of actors;
- analysis of factors;
- analysis of your own organisation.

These analyses are supplemented by a planning methodology called Theory of Change. This planning methodology helps you further define the policy issue and how to place your policy influencing intervention in a wider context.

A popular participatory tool to make a contextual analysis and bring together information you have in a comprehensive structural fashion is the ‘problem tree.’ An example of its use is in the final part of this Manual. It is an extremely useful tool though it must be moderated very carefully and the subject of analysis should be well-defined. It is often complemented with an ‘objective tree.’ This can be a useful planning tool, but on the next pages you will find another planning approach called Theory of Change. Particularly for policy influencing interventions we would recommend you try this approach. The Theory of Change approach is especially useful to analyse complex situations. It is often those situations you will be working on in terms of policy influencing.

### Analysis of actors

A thorough analysis of actors is made in chapter *Beneficiary Participation*. In that chapter the analysis is focused on determining who are the most important and influential actors concerning and related to your issue. This serves two purposes that may overlap:

- who are you going to be working with in your intervention in planning and implementation. How will you work with them, at what level of participation in planning and implementation;

- strategising, or who will you target in your intervention, with whom will you do so and how will you do so.

At this stage, in analysing the context, you will want to have some idea of who the stakeholders are who play a role in the issue. It is best to start listing stakeholders with others and get a rough idea of their role regarding the issue to list stakeholders, determine their influence and importance with regard to the issue you are working on. You will already need to do this analysis with others, including beneficiaries. The way you determine who you will do this with is usually based on your own knowledge and experience of the subject. Your knowledge and experience will not be sufficient after this. You will need to work with others who complement your knowledge and experience. In undertaking the various analyses in order to determine who you will be working with in the planning and implementation stage of your intervention and how you will work with them, you may need to do the stakeholder analysis a number of times and thus make it more complete and precise as you go along.

### **IMPORTANT**

*Do the stakeholder analysis with others, especially beneficiaries. Determine who will be included in the planning and implementation process and how they will be included. Determine with them what strategy you will use in order to have a successful intervention.*

## Analysis of factors

A second pillar of the contextual analysis is an analysis of factors. These are factors that are likely to influence your organisation and/or your policy influencing intervention on the issue. They may be internal to your organisation, as well as external. A common tool used to identify relevant factors is the PESTLE analysis. These are all types of factors you should take into account when analysing a context. The PESTLE analysis as a form of factor's analysis is also used as the Threats and Opportunities part of a SWOT analysis.

*PESTLE stands for:  
Political, Economic,  
Social, Technological,  
Legal, and  
Environmental.*

In undertaking such an analysis you can get lost quite quickly, and end up analysing too much. Therefore it is important to look only at the context relevant to the issue. In analysing

the factors the issue may become more specific. Thus the analysis process itself may help you further define the policy issue.

The PESTLE analysis is further explained in the Toolbox of this Manual.

The factors analysis can be supplemented by an environmental scan. Such a scan is particularly useful when you have a more specific idea of your intervention. It allows you to understand the factors in the context of your specific intervention analysing:

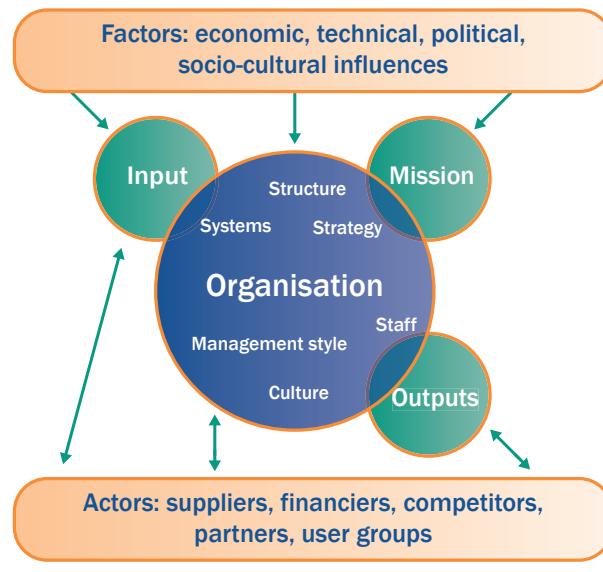
- the probability of the factor (if it is a factor likely to affect the intervention in the future, such as war, natural disasters, or political changes);
- the potential impact if it happens;
- the influence you have over the factor.

The environmental scan is further explained in the last part of the Manual.

## Analysis of your own organisation

This part is often forgotten, but we do consider it an important pillar in the contextual analysis. Analysing your own organisation helps you place yourself within the context, in particular regarding the issue. It also helps determine whether you are best placed to intervene based on internal aspects of the organisation. And it helps identify potential bottlenecks or lack of capacity in working on the issue.

It is always useful to undertake a full analysis of your organisation. However, time and resources are often a problem. Additionally, for the purpose of the contextual analysis it is not needed.



Integrated Organisation Model

A useful way to analyse the organisation is by taking the Integrated Organisation Model (IOM) developed by MDF. The IOM is a model that can be applied to describe, to analyse and to diagnose organisations. A graphic representation is below:

In the IOM you find the different elements we dealt with above: actors and factors. This places the organisation within the context. These actors and factors influence the organisation. The organisation is represented as the entity that converts inputs into outputs, and different aspects within the organisation make this possible, or slow down the process.

The mission is semi-external to the organisation as it is oriented towards the outside and comprises aspects of internal functioning. A good mission indicates clearly what an organisation should, and should not, do.

The output of an organisation comprises all material and immaterial products and services delivered by the organisation to its various target groups such as clients or customers.

The inputs of the organisation include all the resources available for generating the products and services of the organisation.

The internal elements of the IOM:

- **structure:** the structure of an organisation can be defined as the formal and informal division and coordination of activities and responsibilities.
- **systems:** this comprises the internal processes that regulate the functioning of the organisation.
- **management style:** can best be described as the characteristic pattern of behaviour of the management.
- **strategy:** refers to the way the mission is translated into concrete objectives and approaches.
- **staff:** refers to all activities, rules and regulations related to staff motivation and utilisation and development of staff capacity.
- **culture:** is defined as the shared values and norms of people in the organisation.

With regard to the issue you want to work on, specifically in undertaking policy influencing interventions, you should already scan whether your organisation is best placed to do so and what you would need additionally within the organisation or from other actors to have a greater chance of success.

### When to undertake an IOM analysis?

A 'quick scan' of your organisation can be useful in undertaking a contextual analysis. It can be equally useful, and perhaps more exact, to do it once you have a more concrete idea of what your intervention aims to achieve concretely and how it wants to do so. This would be after undertaking a Theory of Change exercise. In that case you have a more concrete idea about what you will do and what is needed for that in your organisation.

A checklist can be found in the last part of this Manual. Do use it as a reference. This means you do not need to answer every single question. Only those that are relevant to your organisation and your issue.

## How to collect information?

With advocacy and policy influencing it is extremely important to keep checking the context. It sets the baseline upon which you base your policy influencing and as such informs the issue you are working on, how you are working on it and with whom. Changes in the context, such as factors, actors and your own organisation will influence all these aspects. More so than with many other projects there are many variables that may influence the context, many of which are probably outside of your control. This also makes it very difficult to measure the effectiveness of policy influencing. See the chapter on monitoring and evaluation of policy influencing.

Collecting relevant information is thus extremely important. For this there are several practical ways of undertaking contextual analysis with regard to the issue you will be working on. You can undertake surveys, questionnaires, focus group discussions, desk studies, or academic research. You can consult stakeholders, such as governmental officials, civil servants, other NGOs and prominent figures. Media outlets may be useful and a lot of information can be found on the internet.

A good way to collect information is not only from other stakeholders, but also with other stakeholders. Getting a different perspective in the type of information you collect may be very useful in your analysis, it builds up relationships you may need to foster and creates a mutual understanding of the issue.

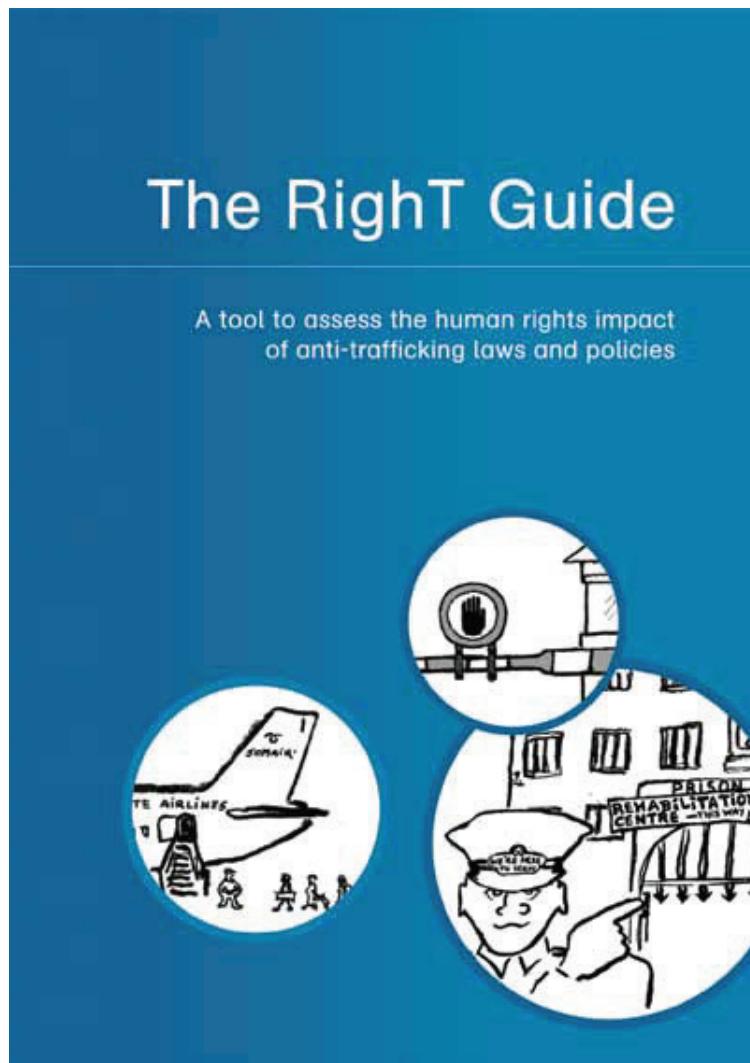
## Contextual analysis and human rights-based approach

Applying a rights-based approach puts a legal framework to your policy influencing work from the perspective of human rights as ratified in the UN Conventions on Human Rights. It may lead you to undertake a contextual analysis focusing particularly on rights, rights-holders, duty-bearers and factors related to power and marginalisation. Such an analysis can be done using the different tools provided in this Manual.

An importance and influence matrix as explained in chapter 7 would then focus more on power relations and the PESTLE will be very much translated into whether these rights are being violated or not. However, there are also a number of specific tools that help you develop a contextual analysis focusing particularly on the situation regarding human rights.

An interesting example of survey-like contextual analysis on a specific issue and continuous monitoring of the issue is undertaken by Transparency International Turkey. They have a toll-free hotline and other citizen-engagement outreach to report cases of corruption. The information gathered from this is used to undertake evidence-based advocacy for structural reform.

There are a number of tools that guide you in making a contextual analysis based solely on linking certain problems you identify to potential human rights violations. Examples of this are the Right Guide developed by Aim for human rights and further developed by Rights4Change in the Netherlands. These tools consecutively allow you to make a contextual analysis based on, for instance, Health Rights of women and the impact of anti-trafficking measures on human rights. Most of these tools use a human rights-based approach which will be touched upon in the next chapter on beneficiary consultation.



## THEORY OF CHANGE

In order to discover how to achieve the improved situation for your beneficiaries and who and what changes before that change for the beneficiaries happens, you must agree with others, especially your beneficiaries, what change should occur in the end, or vision, and how to get there. This step-by-step process from how the situation is now to the vision of the future is your Theory of Change. You will look towards playing a role in making the Theory happen.

### What is Theory of Change?

Increasingly it is proposed that organisations working on policy influencing, either as their core business or as part of a programme or project, formulate their theory of change. In this chapter we will provide an overview of the Theory of Change. If you do a Theory of Change, it is recommended you read more materials about it or get the process facilitated.<sup>2</sup> When we talk about Theory of Change we talk about a certain approach in project management. However, we realise a method often becomes so complicated and full of a set rules that it almost seems undertaking the method is an end in itself. The proposed methodology below is one you can adapt to your own context. The only thing we want you to do, in small steps, is agree on what you want to change and agree on your theory of how that change will come about. When you do that with others, you are forced to be precise and explain why you believe change occurs. Agreeing on that also is an important aspect of the approach.

At its most basic, a theory of change explains how a group of early and intermediate accomplishments sets the stage for producing long-range results. A more complete theory of change articulates the assumptions about the process through which change will occur, and specifies the ways in which all of the required early and intermediate outcomes related to achieving the desired long-term change will be brought about and documented as they occur.

*Source: The Community Builder's Approach to Theory of Change<sup>3</sup>*

Theory of Change is a planning methodology describing how change processes are envisioned. For planning on policy influencing a methodology is needed that focuses on changes, and particularly behavioural changes. After all, you want a Government to change, a community to do things differently or companies to change. Such change processes are large and complex. They do not occur by undertaking one intervention, nor are they achieved by one actor. Usually many other things have to change before your ultimate target changes. And for that you will need to undertake different interventions at different stages.

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<sup>2</sup> A good starting point is the website of Keystone Accountability: <http://www.keystoneaccountability.org/analysis/ipal>, as well as the website <http://www.theoryofchange.org/>

<sup>3</sup> *The Community Builder's Approach to Theory of Change: a Practical Guide to Theory Development*, Andrea A. Anderson

*"The Theory of Change approach makes explicit the assumptions – or theories – about why and how a program should create social change. The Theory of Change maps the relationships and steps between program activities, interim goals, and short-term and long-term outcomes, while also accounting for context, key allies, as well as unintended consequences. The organization develops their vision of what "success" looks like and highlights the social changes they desire. This mapping helps an organization to understand where they presently are and how they aim to achieve their vision, paying particular attention to identifying who will help them achieve their specific goals as well as outlining what is needed in order to maintain desired changes. They also consider what kinds of working relationships with specific constituents are needed in order to achieve their vision more effectively. The preconditions for achieving change are also mapped according to each constituent group in order to ensure solid assessment of the links between processes and outcomes. Finally, the method emphasizes the role of the organization's constituency and their role in developing the Theory of Change."*

Source: AWID<sup>4</sup>

### When to do a Theory of Change?

Developing a Theory of Change is recommended while your project or programme is in the planning phase. But you can also do it during the implementation of the project or programme, and it can be especially useful as a way of identifying potential obstacles. We have placed the Theory of Change at the point of defining the policy issue, thus early in your planning process for it allows you to define the policy issue, and provides a good basis for discussion during the beneficiary consultation. After having undertaken the beneficiary consultation and the stakeholder analysis you should be able to further refine the Theory of Change. Even beyond that, the Theory of Change allows you to understand your work in a larger context. In that way it is also a solid method to identify other partners to work with and possibly to build alliances with. See the chapter on Alliance Building. You can use your Theory of Change in alliance building to make sure everyone has the same understanding of the change process and the objectives of the change.

At the end of the Theory of Change presented on the next pages you should have:

- a good understanding of the context;
- an overview of changes that lead to the ultimate change you want to see happen;
- an idea of work of other stakeholders and potential allies or partners;
- a good definition of the policy issue you will be working on;
- a first draft of your early message;
- a basis for further strategising and further analysis.

<sup>4</sup> Srilatha Batliwala and Alexandra Pittman, *Capturing Change in Women's Realities: A critical overview of current monitoring and evaluation frameworks and approaches*, Association for Women's Rights In Development, December 2010, p. 26-27.

## How to build a Theory of Change?

There are five steps in undertaking a Theory of Change. These are presented on the next pages. Each step contains the content of the step and rationale behind it. Each step is complemented with an example.

### **A case study from Rubudunia**

The case study is about paid employment for women in the fictional country Rubudunia. We are a development organisation working on women's participation on the labour market. We believe this is, amongst others, best achieved through better education for girls, most notably on secondary school. That is our main area of work! In Rubudunia there is a serious problem with regard to girls not going from primary schools to secondary schools. In order to analyse the problem and potential changes needed to address the problem, the organisation makes a Theory of Change. This Theory intends to understand what small steps will be needed to change the problem and what the organisation could start by doing.

### **STEP 1**

## Clarify the ultimate goal

During this step, the ultimately desired change is identified. This change is called the ultimate goal or the vision of success, or dream and only occurs over a longer period of time (5 to 10 years). Even though this is a long-term goal you should be as specific as possible. You can formulate the ultimate goal based on the issue you are working on (in our case education for girls in Rubudunia) or on the project you are working on.

You can also undertake the Theory of Change after having formulated a more detailed intervention and when you want to check with others if it will be successful. Or, you can take the vision of your organisation as a starting point for joint strategic planning when you want to check whether your theory of change applies for everyone in your organisation. Depending on the level you want to analyse you can formulate a vision that is more ambitious.

Young women in Rubudunia increasingly have better paid jobs. This means:

- schools offer girls and young women education adapted to the needs of the labour market;
- government provides jobs to young women;
- parents of girls send their daughters to secondary school.

Girls attend good quality primary and secondary schools in Rubudunia. This means:

- schools offer gender sensitive education to girls;
- secondary schools' curricula for girls are adapted to the needs of the labour market;
- parents send their daughters to secondary school;
- primary schools offer education to girls with a view to letting them go to secondary school.



In example 1 the vision is much larger than in example 2. Both are useful and right, but the Theory of Change in example 1 will obviously be much larger. Secondary school attendance is only a part of the larger vision. This could be the vision of our organisation. The organisation says: we believe that women will have better employment opportunities if education is improved. You could even think of a step above saying the vision is increased development of the economy. The assumption would be then that participation of women in the labour market leads to a better economy. That would make the Theory of Change enormous as there are obviously many other factors contributing to a better economy. The Theory of Change would become unmanageable.

The second example is then more focused on the specific programme or project the organisation is working on. The vision there is directly linked to better quality education for girls. Explaining what the vision means forces you to be exact. The statements look like mission statements indicating what and who you believe needs to change in order to get to the vision. Forcing yourself to be concrete is difficult at this step. A vision is more like a dream and people have difficulties becoming precise in a dream. Often all encompassing words such as empowered or aware or richer are used. Even though the vision as it is formulated in both examples still has some vague words (for instance: better), the aforementioned words are much too vague. Everyone has a different notion of empowerment or richness and awareness of something still does not indicate change. Thinking about your vision with others already forces you to be concrete and explain terms. Forcing yourself to think in terms of concepts such as what do I see when the vision is achieved also helps a lot. Finally you can even ask participants in a Theory of Change workshop to draw their vision making sure they draw changes that can be seen and actors who have changed.

**STEP 2****Formulate the outcomes - areas of intervention**

Once the goal is defined, outcomes – intermediary steps – necessary to achieve the ultimate goal are identified. These outcomes define the areas of intervention. The outcomes indicate changes for individuals, organisations or communities. Only results and situations are described, not activities. Formulate these as concretely as possible.

This is what you have done when making the vision concrete. Be sure to take the statements apart and check them again. It is important at this stage to formulate these areas of intervention in agreement with other stakeholders. It is especially important to ask: do we believe that by changing the actors in the way described we will get to the vision? Making assumptions explicit is an important element of the Theory of Change. It forces you to explain why you believe someone needs to change something.

Girls attend good quality primary and secondary schools in Rubudunia. This means:

- schools offer gender sensitive education to girls;
- secondary schools' curricula for girls are adapted to the needs of the labour market;
- parents send their daughters to secondary school;
- primary schools offer education to girls with a view to letting them go to secondary school.

We take example 2 from above. The vision has three areas of intervention or possible outcome. Each of these is linked to an actor who needs to change something at some point in the future. The organisation believes that these four outcomes will achieve the ultimate change in the vision, which may contribute to the ultimate change in the vision of example 1 above. Thus the organisation assumes that achieving these changes will lead to girls receiving good quality education in Rubudunia. Note that the term good quality is already explained in more detail. The organisation needs to find good quality education, and education that is gender-sensitive, or attuned to the needs of both boys and girls, adapted to the labour market and adapted to the needs of secondary education.

When undertaking this exercise with other stakeholders the term 'good quality' may of course be given another meaning, or an even more precise meaning.

Also note that from these statements we can work out wherein lies the problem. The organisation believes that girls are not attending good quality primary and secondary

education, because there is no good quality education for girls and parents are not letting girls go to secondary school. In this way the Theory of Change also serves as a more positive problem tree analysis.

At the end of the first two steps you will have a goal and outcomes that lead to it. In the example there are different actors that need to change something: parents, primary schools and secondary schools. These outcomes, depending on the context, may be interconnected or they may be completely separate. The outcomes are areas of intervention, thus your intervention will focus on the change of one actor.

### STEP 3

### Create a 'so-that chain' or pathway of change

In this step you start mapping what changes need to be put in place by whom, so that you can achieve the change you formulated in the area of intervention. The chain of changes is called the 'so-that' chain or 'pathway of change.' One change takes place so-that another change happens and you create a pathway to achieving certain results. The different steps are called pre-conditions. They are pre-conditions to various outcomes. These pre-conditions must also be formulated as results.

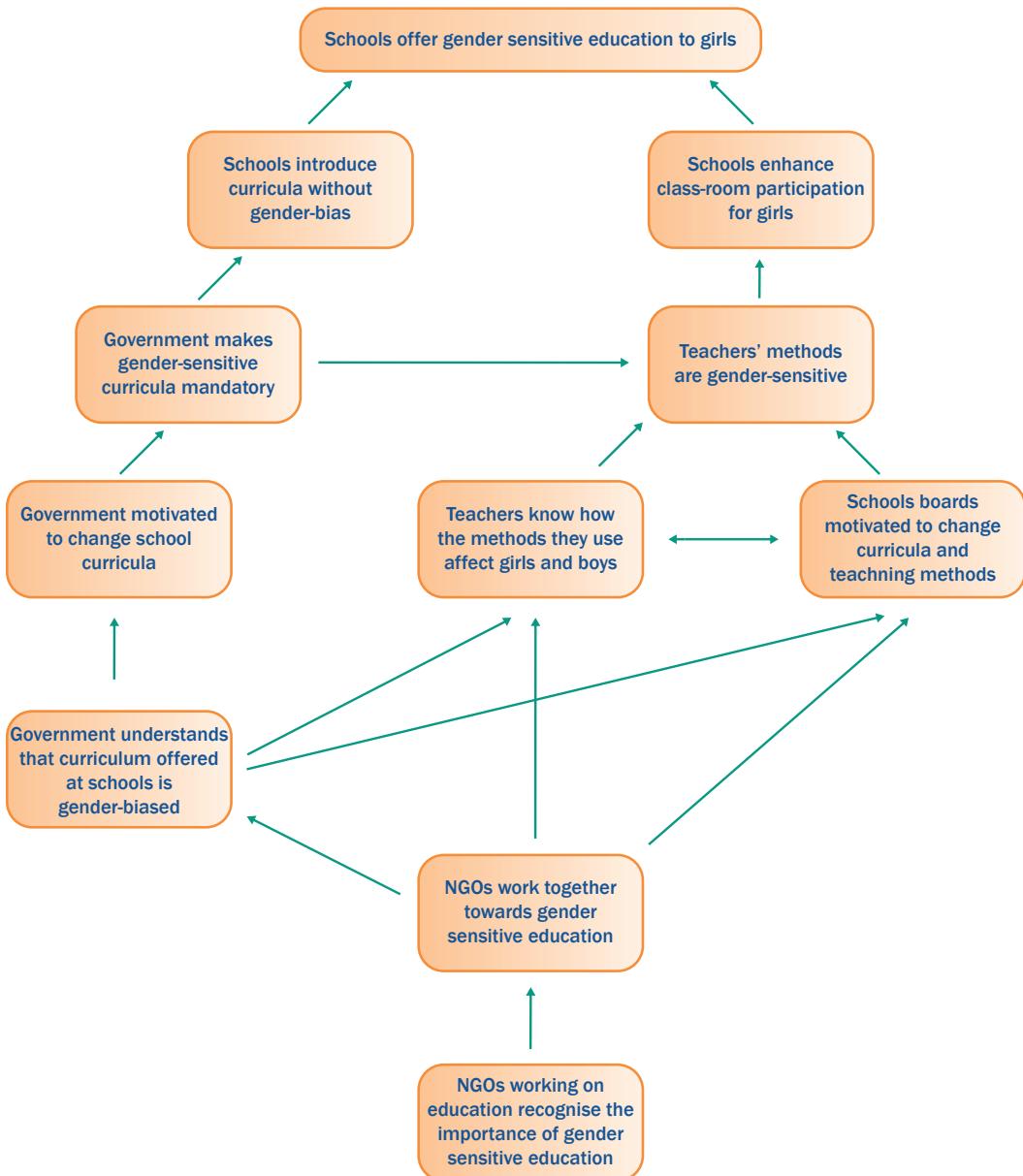
We suggest making general so-that chains for each area of intervention. This means only agreeing on the bigger steps leading to the desired change. This will make explicit what and who else needs to change in order to get to the bigger desired change, which is the outcome. It will also make explicit where possible policy influencing interventions need to take place. Having agreed on the larger so-that chains you can discuss with others what you will work on. In your case you will pick out the major policy influencing issue in the so-that chain and start working on that.

It might be that not all results can be connected. Results may occur independently or in a highly interrelated way, sequentially or simultaneously, from single strategies or multiple ones. Results may lead to common goals or separate ones. This is where the Theory of Change differs most from the more commonly used planning method, and which is where the logical framework comes in. The logical framework presents sequences of change in a pre-set format of activities leading to outputs, leading to outcomes, and contributing impact. The Theory of Change allows you to present the change in a less linear fashion which is not limited to pre-set chains. It allows you to present complicated change processes in many more steps with links between different steps. Essentially it presents the situation in a much more realistic fashion.

There are different approaches to the 'so-that chain'. You can work from the current situation to the desired situation or the other way around, starting with the area of change. One idea

is to write down on a card the potential change that you envisage and in this way you will be able to visualise the change, and thus be able to change it around in the chain of events.

In the example, you work out some steps of the so-that chains linked to the four outcomes. In our example one step could look like this:



In this case we only show a part of the so-that chain in order to show the general steps and how these steps can be interlinked. You can also see that the organisation believes that one important step towards gender-sensitive education is that Government makes it mandatory. For that to happen, a policy change needs to take place. This is part of how the organisation sees the context. Apparently in Rubudunia there is no gender-sensitive education policy. In other countries there may be a gender-sensitive education policy, but no effective implementation of it.

Here you see the policy influencing issue appear quite concretely. The right side of the chain looks more on capacity enhancement of teachers and schools, while the left side really focuses on policy influencing. It is important to note that the organisation believes that the right and left side may influence each other. In this case, the organisation may want to motivate teachers more towards working with more gender sensitive teaching methods.

In Rubudunia, in this case, in order for schools to change their behaviour towards girls, the organisation believes that Government should change, as well as teachers and school boards.

Note that this is still quite crude as Government is identified as a single homogeneous entity. If the analyses in the later parts of the Manual are undertaken, this part of the ladder will become much more specific.

#### STEP 4

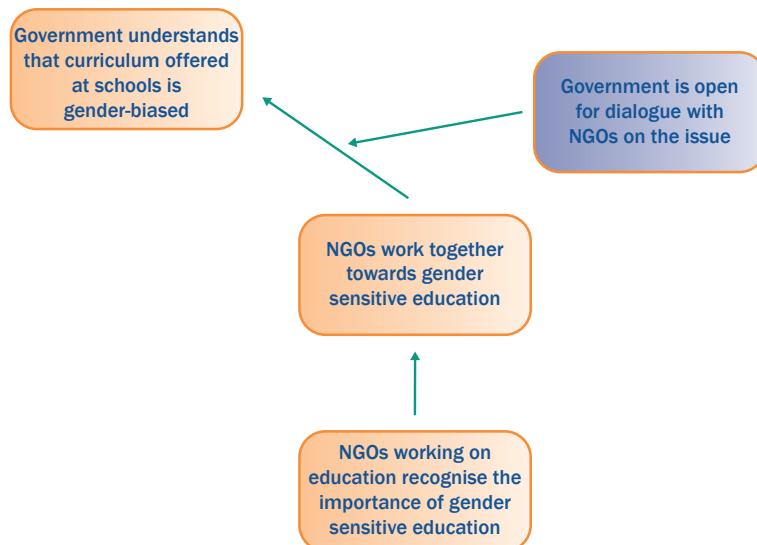
#### Make your hypothesis explicit

What are the philosophy or principles behind the vision and the 'so that' logic? In Theory of Change literature this hypothesis are called 'assumptions', but as we consider this confusing as the Logical Framework (something many organisations, particularly working with the European Commission, work with) also has assumptions, we prefer the hypothesis.

Hypotheses are particularly important in two places and for different reasons:

- at the top of your chain the hypotheses indicate why you believe the outcomes are important and why you believe the outcomes will lead to the vision. In the example we already noted that the organisation believes that the four outcomes lead to better education and to girls attending school. They believe that girls are not attending secondary school due to pressure from their parents and that quality of education is linked to gender-biased education and that education is not adapted to the labour market;
- hypotheses are also very important within the so-that chain. There the hypotheses make it obvious why you think a certain change will happen. In the example,

the organisation believes that change will only occur when NGOs work together. However, they also believe that Government will be receptive to NGOs. A hypothesis, for example, between “NGOs working together” and “Government understands that school curriculum is gender-biased” is that Government is open for dialogue with NGOs on this issue. This must be made explicit in the so-that chain, because this needs to be monitored. It especially needs to be monitored if in your factors analysis you have discovered that there is an inclination not to view NGOs as a serious partner in dialogue, for example through the enactment of restrictive legislation.



If the organisation thinks it is unlikely that Government will want to talk to NGOs on the issue, than it becomes part of the so-that chain. It is something you need to work on. In that way it works similarly to assumptions in the logical framework, but it is much more precise and forces you at each small step to make it clear why you think change happens.

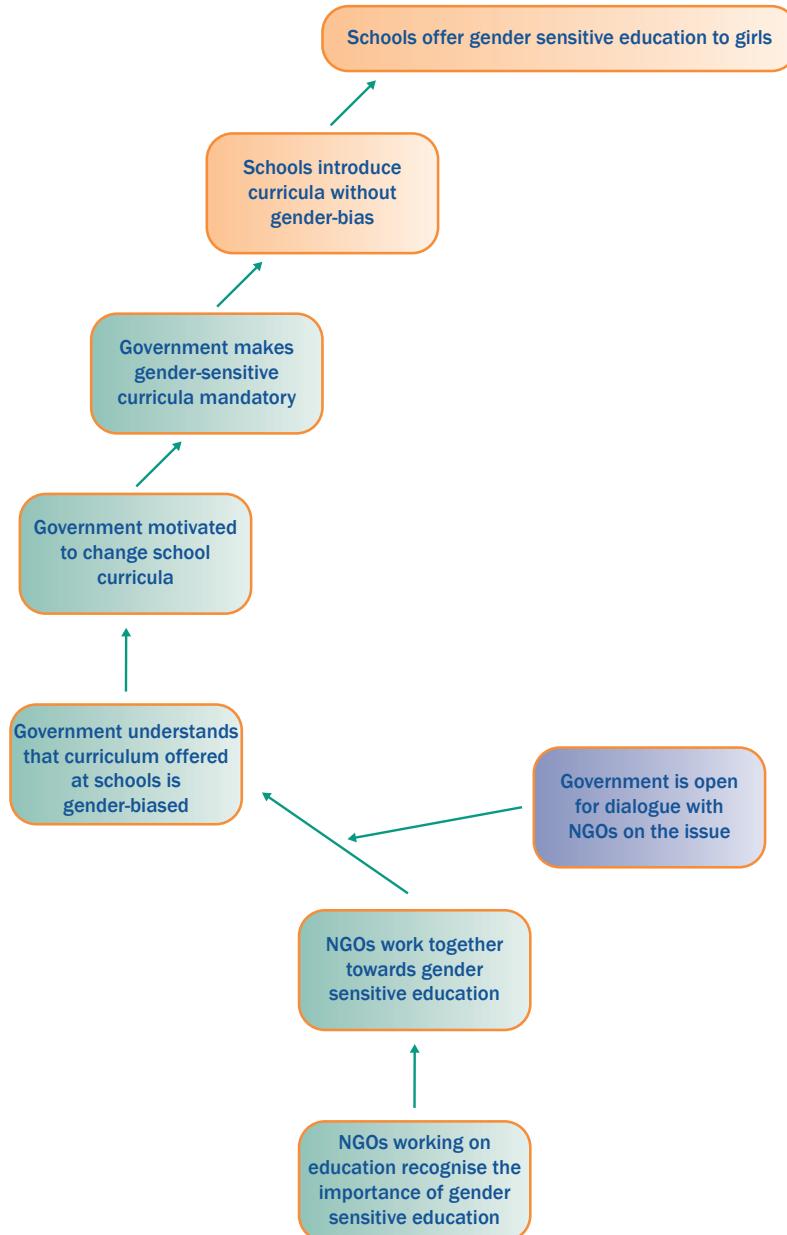
## STEP 5

### Choice of strategy

In the strategy a broad description of your action or approach is given. This is where you start elaborating on the piece of the so-that chain you want to be held responsible for. In terms of policy influencing issues, this is where you define your policy influencing issue and start elaborating on your message or position with regard to the policy influencing issue.

You will probably need to work out that part of the so-that chain much more in smaller steps. Again this is best done with other stakeholders.

In our example the organisation has indicated it wants to work on Government making gender-sensitive curricula mandatory and all the steps under this also become the responsibility of the intervention, marked by boxes in green.



In the example what the organisation wants to change is a school system represented by schools who, apparently in Rubudunia, enforce gender bias and ultimately make it impossible for young women to compete on the labour market. The organisation believes that one way to change this is by, at least, changing Government's attitude to the problem and forcing them to intervene. That is a policy influencing issue. Again, as mentioned under step 3, the Government is still a homogeneous entity here. Once you start working on this part of the chain, you will be forced, through the analyses presented in the next chapters, to be much more precise about who needs to change. The steps you envisage in the chain will also become smaller and more precise.

#### **Choice of strategy**

In the example the organisation chose together with the stakeholders to concentrate on a small part of the Theory of Change. Such a choice can be based on various criteria, amongst which are:

- urgency of the issue;
- feasibility;
- sustainability;
- interdependency of the issue with other issues leading to the vision;
- importance of the particular issue to beneficiaries.

Also important are more internal aspects, some of which we already dealt with looking at the identification of the issue above and when looking at ones' own organisation:

- the issue fits in with the overall mandate of the organisation;
- expertise and experience on the topic and policy influencing;
- available budget;
- available human resources.

This is why it is crucial to re-check the analysis of your own organisation.

The timeline is four years. Thus within four years the organisation wants to see the change happen. The underlying hypotheses, the analysis of factors and the results from the stakeholder analysis may affect the level of ambition. That is why this strategising must be done with other stakeholders. It is especially important to make sure that beneficiaries understand on what criteria the choice is based. In that sense the Theory of Change becomes an expectations management tool, whereby it is made clear with others what to expect after four years, and what not to expect.

## STEP 6

## Further strategising

From this moment on you also start indicating who and what you aim to change in your intervention, you will start thinking about how to make sure the changes happen. Obviously, since your theory of how change happens is based on prior changes happening, you start from the bottom up.

This is where you start making strategies based on the issue and the first message. This is where you start making action plans. You will need more input from other stakeholders and input from your beneficiary consultation (next chapter), stakeholder analysis (chapter 7), the policy process scan (chapter 8) and alliance building (part 3 of the manual). In those chapters we will make the link to the Theory of Change in order to indicate that it needs to be filled in more detail or, perhaps, reviewed.

Be sure to identify these automatic changes and non-automatic changes as it also helps you gather the underlying hypotheses. We must repeat that getting those underlying hypotheses are important to get a common understanding of the issue you are working on. In addition these hypotheses must be monitored as these may not come true and block all change.



## Advice in undertaking Theory of Change

It helps to *visualise* the steps while developing the ToC to enable full participation of the different stakeholders in the process and the ToC. Later on this can also easily be used in the design of the intervention (the actual planning – see chapter 10).

With visualisation, we mean that you should use pictures at different stages and use cards of different colours and sufficiently big posters to enable you to make an elaborate Theory of Change. An example of an exercise with the Theory of Change is worked out in the Toolbox in this manual.

The Theory of Change also needs *good moderation*. Experienced facilitators in Theory of Change are needed in order to achieve a satisfying result. Making a Theory of Change also takes a considerable amount of time. Do take this time. If you do not and you do not use the Theory of Change as a backbone to your intervention you may end up having to spend a lot of time and money understanding where things go wrong, or conflicts might arise between allies or beneficiaries in the understanding of the changes.

## Other usage of Theory of Change

We will refer back to your Theory of Change many times in this manual. It is the backbone of your intervention strategy. You can use it to plan your interventions, and to understand the complex nature of the policy intervention issue and its linkages with other issues. You can also use it to identify possible partners and alliance opportunities.

Finally, you can use the ToC for planning, monitoring and evaluation (PM&E). For this you may want to take ‘your area’ of the Theory of Change and make a result chain of it which is similar to the logical framework and complete it with indicators, sources of verification and assumptions. This makes sense if this is your normal way of planning. However, you can also use the Theory of Change to monitor your intervention. For this you need to pay particular attention to the hypothesis you formulate. These are issues you will need to monitor closely.

Reconstruction of projects and programmes, especially those focusing on policy influencing is done more and more when evaluating such initiatives. Reconstruction is done with different actors, where the question asked is: what changes did you want to make? Why did you want to do that? How did you want to do that?

## INVOLVEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS

You have not yet undertaken a thorough stakeholder analysis or systematic beneficiary consultation, but, obviously, you have already identified beneficiaries and other stakeholders in the identification and definition process. We would strongly advise you try to include, as much as possible, different stakeholders, especially those you envisage working with along with other experts, in undertaking the contextual analysis and the theory of change. When undertaking your beneficiary consultation the results of your first contextual analysis and theory of change leading to the definition of the policy issue will be discussed with them. We strongly advise you after taking the next step to re-visit the definition phase.



## TIPS for practical application and facilitation

The major challenge with undertaking a contextual analysis is doing it in a systematic way. We all have an idea of the context in which we operate, but, especially having worked on a particular issue for very long, we forget to communicate this to others. This is often one of the greatest pitfalls in policy influencing work. It makes us think in pre-determined solutions that are not based on the needs of beneficiaries, it makes us forget about changes that have occurred and are likely to affect the work and it makes us predictable. However you do it, in the end it is about undertaking and writing down your view on the current context and matching it with other people's views.

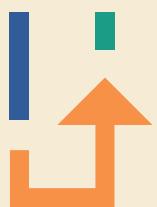
Doing at the very least analyses of factors, actors and your own organisation on the issue you will be working on is important. Do make the issue as specific as possible already without talking of solutions (something you see happen very often when one does a problem tree exercise: the problems often are disguised solutions). What Theory of Change approach forces you to do is making underlying assumptions about the context explicit. How you view future change says everything about how you view the current situation. This makes it possible to discuss these within your own organisation, as well as with others.

The best approach to undertaking a Theory of Change is to find an external facilitator. An external facilitator can keep an eye on the process, making sure the approach is a means and not an end in itself, and ask questions that seem obvious to you. The only rule you should follow is that you try and achieve consensus about the context. If you do not, it becomes impossible to cooperate closely. It is also very difficult to cooperate when there are still things which are not clear.

A final tip for application and facilitation is that you should agree with others on the issue on which you need to do a contextual analysis. This issue should not be too broad (i.e. poverty) or too vague (i.e. powerlessness).

## QUESTIONS for further reflection

- How far should you go in analysing the context? To which level of detail should you go?
- The analysis of context is often not financed. It is something you do before you get project financing. So how can you go about analysing the context in a participatory way without too many funds?
- Explaining the approach Theory of Change as a way to analyse the context, define your issue and start formulating your early message is quite complicated. How do you make sure that the exercise can be done without getting into a discussion about the approach as such?
- Context changes, also due to your intervention. How can you make sure that you keep an eye on the changing context and how it affects your intervention?



## **Beneficiary Participation**

## WHO ARE BENEFICIARIES?

*"It is not the function of our Government to keep the citizen from falling into error; it is the function of the citizen to keep the Government from falling into error."*

U.S. Supreme Court

A beneficiary is a stakeholder. Stakeholders are persons, groups or institutions with interests in a process, such as policy influencing. There will be more in-depth information on stakeholders in the following chapter, but a beneficiary is a primary stakeholder. There are always beneficiaries with regard to the policy issue you are working on. These are people and groups whose lives are likely to improve due to successful policy influencing. However you put it, you are working towards influencing the lives of the beneficiaries.

Depending on the issue you defined your beneficiary group may be big or small, easily identifiable or hard to pin down. Most of the time you will notice that you have quite a clear picture of the beneficiaries as they have probably informed your choice of policy issue. The consultation of the initial group of beneficiaries should help to further define the policy issue and gradually move towards the early message in your policy influencing. Therefore the initial group may well be larger than the final group of beneficiaries.

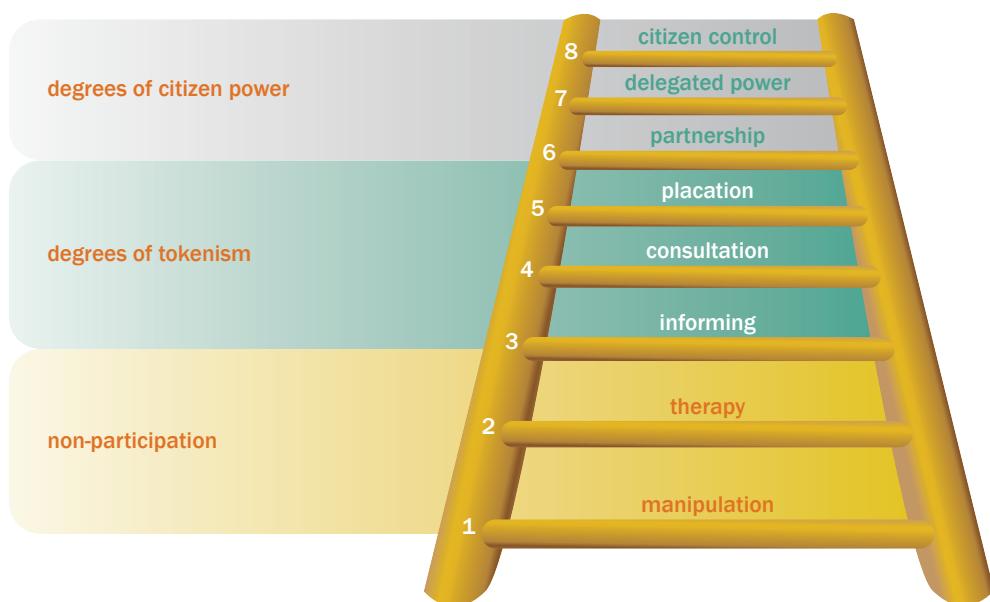
Your actions should be guided by the will of the beneficiaries and your actions should increase the power of beneficiaries, by empowering them.



## Arnstein's participation ladder

Beneficiaries should play a role in all stages in your policy influencing intervention, from planning, to implementation, to monitoring and evaluation.

Beneficiaries can participate in different ways in all those stages. Consultation of beneficiaries, especially in this early stage of planning, is a minimum. There are various more inclusive ways of participation, and there are several less inclusive ways of participation. We will explain these briefly using the widely referred to 'Participation Ladder' published in 1963 by Sherry R. Arnstein.<sup>5</sup>



She made a distinction between non participative methods, tokenism and citizen power. Citizen power includes the most participative methods.

Participation in this sense is about who has the power to decide and manage. In non-participative methods like manipulation and therapy, the goal is to 'cure' or 'educate'. As with tokenism methods such as informing, consulting and placation, the goal is not really to change power relations. The power stays with those undertaking the intervention in the first place. The difference between non-participation and tokenism is that, at the very least, beneficiaries have a voice and are heard in tokenism (i.e. they advise in 'placation' and are informed and inform themselves in 'consultation').

The true changes in power relations occur under citizen power where those who have not (the beneficiaries) are empowered in order to increase their degree of decision-making over the intervention. This is a good moment to recall CLASP principles, in particular 'Power'. Only in 'citizen's control' does the power balance shift from 'Power over' to 'Power with' and 'Power to'.

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<sup>5</sup> Arnstein, Sherry R. "A Ladder of Citizen Participation," *JAIP*, Vol. 35, No. 4, July 1969, pp. 216-224.

## MDF's Participation ladder

We use a similar model as Arnstein's participation ladder to show different degrees of participation in projects, such as policy influencing interventions, at different stages.

The categories are based on Arnsteins' ladder, but not put as negatively. Also the focus is not so much on individual citizens (as the model is not placed in the context of citizen participation), but more on groups of people or organisations.

We use this model to show different levels of participation in various stages of projects, such as policy influencing projects. Collaboration and Self-mobilisation are the most participative methods as they shift the balance of power from the project developer to the beneficiaries. Other categories are not per se negative. Different stakeholders could be placed on the ladder according to their importance and their influence on the project. You can do this exercise when undertaking a stakeholder analysis (in chapter 7 you will find such analyses and the link to the Participation Ladder). At this stage the ladder helps you think about different levels of involvement of beneficiaries. It also makes you understand that beneficiaries should, at the very least, be consulted in this phase of the planning.



### Participation ladder

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OFFENDING COMMAND: .buildshading2

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-dictionary-  
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