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**Action on Rights**  
Human Rights Based Approach Resource Book

## OUR VISION

A world without poverty and injustice in which every person enjoys their right to a life with dignity.

## OUR MISSION

To work with poor and excluded people to eradicate poverty and injustice.

## OUR VALUES

ActionAid International lives by the following values:

- Mutual respect, requiring us to recognize the innate worth of all people and the value of diversity
- Equity and justice, requiring us to work to ensure equal opportunity to everyone, irrespective of race, age, gender, sexual orientation, HIV status, colour, class, ethnicity, disability, location and religion
- Honesty and transparency, being accountable at all levels for the effectiveness of our actions and open in our judgements and communications with others
- Solidarity with the poor, powerless and excluded will be the only bias in our commitment to the fight against poverty and injustice
- Courage of conviction, requiring us to be creative and radical, bold and innovative – without fear of failure – in pursuit of making the greatest possible impact on the causes of poverty
- Independence from any religious or party-political affiliation
- Humility in our presentation and behaviour, recognising that we are part of a wider alliance against poverty and injustice

In this HRBA resource book you will find many online links to references and resources. These are diverse and include strategies, policies, information and conceptual material. If you are reading the book online you can access these materials directly by following the links we have created for you. We have also put together all of these materials in **ACTION ON RIGHTS**, our HRBA programme space on the HIVE -



[https://hive.actionaid.org/Field\\_Staff\\_Programming\\_Forum/default.aspx](https://hive.actionaid.org/Field_Staff_Programming_Forum/default.aspx)

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## **Acronyms**

AA – ActionAid

Alps – Accountability Learning and Planning System

ANC – African National Congress

ARR – Annual Review and Reflection

BECTF – Basic Education Community Trust Fund

CBMES – Community-Based Monitoring and Evaluation System

CBI – Capacity-Building Initiative

CBO – Community-Based Organisation

CD – Country Director

CDLG - Coast Development Lobby Group

COPE - Complementary of Primary Education

CP – Country Programme

CREST – Children’s Rights and Empowerment for Social Transformation

CS – Child Sponsorship

CSP – Country Strategy Paper

DA – Development Area

DI – Development Initiative

EASA – East and Southern Africa

EFA-SL - Education for All Sierra Leone

ELBAG – Economic Literacy and Budget Accountability for Governance

EPA – Economic Partnership Agreement

ESC rights – Economic, Social and Cultural rights

EU – European Union

GMF – Global Monitoring Framework

HRBA – Human Rights Based Approach

ILO – International Labour Organization

IMF – International Monetary Fund

INGO – International Non-Governmental Organisation

KABTAN - Kambia Budget Tracking and Advocacy Network

KDSMCA - Kambia District School Management Committee Association

LATF - Local Authorities Transfer Fund

M&E – Monitoring and Evaluation

MoU – Memorandum of Understanding

NCSW - National Commission on the Status of Women

NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation

NREGA - National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

OE – Organisational Effectiveness

PAQF – Programme Approach Quality Forum

PRA – Participatory Rural Appraisal

PRRP – Participatory Review and Reflection Process

PVA – Participatory Vulnerability Analysis

Reflect – Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community

RTEP – Rights to End Poverty

SMC - School Management Committee/s

SMT – Senior Management Team

STAR – Societies Tackling Aids through Rights

SVAGS – Stop Violence Against Girls in School

TDI – Territorial Development Initiative

ToT – Training of Trainers

WACA – West and Central Africa

UDN - Uganda Debt Network

UN – United Nations

## HOW WE WILL DEEPEN OUR HRBA WORK IN ACTIONAID

In the next 18 months the Programme Approach Quality Forum (PAQF) will be undertaking a global HRBA capacity-building initiative (CBI). This will be led by the PAQF but forms one part of a wider capacity-development programme being undertaken by the Organisational Effectiveness (OE) unit.

The HRBA CBI will be implemented at international level through a Training of Trainers (ToT) in HRBA programming, and will be preceded and followed by intensive capacity support to countries. At national level, each country will be expected to hold a field staff retreat, a national HRBA programme training, and long-term capacity development support through coaching, HRBA practice circles, people-to-people exchanges etc.

Through these various processes, this HRBA resource book will be rolled out and applied in practice. The HRBA CBI will allow us to receive feedback on the content of the book. On the basis of your feedback and the new international strategy, we will revise the resource book in just over a year.

You can be in contact directly with Samantha Hargreaves, the International HRBA advisor, at [samantha.hargreaves@actionaid.org](mailto:samantha.hargreaves@actionaid.org) if you have any immediate questions or feedback on the resource book. We look forward to hearing from you.

# 1

## CHAPTER

# INTRODUCTION AND USE OF THIS RESOURCE BOOK

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Ten years ago we adopted a human rights-based approach (HRBA) to our work. At this time we had a deep faith in the potential of this approach to challenge social inequalities in fundamental ways and to lead us towards sustainable solutions to poverty and exclusion. We knew, however, that there was no one way to implement a HRBA. So, rather than develop a resource book providing a theory for how a HRBA should be implemented, we felt that we should spend some time testing and developing the approach in different places.

A decade later, we are in a very different position. We now have rich experiences of working with a HRBA in a variety of contexts and conditions. While we believe there is no one-size-fits-all recipe for a HRBA, we have an agreed HRBA programme framework, which outlines the changes we are working towards, the principles, areas of programming, types of interventions, and minimum standards that can be applied in every context. This is a broad frame coming from our experiences, and a guide for how we should be working in our local rights programmes.

This resource book reflects our rich experiences, approaches and practices of working for change within a HRBA. We do not have all the answers, and the resource book cannot address all aspects of our work in great detail. However, we hope that the book will offer our programme staff important guidance and inspiration. We also hope that it answers some of the questions programme staff have about the challenges they face in implementing a HRBA at local level.

The timing of this resource book is also significant. We are coming to the end of our current strategy period, and the book pulls together some of our most significant lessons and insights about working for change within a HRBA. Over the next 14 months we will test the consolidated HRBA programme approach and framework set out in the book, we will gather feedback, and review the book in light of the experiences that emerge from our testing. We will also consider the new international strategy and its implications for how we programme.

We therefore invite you to use the resource book, test out the programme framework, assess it against your practice, and give us your feedback. The HRBA resource book roll-out, which forms part of the international HRBA capacity-building initiative (CBI), will outline in more detail how you can use and give feedback to the resource book.

**We hope that  
the book  
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**Strong HRBA programmes... are fundamental to our efforts to build a world that is just and free of poverty**

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## Who is this resource book written for?

All staff having an interest in human rights and HRBA programming in general will benefit from this resource book. The primary users of this resource book, however, are the ActionAid local programme staff or partner staff who implement long-term local rights programmes (what we have to date called our Development Areas (DAs) and Development Interventions (DIs)). The secondary audience of this book are the ActionAid staff who do solidarity and campaigns programming with constituencies around the world, or who work in short-term 'special' programmes, or who programme for change at the national and international levels.

We have written the resource book to inform, inspire, and challenge programme staff and we hope that we achieve at least some of these high ambitions. We encourage programme staff to use the book to strengthen understandings and work for human rights.

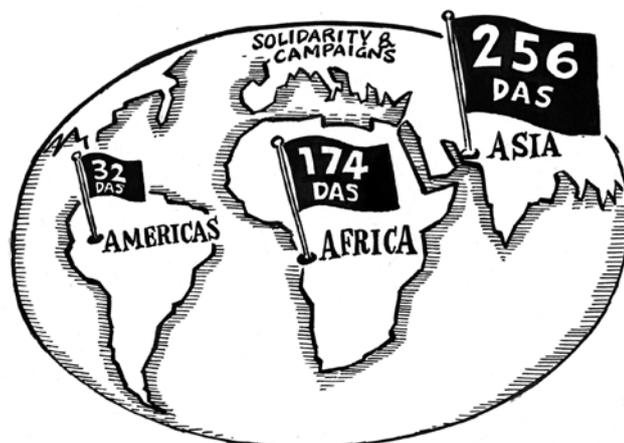
Strong HRBA programmes, supported by our skilled, passionate and politically committed programme staff, are fundamental to our efforts to build a world that is just and free of poverty. This resource book acknowledges their valuable contributions, it aims to support them, and ensure that they can work in powerful and effective ways towards our common goals of transformation and justice! We hope that readers will find this book helpful, and we look forward to receiving feedback so that we can strengthen the content over time to meet programme staff needs better.

## Engaging programme staff in developing the resource book

In the course of developing this resource book we gathered the views, questions and needs of programme staff in various ways: First, visits to programmes and programme staff platforms provided opportunities to hear the questions and worries of programme staff. Second, we set up a space on the HIVE and invited programme staff to contribute to an online questionnaire. Third, we sourced stories, case studies and examples of our work from our country programmes (CPs)<sup>1</sup> – we interviewed programme staff and in some cases programme staff wrote contributions.

**ActionAid currently works in 462 DAs across the world. At this time about 75% of DAs are partner-managed. ActionAid manages the balance.**

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<sup>1</sup> When we use the term 'country programmes' we are referring to all of our country level units, whether these have the 'official status' of country programmes, country offices, associates or affiliates. These country units are implementing work in a particular country context and this is what distinguishes this level of 'unit' from the regional or international levels.

Fourth, a reference group of five programme staff supported the development of the resource book. Finally, the seven chapters were written by members of the international secretariat and country programmes, who have historically had extensive contact with programmes and programme staff in the different regions.

The following two boxes present responses of programme staff to two questions in the online questionnaire: (1) What are the key concerns of ActionAid programme staff relating to a HRBA?; and (2) What motivates ActionAid programme staff as they work for change?

***What are the key concerns of ActionAid programme staff?***

- Is the HRBA the best approach to development; what is its value?
- How do we implement a HRBA in a country that has not ratified international human rights treaties?
- What is a HRBA approach to service delivery?
- How do we apply the HRBA in a country where even the usage of the word 'right' is risky?
- What are the simple steps we can follow to monitor and evaluate HRBA interventions?
- What is ActionAid's role in a HRBA when we work in and through partnership?
- How can advocacy help to increase community awareness about and mobilisation for their rights?
- What are some of the success stories and lessons learnt from other CPs?
- How do we organise a policy campaign so that it links the local, national and international levels?
- When should we move from collaboration with government to confrontation in order to support the liberation of the poor and excluded?
- How do we create a strong linkage between our programme and policy work?

***What motivates ActionAid programme staff to work for social change?***

- I believe the status quo will never remain, the only constant in life is change, it is only social change that will make the powerless today powerful tomorrow. (Esther Agbon, ActionAid Nigeria)
- I believe that everyone has the same rights and I want to live in a world in which such rights are truly respected. (Glauce Arzua, ActionAid Brazil)
- I think it is very unfair for people to continue to live in poverty in a world with so many resources. I believe we can only bring change to the people we work with if we interact with them and... put our feet in their shoes. (Foday Swaray, ActionAid Sierra Leone)
- Social injustice has created so much suffering for many people! Human beings created social injustice... and I believe that only human beings can overcome it! One day, the people's solidarity will bring justice back to our society! (Kimtheng Sen, ActionAid Cambodia)
- I'm working for poverty eradication in my country... Poverty is a result of a social situation in which there is unequal... resource distribution and where human rights are violated. This requires a social change, which is not easy... As an ActionAider I'm joining my efforts to others so that we can eradicate this... enormous poverty. (Adelin Ntanonga, ActionAid Burundi)

## WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THE RESOURCE BOOK

The resource book focuses on how to implement ActionAid's approach to HRBA in a long-term rights programme at local level. It explores how to think about a HRBA and how to apply a HRBA in keeping with ActionAid's HRBA programming areas of empowerment, campaigning, and solidarity, and in keeping with ActionAid's commitment to women's rights.

Chapters 1, 2 and 3 prepare the ground for the HRBA programme implementation framework which we set out in Chapter 4.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 deal with each of the three programme areas of empowerment (Chapter 5), campaigning (Chapter 6), and solidarity (Chapter 7).

The resource book is organised as follows:

### ***Chapter 1 – Introduction and use of this resource book***

In Chapter 1, the one you are reading now, we outline the purpose of the resource book, and help you find your way around the book.

### ***Chapter 2 – A history of why we work on rights***

In Chapter 2 we present an understanding of the different elements of a HRBA, and explore why ActionAid has adopted a HRBA. We compare three different approaches to development implemented by ActionAid over the past 20 years and look at the factors that prompted shifts to a HRBA.

### ***Chapter 3 – What is ActionAid's HRBA?***

In Chapter 3 we explore ActionAid's understanding of poverty, inequality and social exclusion. We then look at ActionAid's understanding of human rights, and consider the various actors in a HRBA, with a specific focus on the state.

### ***Chapter 4 – HRBA programming: how we work for change***

In Chapter 4 we introduce ActionAid's understanding of a HRBA programme, its principles and areas of programming. We look at the core building blocks of a good HRBA programme – such as accountability, monitoring and evaluation, building links across programme levels etc. We then look at the broad implementation phases and supporting organisational systems through which we operationalise the HRBA programme framework.

### ***Chapter 5 – Empowerment***

In Chapter 5 we explore what we mean by rights holder empowerment in a local rights programme and what we aim to achieve through this process. We outline and explore different interventions to empower rights holders, and we look at how we can implement service delivery work to advance rights strategically.

### ***Chapter 6 – Campaigning***

In Chapter 6 we look at ActionAid's distinctive approach to campaigns in a local rights programme. We offer ideas and tools to analyse, plan, and monitor and evaluate local advocacy and campaigns. We also explore the importance of duty bearer accountability and the different processes and methods you can use in a local rights programme.

### ***Chapter 7 – Solidarity***

In Chapter 7 we explore solidarity and why it is important in ActionAid's HRBA. We consider different forms of solidarity and ways in which we can build solidarity over the life of a long-term rights programme.

## ActionAid's local rights programme: a note on context

ActionAid currently works in 462 DAs across the world: 256 are in Asia, with 111 in India alone. In Africa the total number of DAs is 174 while there are 32 in the Americas region. At this time about 75% of ActionAid's DAs are partner-managed. ActionAid manages the balance.



DA is the term that ActionAid has historically used to refer to its local development programmes, which have usually been organised in a defined geographical area of varying size and scale. We also use the term DI to refer to our local programmes. The definition of DA and DI varies from one country programme to another. *We now refer to all of our programmes as rights programmes, which may be implemented at local, national, and international levels. For more in-depth discussion on rights programming please see Chapter 4.*

**We now refer to all of our programmes as rights programmes, which may be implemented at local, national, and international levels**

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## How to find what you are looking for in this resource book

The chapter-by-chapter outline to the left is one way of finding what you are looking for. The diagram on the next page will also help you navigate to the sections of relevance to you.

We expect that rather than read the resource book from cover to cover, most readers will come to the book with specific questions or concerns, and a desire for a better understanding of HRBA.

To help you find what you are looking for, a range of visual icons have been used throughout this resource book. These icons draw your attention to important information, to case studies and to definitions. You can also use them to find your way to particular sections of the chapters.

Below are the icons which are used in all chapters:



The 'listening ear' icon points you to case studies and stories related to an idea or concept under discussion.



The exclamation mark points to definitions of concepts and terms.



The turning arrow icon tells you what you will find in the next chapter.



The light bulb icon points to key questions to assist you 'digest' some of the content of that chapter. You can also use the questions in HRBA practice groups of ActionAid programme and partner staff.



The book icon directs you to a list of resource materials you can use to obtain a deeper understanding of the 'issues' covered in that chapter.

1

CHAPTER

INTRODUCTION AND USE OF THIS RESOURCE BOOK

2

CHAPTER

A HISTORY OF WHY WE WORK ON RIGHTS

3

CHAPTER

WHAT IS ACTIONAID'S HRBA?

BUILDING BLOCKS

1. Accountability and Transparency

2. Powerful Analysis and Change Strategy

3. Monitoring and Assessing Change

Principles:  
1. We put rights holders first

2. We analyse and confront unequal power  
3. We work in partnership

4. We are accountable and transparent  
5. We advance women's rights

6. We critically reflect and learn  
7. We ensure links across levels

Phase 1: Exploring partnership  
Phase 2: Establishing the rights programme  
Phase 3: Acting for Rights  
Phase 4: Supporting sustained change

MINIMUM STANDARDS 1. Building poor people's consciousness as rights holders 2. Agency of the poor and excluded 3. Women's rights 4. Poor and excluded people critically engage duty bearers 5. Changing the rules

CHAPTER 4 HRBA PROGRAMMING: HOW WE WORK FOR CHANGE





# 2

## CHAPTER

# A HISTORY OF WHY WE WORK ON RIGHTS

In this chapter we trace the shift from addressing needs to working for rights in our programme work over a period of around 20 years.

We begin with a note on different approaches to development. Then in Section 1 we look at three examples of programme work in ActionAid Kenya and highlight key differences between a needs-based approach, an empowerment approach, and a HRBA. In Section 2 we draw out key lessons from working with the needs-based and empowerment approaches and indicate why it is important to strengthen and consolidate a HRBA.

### A note on approaches to development

Different approaches to development have predominated amongst development agencies over the past decades. These approaches represent different ways of thinking about development that translate into different ways of designing, planning and implementing development programmes and projects.

The recognition that earlier approaches were not bringing about desired changes led many development agencies, including Action Aid, to make the gradual shift to a HRBA<sup>1</sup>.

Popular approaches since the 1970s have been the welfare, anti-poverty, basic-needs and empowerment approaches, with HRBA approaches gaining popularity since the 1990s. Each approach has its own underlying understanding of development, poverty and inequality, of social change needed, of how change should happen, and who should drive change.

<sup>1</sup> ActionAid's HRBA is outlined in more detail in Chapters 3 and 4.

**ActionAid  
builds on the  
idea that human  
development  
is the central  
concern of  
development**

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Underlying understandings of the welfare and basic-needs approaches were, for example, that the goal of development was profit maximisation and the lot of the poor would be addressed through the trickle-down of benefits from large infrastructure projects of dams and bridges. Empowerment approaches stressed the direct empowerment of poor people and placed human development at the core of development.

In developing its HRBA approach, ActionAid builds on the idea that human development is the central concern of development, and takes the lead from the famous economist, Amartya Sen, who defines development as a process of expanding the freedoms people enjoy. According to Sen

These freedoms are both the primary ends and the principal means of development. They include freedom to participate in the economy, which implies access to credit, among other facilities; freedom of political expression and participation; social opportunities, including entitlement to education and health services; transparency guarantees, involving freedom to deal with others openly; and protective security guaranteed by social safety nets, such as unemployment insurance or famine relief.

The trajectory of change for ActionAid has been a move over time from a charity orientation to a HRBA approach to development. This evolution, which has not been a 'clean' movement from one approach to the next but rather a gradual transition, is explored in the sections that follow.

## Section 1: Three stories about different approaches to development

The first of our three examples of programme work in ActionAid Kenya is of a needs-based approach to development, with strong features of welfare or charity work. The second example reflects an empowerment approach. The third example reflects a HRBA.



### *Story 1: 20 years ago – in support of education*

In 1990, ActionAid Kenya started work in the Kapsokwony DA, made up of about 60 to 70 villages where the population of some 40 000 experienced high levels of poverty. The community identified education, food security, water and sanitation, and health, as priority issues for action. Joseph Adoka, Programme Assistant now working in the Cheptai DI, Mt Elgon, Kenya told us about their work at this time.

#### *Intervention focus*

ActionAid Kenya focused on meeting the basic needs of poor people in this area. We provided materials for building classrooms, we provided vocational training, and we ran school feeding schemes for sponsored children.

Since financial aid was received through the sponsorship of 2 500 children we focused on ensuring that these children received school uniforms, school meals, and were sponsored to secondary level if they performed well in their primary years.

We supported primary and secondary schools with learning materials; trained school management committees; and supported village polytechnics by providing skills in carpentry, mechanics and tailoring to young adults who had not performed well at primary level.

#### *ActionAid role*

As a development agent ActionAid Kenya engaged in direct implementation. ActionAid held the budget, provided the materials, and built the classrooms. While the community participated, their participation was in a context where ActionAid controlled the process and did not strongly prioritise empowering, or building the capacity of the community.

For each 'sector' (for example education and health) there was a village committee, elected by a meeting of community members, and made up of people who would 'benefit' directly from the project. The committee would identify the needs and ActionAid would develop the plan. The community provided labour, for example, to build classroom walls. The budget remained with ActionAid, and there was no practice of transparency.

#### *Who or what we saw as the drivers of change*

ActionAid was seen as the driver of change – providing the budget, making the plans, and delivering the services. The poor and excluded people were seen as the recipients of our charity and goodwill.

**ActionAid was seen as the driver of change – providing the budget, making the plans, and delivering the services**

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**We substituted for government by providing the services for which government was ultimately responsible**

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**Who we worked with**

ActionAid worked with a geographical community of the poorest and most marginalised people, barely looking beyond the boundaries, as if the DA was an island.

**How we saw the people we worked with**

Individual charity and giving was seen as a key part of the solution to problems of poverty. We assumed that if some people gave up a little of what they had to others, the problems of poverty would be addressed.

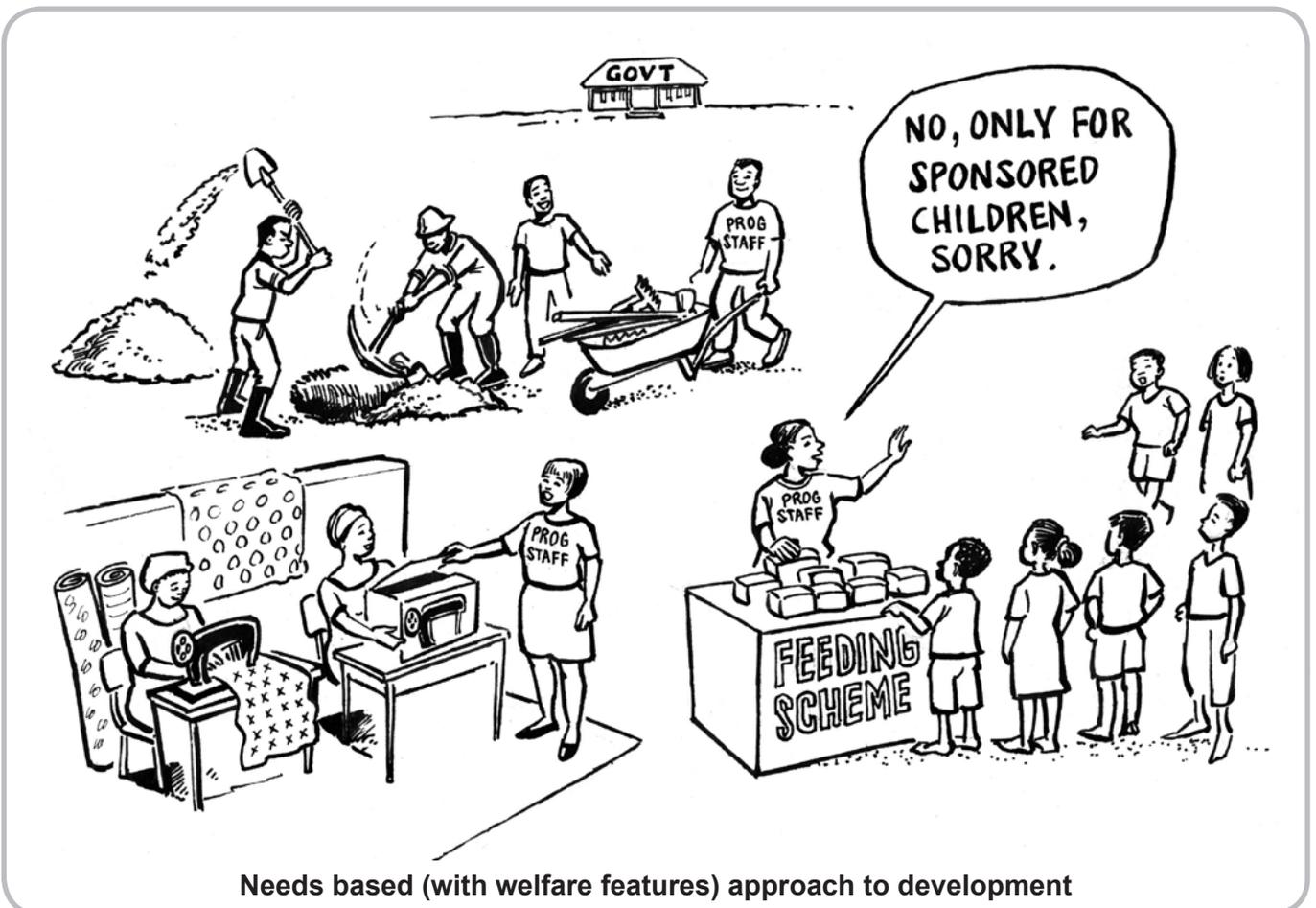
**How we understood poverty**

The emphasis for our development work was on the immediate problems – that is children not attending school; and on their most obvious causes – that is not having classrooms. ActionAid avoided looking at the underlying and root causes that resulted in the problems around access to education.

**How we related to government**

Even though government was ultimately accountable for meeting community needs, we did not work with the communities to hold government accountable. Instead we substituted for government by providing the services for which government was ultimately responsible.

During this time, ActionAid itself looked like a small government and the community looked to ActionAid as the provider. We had magnificent offices and big storage for all of the materials we provided. We had over 50 staff working in just that one DA.



***How we understood and addressed inequality between women and men***

The school management committees were generally made up of men. This was because men attended the meetings, while women were at home cooking and feeding the children. We did little to shift this gender imbalance, and by our inaction marginalised women further.

But we acted to bring more women into the forums of head teachers. DA staff had observed that men dominated the forums of head teachers in the DA, and that women teachers rarely attended skills enhancement courses. This triggered an assessment of 38 schools. The assessment found not one woman head teacher. Our response was to provide training to women teachers specifically. However, this intervention was limited by the fact that we did not work to transform the very institution excluding women teachers – that is, the school.

***Linkages to wider struggles and processes***

We planned and implemented projects to meet basic needs at the local level. Our interventions were area-focused and barely looked beyond that area we were working in. No linkages were made outside of the area to the national and international levels.

**No linkages were made outside of the area to the national and international levels**

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***Story 2: Half a decade ago – our work to partner and empower***

In 2005 the majority of children of school-going age in the Malindi DI in Kenya were not in school. To get to school children would walk 7 to 15 kilometres, and parents, fearing for their children's safety, kept them home. David Barisa, now the policy research coordinator at the Mombasa regional office of ActionAid Kenya, told us of the ActionAid intervention to address the problem of access to education.

***Intervention focus***

ActionAid focused on empowering the community to provide feeder schools and access centres at village level, and helped build the capacity of parents to manage the schools.

***ActionAid role***

ActionAid worked in partnership with the community and government to satisfy local needs and provide local services. The feeder schools and access centres were run by volunteer teachers, and overseen by parent volunteers. ActionAid helped mobilise communities and built their awareness of the importance of education. ActionAid also helped to recruit and train the voluntary teachers, and the parent volunteers.

**We saw our role as partnering and supporting communities to meet their basic needs**

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***Who or what we saw as the drivers of change***

Our thinking was that communities can and should be empowered to deliver services in cases where the state is failing to deliver. To this end ActionAid supported community mobilisation and organising. With our assistance, and sometimes with inputs from government, communities were supported to mobilise funds and local resources, and through their volunteer labour provided much needed public services.

The community participated in developing annual plans, in conducting annual reviews, and were informed of budgets. Priorities for annual plans were identified through a process of village meetings, and these were concretised into plans for the coming year in a larger forum of village representatives and representatives from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and government.

Each village was supported to form a group called the Basic Education Community Trust Fund (BECTF), whose role was to mobilise financial contributions to education from the community. The group also sensitised community members on the need for education.

We were also involved in a school-feeding programme from 2005. This programme targeted all children and had as its aim to raise school retention levels. Advocacy led to government taking on the school-feeding programme from 2007.

***Who we worked with***

We worked with groups of poor people at village level.

***How we saw people we worked with***

We saw the people we worked with as fully capable of providing and managing a very basic standard of services at the local level. We saw our role as partnering and supporting communities to meet their basic needs.

***How we understood poverty***

We identified and met immediate causes of poverty, through empowerment and capacity building of the community.

***How we related to government***

We worked to empower (build capacity and knowledge of) communities to fulfil government's responsibilities locally by providing public services, or by supporting state-community-ActionAid partnerships through which services were delivered and maintained.

In addition to working on the feeder schools, we worked in partnership with government to improve infrastructure – classrooms and desks – in government schools. ActionAid topped up the money provided by government to upgrade schools.

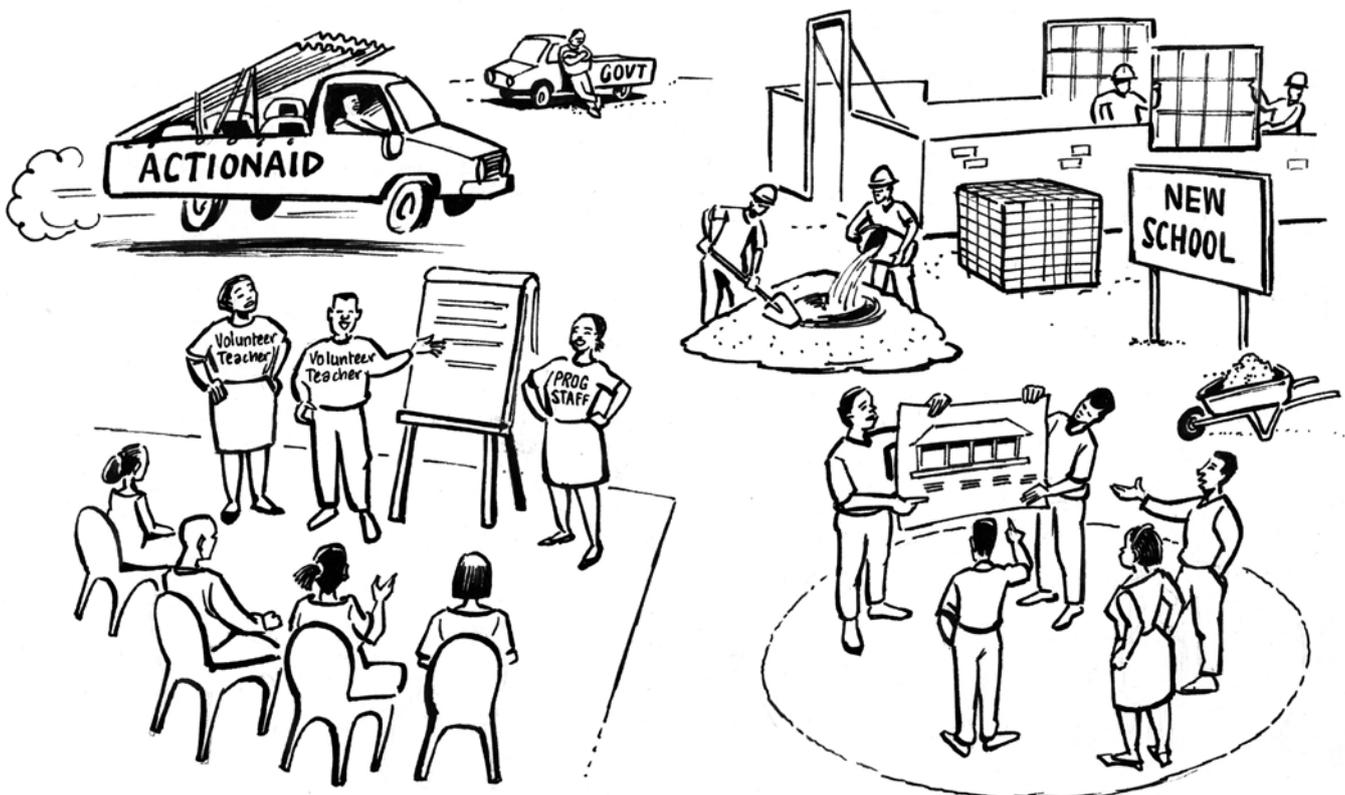
### ***How we understood and worked to address inequality between women and men***

Women had unequal access to education and employment and could not own property. Illiteracy levels were higher for women (82%) than for men (63%). Girls were married off early so that bride wealth could be used to pay the school fees for their brothers. Decision-making structures in the community were male dominated.

The programme was set up by introducing reflect circles to mobilise women, sensitise them on the value of education, and bridge the literacy gap between men and women. We also encouraged women's participation in school management committees, and supported income-generating projects targeting women. Finally, we sought to acknowledge and elevate the contributions of women to the development process by, for example, naming water kiosks after extraordinary women.

### ***Linkages to wider struggles and processes***

We did not link work across DIs or engage beyond the local level even though villages experienced shared problems, which could only be addressed by changes at the national or international levels.



**Empowerment approach to development**



### **Story 3: And now – working for rights in education since 2001**

In order to inform its strategy to address challenges in the education sector in Mombasa, ActionAid Kenya commissioned a study in 2001. The study highlighted challenges of low enrolment, high dropout, and poor performance in national examinations. The underlying causes of these problems included inadequate school infrastructure, poor attitudes of parents towards education, low parental participation in school governance, high education costs and the negative influence of tourism on children's motivation to study.

From the initial study a community campaign grew, fed by local analysis and activism and supported by ActionAid. The community campaign influenced the local education sector, parents and students, and eventually fed into a national campaign, which contributed towards the introduction of the Free Primary Education policy by government.

Evelyn Samba, Head of Programmes in ActionAid Kenya, tells us more about this HRBA intervention.

#### ***Intervention focus***

The focus of ActionAid Kenya's intervention was to meet basic needs by protecting and fulfilling the human rights of poor and excluded people. This was achieved by working across the three elements in ActionAid's HRBA – empowerment, campaigning, and solidarity.

To advance the **empowerment** of rights holders, ActionAid disseminated the findings of the education study to the community, and supported community forums to reflect on the findings. Community discussions led to a realisation that people needed to come together to improve education in Mombasa. This led to the formation of Mwamko wa Elimu Pwani (MWEP), a local-level education network of various stakeholders including parents, local community-based organisations (CBOs) and community groups.

With ActionAid support, the MWEP engaged in a process of analysis and community dialogue to prioritise and create strategies to address problems they could handle immediately on their own. One such issue was negative parental attitudes towards education. The network knew that the community's attitude towards education had to change. They organised training in the Rights of the Child for community members, local leaders and parents to create more support for a campaign for the right to education.

The community came up with the slogan 'education for life, not for employment' to emphasise the need to educate children as a life skill. With this slogan they conducted community outreach to talk about the problems facing the education sector and the need to take children to school. They went into schools to sensitise children on the need to work hard to improve their performance. With support from ActionAid, the network organised various activities aimed at improving performance, which included debates and quizzes, competitions, public speaking and prize-giving days.

ActionAid supported this network and its campaign to hold government accountable for improvements in education through **campaigning** at different levels. The network sensitised parents on how school levies were leading to the exclusion of children from school. With training by ActionAid on school governance and budget tracking, school management committees were able to demand transparency and accountability in the use of resources within the schools, and challenge decisions by school heads that were not transparent.

A vibrant local campaign called on government to reduce the school levies and to abolish school fees. With support from various international and local NGOs and CBOs this campaign grew into a national campaign for free primary education, and contributed to the introduction of Free Primary Education in the country in 2003. This significant social transformation was greatly assisted by different forms of **solidarity** – between community people planning and undertaking collective action through the local MWEF network; by ActionAid Kenya's partnership and support to the community struggle; and by the creation of a national platform bringing together MWEF, various international NGOs (INGOs), Elima Yetu (the national education campaign coalition) and others, working in tactical alliance with opposition political parties to press for the right to free primary education.

#### ***ActionAid role***

ActionAid worked in partnership and solidarity with the MWEF, a rights holder organisation, later linking MWEF to allies in a national campaign, and in all these various ways, helped to build a broad movement for change.

#### ***Who or what we saw as the drivers of change?***

The main agents in the development process were poor and excluded people who challenged unequal power and injustice.

#### ***Who we worked with***

We worked with local communities of rights holders. We identified the right infringed and the groups to be supported for the realisation of that right. We eventually scaled up outside of the DA into a national campaign.

#### ***How we saw the people we worked with***

We see poor and excluded people as capable, autonomous and able agents. Our role is to support and stand together with the poor as they struggle for their rights.

#### ***How we understood poverty***

Our understanding is that the majority of the earth's people are poor and marginalised both socially and economically, because the structures of our societies enable a small number of people to accumulate wealth and power at the expense of the majority. Social differences along the lines of sex, race, class, caste, ethnicity, and religion are used to intensify this marginalisation. This structure of exclusion is kept intact unless the affected people themselves – in alliance with others – organise to challenge this. In the education network, one of the structural roots of the rights violation was addressed when the network successfully campaigned with others for the eradication of school fees.

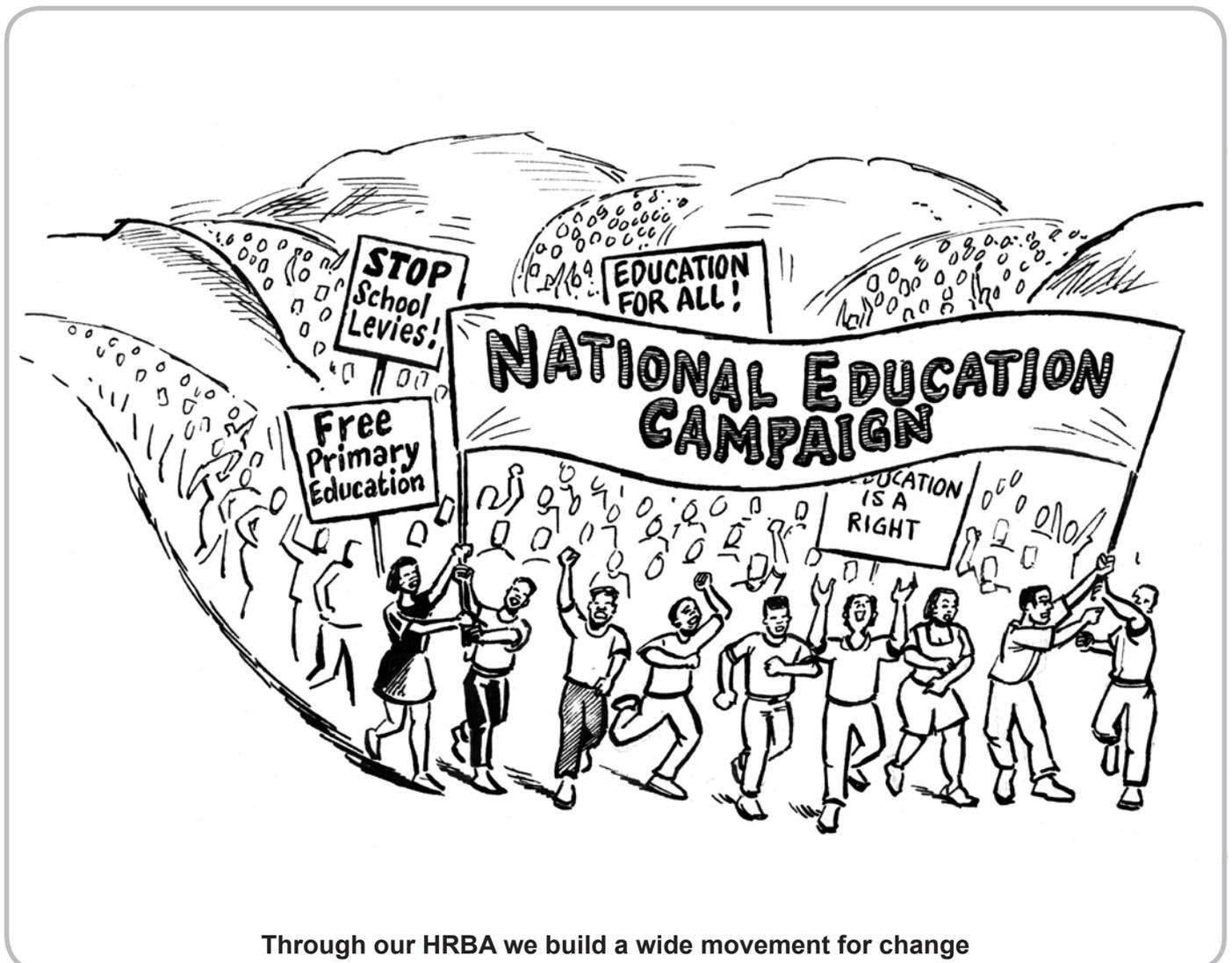
**Our role is to  
support and  
stand together  
with the poor as  
they struggle for  
their rights**

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***How we related to government***

Government is not neutral, but is instead strongly influenced by those who have power. Because of this we need to be strategic in how we work with the different arms of government. At times we helped build the capacity of government structures such as school management and school governing bodies. At other times we needed to push government to change its policies and we needed to hold government accountable – so we entered into a campaign with others to influence a change in policy on user fees and to hold government accountable to its commitments regarding the right to education.

When government introduced free primary education, the challenge shifted to ensuring quality education and retention of learners. The network focused on working closely with social audit groups to ensure government transparency and accountability in the use of education resources.



Through our HRBA we build a wide movement for change

***How we understood and addressed inequality between women and men***

The coastal people of Kenya, like many other communities in Kenya, are very patriarchal with deep cultural beliefs and practices that result in women's social, economic and political exclusion. Leadership structures in all institutions – religion, community, schools etc. – are typically male dominated so women's and girl's concerns are rarely heard or acted upon.

ActionAid Kenya's main strategy for dealing with women's exclusion under a HRBA was to support MWEF and Sauti ya Wanawake, the women's movement in the same DI, to sensitise mothers in the community on the need for education, and girl's education in particular, and on the importance of women's participation in school governance. Through capacity building and leadership development, women gained the confidence to participate in school management and community structures from where they championed the issues affecting children, and girl children in particular. Sauti ya Wanawake also worked with school management structures and teachers to create safer environments for girls in school.

A second dimension of our approach was to build awareness of the importance of women's participation and challenge male leadership in the various local decision-making bodies.

***Linkages to wider struggles and processes***

Over time the work that was started with MWEF was linked into a number of campaigns and initiatives at other levels. The one link was into the Stop Violence Against Girls in School (SVAGS) Campaign and aimed to ensure safe environments for girls in and on the way to school. MWEF is a member of the Elima Yetu Campaign in the coast region. Through this coalition it forms part of the national campaign for increased resource allocation and greater transparency and accountability in the use of these resources by the state education sector.

## KEY FEATURES OF THE THREE APPROACHES

The table summarises key features of the three approaches in each of the stories above:

	<b>Features of needs-based (with elements of welfare) approach to development</b> <i>Story 1</i>	<b>Features of a participatory-empowerment approach to development</b> <i>Story 2</i>	<b>Features of ActionAid's HRBA to development</b> <i>Story 3</i>
<b>Intervention focus</b>	Meeting basic needs of poor people without making links with broader processes	Empowering the community to provide and manage public services at the local level, often in partnership with ActionAid	Protecting and fulfilling the human rights of poor and excluded people
<b>ActionAid's role</b>	Direct implementation of basic services	Working in partnership with the community and in some cases with government to meet the basic needs of poor and excluded people	Working to empower rights holder organisations, build solidarity between rights holders and allies, and supporting campaigns to hold the state accountable to poor and excluded people
<b>Who drives change?</b>	Development organisations such as ActionAid	Empowered skilled communities/community groups	Poor and excluded people as rights holders
<b>Who ActionAid works with</b>	A localised geographical community	Groups of poor people at village level	Communities, organisations and movements of rights holders
<b>How ActionAid sees the people we work with</b>	Passive beneficiaries	Capable of providing and managing a very basic standard of service at the local level	Capable, autonomous and able agents of change
<b>How ActionAid understands poverty</b>	Lack of material needs	Lack of material needs, information, knowledge and power	Structural causes lead to social exclusion along lines of sex, race, class, caste, ethnicity etc.
<b>Relationship to government</b>	ActionAid takes on the role of government	Communities take on the role of government locally with support from ActionAid	Government is to be held accountable while being strategically supported to play its role
<b>Addressing gender inequality and women's rights</b>	Ensure needs of both men and women are met, without necessarily challenging unequal relations of power between women and men	Empower women to participate in the development process but again not directly challenging unequal relations of power with men	Build women's power to address structural power imbalances between women and men in order to achieve women's rights
<b>Working beyond the local</b>	Not linked to the national and international	Not linked to the national or the international	Think and act globally and locally; constraints to social change lie beyond the local in a complex and interconnected global system

## Section 2: New directions over time

Drawing on the three stories above, we now look at some of the main changes in our work over the last three decades.

### 1970s – charity and welfare

The 1970s were mainly a time of charity and welfare, where the overarching system of injustice and inequality was not challenged. We became increasingly aware that our focus on individual children was random and unjust. Children lucky enough to be sponsored were helped. Those that were not sponsored, despite in some cases their greater need, received no support. The sponsored children were going to school but were receiving little education. Little was really changing in the lives of the children we worked with. We knew it was *Time for change...*

### The 1980s – basic-needs approach

Learning from our work in the 1970s we moved beyond individual children and schools as the main focus of our work. We included the families and communities that children are a part of. We focused mainly on meeting the basic needs of communities – supplying physical essentials such as seeds and farming equipment, construction materials and pumps, and wells and taps for drinking water supply. For 15 years we built good quality schools, often using locally sourced materials, and ensuring good community participation in the construction process. We also provided money, raw materials and training for income-generation activities such as tailoring, weaving and beekeeping.

While this brought some improvement to the ‘quality’ of life of those we reached, this approach left untouched the unequal power that results in unequal distribution of resources in the first place.

While we supported women’s specific needs for water, education for their children, and some income-generation work, we had failed to challenge the gender-specific roles in which women are trapped, their work undervalued and underpaid. We knew it was *Time for change...*



### The 1990s – supporting the empowerment of communities

Our focus during the 1990s was sustainability and empowerment. Our thinking was that since the state could not meet the needs of people, we would support communities to help themselves. We helped set up local farmer cooperatives, community schools or non-formal education centres, and continued our work in the area of income generation through collectives.

We strengthened our capacity for participatory analysis, and we developed Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community (Reflect) as an approach to adult learning and social change. We helped poor people make their voices heard through advocacy work. We researched, developed alternative policies, and lobbied local and national governments. We had some success and the resulting changes implemented by government officials benefited others beyond the communities we worked in, thus expanding the impact of our work.

We realised that an approach, in which communities replace the state locally, is not a sustainable long-term solution. We also realised that in the absence of strong grassroots organisations and movements applying pressure on the state we would not achieve and sustain the changes we want. Finally, we learnt that we trap women in positions of marginalisation when we continue to organise them to address the needs of others – their husbands, children, the disabled, the sick or even ‘the community’. Women are oppressed and we must work with women to identify and overcome the causes of their oppression. We knew it was *Time for change...*

**We trap women in positions of marginalisation when we continue to organise them to address the needs of others**

## We work in partnership with local rights holders

### *From the late-1990s – working for human rights*

We changed our approach to poverty eradication by adopting a HRBA.

We focus on protecting and fulfilling the human rights of poor and excluded people as the best way to eradicate poverty and injustice. By building local organisations of rights holders, and linking these organisations into networks, platforms, alliances and movements at the national and international levels, we help build a broad and powerful movement for change. In some rights holder programmes at local level we still implement programmes directly, and we do address basic needs but the major difference is that we work in partnership with local rights holders, shaping priorities, strategy, plans and budgets. Our basic needs delivery work is a vehicle for organising rights holders, building analysis, piloting alternatives etc. and no longer the end point of our work.

We see poor and excluded people as the leading agents in the development process and in challenging unequal power and injustice. We help to build and strengthen their organisations, uniting organisations and people in solidarity through collective efforts for change.

The primary shift in understanding is that poverty is (a) a violation of human rights, (b) that poverty arises principally because human rights have been denied, and (c) that if we are to end poverty then it is necessary to protect, promote and fulfil the human rights of poor and excluded people.

Our main strategies are to empower poor people (rights holders) to claim their rights and to hold accountable those people and institutions (duty bearers) meant to deliver on these rights.

In helping poor people claim their rights we:

- Help them organise, build capacity, develop rights awareness, become conscious of their marginal position and the reasons underlying this, and meet their most basic needs to enable them to advocate for their rights (all of this we call rights holder empowerment, addressed in Chapter 5);
- Campaign alongside rights holders for structural change (addressed in Chapter 6); and
- Act in solidarity, and mobilise others in civil society, including sponsors and supporters to align to the rights struggles of poor and excluded people (addressed in Chapter 7).

We have an explicit focus on women's rights. We understand that women are marginalised because of the structure of society and hence have unequal power. So, we must work with women to build their power to achieve their rights.

In conclusion, it is important to note that while our approach to development has changed over time, we have drawn upon elements of prior approaches in each 'new era'. So, for example, empowerment of rights holders remains a central feature of our HRBA but now it is joined to an agenda to hold the state accountable for meeting the basic needs of its citizens. Under a HRBA we provide some level of basic services, the major focus of our work in the early years, but now we do this in strategic ways, to organise rights holders, build awareness, and model alternatives to lobby government to take up.





### ***What will you find in the next chapter?***

In the next chapter, we explore in greater detail what a HRBA is and specifically what makes up ActionAid's distinctive approach. We will look at our understanding of:

- Poverty and social exclusion;
- Human rights – principles, legal standards, and their evolution over time; and
- The actors – rights holders and duty bearers.



### ***Questions for you to think about***

Having read Chapter 2 on the history of our approach to development:

1. What similarities and differences do you see in the evolution of ActionAid's approach to development in your own country? How would you explain the differences?
2. Over time, what specific shifts have you seen in how we understand the relations between women and men, and the actions we take to support transformation in the lives of women?
3. What 'value' do you think was added with each shift in approach? What do you think might have been 'lost' or compromised?
4. And now... what are the main lessons learnt about a HRBA to development? What needs to change? In what direction do we need to build in future?



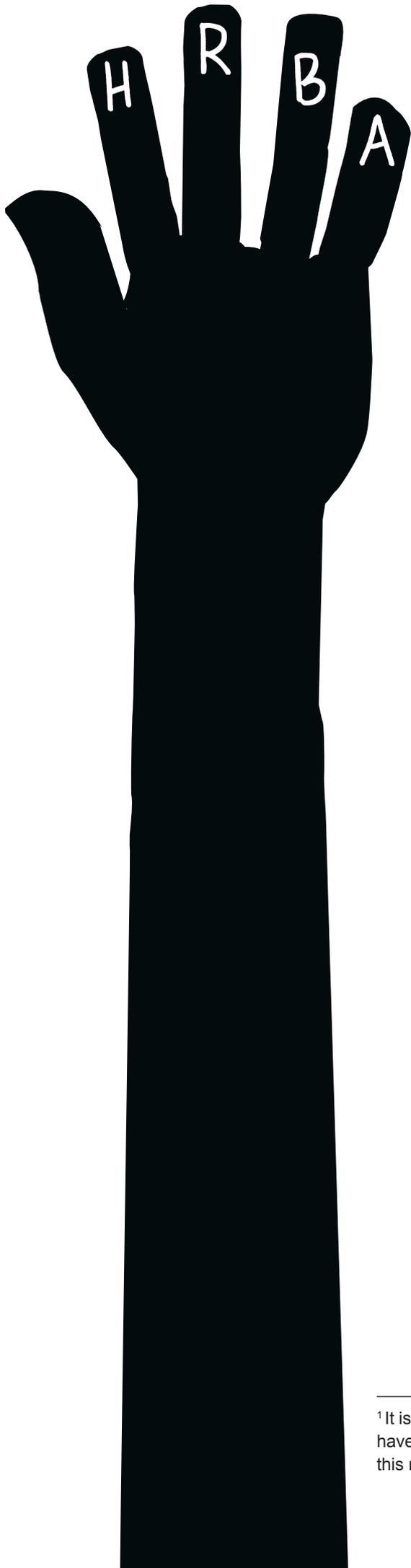
### ***Resources***

Archer, D (2010) 'The Evolution of NGO-government relations in education: ActionAid from 1972 to 2009', *Development in Practice*, Volume 20, Numbers 4-5, Routledge – [click here to access paper](#)

ActionAid (2004) *A Human Rights Based Approach to Development*, Books for Change, Bangalore

Ljungman, C (2005) 'A Rights-Based Approach to Development', in Mikkelsen, B *Methods for Development Work and Research – A New Guide for Practitioners*, Sage Publications, New Delhi

Kirkemann Boesen, J and Martin, T (no date) 'Applying a Rights-Based Approach: An Inspirational Guide for Civil Society' – [click here to access paper](#)



# 3

## WHAT IS ACTIONAID'S HRBA?

CHAPTER

Our HRBA<sup>1</sup> is an approach to development that centres on supporting rights holders to organise and claim their rights and to hold the duty bearers to account. Our HRBA flows from our politics and our strategy. We analyse and confront power imbalances and we take sides with the poor and excluded.

In Section 1 of this chapter we look at the guiding ideas in ActionAid's HRBA to development. Section 2 asks how ActionAid thinks about poverty and social exclusion. Section 3 examines ActionAid's understanding of human rights. Section 4 looks at the actors and their roles in a HRBA.

<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that there is no one HRBA. Different development organisations have drawn on rights in their programme work in different ways. In this chapter and in this resource book we focus on a HRBA as understood by ActionAid.

## SECTION I: GUIDING IDEAS IN ACTIONAID'S HRBA TO DEVELOPMENT

These are some of the ideas that lie beneath and drive ActionAid's HRBA. They are unpacked further in the sections and chapters that follow:

<p><b>Idea 1</b></p>	<p><b>Poverty is a violation of people's human rights</b> and a terrible injustice. Poverty arises because of the marginalisation and discrimination associated with human rights violations. The poor are rights holders by virtue of being born and are entitled to the enjoyment of civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights – not as a favour or act of charity but as a right.</p>
<p><b>Idea 2</b></p>	<p>In a HRBA we identify and address the structural (or underlying) causes of poverty. At all levels of society, the <b>rich and powerful deny the rights of the poor and excluded</b> in order to get control over productive resources and build wealth. It is in the interests of the rich and powerful to dominate institutions including state structures and to use them for their economic interests. In order to address poverty this power imbalance needs to be addressed.</p>
<p><b>Idea 3</b></p>	<p>Rights holders' <b>needs are related to specific rights</b>. In a HRBA rights holders should be supported to understand that their needs are related to specific rights. They should be assisted to identify and target the specific duty-bearer, or bearers, who are accountable for ensuring the realisation of those rights.</p>
<p><b>Idea 4</b></p>	<p>In a HRBA <b>government and other duty bearers responsible for fulfilling specific rights must be held accountable by rights holders</b> for the fulfilment of rights. The duty bearers responsible for each right should be identified, targeted and held to account.</p>
<p><b>Idea 5</b></p>	<p><b>Rights holders are at the centre</b> of our HRBA – rights can be claimed and protected only when rights holders are organised and mobilised as a constituency, aware of their rights, and conscious of why their rights are being violated. Poverty is not the problem of an individual, and cannot be solved by an individual or by working with individuals.</p>
<p><b>Idea 6</b></p>	<p><b>ActionAid, supporters and sponsors stand alongside rights holders in solidarity</b>, supporting them to organise and advocate for their rights.</p>
<p><b>Idea 7</b></p>	<p><b>Women's rights</b> are central to our HRBA. Through our work we aim to confront the domination of men over women and the inequality between men and women in access to services, resources and power.</p>
<p><b>Idea 8</b></p>	<p>In an HRBA, we <b>think and act globally and locally</b>. The roots of a human rights violation at the local level may lie elsewhere in a complicated and interconnected global system. In building our programmes and campaigns we need to be aware of how the local links with the national and global.</p>

## Section 2: Poverty and social exclusion

ActionAid has a very particular understanding of poverty and its relationship to human rights, and this understanding shapes our responses to poverty.

### **Poverty is a violation of human rights arising from unequal relations of power**

Poverty arises because of unequal relations of power, and is a violation of human rights. Through our work in a HRBA we aim to break this vicious cycle of poverty.

The causes of poverty are structural – the structures of society at all levels are set up so as to enable the rich and powerful to control productive resources and build wealth. The rich and powerful dominate institutions, including state structures, and use them to pursue their economic interests.



The term ‘state’ refers to a set of connected governing institutions that pursue certain common objectives or have particular consequences, such as the maintenance of law and order in society. This collection of institutions usually has sovereignty over a territory and its population. The state includes legal/judicial, military, and bureaucratic/administrative units. The word ‘government’ usually refers to the actual bureaucracy or machinery of the state that carries out its affairs on a daily basis. This is the executive and includes government departments, municipalities, parastatals etc.<sup>2</sup>

**Poverty is a lack of power to access, use or control resources**

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Poverty is therefore not just a lack of income or a lack of material resources. It is a lack of power to access, use or control resources<sup>3</sup> “adequate to fulfil a standard of living consistent with a life of dignity”.<sup>4</sup>

Poverty is the denial or violation of human rights, including the right to dignity. The poor are typically denied many of their rights to basic needs such as food, education, housing and health care. They also generally do not enjoy the normal benefits of citizenship such as legal justice, participation in decision making, and access to information. These human rights violations compound one another, driving people further and further into poverty and marginalisation.

People living in poverty are often treated as less than human. Day to day, from cradle to grave, they are cheated, exploited and denied what they need to flourish as human beings. This injustice is carried out by more powerful family members, neighbours, employers, traders, and the state. In the case of the state, this very body entrusted with the duty to protect and promote people’s human rights, dignity and well-being, is at times responsible for human rights violations.

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<sup>2</sup> Cudworth (2007); Meer (2006) and Wikipedia [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sovereign\\_state](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sovereign_state)

<sup>3</sup> By control we mean that people are seen as the legitimate ‘owners’ and can make decisions related to the resource.

<sup>4</sup> ActionAid (2004) p 52.

**Social exclusion is the outcome of the multiple human rights violations a social group experiences**

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When people are treated as less than human, they often internalise that treatment, and can feel deeply ashamed, inferior, unworthy and powerless. They can feel undeserving of the freedoms, privileges and benefits other human beings enjoy. Oppression can rob oppressed people of the ability to dream and imagine a different life for themselves, and to stand up for themselves. To address this, our HRBA challenges people's internalised oppression through consciousness-raising.<sup>5</sup>

**Social exclusion**

In any society, relations are hierarchically structured with different social groups having different access to power and status. Within<sup>6</sup> and between different social groups there will be exclusions from and unequal:

- Access to and control over resources;
- Abilities to claim rights;
- Control over their own lives and the lives of others; and
- Roles and responsibilities.

Social exclusion is the outcome of the multiple human rights violations a social group experiences. Social exclusion is the reality for the majority of the world's people – the poor – who are excluded from the resources and benefits they need to survive and live with dignity. The poor are also excluded from enjoying their human rights.

Exclusion takes place on the basis of gender, race, class, caste, ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation, and a range of other social relations. The more powerful use their power over and exclude the less powerful – with gender men have power over and exclude women, with class the rich do so over the poor, with race white over black people, with caste higher castes over lower castes and dalits, with sexual orientation, heterosexuals over people with other sexual orientations such as gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transsexuals.

Within each of the excluded social groups (e.g. the poor, lower castes, black people or people of alternative sexual orientations) women are generally further marginalised because of existing gender power relations which privilege men and subordinate women. So, for example, in a poor rural community a poor man will be able to access land, whereas a poor woman will be denied land because women as a group are not seen as holders of property, but are themselves seen as the property of men. Often exclusions are multiple and overlapping – and so a woman may be poor and marginalised because she is black, single, HIV positive, living in a slum, and because she is a woman.

Excluded groups are denied their human rights not because someone forgot or didn't make enough effort. They are denied their rights because of their place within a system of unequal social relations of power, which enables the more powerful to deny the human rights of the less powerful. Because of this, members of excluded social groups cannot participate fully in the economic, social, and political life of the communities and societies in which they live.

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<sup>5</sup> See Chapter 5 on empowerment.

<sup>6</sup> It is important to note that social relations within social groups are also unequal – for example, a woman within a marginal dalit caste will have a different and unequal experience to her dalit male partner because of the sexism she experiences by virtue of being a woman.

Social exclusion is cyclical and reinforcing – so that we can talk of a cycle of poverty and exclusion that continues from one generation to the next. As the poor and other excluded groups are denied their human rights, they cannot gain access to the resources needed to sustain a life of human dignity, their oppression is further and further internalised, and the cycle of poverty and exclusion continues.

Poverty and social exclusion also increase poor people's vulnerability to emergencies and conflict. The housing of the poor and the land they occupy are often most vulnerable to flooding, fires, or landslides so when disaster hits the poor are generally worst affected. The poor do not have the resources to recover from the disaster so the cycle continues with the poor sliding further and further into poverty and social exclusion.

But the cycle of social exclusion can change, in particular when excluded groups organise and act to change the situation. Human agency or the power of human beings to change things is the most powerful force for change. This is why ActionAid's HRBA focuses on the empowerment of rights holders through organising, mobilising, awareness-raising and conscientisation.



**ActionAid believes that change happens and is more likely to be sustained when rights holders organise to challenge their exclusion**



**Ma Luthuli: A woman peasant farmer in South Africa – a story of poverty and power**

Ma Luthuli is 45 years old. She has three children and her only source of income is one hectare of poor quality land. Ma Luthuli has been on the waiting list for a government grant for land redistribution for 15 years. Meanwhile she receives no government support at all – no subsidy or training or extension or marketing support.

Two years ago her husband died. From the time of his death her husband's brothers have been trying to take her land from her, using customary law and the local chief to do this. Ma Luthuli has struggled against this. She fights back because she and her children will have no home and no food if the land is stolen.

Her life is difficult and she and her children barely survive from one month to the next. Most of the food Ma Luthuli grows is to feed her children and herself. There is a small part she can spare to sell at the local market, and this covers the transport cost to school for her eldest child and some other bills.

As a woman Ma Luthuli has no voice in the lekgotla (the traditional decision-making forum), and she can feel people watching and gossiping about her. She worries that one day she may face a witchcraft accusation, an accusation often cooked up in villages such as hers in order to take the land from widows.

In this story we see how Ma Luthuli faces multiple violations of her rights because of the actions or inactions of powerful institutions or individuals:

- First, by the failure of government policy and programmes to support her obtain access to the land and support she needs to make a sustainable living for herself and her family.
- Second, by both the traditional institutions and the family of her deceased husband who try and evict her from her land.
- Third, by the traditional institution which prevents her participation in community decision-making because she is a woman.
- Fourth, by members of the community that marginalise her socially because she is a widowed woman.

And we can continue...

***Unequal power is created and perpetuated by institutions***

Unequal social relations and social exclusion are shaped by institutions and they are perpetuated by institutions as we see in the Ma Luthuli example above. Institutions are structures, systems and rules that govern the behaviour of individuals in society. Examples of institutions are the family, the community, the state, the market, the international arena, and religion.

These institutions typically present themselves as neutral. But behind the words of these official ideologies (what they want us to believe) we find another picture, as we show in the following table.

INSTITUTION	'OFFICIAL' IDEOLOGY	WHAT LIES BEHIND THE 'OFFICIAL' IDEOLOGY
<b>State</b>	Concerned with national interest and national welfare; protects and promotes the human rights, dignity and well-being of all citizens equally	State laws and policies are geared to the interests of the powerful upper classes, discriminate against women, and produce and reproduce social exclusion
<b>Market</b>	Concerned with maximising profit and ensuring fair and balanced trade	The market perpetuates exclusion by privileging rich, powerful males
<b>Community</b>	Caring for and servicing all of its members	In most communities a small elite has access to and control over resources, power and authority
<b>Family</b>	Members cooperate, provide mutual support, and care for the welfare of all members	Unequal relations mean that women, girls, and younger family members may get less food, have less control over resources, and exercise less authority to influence family decisions; for many women the family is a place where they may experience violence

At the same time institutions can be transformed to address the needs and interests of the poor and excluded. In order to work for change we need first to move beyond the official ideologies to uncover the actual rules and practices of institutions. We need to see clearly whose interests institutions actually serve.<sup>7</sup> We need to pay attention to how institutions relate to and support each other in reproducing existing inequalities and we need to develop strategies for change. So for example, if we want to advance women's rights to land and productive resources we need to uncover how each of the institutions is responsible for denying women this right and we can then devise strategies to shift these institutional rules and practices.

We need to also be aware that the rules, practices and procedures of institutions are supported by deeply held **ideas and beliefs** that almost invisibly influence and shape policies, laws, practices and behaviours. For example, in the case of Ma Luthuli, the discrimination she faces is underpinned by the belief that women are inferior to men, and that women should not own property. We need to be aware that as products of society and its institutions we ourselves, and the people we work with, might well hold such ideas and beliefs. Working for change and for the realisation of human rights might well challenge our own deeply held beliefs. And a first step might be that we need to address change within ourselves!

<sup>7</sup>Analytical tools are described in Chapter 4.

ActionAid as an institution is also shaped by and reproduces the attitudes, values and beliefs of the mainstream society of which it is a part. Consciously or unwittingly, ActionAid could perpetuate discrimination – for example, by failing to take a stand against the criminalisation of homosexuals by governments, or by failing to challenge discriminatory beliefs and attitudes amongst staff. Failing to act would go against our international strategy and our Accountability Learning and Planning System (Alps).



#### **More on Ma Luthuli and the story of poverty and power...**

Let's go back to the experiences of Ma Luthuli. We mentioned earlier the many institutions that violate the rights of Ma Luthuli – state, community, traditional governance, and family. Whose interests were these institutions pursuing?

Firstly, Ma Luthuli is excluded from getting more and better land, and government support because of the orientation of government land policy and law. In the early 1990s, the World Bank supported the setting up of well funded think tanks that influenced the African National Congress (ANC), then the main liberation movement and now the ruling party, to adopt a neoliberal, market-oriented land reform programme based on the state purchase of land from willing farmers. This was supported by white farmers and emergent black farmers who saw the potential to benefit personally from this form of land reform. This policy did not enable large-scale land redistribution to the poor and landless. So, as you can imagine this policy failed many millions of farmers, and especially women, like Ma Luthuli. Peasant farmers remain landless and hungry.

Secondly, Ma Luthuli has faced two rights violations by the traditional institution – she is not permitted to participate in local decision making as a woman and the Chief has backed the family of her deceased husband's claim against the land which she has used as her own for two decades. The traditional institution is comprised of men, and it represents the interests of men. It is not a neutral institution safeguarding the interests of 'the community'.

Thirdly, there is her husband's family who far from being a source of mutual support are a threat as they attempt to grab her land.

Fourthly, there is the community who hold strong beliefs about women's role and place and see a woman who tries to claim her rights to land as an upstart and maybe even a witch.

Understanding what interests each of these institutions is pursuing, and going beyond the official picture is the first step to developing strategies for change in order to advance Ma Luthuli's rights to land and livelihood.

## Section 3: Human rights

Humanity has agreed a broad set of human rights and freedoms that give equality to all human beings. Human rights belong to a person by virtue of being born. They are independent of a person's sex, religion, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, where they live, or any other status. They cannot be given or taken away. All human beings are equally entitled to our shared human rights without discrimination.



### *Human rights can be classified into three categories*

1. **Civil and political rights** ensure that all citizens can participate in the civil and political life of the state without discrimination or repression. They focus on what the state should not do to interfere with people's freedoms, such as the freedom of speech, association and belief. These are, in effect, 'keep-out' notices to the state saying that these freedoms must not be limited in any way.
2. **Economic, social and cultural (ESC) rights** focus on what the state should do to promote people's rights. They are concerned with equality of condition and treatment – for instance that the state should offer education for all or that it should guarantee the right to food. In 2008, ESC rights were elevated to the same level as civil and political rights internationally with the adoption by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly of the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966).
3. **Collective rights** or 'solidarity rights' focus on the rights of groups of people rather than on individual rights. They include minority rights, the right to development, environmental rights and the rights to sovereignty and self-determination. The right to development includes the concept that states can make human rights claims against other states or the international community. These claims could include the right to pursue a national development policy, or the right to an international environment conducive to development. It may also imply the duty of powerful or responsible states to provide international development assistance.

**All human beings are equally entitled to our shared human rights without discrimination**

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**We cannot  
decide to  
defend only  
those rights  
we agree with,  
while we reject  
other rights  
because they  
challenge our  
beliefs**

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There are three key principles of human rights:

- Human rights are *universal* – that is they apply to all human beings.
- Human rights are *indivisible* – a human being can only be treated with justice, equity and dignity, if all his or her rights, i.e. civil, political, social, economic and cultural, are protected, promoted and fulfilled. For instance, a woman may be free to vote and to be elected as a political candidate, but if she is denied the right to education and is illiterate, she may not be able to take up these other rights.
- Human rights are *inalienable* – they cannot be taken away and people cannot be forced to give them up.

Because ActionAid is a defender of human rights, we must uphold these principles to the highest standards and commitment. This means that we cannot decide to defend only those rights we agree with, while we reject other rights because they challenge our beliefs. For example, some people might find the right to abortion difficult to support because of their religious beliefs. Others might be morally offended by gays. Working in a HRBA requires that we look closely at such beliefs and prejudices, and that we begin to uncover how these beliefs lead to the denial of basic rights and social exclusions. It is only when the beliefs of the individuals are in greater harmony with the values held by the organisation (ActionAid) that meaningful change can be advanced.

An important distinction needs to be made between human rights based on the moral idea that all human beings have the right to be treated equally, and legal rights, which are set out in law. ActionAid works with rights holders to fight for and defend human rights, not just those rights enshrined in law. Why do we go beyond legal rights? Because the legal structures – the courts and the state institutions, like commissions, or government departments and parliaments that draft and pass law – in our countries are often not neutral. They are often biased in favour of the rich and powerful that control the state.

Human rights are born out of people's struggles for recognition, for humanity, for dignity and equality, and for a better life. To turn human rights into reality, human rights campaigners agreed on the need for universal laws that could bind all people in all nations and would hold all states accountable for their conduct. The first of these to be developed, the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, reflected the shared hopes and beliefs of all member countries. Since then human rights treaties and covenants have been developed, and ratified by states. ActionAid primarily looks to these international human rights instruments, and to national constitutions and laws that are consistent with the international human rights framework, to frame the content of our human rights work.

However, the international human rights frameworks and national laws are themselves the outcome of negotiations that reflect the balance of forces at a particular point in time, and have not always taken into account the rights of all human beings. The original formulation of the universal declaration for example, said nothing about women's rights or the rights of gay people.

New rights continue to be created and defended by movements and constituencies of marginalised people, for example women, gay people and indigenous peoples. In this sense rights can be seen as arenas of struggle to be constantly extended and defended.

**Women’s rights are central to our HRBA**

It is important to see women’s rights as human rights and to place women’s rights at the centre of our HRBA.

Why do women’s rights matter in ActionAid’s HRBA? In our international strategy, Rights to End Poverty, we outline very clearly that the “eradication of poverty and injustice will simply not be possible without securing equality and rights for women”.<sup>8</sup> We can see that human rights violations cause poverty. As compared with men in the same class, or ethnic group, or race group, women are doubly vulnerable to human rights violations because of their subordination within an unequal system of gender relations. If we fail to specifically address women’s human rights our poverty eradication efforts for women, but also for men and the wider community will be ineffective, at best, and harmful, at worst.

Women’s rights are central to our HRBA, and through all our work we aim to confront the domination of men over women and the inequality between men and women in access to services, resources and power.



How we think about rights in ActionAid’s HRBA

<sup>8</sup> ActionAid (2005) p 4.

**A duty bearer is that individual or institution with the obligation to respect, protect and fulfil a right**

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## **Section 4: The actors and their roles in ActionAid's HRBA**

The focus of ActionAid's HRBA is to support the protection and fulfilment of the human rights of poor and excluded people as the best way to eradicate poverty and injustice. Our main strategy is to empower poor people (rights holders) to claim their rights and to hold accountable those institutions (duty bearers) meant to deliver on these rights.

### ***Rights holders and duty bearers***

The two main parties in an HRBA are the **rights holders** and **duty bearers**, and the fulfilment of human rights is based on a **relationship** between the rights holders and the duty bearers.

The poor are rights holders by virtue of being born and are entitled to the enjoyment of civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights – not as a favour or act of charity but as a right. A duty bearer is that individual or institution with the obligation to respect, protect and fulfil a right.

The state and its various organs, such as parliaments, local authorities, and the justice system are often the primary, or ultimate, duty bearers. In the context of a weak or failed state, multilateral agencies such as the UN, humanitarian agencies like the Red Cross, or INGOs/NGOs like ActionAid, may become 'proxy' (replacement) primary duty bearers. Secondary duty bearers are non-state actors who also have power and duties in relation to rights – for example, traditional and religious authorities, corporations and employers, and even individuals. Men are also duty bearers in relation to women.

The essence of a HRBA, therefore, is a process of rights holders identifying, targeting and holding duty bearers to account.

### ***Empowering rights holders as agents of change***

Rights holders are at the centre of ActionAid's HRBA. We see poor and excluded people as the leading agents in the development process and in challenging unequal power and injustice. Rights can be claimed and protected only when rights holders are organised and mobilised as a constituency, are aware of their rights, and are conscious of why their rights are being violated.

ActionAid, supporters and sponsors stand alongside rights holders in solidarity, supporting them organise and advocate for their rights. Since poverty is not the problem of an individual, and cannot be solved by an individual or by working with individuals, it is important to support the self organisation of constituencies of rights holders. By supporting and strengthening the organisations of rights holders we help build a broad movement for change. Human agency or the power of human beings to change things is the most powerful force for change.

### ***Holding duty bearers to account***

A core principle of ActionAid's HRBA is the accountability of duty bearers for their obligation to respect, protect and fulfil rights. In the past, development was an act of charity, a 'gift' of states to their citizens. In a HRBA development becomes an obligation and a duty. And duty bearers can therefore be held accountable for their actions and inactions to advance human rights.

In fact, the argument can be made that if agencies like ActionAid do not support rights holders to organise and hold the state accountable for its duties we are weakening both the state and the collective agency of the poor. It is the emphasis on accountability that is one of the most powerful features of a HRBA.

Accountability requires that “the government, as the legal and principle duty bearer:

- Accepts responsibility for the impact it has on people’s lives;
- Co-operates by providing information, undertaking transparent processes and hearing people’s views; and
- Responds adequately to those views”.<sup>9</sup>

This is why, in addition to informing, educating and building the consciousness of rights holders, we work with rights holders and allies to expose instances where duty bearers, especially the state, are not respecting rights or are violating rights. And we advocate and campaign for policy, legislative or other changes. We do this influencing work alongside rights holders, and with networks and coalitions. See Chapter 6 where we look at ways in which we can influence and hold the state accountable.

The following table attempts to summarise the key actors and strategies we have in relation to them:

ACTORS	STRATEGIES IN RELATION TO THESE ACTORS
<p><b>Rights holders</b> – groups, communities, movements and organisations of poor and excluded people</p>	<p>Organising and mobilising rights holders Supporting social movements Raising rights awareness Building consciousness about why rights holders are poor and excluded Building organisational and leadership capacity of rights holder organisations Supporting rights holder mobilisation in advocacy actions and campaigns Addressing basic needs in ways that increase empowerment of rights holders</p>
<p><b>Duty bearers</b> – governments, traditional leaders, family members etc.</p>	<p>Identify the duty bearer responsible for the rights violation Hold the duty bearer to account Get the duty bearer to accept responsibility Expose duty bearer inactions or violations Challenge duty bearers</p>

<sup>9</sup> UNDP (2000)

***And where does ActionAid sit in the picture? What is our role? How do we deal with conflict?***

ActionAid's HRBA is political – we are not a neutral actor. We take sides with poor and excluded rights holders. We work to advance their power through organisation, consciousness and capacity. We mobilise more power on the side of rights holders by building solidarity with friendly movements, organisations and middle-class people at all levels of society. We work with social movements. We work to hold duty bearers to account and we advocate and campaign with others to change laws, policies, programmes and practices of duty bearers.

**Neoliberalism [is] one of the main structural reasons for poverty, inequality and social exclusion**

We hold a deep critique of the dominant global economic system of neoliberalism<sup>10</sup>, which favours a minimal role of the state and increases the scope of the market or private sector. The economic rationale of such a system is profit making and since the market cannot make profits from the poor (who have no money) the needs of the majority of the earth's people, and their rights to housing, education, or food are violated. We see this system as one of the main structural reasons for poverty, inequality and social exclusion.

As we work for change we also need to consider ways of dealing with and mediating conflict. Those with power and resources do not willingly give up their privileges and benefits and so there is always resistance to change. This may take many forms ranging from the sabotage of campaigns through



<sup>10</sup> Neoliberal policies have had far reaching negative impacts on poor people across the globe. These include major cut backs in public spending and social subsidies; tax restructuring that has substantially benefited elites and reduced money in the state coffers for public services; poor farmers that have been left vulnerable to competition from cheap imports etc. Social movements and popular struggles in the past decades have been substantially directed against neoliberalism, and its major proponents, which include the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

the spreading of misinformation, to the bribing of members or leaders of the oppressed social group, to the assassination of leaders by civil society militia groups. Since the state is often aligned to and supportive of powerful interests, we often find instances of police or military repression against the rights struggles of poor and marginalised groups. Such repression may take the form of infiltration of the organisation of the oppressed social group, arrests, tear gassing of housing protests, and at the extreme, we find the torture and murder of activists.

Conflict is inherent in the social change process and cannot be avoided. And this is a cause for worry amongst ActionAid staff and partners, especially in countries that have recently emerged from civil war. Risks of repression will also be more extreme in situations where there is limited democratic space.

While we cannot avoid conflict, we can forecast, prepare for, strategise around, and manage its worst possible manifestations, through strong risk analysis and management. And so one of our roles is to support rights holders and their allies, including ourselves, analyse the balance of power around a rights struggle, figure out where powerful groups sit, which institutions align with and against them, and what the likely consequences may be of different strategies and actions. With information and analysis rights holder groups and their friends will be better prepared, and can make informed choices.

**Conflict is inherent in the social change process and cannot be avoided**

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### ***What will you find in the next chapter?***

In Chapter 4 we explore our understanding of a HRBA programme. We look at:

- The programme framework – areas of change, programme principles, areas of programming (section 1, part A) and the essential elements or building blocks of a good HRBA programme (section 1, part B).
- In section 2 we look at the broad implementation phases and supporting organisational systems through which we operationalise the programme framework.



### ***Questions for you to think about***

Having read Chapter 3 on how we understand the HRBA in ActionAid:

1. Does your work address the underlying structural causes of poverty and inequality? If no, what do you think is the difficulty?
2. Think about one institution you are familiar with – your church, community, or the local government for example – whose interests do you think this institution serves? And what are the effects of its orientation?
3. Pinpoint one right that you feel uncomfortable supporting. What is the source of your discomfort? What is the implication of this for rights holders? What do you need to do to challenge yourself?

4. 'Change comes through confrontation and conflict'. What do you think about this statement? What can we do to identify and manage some of the bigger risks – for rights holders, for ourselves, for our organisations – that come with change, while at the same time not running away from the conflicts and resistances that come with challenges to power?



### **Resources**

ActionAid (2004) *A Human Rights Based Approach to Development: Resource Book*, Books for Change, Bangalore

ActionAid (2005) *Rights to End Poverty*

ActionAid (2005) *Critical Webs of Power and Change*

ActionAid (2006) *Power, Inclusion and Rights-based Approaches: The ActionAid Gender Equality and RBA Resource Kit*

ActionAid (2008) 'Human Rights Based Approaches to Poverty and Development' - [click here to link to paper](#)

Bunch, C and Frost, S (2000) *Routledge International Encyclopaedia of Women: Global Women's Issues and Knowledge*, Routledge

Cudworth, E et al (2007) *The Modern State*, Edinburgh University Press

Meer, S (2006) 'Rights Based Approaches in Development Programmes', workshop report

Save the Children (2009) 'How we Work: Our Approach to Realising Children's Rights through Country Programmes' – [click here to link to programme approach](#)

Symonides, J and Vladimir, V (2001) 'A Guide to Human Rights: Institutions, Standards and Procedures' – [click here to link to paper](#)

UNDP (2000) *Human Development Report*, Oxford University Press

For a list of the nine core international treaties and their monitoring mechanisms [click here](#)

For a fuller list of the core international human rights instruments and their monitoring bodies [click here](#)

For human rights treaties and other instruments [click here](#)

# 4 HRBA PROGRAMMING: HOW WE WORK FOR CHANGE

CHAPTER

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In this chapter we set out ActionAid's approach to designing and implementing a HRBA programme. We unpack the assumptions that lie beneath our programme work and we outline the programme framework or structure. We do not go into operational details of how to do programmes, but rather focus on how we think about programme work and the basics that have to be in place for a HRBA programme.

If you think of this in building terms we get as far as putting up the frame and putting in the walls, but we do not detail the windows or the doors or what goes into the interior of the house. Section 1 looks at ActionAid's HRBA programme framework, which includes our change vision, programming areas, principles, building blocks and minimum standards. Section 2 outlines broad implementation phases and supporting organisational systems.

We focus on long-term local rights programmes, i.e. those programmes that run over five years and more. However much of the content is also relevant to local rights programmes implemented in shorter time-frames. We do not specifically address rights programming at sub-national, national and international levels, although we do address the linkages across these levels from the perspective of a local rights programme.

**Rights programmes may be implemented at local, sub-national, national or international levels**

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## **Introduction: What we mean by a ActionAid HRBA programme**

So let us begin with looking at ‘what is a programme’? We speak of programmes all the time so this might seem an unnecessary first step. But let us start here so that we are sure that we are on the same page!

We define a programme as several inter-related activities, projects, interventions etc. which collectively aim to bring about a change, or a set of change objectives. Programmes, unlike projects, are made up of interventions bigger than activities, and are implemented over a longer period. A programme has a goal, objectives, and strategies. A programme, or combination of programmes, helps us achieve our bigger change strategy – e.g. a country or international strategy – and our organisational mission. Programmes are geared to bringing about a change in the lives of the rights holders we work with. Our programmes are supported by appropriate organisational systems, policies, structures, capacity and resources.

ActionAid development programmes are called rights programmes. These are external mission oriented programmes that include ActionAid’s three HRBA programme components – empowerment, campaigning, and solidarity work.

ActionAid’s rights programmes are informed by our very particular idea of human rights (outlined in Chapters 2 and 3) and so our approach to programming for human rights may be different from other agencies. Our rights programmes aim to empower poor and excluded people (rights holders) to claim their rights and to hold accountable those (duty bearers) meant to deliver on these rights. Our rights programmes also aim to build a movement to defend and expand rights over time.

Rights programmes may be implemented at local, sub-national, national or international levels. They may be short term (up to three years) and long term (five years or more). Our rights programmes are usually undertaken directly with rights holders, their communities, organisations and movements. These are our preferred partners. In exceptional cases where we do not work directly with rights holders, our work is still led by the interests of rights holders. When we devise strategies and form alliances we always keep the needs and interests of the rights holders in the foreground. In a rights programme we do not typically partner with governments, but to achieve a common purpose, or as a tactic, we may in some cases work with government.

### ***Local rights programmes***

A local rights programme is implemented in a particular local area. Up until very recently we referred to such local programmes as a DA, DI or Special Project. We now use the term ‘local rights programme’ to refer to all such programmes.

The geographical scale of a local rights programme is determined by a number of factors including: the rights holders and the issues they are taking up; the change objectives and strategy; Child Sponsorship (CS)/donor requirements and/or feasibility; what will make for cost effective operations; and possibly even government imposed restrictions.

Most of our rights programming should be at the local level, working closely with rights holders. We believe that we can best support sustainable change in power relations through a close long-term relationship with poor people – the rights holders. Such a relationship enables the development of a set of solutions with rights holders, enables policy change on a larger scale, and ensures that rights holders and their organisations are in the driving seat.

Local rights programmes may be funded through child sponsorship and/or through donor funding. A rights programme at local level should ideally draw on different sources of funding over its lifetime, or at the same time.

***Rights programmes at other levels***

We also undertake rights programmes at sub-national, national and international levels. In the past we referred to our national and international work as policy, campaigns or advocacy work. However because the three HRBA areas of programming apply at all levels, this is no longer appropriate. So we now refer to these programmes as ‘national or international rights programmes’. Our rights programme work should link across levels. We discuss ways of doing this later in this chapter.



GLOBAL MONITORING FRAMEWORK



EMPOWERMENT

- Service delivery
- Building alternatives
- Building awareness
- Conscientisation
- Organising and mobilising



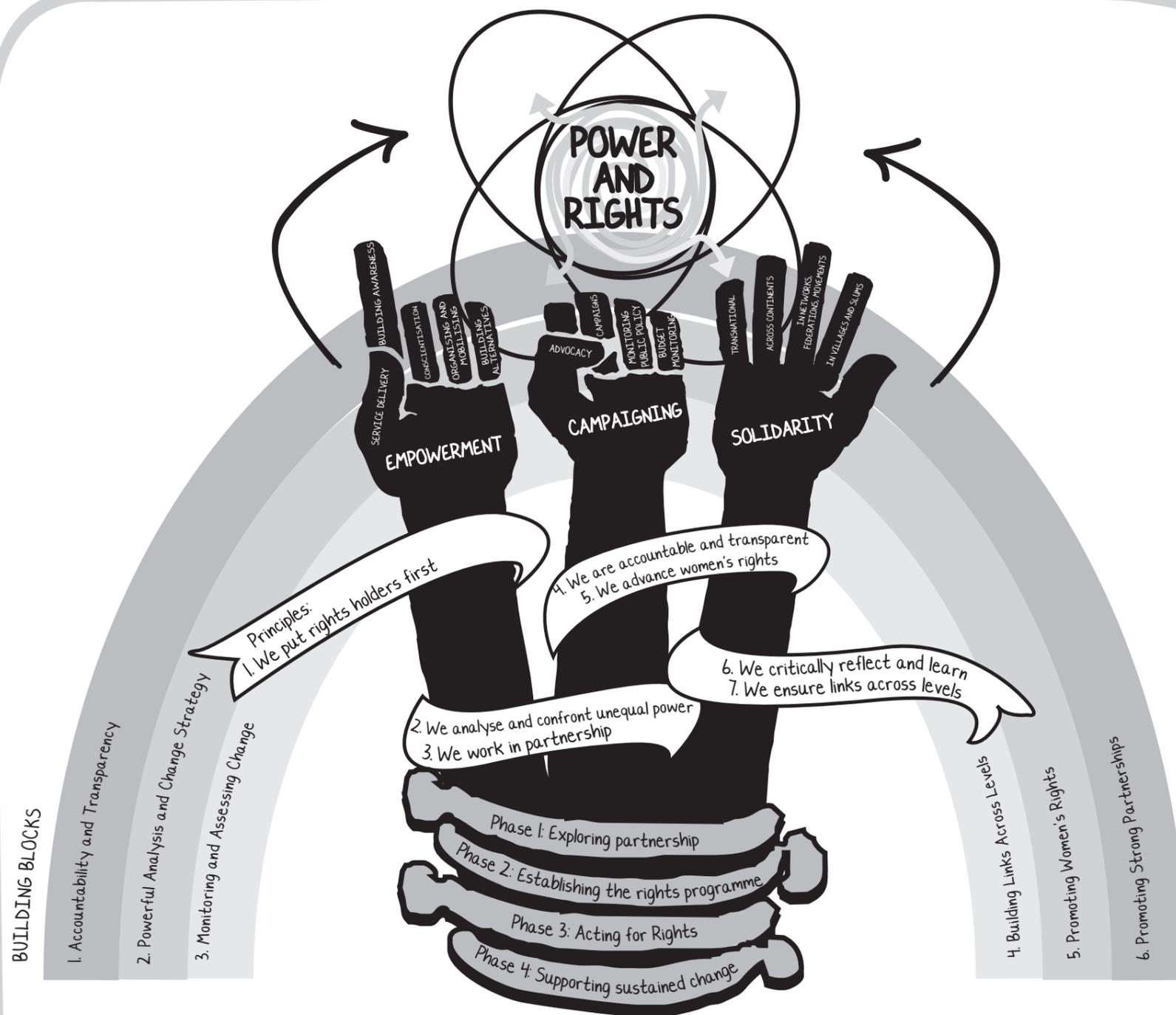
CAMPAIGNING

- Advocacy
- Campaigns
- Monitoring Public Policy
- Budget Monitoring



SOLIDARITY

- In villages and slums
- In networks, federations, movements
- Across continents
- Transnational



# ActionAid's HRBA

MINIMUM STANDARDS 1. Building poor people's consciousness as rights holders 2. Agency of the poor and excluded 3. Women's rights 4. Poor and excluded people critically engage duty bearers 5. Changing the rules



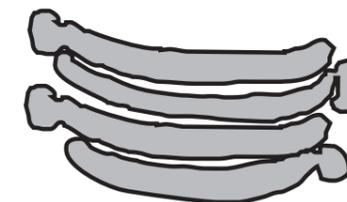
BUILDING BLOCKS

1. Accountability and transparency
2. Powerful analysis and change strategy
3. Monitoring and assessing change
4. Building links across levels
5. Promoting women's rights
6. Promoting strong partnerships



PRINCIPLES

1. We put rights holders first
2. We analyse and confront unequal power
3. We work in partnership
4. We are accountable and transparent
5. We advance women's rights
6. We critically reflect and learn
7. We ensure links across levels



PHASES

- Phase 1 Exploring partnership, appraising and preparing for a rights programme
- Phase 2 Establishing the rights programme
- Phase 3 Acting for rights – the long term struggle
- Phase 4 Supporting sustained change through solidarity

## Section 1: ActionAid’s HRBA programme framework

In section 1 (parts A and B) we outline what we call ActionAid’s programme framework. Our framework covers our understanding of what we want to achieve and how we want to get there.

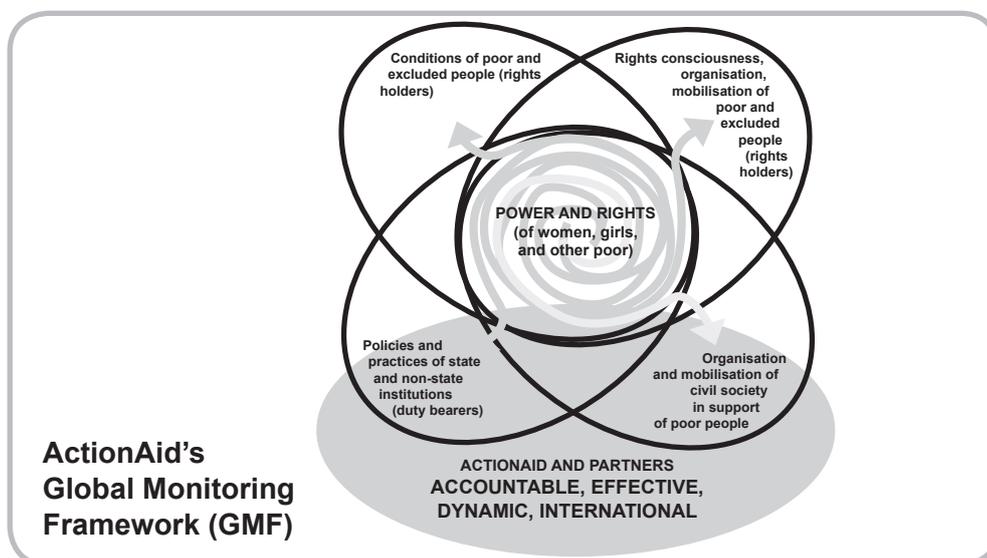
### **Part A: Change vision, programming areas and guiding principles**

ActionAid’s vision is ‘a world without poverty and injustice in which every person enjoys their right to a life of dignity’. In our view the best way of achieving this vision is by increasing the power of poor and excluded people, and women in these groups in particular, so that they can claim and enjoy their human rights.

As Action Aid’s Global Monitoring Framework (GMF)<sup>1</sup> says, this ‘big change’ will be achieved if:

- The very basic conditions or needs of poor and excluded people are met so they have the strength and well-being to mobilise for other rights to be met (GMF area of change 1).
- The organisation, rights consciousness, and capacity of rights holders is increased (GMF area of change 2).
- Civil society allies are mobilised to act in solidarity with rights holders as they claim their rights (GMF area of change 3).
- Policies, laws and practices of state and non-state institutions are changed through processes of people-centred advocacy and campaigns (GMF area of change 4).

This is in essence our theory of change, our idea of how change happens. We do not believe that it is enough to work on just basic conditions. Nor is it enough to work on just changing policies and practices. Long-term sustainable change will come about only if we work on all of these areas and when citizens are mobilised, governments are accountable, civil society is strengthened and women are equal. All our local rights programmes must work towards these areas of change, and ensure that women’s specific interests are addressed in each area of change.



<sup>1</sup> The GMF is a framework that has been developed to allow us to track progress against our international strategy, Rights to End Poverty (RTEP).

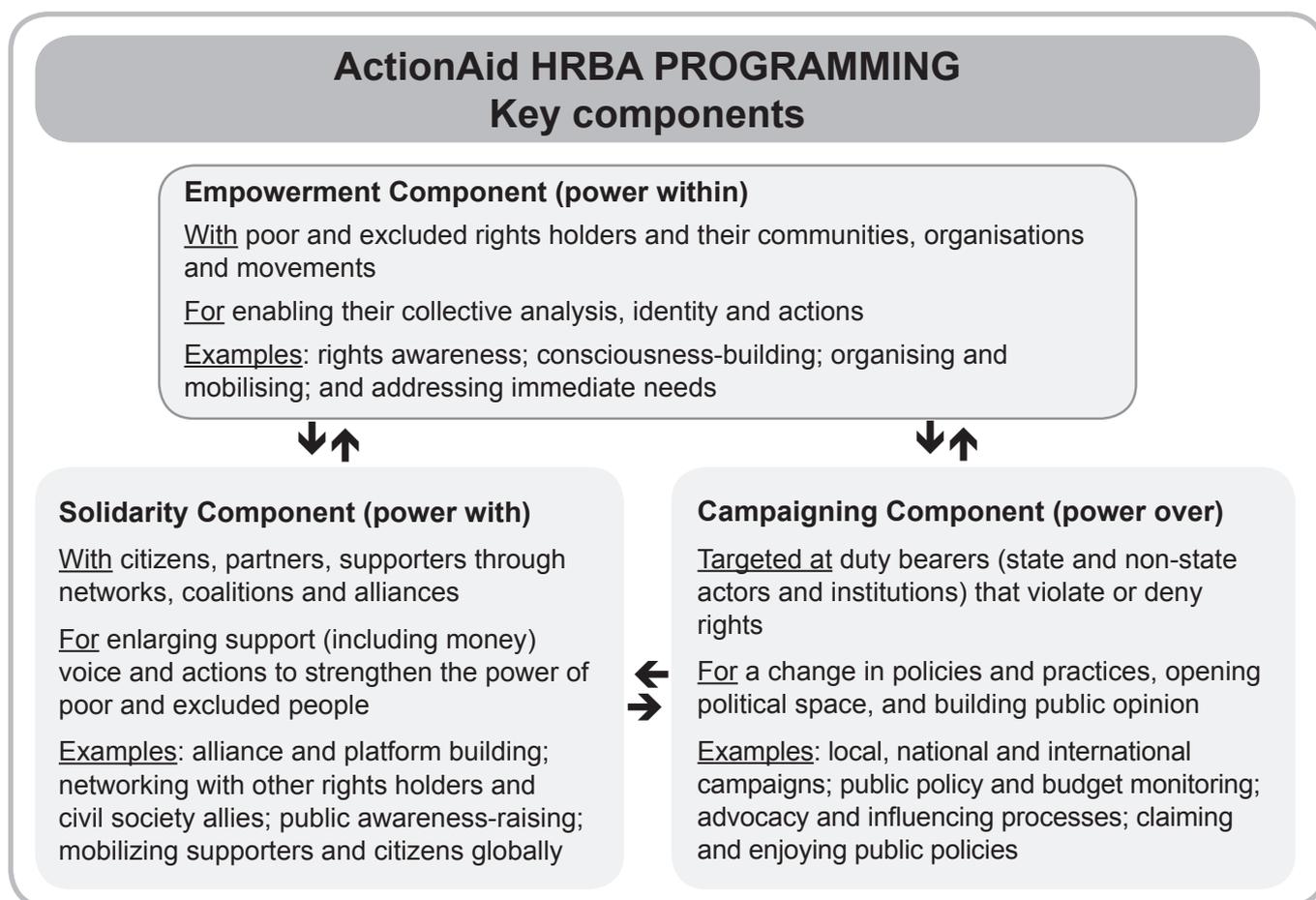
The fifth area of change – the bowl at the bottom of the GMF – is about ActionAid’s values and principles. This refers to ActionAid and our transformation into an accountable, effective and dynamic international organisation. Our Alps principles and our organisational values, outlined in our current international strategy titled ‘Rights to End Poverty’, are ActionAid’s vision of and commitment to organisational transformation. This transformation also applies to partner organisations and our relations with them, and to individual staff members.

Staff of ActionAid and partner organisations must have the skills, attitudes and values to achieve the changes we hope for in the world. We, as ActionAid staff, are challenged to ‘live’ these values in our daily lives at home, in family, community, in cultural and religious institutions, and in and through the work we do. So, for example an ActionAider cannot work on women’s rights by day, and then return home to violate the rights of his wife. We need to live our values and commitments across all areas of our lives.

ActionAid’s theory of change is influenced by a number of powerful thinkers, such as Paulo Freire and his work on critical consciousness, Gandhi’s theory and practice of mass mobilisation and peaceful resistance, and Amartya Sen’s work on development as freedom. Our theory of change is influenced by ongoing reflection on what has worked, and what has not worked. While ours is not the only path to change, it is the one we have chosen for our strategy, and which unites us as we work for change.

**Three programme areas in ActionAid’s HRBA**

In ActionAid’s HRBA we have three areas or components of programming: empowerment, campaigning and solidarity work.



These three components compliment and support each other. It is the integrated 'delivery' of these three components that satisfies our HRBA. They must all be addressed at some point over the life of a long-term rights programme if human rights are to be realised, and if a programme is to qualify as a HRBA programme. However, it is not necessary or appropriate to work on all programme areas at all times. As we show in section 2 of this chapter specific programme areas might feature at different times over a long-term rights programme. The empowerment component is at the centre or heart of our approach to change. In ActionAid's thinking, human rights can only be realised if rights holders have agency, that is if they are organised, have skills, and are leading their own struggles. The centrality of rights holders' struggles and their leadership of the change process is an important part of our theory of change.

The empowerment component is explored in detail in Chapter 5 of this resource book, the campaigning component in Chapter 6, and the solidarity component in Chapter 7.

### ***The principles that guide HRBA programming***

Seven core HRBA programme principles (drawn from Alps and RTEP) guide how we plan and implement interventions in the three programme areas, and are the foundation of our practice. The principles add value and distinguish the ActionAid HRBA approach.

#### ***The seven principles at a glance***

1. We put rights holders first and ensure participation of rights holders
2. We analyse and confront unequal power
3. We work in partnership
4. We are accountable and transparent
5. We advance women's rights
6. We critically reflect and learn to improve our work for change
7. We ensure links across levels – local, national, regional, international

**PRINCIPLE 1: WE PUT RIGHTS HOLDERS FIRST AND ENSURE PARTICIPATION OF RIGHTS HOLDERS**  
We believe that the analysis and views of poor and excluded people, and their meaningful participation in rights programmes, is essential to changing unequal power. Together with rights holders we analyse and strategise about how their rights can be addressed, and we work to build the organisation and power of rights holders. While we may develop or support rights holders to develop 'tactical' alliances with more privileged groups – for example working with middle-class women in a campaign for a law to prevent violence against women – this should be done in ways that puts the interests of the poorest women first. Putting rights holders first does not mean that ActionAid puts aside its own political vision and strategy. We are committed to building an honest, open relationship with rights holders, based on dialogue and mutual challenge.

**We use our  
power positively  
by being  
transparent and  
accountable,  
promoting  
participation  
and passing  
our skills onto  
others**

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We have over the years developed a range of participatory approaches that we use to support participatory analysis and planning. Through participation in analysis, strategy development, reviews and decision making rights holders gain an experience and insight as to how duty bearers should be engaging them in decision making, and can begin to make similar demands upon them. Examples of our participatory approaches include Reflect, Societies Tackling Aids through Rights (STAR), Participatory Vulnerability Analysis (PVA) and more recently Territorial Development Initiative (TDI). We discuss this in more detail in Chapter 5.

**PRINCIPLE 2: WE ANALYSE AND CONFRONT UNEQUAL POWER**

We believe that social change is about changing unequal power relations. Through empowerment work we build the organisation and power of the poor, through solidarity work we build alliances to strengthen the power of the poor, and through campaigning we work with rights holders and their allies to raise voice and apply pressure for change in policy, law and practice. Through our programmes we work with rights holders to analyse and make visible the power relations that keep them poor. And then we work with them to figure out how to work with friends and allies to confront this power. We recognise that we, as ActionAid and as individual staff, may have more power than the rights holders we work with. This power comes from the money we have, from our power to make and influence decisions, and from the skills we have. In our relationship with rights holders and partner organisations we use our power positively by being transparent and accountable, promoting participation, working to support women's rights, and passing our skills onto others.

**PRINCIPLE 3: WE WORK IN PARTNERSHIP**

Partnership is a feature of ActionAid's HRBA. Structural change can only come about when people stand together. One of the ways we can stand together is by building partnerships with rights holder organisations and movements, and non-governmental or community-based organisations supportive of rights holders' struggles. Partnerships with local organisations can strengthen and expand civil society and it can help to root our work at the local level. Local organisations may better know the context, speak the language, and could more easily build relations with rights holders. Our partnership relations are founded on mutual respect, transparency and accountability.

**PRINCIPLE 4: WE ARE ACCOUNTABLE AND TRANSPARENT**

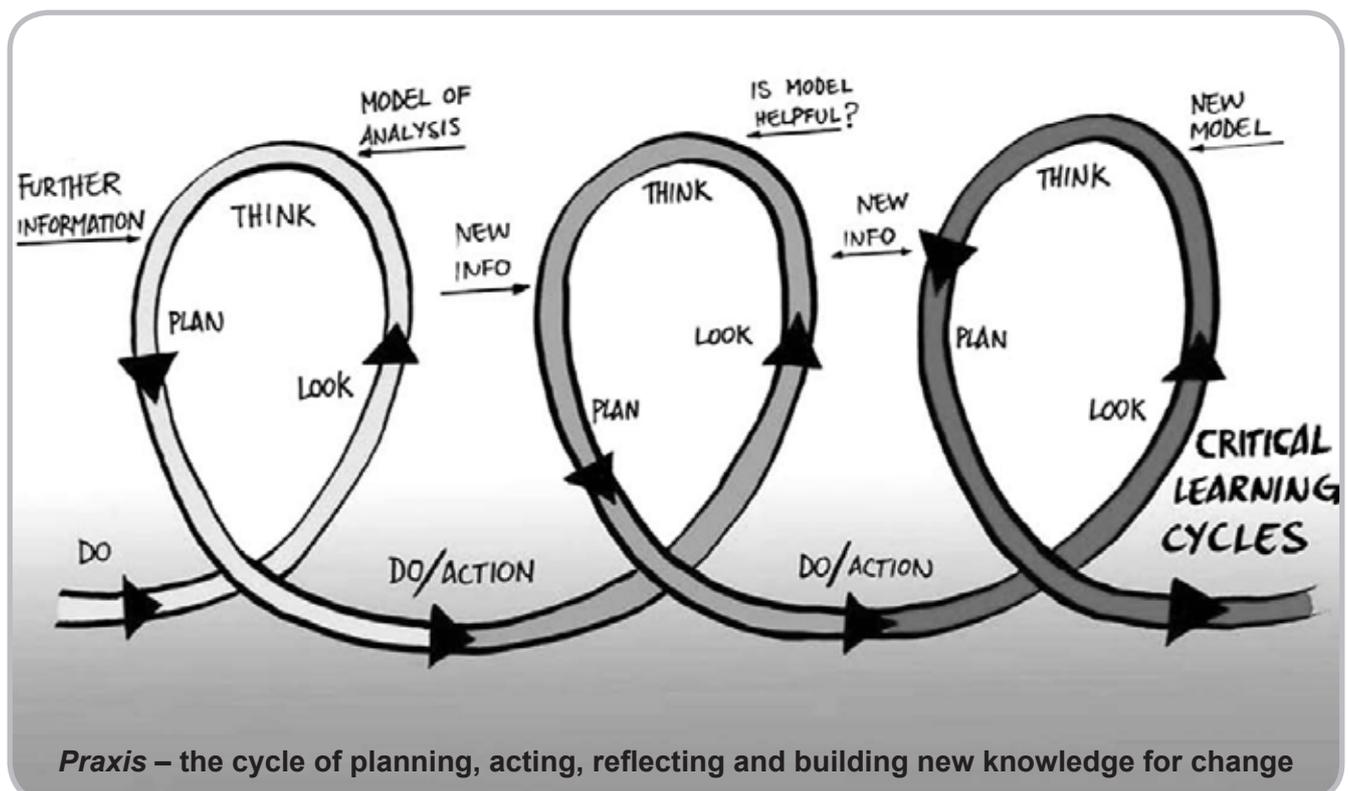
Being accountable is a value that ActionAid puts into practice in all our relationships. In particular, we privilege downward accountability to rights holders. We are accountable and transparent in different ways. First, we develop our strategies and plans together with partners and rights holders. Second, we review programme progress with rights holders and partners. Third, we share information (financial and other) with rights holders through meetings, transparency boards, social audits etc. In a rights programme our transparency and accountability is very important. If we are to advocate to and hold the state accountable then it is necessary that we uphold the highest standards of accountability ourselves. Our own internal accountability (that is being accountable to ourselves inside of the organisation) is also important. Through ActionAid accountability processes rights holders develop the confidence to hold government accountable to its promises.

**PRINCIPLE 5: WE ADVANCE WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

Women face multiple human rights violations throughout their lives. In our rights programmes, we at times target women specifically as a rights holder group (for example in a programme on ending violence against women), and in all our programmes we make sure that we address women's concerns and interests as particularly discriminated members within rights holder groups (for example in a HIV and Aids programme, or a livelihoods programme we will make sure that women are involved and that their experiences and interests are addressed). We work to organise women as a constituency; we work to build their awareness and consciousness of their specific oppressions as women; and we work to build and support women's leadership amongst rights holders and the partners we work with. We also work to make sure that our own organisation and partners support women's rights. We seek equity in recruitments, and work to ensure that ActionAid and partner staff have the skills and political commitment to support women's rights.

**PRINCIPLE 6: WE CRITICALLY REFLECT AND LEARN TO IMPROVE OUR WORK FOR CHANGE**

In order to strengthen our HRBA programmes we engage in constant critical reflection. We analyse, reflect and learn about challenging power, and how change happens. This leads to new insights and we adapt our work to support new, stronger actions for change. We call this cycle of learning *praxis*. *Praxis* takes place inside ActionAid, and with and between partners and rights holder organisations. We build analysis and awareness through methods like Reflect, STAR, and PVA. Trainings and political education programmes that build critical consciousness are also important. Critical reflection and learning are ongoing – through participatory analysis, planning, and review processes. We also reflect and learn through people-to-people exchanges, and participatory capacity-building processes.



PRINCIPLE 7: WE ENSURE LINKS ACROSS LEVELS - LOCAL, NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL

The causes of poverty are found at different levels – the international and national as well as the local. If our work is going to bring about the change we seek we therefore need to take action at all levels. These actions need to be linked, that is the actions we take at international level must be linked to needs and problems affecting rights holders in their communities, organisations and movements at the local level. Similarly, a rights violation at local level may be rooted in a law or policy failure that can only be addressed through advocacy at the national or even the international levels. As an international agency, one of our added values is that we are able to link local rights holders to movements, to information, and to strategies for change that address other levels.

**Part B: Building blocks in a local rights programme**

Our ‘building blocks’ are the essential things we must consider when planning and implementing a HRBA programme. The building blocks are linked to and operationalise the principles set out in part A.

***The six building blocks at a glance***

1. Accountability and transparency – including accountabilities to children and young people
2. Powerful analysis and change strategy (including identifying and managing risks)
3. Monitoring and assessing change
4. Building links across levels
5. Promoting women’s rights
6. Promoting strong partnerships

Critical reflection and learning is addressed across all of the building blocks

***Building block 1: Accountability and transparency***

Accountability is a core principle that guides how we work for human rights. In a long-term local rights programme we may have to manage multiple accountabilities. Our primary accountability is to the rights holders we work with, but we will also have other accountabilities – to donors, to allied organisations, possibly even to government.

OUR PRIMARY ACCOUNTABILITY: RIGHTS HOLDER ACCOUNTABILITY

To be accountable to rights holders we must ensure that:

- Poor and excluded people, with a strong focus on women, take part in the local rights programme appraisal, analysis, planning, monitoring, implementation and review;

- The analysis and perspectives of poor and excluded people are respected and critically engaged with. And their priorities and perspectives inform the decisions we and our partners make; and
- Rights holders are engaged in the recruitment and appraisal of frontline programme staff.

In a rights programme, ActionAid's accountability to rights holders is even more significant than under other development approaches. Why do we say this?<sup>2</sup>

- We work with rights holders to strengthen their ability to hold governments accountable to the interests of poor people – a very necessary pre-condition for democracy.<sup>3</sup>
- If we are to maintain legitimacy and moral standing in these accountability demands then we must walk the talk! – and maintain the highest standards of accountability.
- Our accountability to rights holders and partners builds trust and solidarity, openness and honesty, and strengthens our credibility and social standing.
- Accountability processes can support awareness-raising, mobilising and the strengthening of rights holder organisations and movements.
- Through accountability mechanisms we can build solidarity between rights holder organisations and other allies, supporting the emergence of stronger partnerships and alliances for change.
- Our accountability enables rights holders to develop the skill and confidence to engage a more powerful actor (ourselves), insights they can draw from in relating to government.

**If we are to maintain legitimacy and moral standing in these accountability demands then we must walk the talk!**

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#### OTHER ACCOUNTABILITIES IN A HRBA

Other accountabilities that we need to balance against our primary accountability to the rights holders are actors to whom we have obligations, usually by virtue of their 'greater' power (such as the state), or because we enjoy a funding relationship (our donors for example) or because they are peers (friends) with whom we collaborate or work closely (social movements, NGOs and other INGOs).

Our **accountability to the state** under a HRBA is complex and will be shaped by your context and your strategy. In a HRBA, we see the state as the primary duty bearer that must be held accountable to fulfil its obligations, duties and promises to its citizens. We might, in some contexts, work closely with a government department as a strategy to bring about policy change. Or we might work with an arm of government to strengthen their accountability with the commitment that this is generalized further etc.

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<sup>2</sup> Some of the points that follow are drawn from the ActionAid Denmark Accountability resource book; and from the Heads of Programmes meeting held in Kenya in April 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Public accountability is addressed in Chapter 6. In this section we focus on ActionAid accountability and explore its relationship to state accountability.

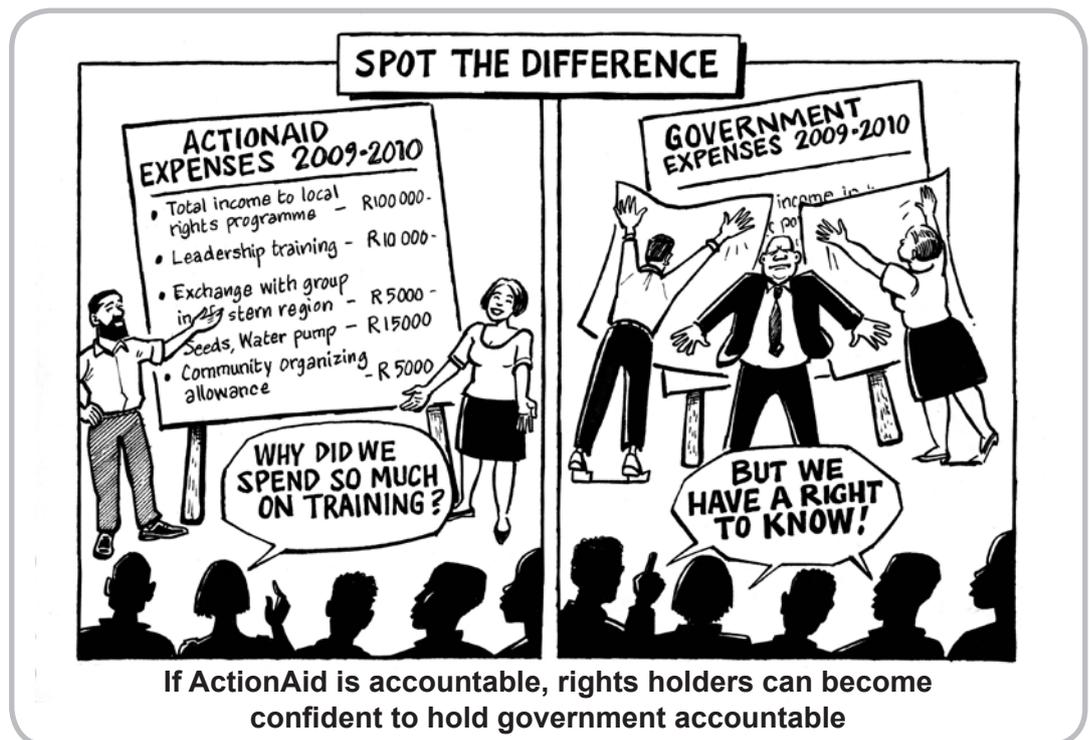
**Our relationship to government under a HRBA should generally be more distant and ‘critical’**

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However, we typically do not enter into ‘partnership’ with government and the character of our relationship to government under a HRBA should generally be more distant and ‘critical’. What does this mean for our accountability to government? We will have to be strategic in determining what information to share at different levels of government, and some information – that is likely to open rights holders or ourselves to risk of repression – will not be shared. You will need to think this question through carefully in your own context, understanding the nature of your own government, and what the form of your accountabilities should be at different levels. In many countries, governments legislate accountabilities and regulate civil society organisations, sometimes in ways that limit our work for change.<sup>4</sup> (For more discussion on our relationship to the state, see Chapter 3.)

We are also **accountable to donors** who provide financial support for our work. Many donors, like ActionAid, see themselves as partners and supporters in the development process. This requires a change in the accountability relationship, which will need to be negotiated. We will need to move beyond reports to consider ways of involving them in our planning and review processes, sharing learning, and through that influencing the broader donor sector. This is possible if we have sought out donors/financial partners that share our vision and approach to change.

**Accountability to sponsors** is an important accountability relationship because close to 50% of ActionAid income comes through linked products, and because we see sponsors as potential solidarity partners and active campaigners for change. Fulfilling our accountabilities to them is an important part of acknowledging them as people that stand with us in solidarity – our community newsletters and annual progress reports must therefore be seen as part of the process of transforming them into campaigners and activists for change.



<sup>4</sup> See Hargreaves (2009).

In a local rights programme we also have a range of accountabilities to organisations (CBOs, NGOs and social movements) with whom we share common interests and agendas. We can call these our **peer accountabilities**.

An important dimension of accountability is transparency. This means proactively sharing information with rights holders, and other important stakeholders.

If we are to be accountable to rights holders and other actors, then we need to start with **accountability inside of ActionAid**. We need to be internally accountable for our attitudes and beliefs. We need to be accountable for the power we have and how we use it inside of the organisation. And we must be mutually accountable for our work, and its quality, within the organisation. In the absence of a high level of internal accountability our work and its impact will be negatively impacted, in turn affecting our external accountabilities.

## **Good strategy clarifies your accountabilities**

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### WHAT A PROGRAMMER CAN DO TO STRENGTHEN ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

Here are a few suggestions for what you can do to strengthen accountability and transparency in your local rights programme:

- **Good strategy clarifies your accountabilities.** A good strategy, strategic plans and annual plans based on a thorough analysis of context and actors will make clear your different accountabilities (to rights holders, local government, local CBOs etc.).
- Your local rights programme strategy should include an **accountability strategy**, which will be adjusted every three to five years when you do your strategic plan. It should be available to partners and rights holder organisations in narrative and visual forms, such as a poster or wall chart. The accountability strategy should set out:
  - the main actors to whom ActionAid is accountable,
  - the primary accountability relationship,
  - for each accountability what exactly you are accountable for,
  - for each type of accountability what methods you will use, and
  - what weakness you need to address and how you will address these in the coming cycle.
- **Be creative** in the use of accountability methodologies and processes. Annual plans and budgets, participatory review and reflection processes (PRRPs), transparency boards and social audits are familiar methods. Think about how to deepen these. Innovate! On the HIVE you will find accountability practice examples from different countries - [click here](#).

**We see children as rights holders that should be empowered to claim and exercise their rights**

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- **Living ActionAid values and principles.** In practising accountability we will have to watch how we use our own power as individuals and as an organisation in relation to rights holders and partner organisations. We will have to consciously work for changes within ourselves, the way we work with others, and the way the organisation works so as to live our principles and values.
- **Good monitoring and evaluation is critical to accountability.** We need information, including about what change is happening and why it has happened, if we are to be accountable to rights holders, sponsors and donors, and even to decision makers and managers inside of ActionAid.

OUR ACCOUNTABILITIES TO CHILDREN IN LOCAL RIGHTS PROGRAMMES

ActionAid has a special responsibility to strategically work with children.<sup>5</sup> This is because we see children as rights holders that should be empowered to claim and exercise their rights. We also see that children and young people have the potential to become catalysts for 'big' social change. And finally, we need to work with children because linked products provide almost 50% of our total annual income. What comes with all of the above are clear accountabilities not only towards our sponsors but also towards children and young people as rights holders and active contributors to ActionAid's fight to eradicate poverty and injustice.

In ActionAid, however, there is currently no clear organisational mandate and strategic direction for how to work with children. The result is that our local rights programmes often do not include work with children as rights holders. Instead 'child participation' is typically seen as the responsibility of the CS team and not as a part of our programme work.

We are therefore not fully exploring change possibilities because we are missing a significant rights holder group, we are not fully adhering to our international strategy and ActionAid's HRBA, and we are neither fully accountable to the children or to the sponsors.

In finding solutions we need to be very clear that ActionAid is not and will not be a child rights organisation. Instead, we need to find innovative and sustainable ways of bringing children and youth into our rights programmes and organisational processes for planning, monitoring and evaluation.

*A solution in the making: CREST*

CREST, born in early 2009 in the ActionAid West and Central Africa (WACA) region, aimed to try and overcome the contradiction between our fundraising work through CS and our programme work so as to better deliver on ActionAid's strategic mandate.

Since then it has been decided that CREST will become an international strategic framework for child participation in ActionAid. What is meant here is that it will give a mandate and outline an approach to how we should work with children in our rights programmes.

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<sup>5</sup> For the time being, the Children's Rights and Empowerment for Social Transformation (CREST) team define 'children' as persons up to the age of 18 in accordance with the UN definition.

Without creating parallel or additional processes, it will help us link our work with *adult rights holders* to our work with *young people* through initiatives such as *Activista* to purposeful engagement with *children* in our rights programmes.

The distinct understanding of child participation that is emerging in ActionAid and aligns to our HRBA and international strategy is that it should enable children to:

- Become aware of self, community and the wider context (understanding/awareness);
- Build confidence – to speak up, articulate and advocate (attitude/behaviour);
- Develop skills for action – negotiation, mediation, analysis and problem solving, leadership and critical thinking (skill); and
- Engage in action in their community to bring about change (action).

CREST will be developed further to include the principles that will guide our work with children, minimum requirements and core components for rights programmes, and guidance for implementation, including tools and techniques for working with children.

What are we already doing with children?

CREST will build on some of the inspiring work we are already doing with children.

a) Building awareness and promoting participation

Much of the work we currently do in many places to raise child rights awareness, offer additional support to formal education processes, and support children and youth involvement in decision making about community development is positive. These types of interventions empower children and youth in their communities and lead to outcomes that are beneficial to them, such as the development of child centres and clubs, advocacy for improved education etc.



**Our work with children should aim to increase their power within the family and the rights holder organisation**

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**Creation of child spaces**

ActionAid Bangladesh supports the creation of 'Child Spaces' – places for basic education, entertainment and cultural orientation for children (mostly sponsored) from ages four to sixteen. The aim is to ensure the growth of creativity through fun activities. There are presently around 300 Child Spaces serving around 3000 children/youth in 31 long-term rights programmes (DAs).

b) Empowerment of children as rights holders

ActionAid Brazil points out that the biggest challenge is to increase the autonomy and agency of children and young people as rights holders. Our work with children should aim to increase their power within the family and the rights holder organisation. This means that we must move beyond superficial activities with children to work that will enable their empowerment. ActionAid Brazil's partner, a movement of rural peasants called Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST), offers ideas for how we can be working with children. It is important to note that the children that are sponsored are the children of the movement members.



**The Little Landless  
– children as rights holders and change agents**

The MST sees children as actors in the land and agrarian struggle and encourages their involvement in the land struggle from childhood. The children, called the *Sem Terrinhas* (Little Landless) are the future of the movement. It is important that they identify themselves with the movement, and that they learn to value the land their parents have won through struggle. Ítalo da Silva, 14 years old, says what it means to be a *Sem Terrinha* – *We fight to get our land to be able to eat. We need to help the others who still don't have their land.*

From the time they are very little, children accompany their families to meetings and courses. There, they are entertained by a team of volunteers and acquire their first knowledge about the environment, the value of having their own land, and growing their own food. From the age of nine or ten, they start participating in meetings at their settlements so that they start to develop an idea of their responsibilities to family and to community. They learn from childhood to participate in and support collective decisions and collective work.

As part of the educational process, MST organises regional meetings of the *Sem Terrinhas*, each one gathering around 300 children from various settlements. Over three days, the children live together and participate in meetings, workshops, outings, and entertainments. It is a huge event and a unique experience where they learn to relate to each other, to cooperate, and to be disciplined. ActionAid finances the material, food and transport for all of these meetings.

c) Protection of children

ActionAid Ghana discusses the Child Protection Policy with partners and collaborators, and ensures that they respect and enhance child rights. ActionAid Ethiopia has worked with police commissions and police stations to set up Child Protection Units – to protect children from violence and bring culprits before the courts.

***Building block 2: Powerful analysis and change strategy***

A strong local rights programme is built on sound and deep analysis of context, of power, of institutions, of actors and of rights. Analysis is about building understanding and making sense of things. This analysis happens on an ongoing basis, but there may be intensive ‘moments’ of more thorough analysis that precede long-term strategy development, strategic and annual plans. We analyse to inform action. Only on the ‘back’ of deep analysis can we build a good strategy or plan that responds to the underlying structural roots of rights violations. Supporting good analysis and good strategy on an ongoing basis is perhaps the most important role of an ActionAid programmer in a long-term local rights programme.

WHAT ANALYSIS AND WHEN?

You will analyse to different depths at different times over the life of a long-term rights programme. The focus for your analysis and the questions to guide your analysis will be different at different times. However, your analysis should always aim to assist rights holders, the partner organisation and ActionAid, and allies to deepen their understanding of:

1. The **rights holders** – their conditions and why these problems exist, their rights, differences and contradictions within the group, the state of their organisation – strengths and weaknesses, the situation of women and the rights violations women face etc.
2. The **duty bearers** – who they are, the interests driving them, differences within them we could exploit, processes they are planning related to our agenda etc.
3. Other **actors** rights holders could ally with to build their power (such as grassroots organisations or movements), or that they need to watch or manage as potential threats.
4. Other aspects of the **environment or wider context** – opportunities to take forward our strategy (a public meeting, an upcoming local election etc.), threats to our agenda for change – for example, a company opposed to the rights struggle.
5. What **risks** do we face in struggling for this right? Who faces what risk? And what do we do about these risks?

The **five main types of analysis** in a HRBA programme are:

- Rights analysis;
- Power and institutional analysis;
- Women’s rights analysis;
- Risk analysis; and
- Vulnerability analysis (if required).

**A strong  
local rights  
programme is  
built on sound  
and deep  
analysis**

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This is in addition to the usual context analysis which covers the environment, the level and range of services, resource mapping and analysis, understanding the state of the local economy etc.

Analysis is always linked to action and learning. It is part of what we call *praxis* – that is the cycles of critical reflection in which we plan-act-observe-reflect. Good analysis informs good action and in turn actions stimulate analysis and new rounds of action informed by a different understanding.

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**When are you doing what analysis?**

WHEN	WHAT
<p>The <b>beginning of the programme</b> when we (ActionAid and partners) first meet with groups of rights holders to understand their ‘issues’; this analysis forms part of the selection and appraisal process; it also informs your interim strategy, long-term rights programme strategy, and your three to five year strategic plans</p>	<p>A <b>rights analysis</b> with the community, reframing needs as rights; exploring the legal, political, social context for realising rights; identifying entitlements of rights holders (what is available in government policy) and gaps in entitlements.</p> <p>This is followed by a <b>power or institutional analysis</b> – of forms of power and interests of stakeholders. This facilitates the development of change strategies and helps identify ‘enemies’ to watch and ‘allies’ to draw close to you.</p> <p>The rights and power analyses must have a strong <b>women’s rights analysis</b>, and the facilitator needs to have or bring in knowledge about the constitution, laws, policies, local and national economy etc. You will bring in conflict and vulnerability analysis, if the context requires this.</p> <p>You will also need to undertake a thorough <b>risk analysis</b> as you develop your strategies and strategic plans. Risks will be different depending on the change you are looking for and the strategies you will use to get there.</p>
<p><b>Every three to five years</b> in advance of new strategic plan</p>	<p>We revisit and renew <b>in depth</b> our analysis across all five areas. Our analysis should dig deeper in every new round.</p>
<p><b>Every year</b> prior to an annual plan – through PRRP and other analysis and planning spaces</p>	<p><b>Touch lightly</b> on all five areas to identify any changes, new opportunities, new risks to be considered etc.</p>
<p><b>Ongoing</b> – on field trips, in meetings, after actions, regular reviews of projects etc.</p>	<p>Since the contexts within which we work are changing rapidly analysis <i>must</i> be an essential ongoing feature of our work. In the field we ask questions and analyse with rights holders. In meetings with partners we ask questions to stimulate analysis. After actions (a march, a networking effort, a meeting with government) we review, going back to the analysis that informed the action: Were we right? Did we make the right assumptions about who to target or how they might respond? Who participated? What was the result?</p>

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## CAPACITY, PROCESS AND TOOLS FOR ANALYSIS

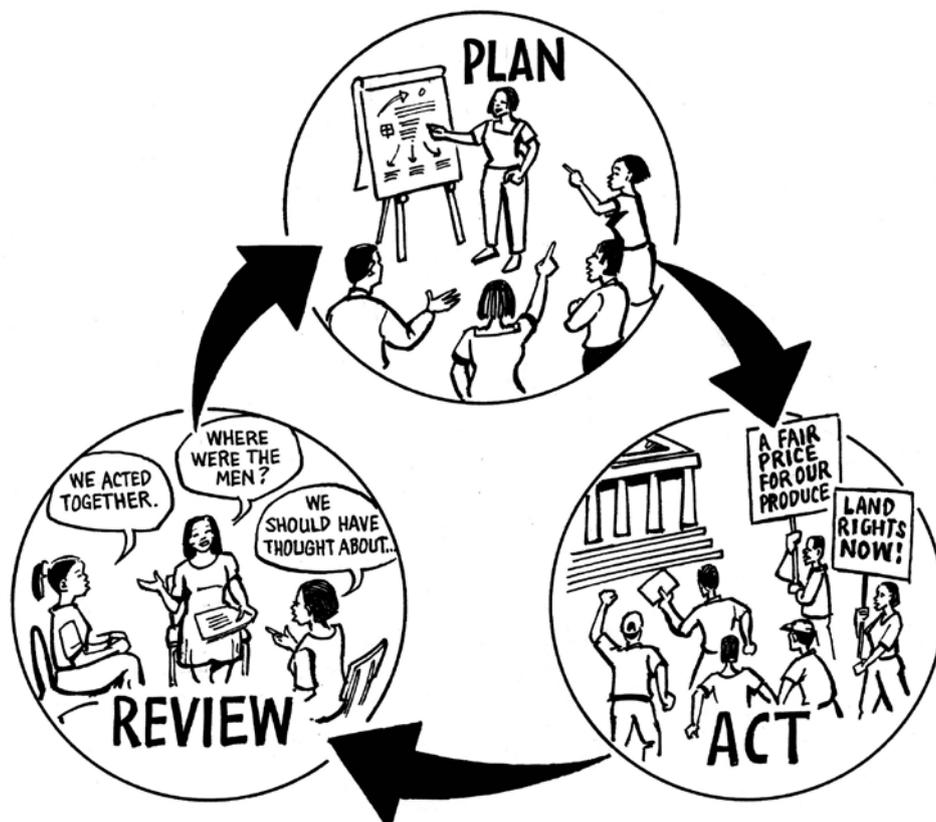
The five areas of analysis can be undertaken through many different tools and processes. They can be done very simply through a group conversation, with **good questions**. The key to good analysis is good questions. And this is challenging. There is no tool or method for good questions. It is a skill every programmer needs to cultivate all of the time. Other capacities essential to strong analysis are:

- **Curiosity and critical thinking** – we must constantly search out and try to understand what lies below the surface. We should never ever accept that what is on the surface is ‘truth’.
- Being **self reflective** – being ready to look at our own change work with a critical eye, to build on successes and address flaws, to be ready always to learn from mistakes.
- Being **hungry for knowledge** – your role is to ‘facilitate’ and support analysis. To do this you need knowledge and perspectives from outside of your programme. You need to be reading, speaking to people, and constantly searching out new ideas.

**We must constantly search out and try to understand what lies below the surface**

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Very importantly, good analysis needs **time**. We need to spend enough time with rights holder groups, we need to have regular meetings with partners, we need to spend time in the field with partners, and we need to budget enough time for review and analysis processes.



**Powerful strategy to bring about change emerges from strong and ongoing analysis, linked to action**

These five types of analysis can be layered onto the kind of contextual analysis you already do. They simply pose new ‘issues’ and questions to explore using existing tools and methods like mapping, matrix ranking, venn diagrams, focus groups etc. we already use in our work.

Tools we can use

There are different conceptual frameworks and tools for doing different analysis. We list some of them here. They have been roughly consolidated on the HIVE – [click here](#).

TYPE OF ANALYSIS	FRAMEWORKS AND TOOLS IN OUR TOOLBOX
<b>Rights analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rights analysis tree</li> </ul> <p><u>Note:</u> Our knowledge of tools in this area is limited. Please share your practice and let us build new methods for this type of analysis together.</p>
<b>Power analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Power over, power to, power with, power within</li> <li>- Public, private and intimate power (gender analysis of power)</li> <li>- Faces of power (visible, hidden and invisible power)</li> <li>- Power cube framework</li> </ul>
<b>Actor and institutions analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Naming the moment</li> <li>- Force field</li> <li>- Friends, foes and fence sitters</li> </ul>
<b>Women’s rights analysis</b> (tools that enable a gender analysis of power are included in the above)	<p>The international women’s rights team has developed a RBA resource kit. This book includes 100 pages of very useful and practical tools – such as how to do structural analysis, stakeholder analysis, mapping of rights context, priority group analysis – as well as theoretical explanations. It is called <i>Power, Inclusion and Rights Based Approaches</i> and is available on the HIVE. <a href="#">Click here</a>.</p>
<b>Risk analysis</b>	See at end of this sub-section.
<b>Vulnerability analysis</b>	See <a href="#">Participatory Vulnerability Analysis</a> guide for different tools you can use.

GOOD STRATEGY IN A HRBA

Good strategy grows out of deep analysis that addresses the different dimensions of rights, power, institutions, women’s rights and risk. A good clear strategy tells us what change we are working for, what strategies we will use to get there, with whom we will work, what risks need to be managed and how, and tells us how the work will be resourced. A good strategy gives us direction, it frames our decisions, and it helps us plan actions that contribute to a bigger change. A good strategy lays the foundation for monitoring and evaluation (M&E). We can establish baselines and set indicators only if we know where we are and where we want to be. Without this clarity our M&E system also fails.

Like analysis, strategy in a HRBA is something we do on an ongoing basis. Yes, we will have ‘moments’ when we build a formal strategy – like a long-term rights programme strategy, or a strategic plan, or an annual plan – but we are also engaged in ongoing ‘strategising’. Strategy and plans are never fixed. The contexts within which we work are changing constantly and with this change come new opportunities, new limitations, and new risks. In many instances we cannot afford to wait until a formal review or an annual plan to adjust ‘strategy’. Waiting might result in a missed opportunity for change. Regular engagements with partners and rights holders to share knowledge, review changing local contexts, and re-strategise our work is essential.

We have different types of strategies and plans in a long-term rights programme (these are more fully explored and explained in section 2 of this chapter):

1. An **interim local rights programme strategy** for one to two years, allows you to explore opportunities and develop knowledge of the rights holders and the context before getting into a longer-term strategy. See phase 1 of section 2.
2. The **long-term rights programme strategy** is developed, at the minimum, two years after you start establishing a presence for a long-term rights programme (see phase 2 of section 2). This strategy gives you the road map for the life of the whole long-term rights programme.
3. **Strategic plans** give us the map to change over a three to five year period.
4. **Annual plans** shape our work over a year.
5. **‘Lower order’ plans** like a specific campaign or pilot or research plan.

**Strategy in  
a HRBA is  
something  
we do on an  
ongoing basis**

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#### IDENTIFYING AND MANAGING RISKS

A HRBA moves ActionAid, partners, and especially rights holders into a different orientation and relationship to duty bearers. The change we are working towards with rights holders and allies will potentially shift power away from the powerful towards the poor and excluded. This change will be resisted by those who stand to lose. This introduces tension, possibly even conflict. As we stated in Chapter 3 conflict is an inevitable and necessary part of change.

In many environments any form of organising, advocacy and challenge to duty bearers, and the state specifically, is risky, maybe dangerous, and in some places life threatening. Collective analysis, forecasting likely outcomes, and careful strategising to minimise risk is therefore critical. Careful assessments of potential partners will help ensure that you do not open yourself to further risk.

We can broadly anticipate the following types of risks: (a) **political risks**, which may include harassment and threat, arrest, legal charges (including even treason or sedition charges); (b) **social risk**, applying particularly to individuals, and may include harassment, social exclusion/isolation, victimisation, separation from family etc.; (c) **economic/resource risks**, applying to organisations and individuals, and may include threats of donor withdrawal, and risks of job loss.

Our role is not to stop the tension and conflict, but to help rights holders and partners identify how duty bearers are likely to respond to different strategies, to figure out whether they are prepared to take these risks, and help them plan for and manage the potential risks. ActionAid and individual staff will also face risks and so the risk management strategy will need to address this as well.

You would need to conduct a **risk analysis** as part of your overall analysis. This will help you think through how you can minimise risks. The basic questions you need to ask are:

**Change will be resisted by those who stand to lose**

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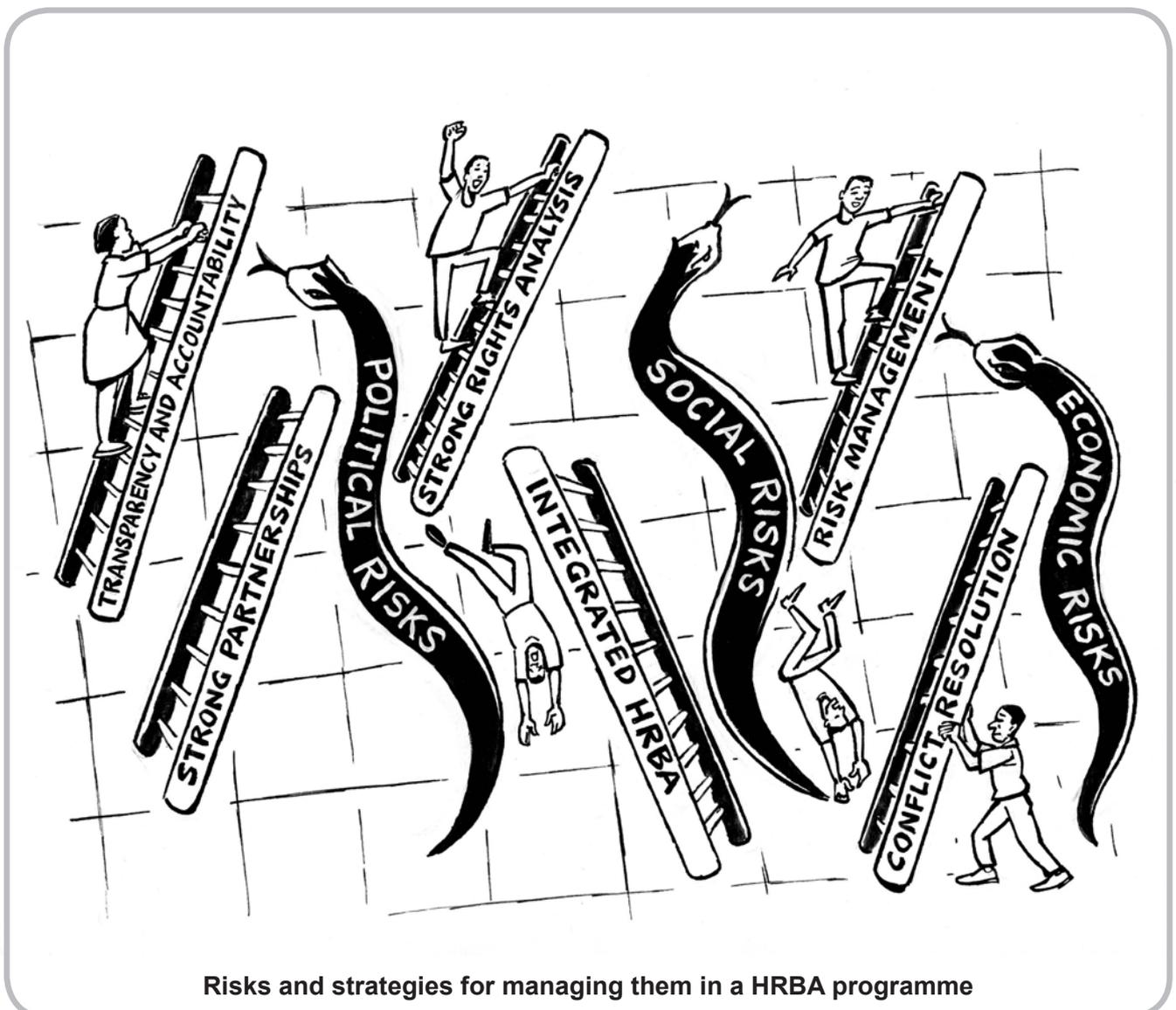
1. What are the risks? What are the things that might go wrong with this strategy or action that could place people’s lives and well-being, the programme, and/or the organisation in jeopardy?
2. If we faced the risk what would its impact be on the rights holders, on our organisation, on individual staff, on the programme? High, medium or low impact?
3. How likely is it that this negative situation (risk) will arise? Is it a high, medium or low risk?
4. For risks that have high impact or high likelihood you should ask: What can we do to reduce risk and protect rights holders, the organisation and the programme?

IMPACT	LIKELIHOOD
<b>High</b> – catastrophic, will threaten the future of the organisation or rights holder group/s, places people’s lives at risk, could lead to a backlash and a reversal of our work	<b>High</b> – very likely to happen in x months/years or is already occurring
<b>Medium</b> – damaging, has substantial impact, but does not threaten future	<b>Medium</b> – could happen in next x months/ years
<b>Low</b> – we will notice but will have little effect on our programme	<b>Low</b> – most unlikely to happen in next x months/ years

Here are some **basic suggestions** for the things that may help to reduce risk:

1. Build **strong mutually accountable partnerships** with partners that are allies to rights holders, operate with the highest level of commitment and integrity, and work in accordance with the values and principles to which we subscribe.
2. Undertake thorough **analysis** and develop strong change **strategies** on an ongoing basis.

3. Implement **strong, integrated HRBA programmes**.
4. Ensure that we hold to the highest standards of **transparency and accountability**, without being naïve about power and opening ourselves to risk.
5. Do thorough risk analysis and build **risk management plans** into our long-term rights programme strategy, strategic and annual plans.
6. Implement other **organisational policies and systems** that can protect the organisation – internal audit processes and standards, adhere to publications and libel risk policy, and implement staff security policies.
7. Finally, and very importantly, support rights holder organisations and movements **deal with internal conflicts and power struggles**, and tackle **resistance to HRBA** inside of ActionAid and partner organisations – a divided weak organisation is more open to risk.



Risks and strategies for managing them in a HRBA programme

## We monitor change and impact on an ongoing basis

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### ***Building block 3: Monitoring and assessing change***<sup>7</sup>

Monitoring and evaluation is not just a technical exercise, it is an integral part of our HRBA:

- When we build our baseline in a participatory way, and focus it on empowerment and rights, we help to strengthen critical analysis and awareness.
- When we debate and set indicators against which we will monitor progress this helps refine our understanding and strengthens our strategy for change.
- Our reviews help us think about whether and how change has happened, assist us build new knowledge and realise the principles of learning and adaptability. Our strategy improves as we see what works and what does not.
- M&E is important to fulfil our accountabilities to poor and excluded people and other actors that support our work in a change process.
- By identifying the changes a programme has brought about and by sharing these we build confidence in and excitement about the programme.

**Monitoring** may be defined as the regular collection and analysis of information on the progress of a local rights programme in order to assess change and the impact we are achieving on an ongoing basis. Some organisations monitor only whether they have done what they said they would do. In ActionAid, because we are monitoring for learning and adaptation, we monitor change and impact on an ongoing basis. Monitoring may include gathering data, stories, and testimony.

**Review and reflection** – Alps calls for participatory review and reflection throughout the year, with data gathered, analysed, and progress shared and discussed. Participants in ongoing reflection processes, such as Reflect, meet periodically to review and reflect. All these reflections should be drawn together in an annual review and reflection (ARR) meeting before or as part of planning, to inform the next cycle. The ARR is not the same as the PRRP, which is a regular and ongoing review process conducted throughout the year as part of your programme.

**Evaluation** of a long-term rights programme takes place every six years, to assist in understanding changes (positive and negative) brought about as a result of the programme, and to serve as an accountability mechanism, on what was achieved, what was not achieved, and why.

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<sup>7</sup> In November 2009, the team of International Directors established a M&E Task Force to develop recommendations to improve M&E in ActionAid to better meet the learning and accountability needs of multiple stakeholders. An organisation-wide consultation will inform an M&E framework for the new international strategy.

## WAYS TO BUILD A GOOD M&amp;E SYSTEM

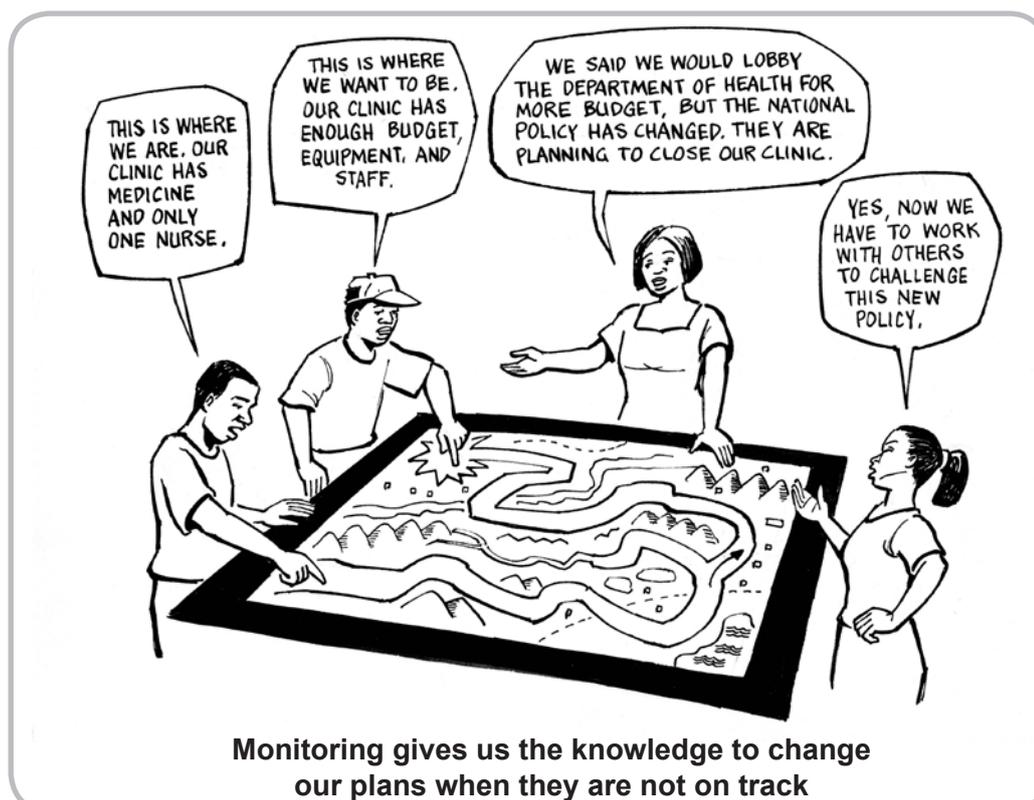
## Strong analysis and planning

The foundations for good monitoring and evaluation of a local rights programme lie in good strategy and plans with well thought through and realistic objectives, relevant indicators and a sound baseline, built upon strong power and rights analysis. See building block 2 for frameworks and tools for good analysis.

*Strategic plans* give focus to local rights programmes and anticipate how changes in the lives of rights holders will occur. They tell us how the programme will contribute to the goals and objectives of the country strategy, and should include a monitoring framework that identifies the changes to be monitored and a monitoring plan, which sets out how the expected changes will be monitored. The monitoring framework should be adaptable – for example it should be updated each year in light of changes to the context and lessons about the programme. It is during strategic planning that the indicators for empowerment, solidarity and campaigning should be set.

An *annual plan* helps us operationalise our strategic plan. It has more detail and is primarily a tool to help us achieve our strategic objectives. It is a key accountability mechanism with rights holders and other stakeholders.

As we plan our local rights programme it is essential that rights holders, ActionAid, the partner and other stakeholders agree on how we will measure change. **Indicators** are basically signs that we can see or measure and that tell us change has happened. Both qualitative and quantitative indicators need to be developed for each of the areas of change in the GMF relevant for your programme (including organisational performance indicators to measure how we know if the role we are playing is appropriate and effective).



**Discuss with the rights holders what big change we want, what the smaller changes might be along the way**

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It is often difficult to measure the qualitative changes, but we must try and assess these. For example, we might say that more women will be confident in community activities after awareness-raising sessions. Possible indicators for measuring this change could be – more women speaking in community meetings, or women-specific needs addressed in community plans. It is not helpful to generate long lists of indicators, nor is it helpful to stick to indicators that are not working. Discuss with the rights holders what big change we want, what the smaller changes might be along the way, what these changes will look like and who will be gathering the evidence? This will help us measure our progress in an ongoing way.

In order to know what we have achieved through a local rights programme, we need to know our starting point. This is what we call a **baseline**. We need a baseline for each of the areas of change in the GMF relevant to the programme. It is best to collect small amounts of highly relevant quantitative and qualitative information in a participatory way. Ensure that your baseline captures the conditions of women and girls at the beginning of the programme in relation to your intervention areas. You will refer back to your baseline in your ongoing progress reviews, and when you evaluate your local rights programme.

*Monitoring change over time*

You will monitor progress on an ongoing basis, in a participatory way, involving rights holders, partners and other relevant stakeholders. Your main vehicle for monitoring will be regular PRRPs. Other mechanisms will include community and rights holder meetings, after action reviews, field visits and partner reports. Monitoring should be designed to help rights holders, ActionAid and partner organisations figure out whether the programme is having the desired impact. Use analytical frameworks like the GMF to help rights holders, partners and ActionAid staff analyse how and whether change is taking place over time. Keep questions or formats simple and encourage analysis of change, and not just the reporting of activities. Encourage the writing of stories of change to stimulate critical thinking about change, and to document experiences. Your monitoring processes should help you work out whether and how change is happening over time, and will give rights holders, partners and ActionAid lessons that should inform the next cycle of implementation.

*Evaluation*

Over a long-term local rights programme you will implement evaluations every six years in order to understand the impact of the programme, and to inform a decision (collectively taken by rights holders, the partner and ActionAid) for programme 'phase out' (i.e. a move into what we are calling the final 'solidarity' phasing of a HRBA programme) or continuation of intensive programme work if change objectives have not been met. The final evaluation of the local rights programme can also be called the 'phase out' evaluation.<sup>8</sup> This tells us the impact of the rights programme over its lifetime, the power shifts achieved, including for women, and changes (both positive and negative). The evaluation enables us to draw lessons for other local rights programmes. It should be participatory, involving rights holders (especially

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<sup>8</sup> For more information on how we plan for and undertake phase out see ActionAid's [phase out policy](#).

women), partners, and other stakeholders, and be undertaken by a multi-disciplinary team, made up of staff of the partner organisation, ActionAid programme staff responsible for the local rights programme implementation, and members from outside of the area that do not have a vested interest in the programme. You can bring in external evaluators, or peer evaluators. The final evaluation report should be written in simple accessible language, and a summary should be made available to poor and excluded people supported through the local rights programme.

#### ***Building block 4: Building links across levels***

Working at different levels – local, sub-national, national and international – simultaneously enables us to make the changes we seek.

Each level makes a specific contribution to change. Working at the local level enables rights holder empowerment, provides a strong local base for more complex forms of organising – like apex structures, networks, social movements and alliances, ensures that campaigning is grounded in local realities and rights holder needs and priorities, and provides evidence for advocacy at other levels.

But since the roots of local problems lie elsewhere we also need to work at other levels. Working at the sub-national and national levels enables us to monitor and hold government accountable for resource allocation and use, to influence national or state level budgets, to introduce needed policy or legal changes and so on. Working at the international level enables us to challenge institutions such as the European Union (EU), IMF or World Bank to act in the interests of poor and marginalised rights holders.

You may wonder why we don't just work at national and international levels and forget the local if the 'structural' root of local problems lie elsewhere. ActionAid has a very clear position about **why we work at the local level**:

1. The rights holders directly affected and whom we put first are at the local level. Their analysis and perspectives must shape the agenda for change, and drive campaigns. The perspectives of rights holders can come through their movements, alliances and other forms of organisation.
2. There are strong possibilities for change at the local level (for example, securing government entitlements, challenging traditional institutions, changing social attitudes). Pressure from the local can in some contexts ensure greater government accountability.
3. Finally, if change is not supported and led by rights holders it will not be sustained over time, as forces opposed to change will very quickly turn things around.

#### SUGGESTIONS OF BRIDGES WE CAN BUILD TO LINK THE LEVELS

##### **Bridge 1: Sharing information and knowledge**

First we need a bridge of two-way information and knowledge. National staff need to provide information and knowledge to rights holders and partner staff at the local level to help their analysis and strategy formulation. National level staff and partners, for example, can help local staff identify opportunities to bring about local change through campaigns work at higher levels. Similarly,

**If change is not supported and led by rights holders it will not be sustained over time**

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staff at other levels require information and analysis about what is happening locally so they can identify opportunities for campaigns work at the sub-national, national and international levels.

Bridge 2: Linked reviews and coordinated strategy and plans

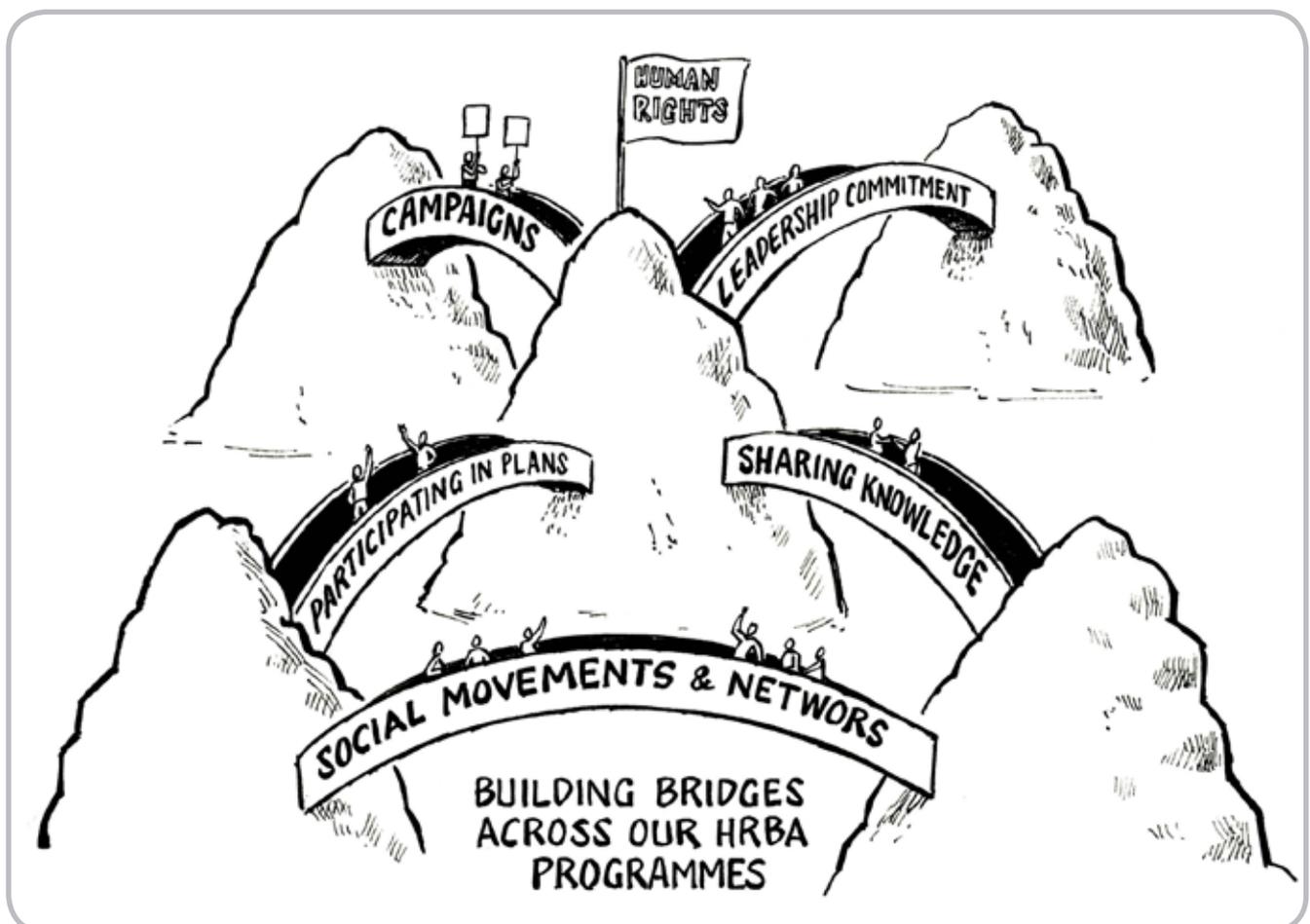
We need to build bridges through existing organisational processes, such as our strategic and annual plans and reviews. This is probably our best starting point. Local rights programme strategies and strategic plans influence and operationalise country strategies. Local rights programme strategic plans need to include objectives and activities for empowerment, campaigning and solidarity work for three-to-five-year periods. National policy and thematic staff should guide analysis, assist in identifying campaigning opportunities, and take local 'issues' into national campaigns work. National campaigns planning should include representation from the local level. In addition, national policy and campaigns plans should build in ongoing support to capacity building and advocacy work at the local level.

**Campaigns that successfully link horizontally or vertically usually do so through organisations of rights holders**

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Bridge 3: Campaigns that bridge the levels

National campaigns are seldom rooted in local issues and struggles, and similarly local campaigning is rarely supported at the national or international levels. What can you do at the local level to address this challenge? If bridges 1 and 2 are in place then this bridge through campaigns should be easy to develop. Strong analysis and sound strategy will show potential links – of



local to national to international – and these should be written into your plans at all levels. It is important to be creative and proactive at the local level. If you see an opportunity for the local to be linked into a national campaign make the proposal. For example, as you develop your campaigns plans at local level, think about the forms of solidarity that could assist and strengthen your campaign. It could be legal advice, or the voice of a prominent public personality, or letters of support from a constituency. Also think through, with your national and theme staff, the opportunities that exist to apply pressure for change at national or international levels. One of the successes with the Vedanta Campaign in India was that the company planning open pit mining is listed in the United Kingdom. The campaign in India was thus backed up by ActionAid UK, supporters and public figures in the UK who drew on their power to campaign against the company.

**70% of the  
world's poor are  
women**

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*Bridge 4: Linked up advocacy through organisations and movements*

Building links across levels is probably best achieved through organisations, networks, platforms and movements of rights holders that cut across the local, sub-national, national, and international. There is an international movement of peasants, for example, La Via Campesina, loosely translated 'the way of the farmer' that is organised from the local to the international. Strength through numbers, shared experiences of exclusion, and supportive allies make for a strong platform. Campaigns that successfully link horizontally or vertically usually do so through organisations of rights holders, connected in solidarity relations with ActionAid, other NGOs, allies like the church, and sympathetic individuals.

*Bridge 5: Leadership and staff commitment*

None of the above will be possible without the strong commitment of leadership and staff. Building the links requires that we give up some control, hand over some of our skills and information to others, and that we work cooperatively. Some may resist building such links as it means they have to give up their power. This is a challenge we have to confront.

***Building block 5: Promoting women's rights***

ActionAid sets high priority on women's rights because we believe that gender inequality is an injustice we must fight. ActionAid also recognises that 70% of the world's poor are women. We will not succeed in tackling poverty if we do not support women to fight for their rights. ActionAid believes that we have a part to play in creating a more equal and just world. Our hope and aim is to witness women worldwide growing in confidence, skills and knowledge so that they may decide their own destiny, live without fear of violence and participate effectively in the decisions that affect their lives and livelihoods.

ActionAid's HRBA places women's rights at the centre of our work. Through our work we aim to confront the domination of men over women and the inequality between men and women in access to services, resources and power. When we analyse a problem, we must ensure that we analyse how women are affected by the problem differently to men. When we develop solutions we must ask if these solutions will expand or limit women's access to services, resources and power. When we strategise and act to empower rights holders we must organise women as a specific grouping within the rights holder group. We must build and advance women's leadership in campaigns or within social movements.

**Ensure that attention is given to how women are affected differently from men by an issue**

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ActionAid's current strategy, RTEP, has a strong focus on women's rights. However often it is not clear at programme level what this commitment means in practice. Many programmes seek to include and benefit women. But very few challenge the underlying causes of women's unequal position in relation to men in their communities.

THINKING ABOUT POWER AND RIGHTS IN NEW WAYS SO AS TO INCLUDE WOMEN'S RIGHTS

ActionAid programme staff need to understand and address inequalities between women and men as one of the most challenging dynamics of power and a critical factor in all situations of poverty and injustice. If we are going to practically put women's rights in the centre then we have to think about rights and power relations in new ways so as to include power relations between women and men.

Initial conceptualisations of rights even within the UN Declaration of Human Rights did not include women's rights among all the rights enshrined in that document. It was only through struggles by organised groupings of women who campaigned that 'women's rights are human rights' that bodies such as the UN began to take notice of and to address women's rights.

Initial rights struggles by independence movements in Africa, Asia, and Latin America did not include women's rights within their agendas. It was only when women within these movements campaigned and insisted that the men in these movements take up women's rights that a shift began to take place within these movements. And within development organisations even today there are some who do not think that women's rights are an integral part of human rights.

In almost all societies that we know of women as compared to men of the same race, class, ethnicity etc., have less power and authority, less access to resources, and a greater work burden. Women's subordination is reinforced by an internalised sense of inferiority.

DEVELOPING SKILLS TO DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT PROGRAMMES TO ADVANCE WOMEN'S RIGHTS

ActionAid programme staff need to develop their knowledge of women's rights and their skill in designing, implementing and evaluating women's rights work. Women's rights can be promoted and advanced within broader programmes – for example, on food rights or education rights and through separate programmes that focus on women specifically – for example, programmes to end violence against women, or to increase girl's access to education.

In conducting an analysis with the rights holders, the programmer needs to ensure that attention is given to how women are affected differently from men by an issue because of their location within the gender division of labour,<sup>9</sup> because of their less privileged access to resources, and because they often do not have the same access to power and authority as their male equivalents.

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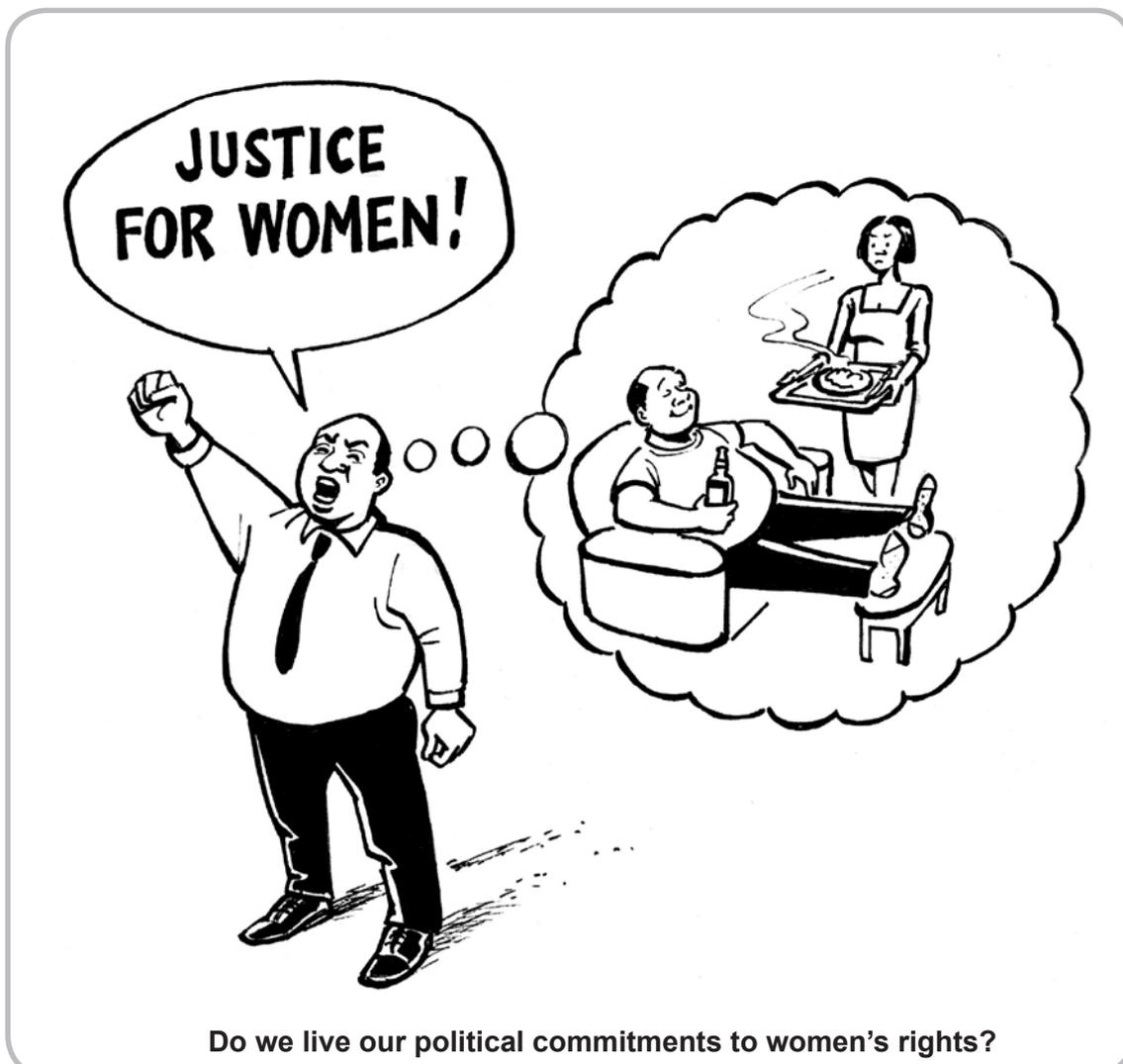
<sup>9</sup> The gender division of labour refers to the roles that are assigned to men and women, girls and boys, within a particular context. The division of labour is not neutral and equal. In most contexts women get most of the burden of labour, and the majority of the unpaid labour, but men obtain and/or control most of the income and rewards resulting from this labour.

So, for example, in a HIV and Aids programme, or an education programme, the programmer would need to spell out the ways in which women are affected differently from men. And strategies would need to be developed to address women's specific situation and interests.

In addition, the programmer would need to identify specific issues of concern to women – for example, around maternal mortality, violence against women or female circumcision. Often these tend to be taboo subjects and skill is needed to make sure that these issues do not remain hidden and therefore not addressed.

In line with our commitment to empowering rights holders to take up their own rights struggles, advancing women's skills, capabilities and organisation are important strategies for addressing women's rights.

As you design programmes it is important also to consider unintended effects of programmes which may in fact increase women's subordination. For example, a livelihoods project set up with the idea of improving women's status by involving women in farming activities and the marketing of produce might unintentionally increase women's work burden and let men in the community off the hook from providing for their families.



**Our partners  
need to be  
politically  
committed to  
working for the  
advancement of  
human rights**

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SOME EXAMPLES OF OUR WORK TO ADVANCE WOMEN'S RIGHTS

In Ethiopia, ActionAid provided support to the Network of Ethiopian Women to conduct training for women parliamentary candidates. This effort played a part in more than doubling women's representation in the last elections.

ActionAid Pakistan has been a key part of the campaign to challenge the Hudood Ordinance which, among other things, criminalises women who have been raped. As well as lobbying for change in the face of fierce conservative opposition, ActionAid has provided free legal support to some of the women in prison as a result of the Ordinance and has supported gender-sensitisation training for the police in Lahore. In November 2006, the Women's Protection Act was passed which has brought some improvements, but there is much further to go both legally and in terms of shifting attitudes.

Many ActionAid programmes support projects around women's economic empowerment. ActionAid India has provided micro-credit to women in fishing communities in Tsunami affected areas. ActionAid Nepal supports a community forestry project, initiated by rural women, to help preserve the forest and strengthen their livelihoods by growing fruit and vegetables.

The international women's rights theme has supported the development of a resource on working for women's rights in a HRBA. It is called 'Power, Inclusion and Rights Based Approaches' and can be obtained by following this [link](#).

***Building block 6: Promoting strong partnerships***

Note: We have an international partnership policy, and other partnership appraisal and capacity development resources, which can be obtained by following this [link](#).

Only 25% of our local rights programmes across the world are managed by ActionAid; the majority (75%) are managed by partners. This is why strong partnerships are critical to our HRBA. It is the partner organisation that works alongside rights holders to realise rights. Our partners need to be politically committed to working for the advancement of human rights, they need to have the knowledge and capacity, and their systems and policies need to support HRBA programme work. They will need to subscribe to the values and principles we believe are important to a rights agenda. And our relationship with partners should be modelled on these values and principles.

A LITTLE HISTORY OF PARTNERSHIP

In the past, when our approach was one of participatory development and community empowerment our primary partners were local communities, and community groups. We partnered with them, and sometimes with government, to provide services and we often complemented the role of government. In the mid-1990s, as we made the shift to a HRBA, we began to partner with different types of organisations – social movements, networks, alliances, coalitions – and our approach to partnership shifted. We progressively withdrew from direct management of local programmes and entered into partnerships with local rights holder organisations, CBOs and NGOs.

There were good reasons for this change. We believe that local programmes can be strengthened by locally based, locally rooted partners. They understand the local area and local 'issues', and they have relationships of trust with rights holders. Working through partnership is also more cost-effective. And most importantly, partnerships are a way of building and strengthening a diverse, broader movement of organisations working towards a shared vision of change.

#### DEFINING PARTNERSHIP

ActionAid generally uses the term partnership to refer to the organisations we fund. In this relationship there are many other forms of support besides funding. A partnership is a relationship of trust, equality and political sympathy and agreement, oriented towards the achievement of a common agenda for change. We partner with rights holders and organisations we consider friends of rights holders. These include CBOs, NGOs, social movements, and networks.

**Do we partner with government?** In only very limited circumstances – a handful of countries in the ActionAid family – do we enter into formal partnerships with government to bring about specific changes in the lives of the poor. Partnerships with government may be formed when there are no alternative organisations to work with rights holders, or where there are constitutional or legal limitations on the formation of civil society organisations capable of implementing change programmes as is true in China and Vietnam, for example.

We do, however, enter at times into '**strategic relationships**' with government – for example to influence their thinking, to obtain information, to help government strengthen its delivery capacity, or its accountability systems. This strategic relationship is for a specific purpose, is time bound (often short term), and not founded on the same principles of trust and mutual accountability that characterise a partnership. Working in a strategic relationship with government does not mean that we 'replace' government.

We generally use the term '**allies**' to refer to organisations that we collaborate with that we do not fund. These are organisations – such as networks, alliances, coalitions, other NGOs – that we see as equals and allies to rights holders and their struggles. We may work with these organisations to support exchanges between rights holders, to link rights holder organisations to help with movement building, and we may work alongside them in campaigns.

#### BUILDING AND MAINTAINING THE RELATIONSHIP - THE ROLE OF THE PROGRAMMER<sup>10</sup>

The first step in forging a strong partnership is **getting to know each other**. This entails developing mutual understanding of our organisations' vision, purpose, approach and strategies. It also means developing insights into how our organisations' work, make decisions, and what values guide us. When making decisions about who to partner with we need to have **clear criteria and a transparent process**. The most critical elements are common values and principles, and a common purpose or vision.

**We partner  
with rights  
holders and  
organisations  
we consider  
friends of rights  
holders**

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<sup>10</sup> This section draws in part on the findings of the partnership review undertaken in 2007.

**Partners and partnerships should be reviewed on an ongoing basis**

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Once a partnership is decided, we need to have a thorough mutual **assessment**. The partner should be able to assess and understand ActionAid and its systems, and vice versa. The assessment informs the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and is the basis of any agreed capacity building. For example, if the assessment shows weakness on women's rights, or financial management, or accountability to poor and excluded people there should be a very clear plan, with agreed inputs, support, and outcomes, to address these weaknesses. Likewise, if the partner assessment of ActionAid shows incompatibilities or potential problems in ways of working, these should be addressed. The MoU/Partnership Agreement should include the **capacity development plan**. The new M&E system being put in place by 2012 specifies that we must have 'baselines' and indicators for our partnerships that will be monitored over time.

A key role for the ActionAid programmer is to **build the necessary capacity** for human rights working in the partner organisation. The capacity development plan, which will be revised annually, should indicate areas for attention. Capacity is developed through formal training, but also by accompanying partners in field work, by participating in partner review and planning processes (to deepen their analysis and strategy skills), through partner meetings, and through partner-to-partner exchanges.

**Partners and partnerships should be reviewed** on an on-going basis. At least once a year – as part of the participatory review and reflection process – the partner should give feedback to ActionAid on its work and the relationship, and vice versa. To empower the partner, this review could be done in a meeting of multiple partners, as in Ghana and Brazil. Partners should also be made aware of, and encouraged to use ActionAid's complaints policy, to raise issues to an impartial part of ActionAid.

Partnership is very centrally about equality in relationship and mutual accountability. These commitments are hard to practise when we hold the purse strings. Working in partnership challenges us, as programmers, to be continuously reflecting on our power and the attitudes and behaviours we hold. In fact, we can argue that **the quality of the relationship** between the ActionAid programmer and staff in the partner organisation is absolutely critical to the success of the partnership. And so partners and rights holders should have a say in both the ActionAid staff recruitment processes and the ongoing performance management of programme staff. This commitment is outlined in Alps.

Our hope is for successful partnerships to continue up to the point when we are mutually satisfied that our change objectives have been met. But, sadly, partnerships at times break down before we have met our objectives: leadership may change, an organisation may take a new direction, staff may leave, relations could break down between the partner and rights holders – there are very many reasons why a partnership may run its course. The MoU/Partnership Agreement will spell out clear mechanisms for how to exit from a partnership. Please also refer to ActionAid's exit policy – follow this [link](#).

## A CHECKLIST – MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR HRBA PROGRAMMES

This checklist will help you ‘assess’ if a programme is human rights-based or not. A HRBA programme must have interventions or a strategy to achieve each of these minimum standards.

<p><b>Minimum standard one</b></p> <p>Building poor people’s consciousness as rights holders</p>	<p>Do existing programme activities or strategies enable ongoing analysis and reflection on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conditions and causes of poverty?</li> <li>▪ The right denied or violated?</li> <li>▪ Unequal power relations between rights holders and other actors like duty bearers, or allies/friends?</li> <li>▪ Unequal power relations between women and men and girls and boys?</li> <li>▪ Causes of inequality, exploitation and exclusion that underlie rights violations?</li> <li>▪ Duty bearers (especially state as primary duty bearer) and opportunities to hold them accountable?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Minimum standard two</b></p> <p>Agency of the poor and excluded</p>	<p>Do existing programme activities and strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Organise and mobilise rights holders?</li> <li>▪ Build skills and leadership of rights holders to articulate their agenda, and take actions to claim rights?</li> <li>▪ Address basic needs in a way that empowers rights holders and generates alternatives that the state can be lobbied to take up?</li> <li>▪ Build a relationship of trust and mutual accountability between ActionAid, partners and rights holders?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Minimum standard three</b></p> <p>Women’s rights</p>	<p>Do existing programme activities and strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure that women identify and challenge different forms of subordination and exploitation – whether sexual, cultural, political or economic?</li> <li>▪ Strengthen the capacity of poor and excluded women and their organisations?</li> <li>▪ Challenge unequal power relations between men and women?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Minimum standard four</b></p> <p>Poor and excluded people critically engage duty bearers</p>	<p>Do existing programme activities and strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enable poor and excluded people and their organizations to connect with and claim from or challenge duty bearers, especially the state?</li> <li>▪ Enable poor people to monitor public budgets and the implementation of public policies at local level?</li> <li>▪ Enable immediate local level gains through the fulfilment, protection and promotion of rights by the state?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Minimum standard five</b></p> <p>Changing the rules</p>	<p>Do existing programme activities and strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work towards lasting gains at the local level and beyond by tackling structural causes of poverty and rights violation (e.g. changes in law, policy, procedure or budget allocation in favour of the poor and excluded)?</li> <li>▪ Connect local rights violations to national and international contributing factors; connect local struggles with national and international movement; and connect local issues to national civil society processes and work such as national development strategies?</li> </ul>

## Section 2: Operational phases in a local rights programme

A long-term local rights programme is a change process implemented in phases, and supported by different organisational systems like Alps, M&E, finance, fundraising etc. Within each phase you will find specific activities required by our organisational systems. Activities you will be familiar with are: appraisal, strategic planning, annual reviews and plans. Our programming over time is not about these activities, and it cannot be driven by or be defined by these activities. This is why we have introduced the idea of four broad phases of programming. Each phase has a strategic focus. The programme phases that follow apply to a long-term rights programme, and give us the road map for how we work over the life of the programme.

***In summary, there are four phases in a long-term local rights programme:***

**Phase 1:** Exploring partnership, appraising and preparing for a rights programme

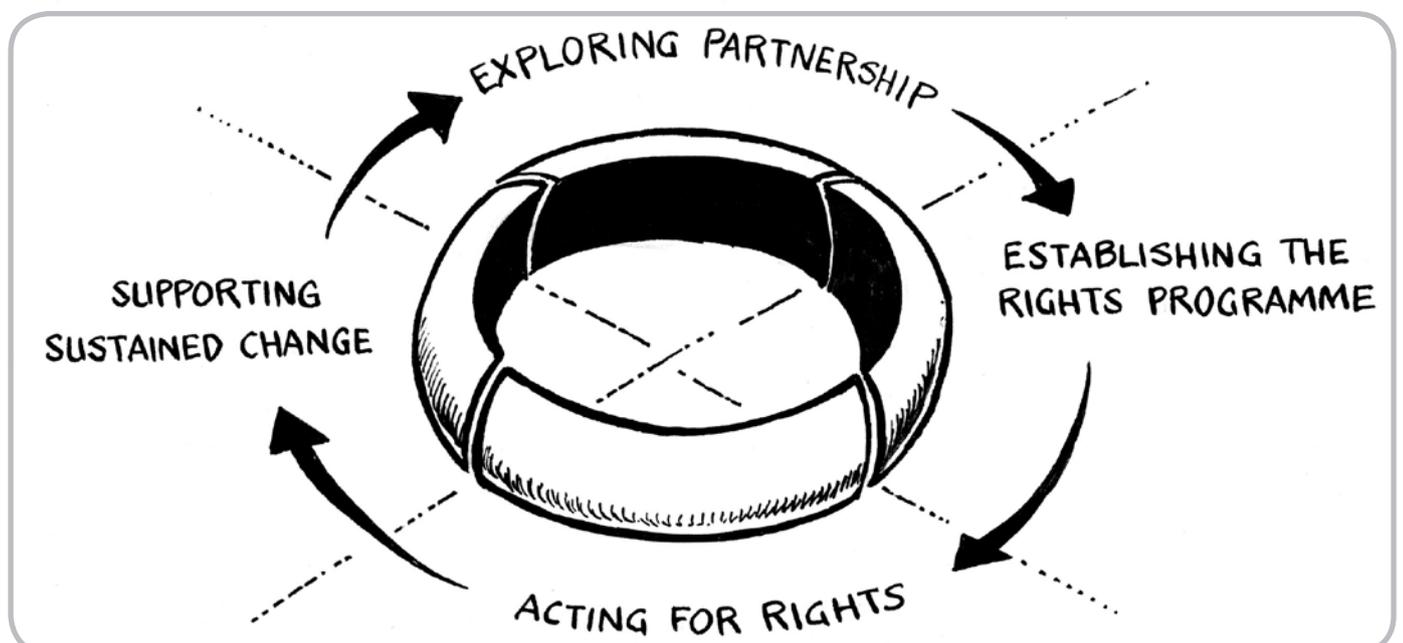
**Phase 2:** Establishing the rights programme

**Phase 3:** Acting for rights – the long-term struggle

**Phase 4:** Supporting sustained change through solidarity

Resources and guidance for activities in each of these phases can be found [here](#).

Please note: This is a very general framework of phases – your context will dictate what you focus on and how you work in each phase. This is therefore *not* a blueprint but a guide for *how* you work in the phases. You will need to modify the content of this guidance to your particular environment, its opportunities and its challenges.



***No standardised time limit in a long term local rights programme***

In a rights programme implemented in the long term at the local level there is no standardised time limit for our work with rights holders. This is different from how we did things previously in our DAs and DIs. In the past we set a fixed ten-year period for our programmes. Now you will set a broad time-frame for the programme at the point of appraisal. This will be revised once you have developed your long-term rights programme strategy. In setting your time-frame you estimate broadly how much time is needed to achieve the change objectives.

The length of the local rights programme will be determined by many factors, such as:

- What we want to achieve;
- The level of organisation of rights holders;
- The type of partner and their capacity;
- The level of ‘deprivation’ and oppression the rights holders face; and
- The government and its capacities, laws, policies and programmes etc.

The length of a local rights programme will vary from one programme to another even within the same country programme. The range could be anywhere from a few years to over two decades depending on your context and the change you are trying to support.

So, unlike our practice up to very recently, we no longer limit ourselves to a standardised period of programming in a long-term local rights programme. Why this change? In the past we worked more in service delivery mode, and we had visible and measurable deliverables – a school, the training of teachers, or the delivery of a well. In this mode much more was in our control. We could decide what to deliver and by when it would be delivered. Service delivery was an end in and of itself with the objective of meeting basic needs, and no more than this. If members of the community were involved in development work, our role was not to empower them to lead the change effort. If capacity building and organising work happened, it was less intense, and it happened at the very local level, targeting community structures. With this orientation we could usually deliver on our objectives in a more or less fixed period of ten years for a local development programme (DA or DI).

But our work has changed drastically and this has meant a change in how we programme and a change in the time period over which we work. In a HRBA our major focus is the rights holders and their empowerment to claim and defend their rights. Change rests on the organisation of rights holders supported in solidarity by ActionAid and other actors, as well as the responsiveness of other institutions, like government. We still support service delivery, but this is now not as simple as just building the well or the school. Our approach to service delivery is much more ‘strategic’ – through the delivery of services we empower the rights holders (see Chapter 5 for more on this). We organise, mobilise and build their rights awareness through the process of planning, delivering and managing the basic service/s. The big structural changes we seek are about changing government and its laws, policies and programmes;

**We no longer limit ourselves to a standardised period of programming in a long-term local rights programme**

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changing the way institutions work; and changing the way people think. These changes do not happen quickly and this is why we need to reconsider the period over which we are programming for change.

Programming in fixed and standardised periods cannot accommodate the diversity of our local rights programmes from one context to the next. We need greater flexibility to accommodate the differences.

***Prior to entering phase 1***

Long-term rights programming is a very important road to the 'big' change we want, and so we should always be on the lookout for opportunities to build strong long-term local rights programmes out of our existing work and relationships with organisations and rights holders.

We should not be driven by funding – whether CS or donor – as the motive for starting a programme. Our long-term rights programming work must ideally grow out of an emergency response or a campaign or a short-term programme or other exploratory work. Hence, much of the understanding necessary to make strategic choices during phase 1 should have been gained prior to initiating this phase.

The decisions we make in phase 1 will shape our work – and therefore the possibilities for change – for many years, sometimes for decades to come, and so we must be strategic and careful in our choices.



COURTING EACH OTHER



NEGOTIATING THE TERMS



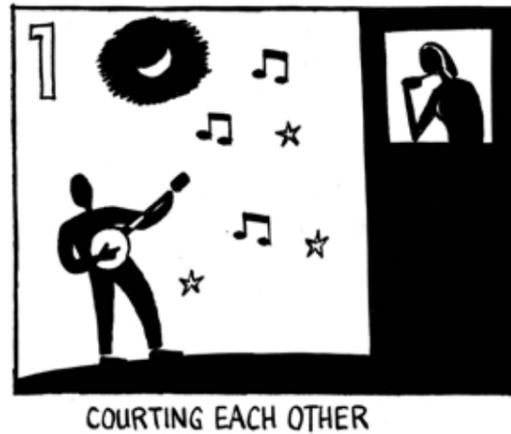
THE MARRIAGE



THE TWILIGHT YEARS

**The four phases in a long-term local rights programme are similar to the phases you would find in the development of an intimate relationship**

Note: We spent many long hours trying to find a simple relevant analogy between programming and day-to-day life. We came up with this analogy, which we feel is a little sexist and hetero-normative (i.e. it privileges a heterosexual view on the world). In the next 14 months we will be consulting further for other ideas we can use and would appreciate your contributions.



## PHASE I: EXPLORING PARTNERSHIP, APPRAISING AND PREPARING FOR A RIGHTS PROGRAMME



### Strategic outcomes

1. We will have explored and achieved a better understanding of potential geographies, rights holders and partner organisations for long-term rights programming.
2. We will have selected the partner/s that will be appraised for a long-term rights programme/s.
3. We will have achieved a basic level of mutual understanding and trust between the partner organisation and ActionAid.
4. We will have conducted an appraisal and made a decision about the feasibility of establishing a long-term local rights programme targeting a particular group of rights holders, in a specific geography, with a particular partner/s.
5. We will have established a solid baseline for the programme.
6. We will have developed an interim strategy for a minimum of 12 to a maximum of 24 months. The interim strategy should include an interim programme design addressing objectives, strategies, indicators, funding sources (a funding plan), a capacity development plan etc.



### Time-frame

Because of the importance of this phase we advise no less than 12 months. If you have the resources we recommend 18 months to build the depth of understanding, relationships, analysis, and strategy required for strong long-term rights programming. The time required for this phase will depend on:

- Our own capacity to initiate the process of building a strategic HRBA programme;
- The length of existence of the country programme (the 'older' programmes have clearer approaches, systems and methods as opposed to the 'newer' programmes still building them);
- The complexity of the context for HRBA programming; and
- The type of rights violation we are working on.

### Steps in this phase

**Step 1:** Select two to four potential partners, places and people (groups of rights holders) for a long-term rights programme

**Step 2:** Undertake a light assessment of each of the above and select one for in-depth appraisal

**Step 3:** In-depth appraisal

**Step 4:** 12 to 24 month interim strategy (i.e. one to two cycles of annual plans)



### Programme elements and GMF

Our main focus is likely to be the empowerment programme component. In this phase we may start work to achieve change in two areas of the GMF – changing conditions of rights holders and building rights consciousness, capacity and organisation of rights holders, but this work will be limited and quite superficial.



### Achievements

1. We will have conducted a basic risk analysis to look at the possible external and internal factors that may impede HRBA programming. External risks may include backlash from vested interest groups and duty bearers, and internal threats could be something like organisational unpreparedness to work on the HRBA. We will have an area-specific emerging conflict and hazard risk analysis of the rights holder group and geography. We will deepen this analysis in our first strategic plan.

## PHASE I

## PHASE I

2. We will have an emerging women's rights analysis.
3. We will have started building a relationship with the rights holder groups.
4. Rights holders may be better organised into local structures and groups.
5. Rights holders may be more aware of their rights through very basic service delivery, but mainly through the programming activities – selection, appraisal and interim strategy development.
6. We will have had open and frank discussions with the community and the partner organisation on the CS mechanism and the prerequisites for its management if CS funding is to be used.
7. Some basic needs may have been met at this stage by the partner with the support of ActionAid, and the participation of rights holders.
8. Partners will have a better understanding of ActionAid and its approach.
9. Partner capacity for working on rights will be built or strengthened (in many country programmes this is a continuous activity over the life of the programme).



### **Organisational systems and processes**

- Selection of partners for long-term rights programme;
- Local rights programme appraisal to determine if the strategic objectives of the Country Strategy Paper (CSP) will be met through the programme, and whether or not the partner organisation is capable of engaging in HRBA and delivering CS requirements;
- Appraisal document, including appraisal package, goes to Country Director (CD)/Senior Management Team (SMT) for approval and sent onwards to affiliate, donor or region; start the process of collecting CS profiles;
- Participatory reviews (PRRPs);
- Annual review and reflection (ARR); and
- Interim strategy to be delivered through one or two cycles of annual plan.

**Note:** Much of the organising and awareness-raising work with rights holders will be implemented through programming activities like the selection and appraisal processes. These should be designed for empowerment – they should provide information, build basic rights awareness, and deepen analysis.

## PHASE I



### **Role of the ActionAid programmer**

In this phase a senior ActionAid programmer facilitates the selection and the appraisal process with a team of programme persons, a person from the women's rights theme, a finance person and a person from fundraising. The programme head, CD and SMT generally make decisions related to these processes. Beyond these processes, an ActionAid programmer should be assigned to work intensively in the locality and with potential partner/s to look into the partner organisation's approach to working with the rights holders, identifying strengths to build on and capacity weaknesses to address. S/he should spend time in the field with the partner staff building basic understanding about the rights violations faced by the rights holders, and particularly the women within the group. The ActionAid programmer may engage in joint strategising and planning with the potential partner. Depending on the capacity of the partner, the ActionAid programmer may start some capacity building and methodology development work with them. The ActionAid programmer will work to identify the internal and external risks and threats that need to be considered and planned around.



### **Sources of funding**

If you are already implementing a campaign, or emergency response programme, or another variant of a short-term programme you could use this funding to cover some costs during phase 1. A donor may be interested in extending the short-term work into a long-term programme and could be persuaded to support some programme activities, such as appraisal and interim strategy development. You are most likely to use unrestricted funds in this phase, or a combination of donor and unrestricted funds. Your fundraising will be framed by your funding plan, which sets out your funding needs and where these funds could potentially be sourced from.

***What do we need to think about when selecting potential places, people and partners for long-term programming?***

The Programme Approach and Quality Forum (PAQF) has agreed for fuller criteria and guidance to be developed on how we go about the selection process. At the minimum, the selection process must:

- First and foremost, **be driven by our country strategy**, not just our expansion plan but what we are trying to achieve over the strategy period.
- **Move away from an exclusive focus on poverty indicators** as the basis for selecting areas to work in, to thinking about what will best help us achieve our change strategy beyond the local area. The most remote area, with the poorest most marginal disorganised people might not be the 'best' or most appropriate vehicle for the 'big' structural changes we seek. We might wish to work in the 'interests' of the most marginal and poor people, but these interests might be better met working in another area, with a group of rights holders whose organisations could be strengthened into a movement for change for example. Strategy must now come to the fore in selecting where we work and who we work with!
- We should **start with the rights holders** and not with the geography as the basis for selecting partners and places. Our focus should ideally be to rights holder groups we consider marginal but that have some capacity for leading change, that have started the process of mobilising, and are in an area in which there is a potential or actual partner that is politically aligned to the rights holders.
- Consider whether there is any **existing activity, activism or capacity to build on**. Our best bet is to start work in areas where there is an emergent struggle, where rights holders have sparked a change process and we can ally with them to strengthen this with our capacity, our voice, our networks, and our relations beyond the local level. Are there potential partners to work with, are there emergent CBOs, and other grassroots formations upon which work can build?
- Consider whether there is **capacity and potential to work on women's rights**? Is there an emergent activism or energy for change we could build upon? Are there some small organisations with capacity we could work with to strengthen and grow work? Is there some potential for change both in this context and beyond at the sub-national and national levels?
- Consider whether we have or could leverage the requisite **competence or technical expertise** to work in a particular geography, on a particular issue, or with a particular rights group.
- **Satisfy CS requirements** if we are considering this as our main funding source.
- Consider **feasibility** in terms of our ability to manage geographical distance, or increased costs of working in a particular area (is this justified or not?)

## PHASE 2



## PHASE 2: ESTABLISHING THE RIGHTS PROGRAMME



### Strategic outcomes

1. We will have obtained a much deeper understanding of the context, the rights holders and their interests, the partner organisation and its approach, funding opportunities, and change possibilities.
2. We will have developed a deeper, more trusting relationship with both the rights holders and the partner organisation.
3. We will have worked with partners and rights holders to deliver very basic services, a process through which we establish or strengthen local rights holder organisations, and build deeper awareness about people's rights vis-à-vis duty bearers.
4. Rights holders are better organised into local level structures, and have deeper analysis of the context and some of the reasons for their exclusion.
5. We will have established all requisite operations and supporting systems for programme implementation in the area, either through a partner, or through our own office and staffing.
6. We will have deepened partner capacity to organise and build consciousness of rights holders, build leadership capacity, and enable women's rights.
7. We will have a long-term rights programme strategy with major programme goals for the long term (that is for the envisaged period of the programme) and major strategies for change across each of the three programme components – empowerment, campaigning and solidarity.
8. We will have a first three-to-five-year strategic plan developed through a participatory process, involving the partner and rights holders, and framed by the long-term rights programme strategy.



### Time-frame

This phase (guided by the interim strategy referred to in phase 1) will run over a minimum of one, **preferably two annual plans**. The time-frame should be determined by:

- The length of time you were working with the partner, in the locality, with the rights holders prior to the inception of phase 1 – the longer the period the less time you will need to establish the programme in phase 2;
- The complexity of the context or the degree of risk involved, which you will need to consider in strategy development;
- The HRBA capacity of the partner, and the degree of readiness to manage a local programme, i.e. the strength of their organisational systems (finance, administration etc.); and
- Whether the programme is direct implementation or through a partner organisation.

### How to implement this phase

If implementing in one year: Implement with ARR in second/third quarter of the year; following ARR develop long-term rights programme strategy and first three-to-five-year strategy.

If implementing in two years: Implement year one with ARR; in year two develop long-term rights programme strategy and first three-to-five-year strategy following ARR in second/third quarter.



### Programme elements and GMF

Our main focus is likely to be the empowerment programme component. In this phase we would support changes in the basic conditions of rights holders and build rights consciousness, capacity and organisation of rights holders.



### Achievements

1. Area-specific communities have contingency plans for emergencies.
2. Made a start on more intensive work targeting women within the rights holder group/s or as a specific constituency.
3. Depending on the length of the interim strategy we will have moved more intensively into some basic consciousness-raising work, and may have supported some small campaigns targeting local government or other local duty bearers for basic services.

## PHASE 2

4. A detailed risk analysis has been done – the internal and external risk factors have been identified and a risk management strategy has been developed as part of the long-term rights programme strategy. Risks are also addressed in the first three-to-five-year strategic plan.
5. CS funding is forthcoming, and fundraising proposals have been submitted for strategic pieces of work within the programme. If this phase is implemented over two cycles, donor income should start to come in.
6. Partner commitment to and capacity for working on women's rights has been strengthened.
7. The rights holders will have a deeper understanding of CS and partners will have a greater capacity to administer CS.



### **Organisational systems and processes**

- Long-term rights programme strategy;
- Three-to-five-year rights programme strategic plan;
- Ongoing participatory reviews (PRRPS);
- Annual review and reflection (ARR);
- Annual plans;
- Fundraising for alternative sources of funding initiated as per funding plan;
- Financial systems of partner organisations set up and strengthened to meet accounting procedures of ActionAid;
- Signed MoU with partner at the end of this period on the basis of local rights programme strategic plan; and
- CS profiles completed and submitted to affiliate.

### **Local rights programme strategic plan**

ALPs require that each long-term local rights programme operates with a strategic plan. The plan, which is required at least once every five years, sets out the objectives and strategies for that period against long-term change objectives set out in the long-term rights programme strategy. Some of the minimum 'requirements' of a strategic plan are as follows:

- The strategic plan must be underpinned by a deep and thorough power and rights analysis.
- It should very clearly set out the specific rights that we will be seeking to advance in the local rights programme.
- The rights holders we will be aligning with and the duty bearers we will be targeting will be clearly identified. It should also clearly identify the allies in the rights struggle.

## PHASE 2

- It should state whether we are seeking to hold government responsible for efficiently delivering entitlements already provided for, or whether we are seeking to change the rules (i.e. change policy and law).
- Very importantly, the strategic plan should indicate the kind of basic needs to be delivered, how these relate to the rights we are trying to advance, and how the needs will be met strategically to support the rights strategy and empowerment of rights holders.
- The strategic plan also indicates how the work will contribute to the country strategy.

The local rights programme strategic plan must have clear strategic objectives and interventions related to the three HRBA programme components to be signed off. In addition, it must satisfy the minimum standards for HRBA programming.



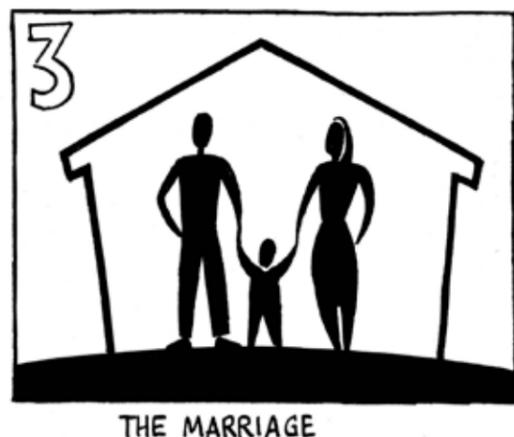
### **Role of the ActionAid programmer**

The ActionAid programmer will facilitate the development of the long-term rights programme strategy and the first three-to-five-year rights programme strategic plan. Where needed, s/he plays an active role building the capacity of partner staff, helping them to strategise on an ongoing basis, and assisting the establishment or alignment of partner organisational systems and policies to our HRBA. An ActionAid programmer will know how to analyse power, identify rights violated, and clearly identify rights holders and duty bearers. The programmer will also help to strategise good social change processes to achieve rights. S/he will need to establish good rapport and a relationship of trust with the rights holders. S/he should be able to meet the requirements of different sponsorship units and take a lead role in helping partner staff understand and operationalise the CS requirements.



### **Sources of funding**

In the very early part of this phase there may still be a dependency on unrestricted funds. Funds will, however, start coming from CS in the first year of this phase. Funds may come from donors if the work has grown out of a campaign or a short-term programme. Towards the end of the phase we may start to see funds coming in from proposals submitted to donors.



## PHASE 3: ACTING FOR RIGHTS -THE LONG-TERM STRUGGLE

This is the most intensive phase of work in a local rights programme. Our goal is to empower the rights holders to seek accountability from duty bearers – to monitor public policies and budgets, and to advocate for the types of legal, policy and practice changes required to satisfy rights. To achieve this we focus more and more attention over time to organising and supporting social movements.

In this phase we move beyond raising rights awareness to building critical consciousness about the structural reasons why rights holders are poor and excluded. We spend more time and resources helping rights holders join hands with other groups of rights holders and allies locally and at other levels. These relations of solidarity are an important part of campaigning duty bearers for changes in policy, law, programmes and practices. Over time this campaigns work will be closely linked to national and international campaign efforts. By midway through this phase we should start to see basic conditions of rights holders being met by duty bearers and not by ActionAid.



### *Strategic outcomes*

1. Rights holders are well organised locally, have strong awareness of their rights, are conscious of the structural realities that exclude them, and are organised or networked into rights holder formations beyond the village level. These include social movements, apex structures, federations, district networks etc.
2. Rights holders are campaigning for rights and entitlements at the local level and at district and national levels through apex bodies, networks and social movements of which they form a part. Rights holder conditions are being changed through the implementation of rights supportive policies and programmes by government and/or other relevant duty bearers.
3. Rights holder groups are supporting each other's struggles locally, and are acting in solidarity through the apex structures, networks and social movements.

4. Women's groups and formations beyond the local level have been formed; women's leadership is strengthened; and women are taking the lead in rights holder struggles.
5. ActionAid and partner staff have deeper capacity to support strong analysis, good strategy that links to 'higher order' change, and are politically supportive of and able to offer strategic support to social movements, apex structures, platforms etc.
6. The rights holders and partner organisation, along with ActionAid, are actively engaging government as the primary duty bearer, through confrontation, challenge or collaboration as the particular context or situation requires. These different orientations are, however, all aimed at bringing about a change in policies, laws, structures or practices to enable rights.
7. The partner staff and ActionAid are able to manage existing and new risks and threats through good strategy, ongoing analysis, and new capacity.



### *Time-frames*

At least two cycles of long-term strategic plans = a minimum of six years as a strategic planning cycle is at least three years.



### *Programme elements and GMF*

In this phase we are working across all three programme elements – empowerment, campaigning, and solidarity. As we progress deeply into this phase we will increasingly be focused very intensively on campaigns, and solidarity elements. In this phase we work to achieve change in all four areas of the GMF, with a similar pattern of a stronger focus to the organisation and mobilisation of civil society in solidarity with rights holders, and influencing policies and practices of state and non-state duty bearers in the second half of this phase.



### *Organisational systems and processes*

- External evaluation (at least every six years) complete with recommendations to inform the next period of work, which may either be more cycles of strategic or annual plans within phase 3 or a move into phase 4. The external evaluation may indicate that more work is needed in phase 3 to ready the rights holder and partner organisations to enter phase 4, which is a solidarity phase in which ActionAid moves into a much reduced solidarity role;
- At least two cycles of local rights programme strategic plans (minimum three years each);
- Ongoing participatory reviews (PRRPs); and
- Annual review and reflection (ARR); and
- Annual plans.

PHASE 3

## PHASE 3



### *Role of the ActionAid programmer*

The role of an ActionAid programmer becomes more complicated in this phase. S/he should be able to help support the partner organisation to empower the rights holders through organisation, awareness and increased consciousness. S/he further strengthens her relationship with the rights holders and helps them build analysis, perspective and strategy for change. This solidarity and mentoring work is done alongside the partner. S/he should be a facilitator in building women's rights analysis and strategic skills in the partner organisation where this is required. S/he should be supporting the partner generally to build staff capacity for rights working by either running the training directly or by facilitating links to the organisations which can provide this capacity building. S/he should be planning and undertaking reviews on a regular basis. S/he ensures sponsorship requirements are met on time and are of good quality. S/he takes the lead in ensuring that the external evaluation takes place and draws up the terms of reference for the evaluators.



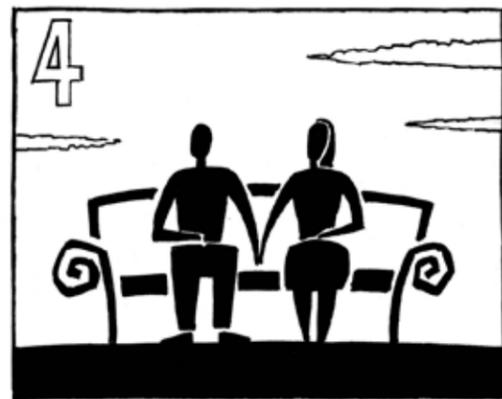
### *Sources of funding*

This phase will have funding from CS, donors and ideally a mix of the two. The programmer, working with CS and especially fundraisers, will have to be quite strategic in identifying opportunities for different types of work to be funded through different funding channels. A good mix of funds should enable the local rights programme to expand and deepen its efforts to support change.

### ***Are we ready to phase out and move into a solidarity relationship with rights holders?***

The external evaluation will make recommendations for what should happen in the programme. If the evaluation concludes that we have done well and are ready to start the process of 'phase out' then it should recommend that we move into phase 4. If this is decided then this external evaluation will stand as our final impact assessment for the intensive long-term rights programme. If the external evaluation, however, concludes that the needed change has not been achieved or that it is not sustainable, then it will recommend more cycles of annual plans or strategic plans in phase 3.

A decision to move into phase 4, the solidarity phase, is determined by our assessment, with rights holders, that we have substantially met our objectives and that sustainable change has been achieved. In some instances, a decision to phase out of a programme may be determined by operational, political or security difficulties.



THE TWILIGHT YEARS

## PHASE 4: SUPPORTING SUSTAINED CHANGE THROUGH SOLIDARITY

In this phase our relationship to the partner and the rights holder organisation/s changes somewhat. In a planned strategy over time, we become more of a solidarity partner. What this means is that we spend more time supporting the development of broad based cross-geography networks, alliances, apex structures and movements. And we work to ensure their independence and the sustainability of their struggles through leadership strengthening and accountability, by building capacity and strategic thinking capabilities, and by helping these structures build their ability to source income that does not compromise their struggles.

An important part of helping to develop independence and autonomy of these struggles is to build linkages to and solidarity with sympathetic organisations and individuals that can continue to support the rights holder movement over time. Our goal in this phase is to ensure that the rights that have been won are not rolled back, and that rights holders can continue to demand rights and government accountability in the absence of our intensive support. This phase is what we might call a 'phase out' period – see ActionAid's [phase-out policy](#).



### Strategic outcomes

1. Rights holder groups, organisations and movements have adequate capacity to continue to claim rights and hold government accountable with minimal or no support from ActionAid.
2. Strong linkages formed by rights holders groups with other civil society organisations and sympathetic individuals that can support struggles.
3. Strong district and national campaigns with a strong emphasis on building solidarity between rights holder groups and allies.
4. Rights being met by duty bearers, especially the state.



### Time-frames

This phase could last for **one strategic planning cycle** or more depending on the capacity of the rights holders to carry forward the rights struggle on their own.



### Programme elements and GMF

In this phase you continue to work across all three programme elements, with a stronger focus on solidarity. The areas of change all have a stronger focus on mobilising civil society in support of rights holders and bringing about a change in the policies and practices of state and non-state duty bearers.



### Organisational systems and processes

- Local rights programme strategic plan/s;
- Ongoing participatory reviews (PRRPs);
- Annual review and reflection (ARR); and
- Annual plans.



### Role of the ActionAid programmer

In this phase, the ActionAid programmer together with the partner acts as a link to other rights holder groups, networks and movements. S/he helps broker relationships with other supportive NGOs, or sympathetic individuals who have a commitment to the rights being struggled for and can assist. S/he works closely with the partner organisation to support the emergence and strengthening of rights holder organisations that extend beyond the local level. The ActionAid programmer is an ally and friend, assisting the networks, movements and alliances of rights holders to analyse, strategise and work for change. S/he is also actively involved in building and supporting campaigns that extend beyond the local rights programme. S/he can also help the rights holders and partner build linkages with the media to highlight efforts of the rights holders and build sympathy and support. S/he also works to document the work at the local level.



### Sources of funding

Unrestricted funding; donor funding could also be leveraged at this time.

**Work  
strategically  
to locate  
short-term  
programmes  
within our  
longer-term  
local rights  
programmes**

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## **What does this all mean for HRBA programming in the short term?**

Our change vision and objectives, programme components, programme principles and building blocks of our programme work apply in their entirety to our short-term (less than three years) local rights programmes. However, the possibilities for change may be limited by the length of time. This also applies to partnerships. So while the principles guiding partnership will be the same in short-term and long-term programmes, the extent to which we can empower the partner, and transform their ways of working to bring alignment with a HRBA may also be more limited.

It is for these reasons that we consider long-term rights programming as the most desirable if we want to achieve deep and sustained change. We need to work strategically to locate short-term programmes within our longer-term local rights programmes. This will ensure that short-term change efforts are sustained beyond the limited three-year cycle and contribute towards a longer-term change we are supporting.

Short-term programmes are typically only funded through donors, while long-term programmes are expected to have a good mix of CS and donor funding.

The programme phases and organisational systems (in section 2 of this chapter) apply very specifically to long-term local rights programmes. However, many of the planning and review processes apply to both short- and long-term programmes. The actual phases and the outcomes we are seeking will vary across short- and long-term local rights programmes. Your power and institutional analysis and strategy/strategic plan will indicate what change is possible within the time available for the rights programme.



### ***What will you find in the next chapter?***

In the next chapter we explore what we mean by rights holder empowerment in a local rights programme and what we aim to achieve through this process. We outline and explore the different interventions to empower rights holders.



### ***Questions for you to think about***

1. If you think about your local rights programme in relation to the HRBA programme framework (section 1, parts a and b) presented here:
  - a. What are your top two to three strengths to build on in the next 14 months?
  - b. What are the two to three biggest gaps to be addressed and what do you need to do differently?
2. Apply the minimum standards checklist to your local rights programme – what do you discover? And what do you need to address?

3. What is the first step you are going to take from today to deepen the HRBA in your local rights programme?
4. What new capacities do you and partner staff need to implement this HRBA programme framework and what are your proposals for how this could be developed?



## Resources

ActionAid (2005) *Critical Webs of Power and Change*: resource pack for planning, reflection and learning in people-centred advocacy- [click here](#)

ActionAid (2006) *Accountability, Learning and Planning System (Alps) and Alps Notes* (for guidance on appraisals, strategic plans, annual plans, PRRPs, and evaluations) – [click here](#)

ActionAid (2009) *Accountability Exchanges* (for overviews of accountability frameworks, examples of accountability practice, and discussion about accountability under a HRBA) – [click here](#)

ActionAid *Accountability Library* (for resources and materials on the HIVE) – [click here](#)

ActionAid Denmark (2010) *Accountability Resource Book* – [click here](#)

ActionAid *Action on Rights* (a HIVE page, which includes information and resources on HRBA programming, and a regular publication related to programming on rights) – [click here](#)

ActionAid *Monitoring and Evaluation Library* (for resources and materials on the HIVE) – [click here](#)

ActionAid *Programme Approach Quality Forum (PAQF) Guidance on Pre-appraisal, Appraisal, Strategic Planning and Phase Out* – [click here](#)

ActionAid (2006) *Power, Inclusion and Rights-based Approaches: the ActionAid Gender Equality and RBA Resource Kit*

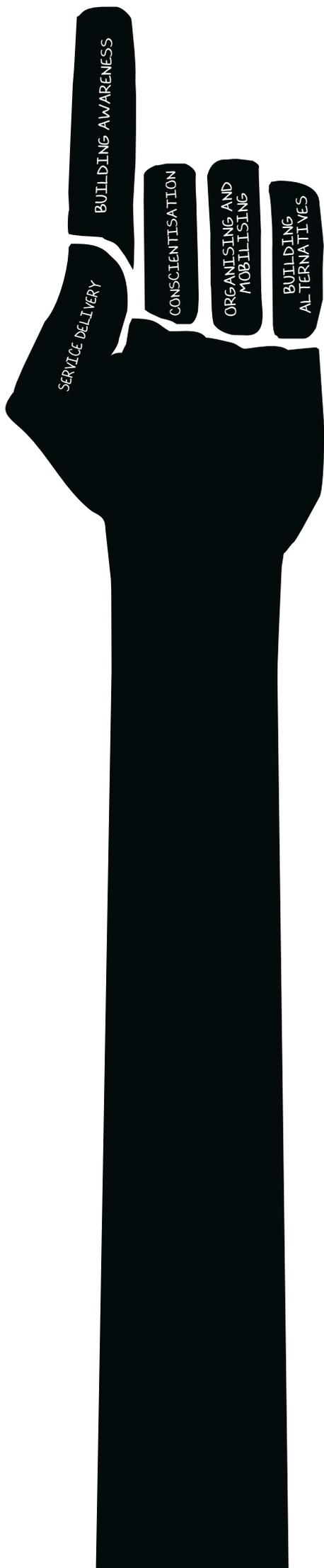
ActionAid *Rights to End Poverty* (our current international strategy) – [click here](#)

ActionAid *Partnership Policy* – [click here](#)

ActionAid Fundraising resources

- *One Stop Shop for Child Sponsorship* – [click here](#)
- Funding Planning and Institutional Fundraising (including high value) – [click here](#)

Hargreaves, S (2009) 'The Politics of Accountability in our Struggles for Rights and Justice', *Accountability Exchanges* 4



# 5

## EMPOWERMENT

### CHAPTER

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In this chapter we focus on empowerment – one of the three interrelated components of our HRBA programming approach. Together with campaigning and solidarity, empowerment enables poor and excluded people to claim rights and make changes in their lives. Our main empowerment interventions are: facilitating awareness-raising, the building of critical consciousness, and the organisation of rights holders. Basic needs are an important component of our approach and are used as an entry point and vehicle for supporting these main empowerment interventions.



We begin in section 1 with an example of rights holder empowerment from ActionAid Brazil. We then draw from this and other examples to highlight ways of thinking about empowerment.



In section 2 we look at practical actions to empower rights holders in local rights programmes, including approaches to meeting basic needs.



Finally, we look at the monitoring and evaluation of rights holder empowerment work.



## Section 1: Empowering rights holders – our approach



### *Opening the houses and the fences – an ongoing struggle for rights of the babassu nut breakers in Brazil*

**Land was  
privatised and  
access to the  
babassu palms  
cut off behind  
the fences of  
the land barons**

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This is the story of growing awareness, conscientisation and transformation of women babassu nut-breakers of Brazil's Eastern Amazon Region. The story is based on an article by Marta Antunes<sup>1</sup> who, as a member of the ActionAid Brazil Policy Team, supported an ActionAid/EU project with the Women Babassu Nut-breakers' Movement (MIQCB).

The babassu palm trees are a vital resource for the women of this region. The survival of their families depends on them gathering, breaking and selling the babassu nuts. Women manufacture a number of products such as oil, soap and even flour from the nuts. The poor communities the women are a part of arrived in the region in 1958, when the land was communal, and their access to the babassu at this time was unrestricted. Then in the 1970s the state government began to transform the land into cattle pasture and farmland for export crops, attracting buyers through incentives such as tax exemptions and credit. Land was privatised and access to the babassu palms cut off behind the fences of the land barons with no consideration for the livelihoods of poor families.

To reach the trees the women had to agree to an unfair deal: pay the landlords half of all the nuts they broke and exchange the other half for goods at the landlords' store. To buy one kilo of rice the women had to deliver ten kilos of nuts, a full day's work.

#### THE STRUGGLE BEGINS

Women began going together in groups to the fields, hiding from the landlords' hired thugs, to break the nuts 'illicitly'. Some men from the community joined in to protect the women. Every time they were caught, they faced violence or arrest by the police for 'stealing' the nuts.

Then the farmers began to cut down the babassu palms. "Pahhh... pahhh... pahhh... pahhh..." That was the sound Nazira, one of the babassu nut breakers, heard one morning in 1986. She knew exactly what it meant. The landlords' hired men had started clearing the babassu palm trees from the fields. She and 27 other women organised and, with the men's help, they confronted three armed men and the landlord on the other side of the fence. "We started saying that they couldn't do that... every palm tree you cut down is like killing one family matriarch. It is from those palm trees that the mother gets her children's food. Women cried, women begged... In the end we warned them, 'If you don't stop, we will not be responsible for what happens.' That day, our strategy was the following: if they wouldn't stop, then the men would face them, would fight, and then it wouldn't be only for the babassu, it would also be for the land."

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<sup>1</sup> In ActionAid and Just Associates (2007).

#### INCREASED AWARENESS AND INTENSIFYING STRUGGLES LEADS TO WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Around this time 40 women were meeting in the clubs created by the progressive branch of the Catholic Church to discuss health problems. But discussion at the clubs now turned to the babassu – how to find a way to react to the cutting of trees? How to prevent further clearing? Through discussion the women came to realise that it would not be enough to free the babassu palm trees in the landlords' lands. Struggles had to be waged over the land.

And so conflicts over land intensified – while community men hid in the forest, exchanging shots with the landlords' men, women assumed important and visible community roles – they prevented tree-felling through physical pressure and negotiation with the landlords; they dealt with the police; they found food, cooked and took food to the men; they cared for the children; and, importantly, took part in decision making related to the conflict. This was a moment of empowerment and organisation for the women. But there were also ongoing struggles to ensure women's participation in community life, such as when the organisation Assema was formed to address security on the land. Women joined, challenging men's insistence that this was an organisation for men only.

The land reform in this period freed very few trees. Winning land back didn't mean that women obtained free access to and protection of the babassu palm trees. Women still had to 'break' the fences to gather the babassu. The landlords and now the women's own husbands and neighbours cut down the trees to clear the way for agriculture.

As a result of their empowerment during the land conflict, some women resisted being dragged back, powerless, into the private sphere of the house. They broke out to join women's and mixed organisations. Others, despite their experience of collective empowerment, found themselves again powerless inside the home, with limited participation and choice. A new struggle took shape: the women wanted to demonstrate to their husbands, to the landlords, to the public authorities and to society in general the importance of protecting the babassu palm trees. In 1996, Assema created The Women's Mobilisation Programme to make visible women's contribution to the family economy through babassu-derived products such as soap, oil and pulp, and raise the self-esteem of women. This programme was critical in the new fight – for a Free Babassu Law.

#### FREEING THE BABASSU THROUGH CAMPAIGNING FOR A CHANGE IN LAW

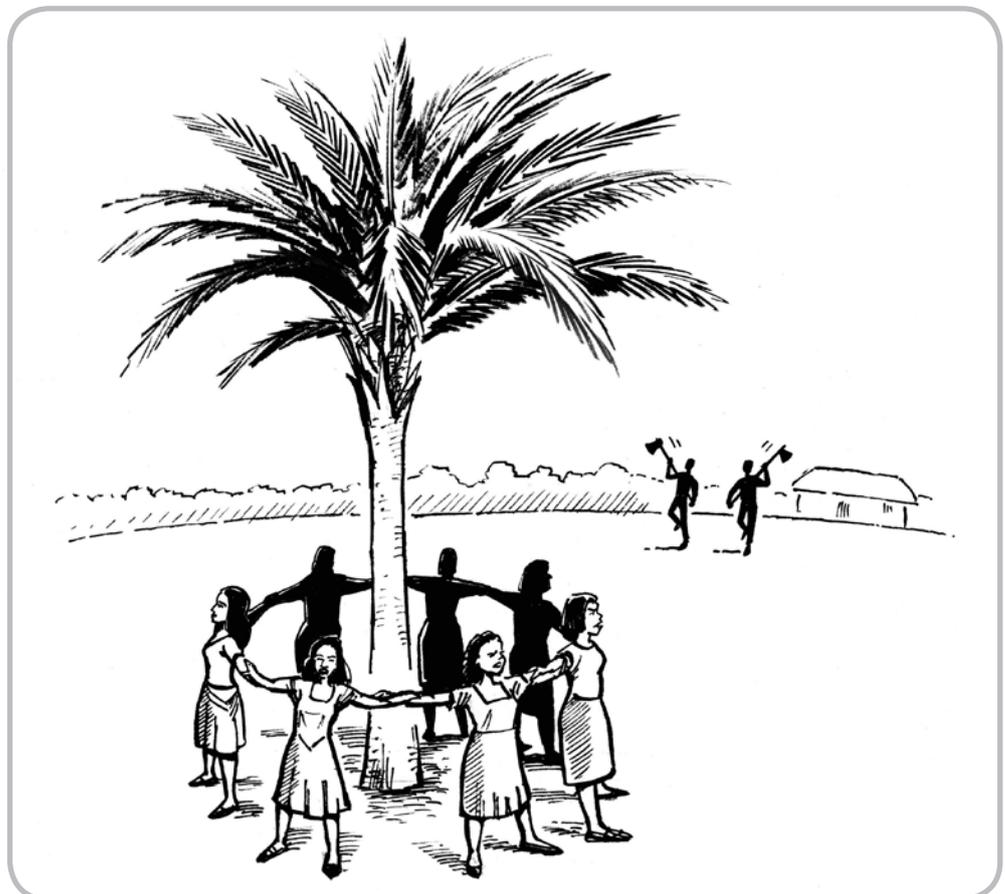
The Women's Mobilisation Programme led the shift to a fight for the vegetation through the drafting, passing and enforcing of the Free Babassu Law. With the help of a lawyer and old friend of the babassu nut-breakers, the women drafted the law. Councilwoman, Maria Alaídes, a babassu nut breaker, presented the proposal to the Lago do Junco municipality. Women babassu nut breakers 'occupied' the city council to exert pressure for the approval of the law. Law 005/97 was passed in this municipality granting women babassu nut breakers free access to babassu palm trees anywhere, regardless of their location.

**The Women's  
Mobilisation  
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Law**

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But this was not enough to protect the trees. It was not clear who would enforce the law and what penalties would be suffered by those who broke the law. Landlords continued to cut down the trees. The councilwoman, Maria, took up the campaign to strengthen the law and its implementation. But, it was not enough to have one councilwoman inside the government. It was necessary to convince the other councillors of the law's importance. Many of the other councillors were not on the side of poor families. The committee analysing the law included some of the region's large-scale farmers, who wanted to change the law, turning it against the women. They wanted to use the 'Free Babassu' label to maintain the status quo. To deal with this situation women mobilised night and day. A truck full of women arrived at the city council on the voting day and sat on the floor facing the council members. Maria Alaídes took the stage and defended the proposal tooth and nail. The Free Babassu Law was then voted on and approved. This strategy was subsequently used in other municipalities. The strategy was to get as many municipal laws passed as possible, and on the basis of this press for a national law. It took five years of struggle before the law made a real difference in the lives of the babassu nut breakers.

The women saw advantages in the law reform process at municipal level – it brings the discussion to the local level, increases women's awareness and strengthens the movement. Dada says "It sends a wake-up call to other babassu nut breakers and draws them out of their homes and into the struggle..." A municipal law is closer to citizens, and enables a grassroots accountability process that would not be as likely with a state or federal law. On the other hand, the federal law will cover all states, not only the municipalities where it has been possible to pass the law. At the federal level, the battle



to pass the Free Babassu Law has been running since 2002, with MIQCB working at three levels: raising awareness and organising for municipal law; exchanging experiences among the different grassroots organisations involved in the struggle; and advocating for the national law. The next step of the fight for MIQCB will be the enforcement of the federal law. For that, the organisation of women babassu nut breakers will have to be strengthened.

FREEDOM INSIDE AND OUTSIDE HOMES AND FENCES: AN ONGOING PROCESS

“What I’m most proud of? The understanding I have today, the way I see the world,” says Dada, a leader of the women’s movement. Dada is conscious of the role The Women’s Mobilisation Programme plays in awakening women, locked in their houses, as she had been ten years ago. “There is need to make a huge effort to build capacity, to bring women into the movement, to raise self-esteem, so that women feel they are human beings, who have rights, who must fight for their rights and who denounce the denial of rights.”

Some powerful women leaders, who faced the landlords’ hired men, the police and the politicians, still have to negotiate their freedom and even their survival inside their homes, where they are threatened sexually, physically and psychologically. They have no voice in family decisions and still have to fight for their right to participate in meetings, or to travel. The Women’s Mobilisation Programme brings the women’s rights agenda to the movement for sustainable rural development. It is not enough to give visibility to women’s contribution to the family economy and to integrate them in the fight for the babassu palm trees. The struggle needs to go further than that to address women’s rights in the movement and in their families.

**“What I’m most proud of? The understanding I have today, the way I see the world”**

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***In summary, what were the different ways in which the babassu nut breakers were empowered?***

The women were empowered in different ways including:

- When they mobilised and supported each other to stop the cutting down of the trees
- Through the mutual support, awareness-raising and confidence building that happened through the women’s groups in the progressive arm of the church, and very significantly through The Women’s Mobilisation Programme
- Through the actions they took to stop the trees being cut, to challenge their exclusion from Assema, to draft and campaign for the Free Babassu Law, to push for the implementation of the law, and their challenging of unequal power in their own homes.

Their empowerment did not happen through one or two separate interventions, like getting organised or becoming aware of their rights. From this story we can see that empowerment was (a) a process that ran over many years; (b) it was closely linked to the actions women took to bring about a change in their lives; (c) it bridged the public and the private (the home); and (d) involved very many different elements, including campaigning and solidarity.

**Through their actions, reflections, and further actions the women experienced a shift in the way they viewed their own position in the world**

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#### THE ROLE AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF ACTIONAID BRAZIL

ActionAid Brazil began a partnership with Assema around 1999 at the time The Women's Mobilisation Programme was being set up. The first major contribution was to raise funds for this programme to help it scale up and at the same time support the work of Assema at the local level.

ActionAid Brazil supported the implementation of The Women's Mobilisation Programme in the regions, and the Campaign for the Free Babassu Law. ActionAid Brazil gave national and international visibility to the struggle, strengthening the position of The Women's Mobilisation Programme through the HungerFREE campaign.

ActionAid Brazil supports continued organising, sensitising, mobilising and raising of critical consciousness so as to reach more and more women and men.

***What does this story tell us about rights holder empowerment supported by ActionAid?***

#### OBSERVATION I: EMPOWERMENT AS A CORE COMPONENT OF INTEGRATED HRBA PROGRAMMING

The ActionAid Brazil example illustrates our approach to integrated programming - it shows how the meeting of basic needs (in this case secure access to the babassu nuts for a sustainable livelihood) in the longer term can be best achieved through linking empowerment, campaigning and solidarity. It also highlights a powerful example of *praxis* – how continued action and reflection by the babassu nut breakers led to increased awareness, growing consciousness, increased organisation, and the development of new strategies in order to achieve their right to livelihoods.

The struggle began when women lost access to the babassu palm trees, which threatened the basic survival of their families. The babassu nut breakers had no alternative but to find ways of getting to the palm trees. As they struggled with the landlords' men in the fields, and reflected on their struggles in the clubs set up by the Catholic Church they became conscious of the power relations that enabled the large landlords to take the land and the trees. They also became aware of government's role in supporting the interests of the large landowners. They realised that it was not enough to fight the landlords and that the struggle needed to be taken from the fields to the municipal and national governments in order to secure their right in the long term. Their growing consciousness fuelled their organisation and mobilisation, the main vehicle being The Women's Mobilisation Programme.

With support from powerful allies – the lawyer, the council member, ActionAid, the trade unions, and the Catholic Church - the babassu nut breakers were able to assert their interests through campaigns at municipal and federal level for laws that would protect the babassu nuts and give women protected rights to harvest the nuts.

Through their actions, reflections, and further actions the women experienced a shift in the way they viewed their own position in the world. Struggles over the babassu soon spilled over into struggles for more power, recognition and rights within their homes and in their community organisation, Assema. The experiences of the women of these two struggles – over the babassu and in relation to men in their community – built their consciousness of the need for

ongoing struggle and the resolve to keep going. They realised that winning a law was not enough, that they would have to be continually vigilant to see that the law was carried out. And that the struggles within their homes too were never ending.

OBSERVATION 2: EMPOWERMENT ENABLES RIGHTS HOLDERS TO TAKE THE LEAD

Armed with new awareness, new knowledge, new skills, and new confidence the babassu nut breakers led their own struggle. They challenged the landlords, drafted laws with the support of the lawyer, and led the mobilisations at the municipalities. While they were supported by organisations and individuals from other social groups – such as the woman lawyer and ActionAid – this support did not dislodge the babassu nut breakers as the leaders of their own struggle. This is in line with our position that the main force for change are the social groups most affected by poverty and social injustice. Our role is not to advocate for and on behalf of, but to support rights holders to lead their own struggles to realise their rights.

OBSERVATION 3: LINKS ACROSS LOCAL AND NATIONAL, AND AT TIMES INTERNATIONAL

The babassu nut breakers built their knowledge and awareness of how the landlords and the state worked together to deny their access to the babassu palm trees. Through action and reflection on their actions they came to understand how their local struggle was linked to municipal, federal, and state processes. Understanding these links brought the realisation that change in law at the municipal and federal levels would secure their interests in a more lasting way, and so the struggle shifted from the fields to advocacy for municipal and federal laws. The interests of the babassu nut breakers were also highlighted and supported through ActionAid's Hunger Free Campaign. As a result of the women's actions and the support of Assema and ActionAid, the Free Babassu Law was approved in 11 municipalities, and the struggle continued for a federal law.

OBSERVATION 4: CLEAR OBJECTIVES BASED ON SOUND ANALYSIS

The ActionAid Brazil example highlights the importance of clear objectives and sound analysis. Through empowerment processes the babassu nut breakers built skills in analysis and strategy formulation. This included analysis on why their problem existed, the power interests of the various actors who stood in the way of their right, the relevant duty bearers to target, and decisions on what change was feasible. Initially the fight was to have access to the babassu palm trees in the landlord's lands. With time the women understood that this was not enough and the struggle moved to access over land. Later still, this shifted as the women realised that the land reform freed very few trees and did not stop landlords and husbands cutting down the trees. The women realised that what was needed was a law to secure their rights to the natural resource that was the very basis of their livelihoods.

OBSERVATION 5: ORGANISING RIGHTS HOLDERS AS A CENTRAL FEATURE OF EMPOWERMENT

As the babassu nut breakers' experience highlights, their organisation as rights holders was crucial in enabling them to take up their struggle and ensuring that they continued to lead their own struggle. The support given by Assema, ActionAid and others helped the women to strengthen their organisation and enabled them to challenge the landlords, the government, Assema, and even their own husbands. The collective identities of the women were built through

**They came to understand how their local struggle was linked to municipal, federal, and state processes**

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**They became more aware of their subordinate position in relation to their husbands, and men in their communities**

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struggle, and resulted in their own organisation – The Women’s Mobilisation Programme. That they have an organisation strengthens the possibility of sustained challenges to the authorities, even after ActionAid or outside donors leave.

**OBSERVATION 6: INCORPORATE A WOMEN’S RIGHTS ANALYSIS**

The denial of their livelihoods forced the women out of their homes, into the ‘world’, broadening their physical movement, awakening their activism, and developing their abilities as leaders. And as they struggled over their right to the natural resource and became aware of the power relations which stood between them and the babassu, they became more aware of their subordinate position in relation to their husbands, and in relation to men in their communities. They became aware of men’s different interests even as they worked with them to free the babassu. Developing their awareness of injustice and their activism to claim rights in one area (to livelihoods) thus spread to another area – to challenging the men who said that the community organisation Assema was for men only, challenging husbands who tried to keep women – even women leaders – inside their homes. This growth into new areas of struggle is never automatic but came about as the women developed awareness of discrimination and as they struggled fearlessly against injustice wherever it was met. However, challenging community organisations or social movements resistant to women’s rights and challenging husbands is not easy, as the babassu women themselves note.



## **Section 2: Getting practical – empowerment in local rights programmes**

ActionAid’s HRBA empowers rights holders to seek rights and entitlements<sup>2</sup> from the relevant duty bearers through:

- Awareness building;
- Raising of critical consciousness; and
- Organising and mobilising.

We work in strategic ways to meet the basic and immediate needs of rights holders as a vehicle for their empowerment.

Our approach to HRBA places ‘**people**’ and ‘**power**’ at the centre of the struggle for rights. Our empowerment work is about building the awareness and capacity of rights holders, increasing their critical consciousness and mobilising them into collective actions.

Empowerment of rights holders takes place through all of our work in a local rights programme, including through processes of participatory analysis and planning. As mentioned in Chapter 4, appraisal, strategy development, planning, monitoring and review all contribute to awareness and consciousness-raising. Through these processes we ensure that rights holders analyse their situation, become aware of the unequal power relations

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<sup>2</sup> Entitlement is a guarantee of access to benefits because of rights or by agreement through law.

which lead to the denial of their rights, and develop strategies to challenge these power imbalances.

Often poor and excluded people may be unaware that they have rights and entitlements. Or they may lack the information, skills and knowledge to access these. Awareness-raising and information sharing processes can help in these situations.

Poor and excluded people, and women within such groupings, may usually internalise their oppression and see their condition as natural and unchangeable. Consciousness-raising processes can shift people's beliefs that nothing can change and help poor people begin to see themselves as agents capable of bringing about change.

When we work with rights holders that are poor and excluded from power, they may lack even the most basic needs (water, food, shelter etc.) required to survive and live a life of dignity. While we are very clear that these are rights that must be addressed by government we believe that service delivery by ActionAid, often in partnership with rights holders, can be a vehicle for building awareness, organising and creating alternatives to lobby to government. The following sub-section looks at empowerment through basic needs and attempts to answer a question posed often within ActionAid: **'What is a HRBA to service delivery?'**

### ***HRBA to meeting basic needs***

We work with rights holders on issues they identify as most important. Often these have to do with what we call basic needs like food, water, sanitation, education, welfare, health care, shelter etc. This is to be expected given that we work with poor and marginalised communities who experience material deprivation and neglect by their governments. The basic needs we refer to are typically delivered by governments as public services. These services are usually a government responsibility because they address needs upon which the survival, health and well-being of human beings depend, and generally require a high level of organisational machinery to deliver and maintain. When looked at from a human rights approach, the state is obligated to ensure that all its citizens – especially the poor and other vulnerable groups – have access to these basic services.<sup>3</sup>

So how does ActionAid see these basic needs and what is our role in meeting these needs in a HRBA? In a HRBA we are very clear that the basic needs we mention above are rights and must be satisfied by government or, when this is not possible, a 'replacement' duty bearer, like a humanitarian agency in conflict or disaster situations. This is a political position and in practice very challenging to satisfy. In one context the government may agree that citizens have certain rights, but it may lack the resources to realise these rights in practice. In another context the government may have the resources to meet basic needs, but lacks the capacity to follow through on delivery. In yet another, the government may deny that poor and excluded people have rights at all and may actively oppose their struggle to realise rights. Rights holders therefore need to be empowered and assisted to advocate to their governments for the realisation of these rights.

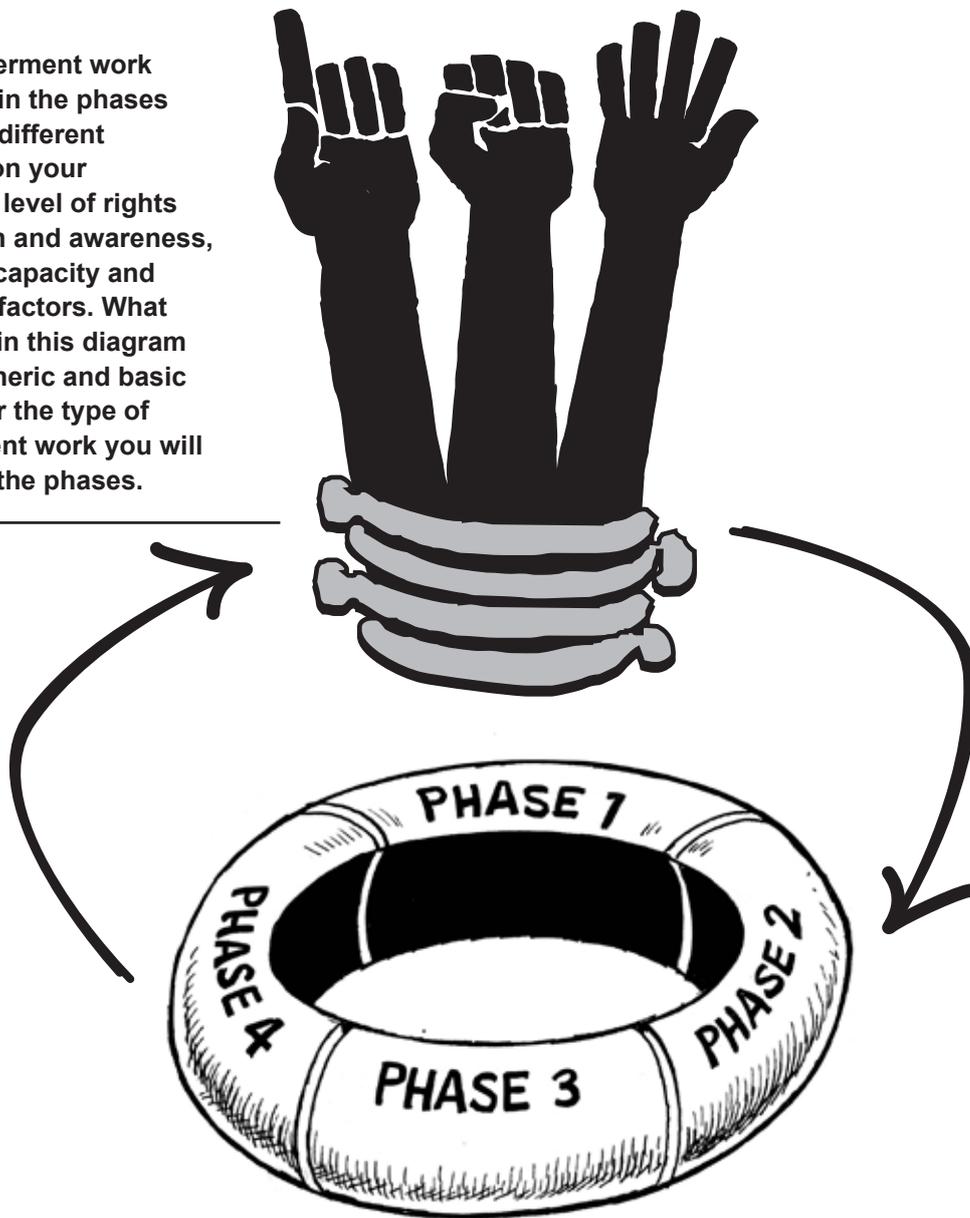
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<sup>3</sup> Constitutions, law and policy may generally limit this right, or the right of universal access, by reference to resource limitations.

## **'What is a HRBA to service delivery?'**

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The empowerment work undertaken in the phases will be very different depending on your context, the level of rights organisation and awareness, the partner capacity and many other factors. What is captured in this diagram is a very generic and basic guidance for the type of empowerment work you will be doing in the phases.



**PHASE 1**

**EXPLORING PARTNERSHIP**

- basic awareness raising through selection, appraisal and interim strategy development
- very basic organizing
- possibly some service delivery

**PHASE 2**

**ESTABLISHING THE RIGHTS PROGRAMME**

- awareness and some consciousness raising through rights analysis, strategy and strategic plan development
- deeper organizing of rights holders, with a focus to women
- empowerment through service delivery

**PHASE 3**

**ACTING FOR RIGHTS**

- awareness raising
- strong focus to building critical consciousness
- deeper organizing - linking rights holders across geographies into movements, alliances, apex structures
- women's organizing and leadership development
- service delivery to build alternatives

**PHASE 4**

**SUPPORTING SUSTAINED CHANGE**

- supporting rights holder movements, alliances, networks and apexes

In our HRBA, we see the meeting of basic needs as an important part of our approach to change. It should not however be separated and done on its own. It fits in an integrated framework of empowerment, campaigning, and solidarity. Our approach is to use service delivery as a vehicle to empower rights holders so that they can ultimately hold to account the duty bearers responsible for the provision of the service or basic need. But what does this all mean practically?

#### PARTICIPATORY ANALYSIS

Consider this situation – ActionAid is working in an area where people do not have safe drinking water. The rights holders say that their priority need is access to clean drinking water. In such circumstances an ActionAid or partner programmer should work with the rights holders to develop a clear analysis of their situation. This will be done through a participatory process involving affected rights holders, with a special effort to ensure the participation of women.

Through participatory analysis and awareness-raising, we will work to help the rights holders develop an understanding that their need is actually a right that the government is responsible to address. We will also need to work with rights holders to develop an understanding of why this right is not being addressed. This will be done through an analysis of institutions, interests and power, showing what influences have come to bear on government and which prevent the basic needs of the poorest citizens being addressed. Analysis and discussion could also start to highlight what the rights holders can do to address the problem.

In some communities we face the pressure to only work to address basic needs. You should be able to deal with this challenge by following the guidance above. Be strategic in identifying those basic needs that will best assist us organise the rights holders now and relate to a right that we are trying to address through policy or legal reform in the longer term. Also right from the inception of the programme we should be open and honest about the extent to which we can support their basic needs. This lays the foundation for a strong and accountable relationship.

#### DEVELOPING STRATEGY AND TAKING ACTION

Once we have a clear and shared analysis with rights holders then we can move to develop a strategy for how the water will be provided in ways that help empower the rights holders and their organisations to challenge the government to address this and other rights in the longer term. The strategy must include some engagement with the duty bearers. In this case, the planned activity should include the community approaching local government for the installation of water pumps, for example, which will provide safe drinking water to the rights holders. The rights holders, with our support, should search out a role for the duty bearer – ideally to provide the water pump, or at the minimum to make a contribution to the installation of the pump.

The processes of analysis, planning and action are not discrete steps as the above seems to suggest. Instead they are closely linked – an early analysis informs a plan and action is taken to hold government responsible for providing the water pump. Reflections on this action will help to deepen analysis and consciousness of the role of duty bearers in satisfying the rights of community

**The rights holders, with our support, should search out a role for the duty bearer**

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members. The action may also deepen awareness of why government does not respond, or may raise questions of unequal power for rights holders to explore further. This helps to inform a deeper analysis and the next cycle of action. As we can see the work to address a basic need acts as a stimulus for organising, awareness-raising and collective action.

#### PLANNING FOR THE DELIVERY OF THE NEED

The process of planning for the installation of the water pump also offers a lot of potential for rights holder empowerment. Discussion and decisions about the water pump, if appropriately supported, can help to:

- Strengthen planning and negotiation skills – making a decision about where the pump should be located, and how it should be maintained for example;
- Strengthen local organisation by bringing people together and develop the skills of leadership to facilitate, mediate, offer direction etc.;
- Give rights holders a positive experience of being actively involved in decisions about matters that directly affect them;
- Involve children and strengthen their involvement in community development processes;
- Involve women and open discussion about the fairness of the gender division of labour – that women and children are primarily responsible for water collection – and challenge the tendency for male labour to be paid and female labour to be free in community projects; and
- Deepen analysis about government's responsibility to meet basic needs as citizen rights.





### *Examples from country programmes*

In Malawi, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, and many other places, ActionAid continues to deliver services, such as school infrastructure and educational aids, as long as the rights holders can leverage complimentary funding and inputs from the government – such as teachers or additional school blocks. Through the process of meeting basic needs rights holders are motivated and mobilised to campaign government to fulfil, or partly fulfil, its obligations.

In the case of ActionAid Guatemala, they reserve a proportion (20-30%) of their long-term rights programme (DA) funding for community projects to meet immediate basic needs.

In other situations, ActionAid provides relief to the disaster affected and meets their basic needs following a careful participatory vulnerability analysis.

*In conclusion*, in our HRBA we see that service delivery (i.e. the meeting of basic needs) can be the starting point or an important part of rights holder empowerment. If we do the service delivery work very strategically we can:

- Deepen awareness about rights and the role of duty bearers, such as government;
- Create deeper consciousness amongst rights holders about why they are poor and not enjoying basic public services;
- Organise rights holders, and deepen the strength of their organisations and leadership;
- Mobilise rights holders to hold the government accountable for providing these rights;
- Begin to empower women and challenge the gender division of labour; and
- Involve children and demonstrate the important contributions and role they play in community life.



### ***Meeting basic needs to create alternatives***

An additional motive for meeting basic needs is to model alternative ways of meeting a need or delivering a basic service. These alternatives, once piloted and assessed for their 'success' can be advocated as 'service delivery models' to duty bearers.

ActionAid Brazil, inspired by the Women Won't Wait campaign, began a new programme named 'Girls United against Violence and Aids' in partnership with Centro das Mulheres do Cabo, a feminist NGO that has worked in the north coastal area for 20 years. The campaign offers legal and social support to survivors. The project, which started as an ActionAid funded pilot, has secured support from both the federal and Pernambuco state governments, and is a successful example of ActionAid's strategy of piloting innovative approaches for government to adopt as good practice.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> ActionAid Annual Report (2008).

**Awareness-raising is about providing information which rights holders can use to change existing inequalities**

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Being strategic in the way we work to meet basic needs requires that we, as programme staff, are very clear about which rights holders we are working with, what rights we are working on, and the path to change that is needed to help rights holders achieve their rights. This clarity about the change process we are following should be set out in our local rights programme long-term strategy and in our strategic and annual plans.

We now look in more detail at our three key empowerment interventions – awareness-raising, consciousness-raising, and organising and mobilising. We highlight ways of understanding these interventions and ways of incorporating them within a local rights programme.

***Intervention: Building awareness/sensitising rights holders***

THE IMPORTANCE OF AWARENESS-RAISING AND SENSITISING

Building awareness is an important component of empowerment. Awareness-raising involves both access to information and the ability to interpret and react to this new knowledge. Awareness-raising is about providing information which rights holders can use to change existing inequalities and access entitlements and rights. We should also work with rights holders to build self-awareness about their capacities and their abilities, and hence increase their self-esteem.

Awareness-raising activities should be based on methodologies that enable dialogue, debate and active participation of rights holders. It is a process that takes place over time, starting at the beginning of a local rights programme, and continuing over its life.

Through sensitisation and awareness-raising rights holders may become aware of their situation and conditions and will receive information to change it, but will not necessarily have an understanding of why they are marginalised and excluded. This is the focus of consciousness-raising addressed in the next section.

Helping rights holders to access information previously withheld from them is often the first step to inspire a community to act. Rights holders in poor communities are often not fully informed about their rights and entitlements. They are often excluded from vital information, and at times information that reaches them is distorted or incomplete. Government information is not easily accessible, particularly to communities with low levels of literacy.

While there might be some difference across countries, it is usually the partner organisation programmer, working alongside other actors (like a Reflect facilitator, or a community organiser, or leaders of a local CBO), who provides the information and works to increase the awareness of rights holders. However the ActionAid programmer will work together with the partner programmer to ensure that awareness-raising is built into the design of the local rights programme.

Going back to the example on service delivery related to water, the ActionAid and partner organisation programmers should design the local rights programme with the rights holders in ways that enable their awareness about:

- Government provisions on access to drinking water;
- How to access the drinking water, for example which government department to apply to, which officials to approach, what application forms must be completed and where they can be obtained, even assisting the rights holders to complete them;
- The laws rights holders can use to challenge government in case of the denial of entitlements, such as a Right to Information Act, or the Constitution; and
- How other groups of rights holders have organised to challenge the government.

The programmers should be aware that in many communities even though women are the primary collectors and users of household water they are often barred from community discussion and decision-making forums because of their subordinate status. The programmers should ensure that women in these communities are engaged in discussions, receive information, and in the case of a water project use women's roles in relation to household water provision as an opportunity to ensure their participation and involvement.

ActionAid internal accountability practice requires that we make rights holders aware of the different ways in which we raise funds for our work. We should focus, in particular, on child sponsorship as this knowledge will help to assist the effective administration of the CS processes, and meets our accountability requirement to rights holders. It is extremely important that rights holders are aware of what CS is and how it works in a local rights programme. This awareness and understanding enables the community of rights holders to make an informed decision about whether or not to enter into the relationship required in terms of the CS funding system. Community awareness is in fact a critical factor in making CS work. It helps to build trust and reduces fear that money is being diverted elsewhere. The awareness-raising process can also help build up a concept of solidarity, that the sponsors give money because they wish to support a change in the lives of the rights holders.

#### WAYS OF BUILDING AWARENESS

In ActionAid we rely on community-level meetings to disseminate information on government entitlements, policies, acts and schemes. Other methods we use to convey information to rights holders include rallies, street plays, leaflets, wall paintings, puppet shows, community radio and participatory action research which involves rights holders. A combination of several methods of communication over a period of time can reinforce awareness.

**A combination of several methods of communication over a period of time can reinforce awareness**

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**Bring to the surface and then challenge deeply held and prejudicial ideas related to power relations of gender, race, class, sexual orientation**

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Countries have adopted different ways of building awareness among the community and the children on CS. Sensitisation on CS is carried out with local governance structures, traditional elders, women's groups, religious leaders and others. Our experience, particularly in Africa, is that sponsorship processes, when championed by women's groups, tend to have the highest rate of success.

#### ROLE OF ACTIONAID AND PARTNER PROGRAMMERS IN BUILDING AWARENESS

The role of the ActionAid programmer or partner programmer depends on the type of intervention. As mentioned earlier, the partner programmer usually leads in the ongoing work to build rights holder awareness on their rights, entitlements and government programmes. This happens through field visits and meetings that are ongoing.

The ActionAid programmer may be involved in designing communication materials – flipcharts, posters, leaflets etc., which will be used in awareness-building activities. She may also be involved in preparing training modules for implementation by the partner organisation. In the case of a considerably big awareness-building session an ActionAid programmer may lead, or help link the partner organisation to individuals and organisations that can provide relevant assistance.

#### ***Intervention: Creating critical consciousness***

##### THE IMPORTANCE OF CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS/CONSCIENTISATION

Critical consciousness and conscientisation refer to processes whereby oppressed groups achieve an understanding of systems and structures of oppression and exploitation, and of their own internalised oppression, and act with this knowledge to create a more just social order. Critical consciousness should help rights holders delve into why they are in such situation and also arrive at an understanding of how to change this situation. In this method, understanding and reflection are linked to action for social change. Conscientisation is not something that is taught or given.

Paulo Freire developed a method of conscientisation through his education work and in community organising in Brazil's slums. The feminist movement has drawn on consciousness-raising as an important tool to challenge patriarchy.

Critical consciousness/conscientisation of rights holders goes beyond awareness-raising, and is crucial in empowering a community to challenge power structures. Conscientisation requires that the oppressed (rights holders) take charge of the situation, analyse collectively the **causes** of their exclusion and marginalisation, and take proactive steps to challenge their conditions of powerlessness.

Conscientisation requires careful work to first bring to the surface and then challenge deeply held and prejudicial ideas related to power relations of gender, race, class, sexual orientation etc. These ideas that are held are generally not visible to the person, and serve to prevent change. Examples include the idea that the situation of the poor is unchangeable, determined by divine law or because of individual failure. Through conscientisation we challenge internalised oppression and lack of self-worth that most oppressed groups suffer. We also uncover the 'issues' that do not get touched because they are 'personal' or private such as sex, or relations between a husband

and wife in marriage. Through conscientisation we bring them out as political issues that have everything to do with power and require change.

In our HRBA we raise critical consciousness through popular or political education and ongoing participatory processes that help rights holders analyse contexts, power relations and violations of rights, and then plan and organise actions to improve their well-being. Collective reflection and analysis should reveal the power structures, the reasons behind the rights violations, how to effect change, and what rights holders can do to shift power.

Conscientisation is deeply tied to action. Because poor and excluded people have a low sense of self worth and personal (or even collective) power the experience of acting to change their situation gives them another experience of themselves – as agents capable of bringing about a change. This positive experience of a more powerful self and community gained through action is reinforcing and supports deeper struggles to bring about a change.

Critical consciousness can be raised when planning programmes, developing strategies and reviewing programmes. Throughout the life cycle of a local rights programme, a cyclical process of action, reflection and further action helps rights holders deepen and strengthen their rights struggles on an ongoing basis. ActionAid and partner organisations can play a role in facilitating these continuous cycles of action and reflection, which we call *praxis*.

Consciousness-raising will be particularly challenging in countries where states are repressive and space for civil society actions is constrained. However in such cases, awareness combined with critical consciousness can empower rights holders to initiate struggles for the formulation of rights.

#### WAYS OF CREATING CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Our practice of raising critical consciousness has not visibly evolved beyond two methodologies – STAR and Reflect. Social movements, including trade unions, have established programmes of popular and political education that we could learn from and adapt in our own practice of working with and organising marginal communities. Strengthening our consciousness-raising work is a core focus for the future.

#### **STAR**

STAR is a participatory approach for community mobilisation, empowerment and response to the challenges of HIV and Aids. ActionAid's STAR programme has evolved out of two of our long-standing methodologies: Reflect and Stepping Stones (a participatory approach to HIV prevention). Communities that are involved in the STAR programme gain information about HIV but also – more crucially – reflect upon how HIV has affected their community and how they can improve their situation.

#### **Reflect**

Reflect is a methodology widely used by ActionAid to create critical thinking and stimulate action amongst rights holders. Reflect was developed by ActionAid through innovative pilot programmes in Uganda, Bangladesh and El Salvador between 1993 and 1995. It fuses the work of Paulo Freire with the practical visualisation methodologies developed within Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). Key to Reflect is creating a space where people feel comfortable to meet and discuss issues relevant to them and their lives. Reflect aims to

**The experience of acting to change their situation gives them another experience of themselves – as agents capable of bringing about a change**

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## The Reflect circle has given us a platform to bring out our hidden potential

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improve the meaningful participation of people in decisions that affect their lives by strengthening their ability to communicate.<sup>5</sup>

Reflect practitioners may address literacy specifically, but the focus is often on empowerment, governance, rights or broader development goals. The role of the Reflect facilitator is to present relevant information about entitlements and institutions, share analysis, ask questions to deepen analysis, and help participants strategise sound actions that can work in that moment to bring about change. The facilitator should also help participants understand their own internalised oppression, and cultural ideas that may be accepted as 'normal' but which lead to internalised oppression. Provision should therefore be made for building the capacity and skills of the facilitators to enable them to take on this role in local rights programmes, and to examine their own power and prejudices.

Going back to our example of a local rights programme seeking to ensure safe drinking water – the programmer in that context can make provisions for setting up Reflect circles to enable the community to critically analyse why they are powerless, the reasons behind their powerlessness and how they can collectively act to change their situation. The analysis should take the community into understanding the deeper roots of powerlessness which lie beneath their lack of water resources, and arrive at ways to challenge the situation. The analysis could also look at women's specific experiences in relation to water issues and women's marginal position within community decision-making processes.



In some cases, Reflect has enabled women to increase their consciousness around their rights. As Priyanka,<sup>6</sup> a member of the Reflect circle in the Phulwarisharif block of Patna district in Bihar, India notes:

Initially I faced many problems... through Reflect processes I have come to know of many things. Now I understand the reasons for the dominance of the patriarchal system. The Reflect circle has given us a platform to bring out our hidden potential. Women have learnt to analyze the social conditions, reasons for lack of basic amenities – such as safe drinking water, electricity, schools, hospitals etc. Through social mapping and chapatti diagram we are able to discuss and identify the responsible factors... Now we are making collective efforts and raising our voices for getting our own rights from upper caste people and the government. We have already claimed our housing rights, drinking water, job cards to all under NREGA, quality midday meals to our children according to the Government norms. Besides, we can now read and write and do our own signatures and our children particularly girl children are regularly attending schools.

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<sup>5</sup> Communication and Power from [www.reflect-action.org](http://www.reflect-action.org).

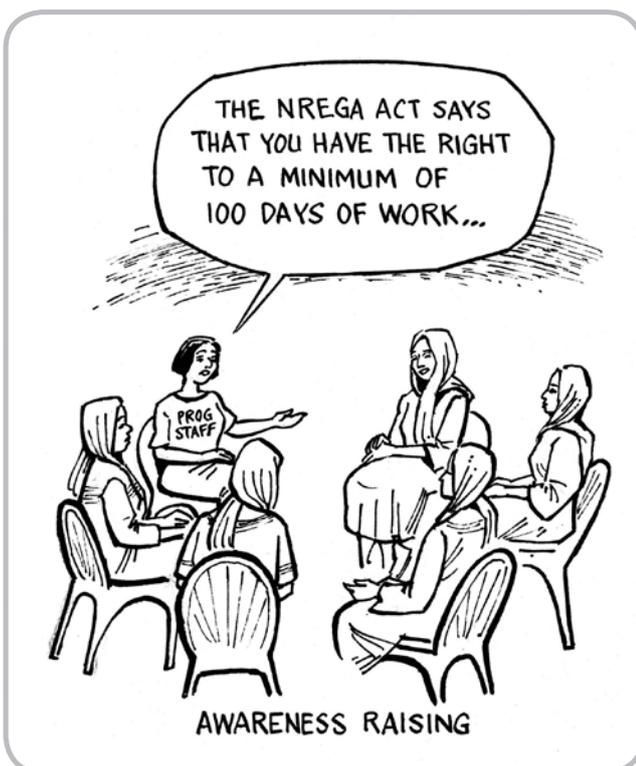
<sup>6</sup> Refer to ActionAid India Annual Report (2009).



Reflect circles have played crucial roles even in social movements. CSG, an ActionAid Nepal partner, ran Reflect circles which helped the Badi community (a marginal Dalit group in which the women are forced, through economic circumstances, into commercial sex) to understand the causes and impact of the injustices they face. Through Reflect circles, Badi women, girls and the wider community identified the driving factors of their discrimination and exploitation, including: lack of legal citizenship certificate; lack of education access for Badi children; unemployment; inaccessibility of government services such as water, sanitation, education, health and electricity; and caste-based discrimination. Reflect members discussed the causes and effects of the issues in Reflect circles. They uncovered a discriminatory patriarchal society and poverty as causes behind the forced sex trade. With increased consciousness about their rights, resources and entitlements and ways to address their problems, more than 400 Badi women and girls took action. They challenged the patriarchal society which denied them legal citizenship because they could not prove the identities of their biological fathers, by demanding citizenship in the name of their mothers.<sup>7</sup>

**They uncovered a discriminatory patriarchal society and poverty as causes behind the forced sex trade**

**ROLE OF ACTIONAID AND PARTNER PROGRAMMERS IN BUILDING CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS**  
The ActionAid programmer will help the partner organisation understand the importance of raising critical consciousness, and will together with the partner programmer ensure that the appraisal, strategy, planning, monitoring, and review of the local rights programme all contribute to awareness- and consciousness-raising. The programmer will work with the partner to plan and build consciousness-raising work into the design of the local rights programme. This will require innovation and creative thinking on the side of the ActionAid and partner programmers.



<sup>7</sup> Sherchan (2006).

**Build the power of an excluded group by bringing them together and building a collective organisation**

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Since consciousness-raising includes surfacing and addressing one's own ideas that may stand in the way of change, ActionAid and partner programmers should explore their own internalised oppressions and address these!

***Intervention: Organising, mobilising and constituency building***

Rights holders can take on and challenge more powerful interests that deny them their rights through organising, mobilising and building constituencies. Processes of awareness-raising and building critical consciousness are in themselves insufficient conditions for such challenge, but they can support the development of organisational vehicles to mobilise constituencies. Our role as ActionAid is to support the self organisation of rights holders so that they can lead their own struggles.

**Organising** is a process by which people come together to act in their shared self interest. Social change involves social struggle in order to generate collective power for the powerless. A core goal of community organising is to build the power of an excluded group by bringing them together and building a collective organisation that will allow them to influence key decision makers on a range of issues over time. Organisations of rights holders at the local level are built through the process of community organising. ActionAid explicitly believes that community organisations should lead the struggles of rights holders and thus engages in building such organisations through our interventions across the globe. Community organising is complex and requires leadership by organisers and activists that have knowledge of a local context, can build or have trust with rights holders, have the skills to draw rights holders together, help them analyse and identify their issues etc. In Cambodia, ActionAid has developed a context-specific approach to community organising that is undertaken by local-level community organisers.<sup>8</sup> In Vietnam, Myanmar and China, ActionAid supports 'fellows' who work at village level to organise rights holders.

**Mobilisation** follows awareness-raising and conscientisation, when a community or communities come together as a unit to take action around issues they have identified and to address power imbalances and injustice.

Organising and mobilising in the context of empowerment is about constituency building – that is catalysing and forming groups of rights holders. Members of these groups have shared interests and are organised around a change agenda. Groups may be organised around basic needs that must be met urgently, around rights violations, and around accessing entitlements to government schemes to improve their conditions. Organisational forms at local level can include women's groups, farmers' groups, adolescent girls' groups, groups of people affected by HIV and Aids etc.

Rights holder organisations may forge links with people of other social groups (that is people of another class, caste, race, ethnicity, gender etc.) who are concerned about the marginalisation and rights violations but who do not themselves suffer the violation. ActionAid and its programme staff are usually in this category of other social groups, alongside other NGOs and concerned individuals who forge links with rights holders. Solidarity and support should always be provided in ways that recognise the rights holders as the leading force for change. See chapter 7 for more on solidarity.

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<sup>8</sup> For more on the community organising approach see Wathna (2009).

Rights holder organising beyond the local level takes various forms including apex bodies; federations and alliances of the marginalised; networks and coalitions; and social movements. It needs to be noted that the organisational form in itself tells one nothing about the interests that are being advanced. In other words not all apex bodies, networks or social movements advance the rights of the marginalised. We have to look to the goals of the organisation, its members, and its struggles to understand the interests it advances. So, an apex body, coalition or social movement could, for example, be set up by government or corporates or traditional leaders to advance their agendas and to perpetuate the exclusion of the poor. Or as we saw in the ActionAid Brazil example at the beginning of this chapter, Assema, a community organisation set up to advance the interests of the poor decided to exclude women. In working with organisations we need to continually assess the agendas and interests they are promoting.

The following table highlights the ‘higher order’ organisational forms of rights holders, their characteristics, and examples for each type. Please note that some of these organisational forms are not particular to poor and excluded people, but here we talk about the form they take when rights holders adopt and use them. In sharing examples of their struggles we do not go into detail about how they were able to arrive at their achievements.

ORGANISATIONAL FORM	CHARACTERISTICS	 EXAMPLE
<b>Apex bodies</b> <b>Federations</b> <b>Alliances of the marginalised</b>	<p>Rights holder groups from different local areas come together to form a cluster or 'new entity' at the next highest level (district, region, state, national etc.). NGOs or middle-class intellectuals may be involved in supporting the organisation, but do not form part of it. This might not necessarily mean the formation of a new organisation. However, there is typically an agreed and elected leadership or governing structure of sorts. They may form for a specific objective and then disband, or typically may have a longer life span to cooperate on shared interests on an ongoing basis.</p>	<p><i>In Tanzania, over 123 000 farmers organised into ten apex structures were able to secure an increase in the state purchase price of cashews and state backing for farmer credit.</i></p>
<b>Networks and coalitions</b>	<p>A coming together of a diverse mix of organisations – rights holder organisations, NGOs and other civil society organisations – in support of shared goals, and a common minimum agenda.</p>	<p><i>In Malawi, membership of the Coalition of Women Living with HIV/ Aids increased from 10 000 to 60 000 in 12 years. Their advocacy led to improvements in health facilities, the construction of two new mobile clinics, and a promise from government to amend proposed criminalisation clauses in the HIV bill to be tabled in parliament.<sup>9</sup></i></p>
<b>Social movements</b>	<p>A coming together of rights holders typically organised into units or structures at local up to state or national level. The members are typically poor people who share a common experience and identity of being excluded. Movements organise to challenge duty bearers directly. In some cases, social movements may enter into coalitions and campaigns. Social movements can be highly organised (e.g. trade unions and farmer federations) or more spontaneous (such as the anti-globalisation movement). NGOs and middle-class intellectuals may support social movements, but do not, or ideally should not lead or be members of the movement.</p>	<p><i>In Brazil the Landless People's Movement (MST), whose members are landless peasants, struggle for land rights and agrarian reform. The movement is organised at local, state and national level, with elected and accountable leadership at each level. The movement does not include middle-class intellectuals – they provide political solidarity and support through a separate structure called the Friends of the MST.</i></p>

<sup>9</sup> ActionAid Annual Report (2009).

Sometimes NGOs, including ActionAid (which is an INGO) get confused with social movements. NGOs are not social movements, but may work in alliance with or in support of social movements as ActionAid does.

#### THE ROLE OF ACTIONAID AND PARTNER PROGRAMMERS IN ORGANISING, MOBILISING AND BUILDING CONSTITUENCIES

ActionAid plays a role supporting rights holders to form groups, while consciously minimising the role of ActionAid in running such groups. For empowerment to take place, rights holders need to realise their power within and they need to build solidarity with other rights holders. In exercising their power with others they can change existing inequalities.

In our work we support local organisations, cluster groups, apex bodies, coalitions and social movements to advance the rights of the poor and marginalised and to enable rights holders to hold duty bearers to account. Our support includes assistance with organising, analysing, and strategising. We usually provide some form of financial support. We also help to build and strengthen leadership of rights organisations. Social change can only be sustainable if local leaders are able to lead and run their own organisations with minimal support from ActionAid.

In our organising and mobilising work we will need to support women's leadership in rights holder organisations and ensure women's interests are addressed. ActionAid programmers might need to raise awareness and conscientise partner organisations on the importance of women's leadership. Many local rights programmes have put in place requirements for a minimum of 50% of leaders in community structures being women. Capacity building is often necessary to enhance women's active participation and to build women's confidence.

ActionAid contributes to the building and strengthening of social movements. In various countries,<sup>10</sup> ActionAid helps to build the capacity of social movement leaders and members, we provide funding, and we also lend political and social solidarity to social movement struggles. ActionAid also supports intermediary organisations that work in political alliance with the social movements. These organisations act as 'fronts' to and assist social movements that are not formally registered. It is not advisable for social movements to officially register as a legal entity regulated by government, as NGOs do, as this creates bureaucracy, may bring about state regulation, and kills popular struggles. ActionAid may pave the way for and support the formation of a social movement in every way possible (funding, strategising, capacity development, unifying rights groups across places etc.) but should not be a founder of a social movement.



In Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal, ActionAid is facilitating the formation of groups to fight economic oppression; building capacity of the communities to do public finance and budget tracking at different levels of government; and supporting movements advocating for fair trade and fighting Economic Partnership Agreements.

**ActionAid helps to build the capacity of social movement leaders and members, we provide funding, and we also lend political and social solidarity**

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<sup>10</sup>Drawn from the Africa Region Dialogue on Social Movements in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa, 2009.

ActionAid believes that social movements can play a critical role in redressing power inequalities. Social movements are led by rights holders, they are broad-based (extending beyond the very local level) and can take collective actions for change. ActionAid strives to link rights holder groups and organisations across localities, and help them find common agendas, interests and strategies, with a view to supporting their emergence as social movements able to sustain the struggle for rights in the long run.



### ***Monitoring empowerment***

**Setting indicators for change may in themselves be moments when a shift in understanding of the partner and rights holders takes place**

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There are three critical areas to monitoring empowerment: the actual tangible changes; changes in ideas, attitudes and beliefs; and our contribution to change.

#### ACTUAL TANGIBLE CHANGES

The actual tangible changes in people's lives such as school enrolment, walking distance to water, amount of income, can be measured by gathering statistics (e.g. government information on schools and clinics) or through PRA tools (e.g. mapping who has what livestock). The baseline information against which to measure these changes should be gathered during appraisal.

#### CHANGES TO IDEAS, ATTITUDES, AND BELIEFS

Changes to ideas, attitudes and beliefs can take place as a result of participatory analysis, awareness-raising, and critical consciousness work. Changes would relate to how people see themselves, how they understand the causes of poverty, what they know about government policies and benefits etc. The baseline and indicators for this should be finalised in strategic planning. For example, how much decision-making power do women have in households? What ideas do men have about women? Finalising the baseline and setting indicators for change may in themselves be moments when a shift in understanding of the partner and rights holders takes place – particularly in cases where the oppression is so internalised, or where unequal relations between women and men have been taken for granted. These types of changes can be monitored through diaries, interviews and observation.

#### OUR CONTRIBUTION TO CHANGE

To measure the contribution and effectiveness of ActionAid and of the partner we would need performance and partnership baselines and indicators. At the appraisal and planning stage, we should clearly analyse and agree what we bring (beyond just funds) and we should set indicators. Possible indicators could be timeliness of disbursement of funds, amount of time spent in the villages by ActionAid staff, feedback from the partner on whether we treated them with respect, our contributions to analysis etc. We would need to monitor these indicators in an ongoing way over the programme's life span.



### ***What will you find in the next chapter?***

In the next chapter we look at ActionAid's distinctive approach to campaigns in a local rights programme. We offer ideas and tools to analyse, plan, and monitor and evaluate local campaigns. We also explore the importance of duty bearer accountability and the different processes and methods you can use in a local rights programme.



### ***Questions for you to think about***

1. Why do we say that government must provide basic services?
2. On a scale of one to five (with one being the worst and five being the best) how would you rate your approach to basic needs in your local rights programme? Name two ways in which this work could be strengthened to support human rights in the next 14 months.
  - a. Do you understand the difference between awareness-raising and conscientisation? Jot down simple definitions of each.
  - b. What are the ways in which your local rights programme is stimulating awareness and critical consciousness?
  - c. What are the biggest gaps you see in supporting rights holder conscientisation? What are the two things you can work with partners to do differently in the next 14 months to support consciousness-raising?
3. List the different ways in which you are currently linking up local rights holder groups within your local rights programme and to groups outside of your programme? Identify your two main gaps and strategise about how you will work to link rights holder groups differently in the next 14 months.
4. What new knowledge and skills do you need to support rights holder empowerment as described in this chapter?



## Resources

ActionAid (2005) *Critical Webs of Power and Change* (a resource pack for planning, reflection and learning in people-centred advocacy) – [critical webs online](#)

ActionAid (2008-2010) *Frontline Stories of Change* (a collection of over 70 stories about our work for change at the local level) – [click here](#)

ActionAid *Reflect* (resources and materials) – [link here](#)

ActionAid and Just Associates (2007) 'Women Navigate Power: Stories About Claiming Our Rights', ActionAid International & Just Associates

ActionAid *Action on Rights* (for resources on critical consciousness and critical pedagogy), see the HIVE - [link here](#)

ActionAid *Action on Rights* (for resources on social movements), see the HIVE – [link here](#)

ActionAid *Annual Reports* - [link here](#)

Sherchan, R (2006) 'Badi Women: Dignity Aspect of Citizenship', in *The Rising Nepal* 22 September

Tarrow, S (1994) *Power in Movement: Collective Action, Social Movements and Politics*, Cambridge University Press

Wathna, C (2009) Community Organising Leads to Right to Education (a frontline story of change)



# 6

## CAMPAIGNING

### CHAPTER

In this chapter we focus on campaigning – one of the three interrelated components of our HRBA programming. Together with empowerment and solidarity, campaigning enables poor and excluded people to hold duty bearers to account and in so doing make changes in their lives.

We begin this chapter with an example of campaigning from ActionAid Pakistan.



In section 1 we elaborate our understanding of advocacy and campaigns drawing on the Pakistan example.



In section 2 we look at how to practically work on campaigns at the local level.



In section 3 we focus on a specific form of campaigning – the monitoring of policy and budgets to hold duty bearers to account.



In section 4 we look at the monitoring of campaigns.

**They face  
poor working  
conditions,  
repetitive and  
hazardous work,  
long working  
hours and low  
wages**

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## **Section 1: An introduction to campaigns in ActionAid – our approach**



### ***Working to advance the rights of women home-based workers in Pakistan***

*Thanks to Javeria Ayaz Malik, ActionAid Pakistan, for this story*

“We work from six in the morning until ten at night making 350 bangles every day and in return get only Rs3. Even if a single bangle breaks, the cost is extracted from our wages.” *Aman Khala, 55, a home-based bangle maker from Hyderabad*

In Pakistan, millions of women work at home making garments and bangles, stitching sacks and footballs, and weaving carpets. These women represent about 75% of the total informal workforce. They have few, if any, rights as workers: no security of employment, no benefits, no minimum wage. They face poor working conditions, repetitive and hazardous work, long working hours and low wages (some as low as US\$5 per month in 2008).

In 2005, ActionAid Pakistan, recognising home-based women workers as a marginal group in need of support, carried out field visits and informal consultations with home-based workers in different geographic locations.

#### MOBILISING HOME-BASED WORKERS

In the first phase of work with the women workers, ActionAid Pakistan helped them organise into 11 groups, each with 20 to 30 women, on the basis of geographic locations. In order to provide a collective platform for the groups, one cooperative centre was established in each area. The centre included a meeting hall (also used as workplace), a study room (for conducting study circles for cooperative members), a community kitchen (providing low-priced food) and a day-care centre (for cooperative members' children).

Partner organisations met with the women's families and convinced them to allow the women to join the centres for a nominal fee. Home-based workers were encouraged to use these centres for work and socialising purposes. Food was provided to them and their children at subsidised rates, their children were accommodated in the day-care centres, and their personal and domestic issues were discussed during the meetings to build their trust and association with the centre.

The women workers were trained in communications and negotiations, market know-how and leadership skills. They were also trained in basic accounting and mathematics to enable them to calculate their income and expenditure.

The organisation of women workers was undertaken to help them improve their work quality, negotiate better deals with their employers, find better sales points, and eventually look for independent work orders without the intervention of a middle agent.

## WOMEN TAKING ACTION

The confidence of the women workers was increased through organising, training and rights-awareness activities, and through having their basic needs met. The women met with middle agents and investors and demanded better wages and social security benefits. They negotiated better deadlines, safety equipment and timely and competitive wages. Their collective voice enabled them to make a dent in the influence of the exploitative middle agents.

Despite this immediate relief, the women workers saw the need for more sustainable, long-term change to improve their wages and protect them against old age, disability, and poverty. ActionAid Pakistan and its partners proposed that these demands be advocated to government as a key duty bearer.

The time had come to build collective pressure to campaign government to sign and ratify the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Home Work Convention C-177. Linked to this, ActionAid Pakistan and its partners joined with the home-based women workers to draft a social protection bill for women workers in the informal sector. The partners and ActionAid together conducted a study on social protection, focused on home-based women workers in the garment, bangle, shoe-stitching, embroidery and handicrafts sectors. They reviewed the laws of different countries pertaining to women workers. And in June 2007 they developed a draft social protection bill, covering benefits such as sickness, maternity, injury compensation and disability pension for women working in the informal sector.



**Social protection** refers to different types of 'social insurance', benefits and services – typically delivered by the state – that provide protection against old age, disability, unemployment and poverty.

In October 2007, the ILO signed a letter of intent with ActionAid to provide technical support to campaign for government to ratify Convention C-177 and implement the social protection bill.

In provincial consultations around the country, ActionAid Pakistan shared the draft bill with government representatives, members of trade unions, human rights activists, political parties, partner organisations, NGOs and HomeNet. The final draft of the bill, presented to the Ministry of Labour, was accepted for further deliberation by policymakers.

To influence policymakers and gain public support for the bill, ActionAid Pakistan and its partners drew on print and electronic media. Radio programmes, articles and letters to the editors of leading newspapers and magazines and television documentaries gave the issue a strong push.

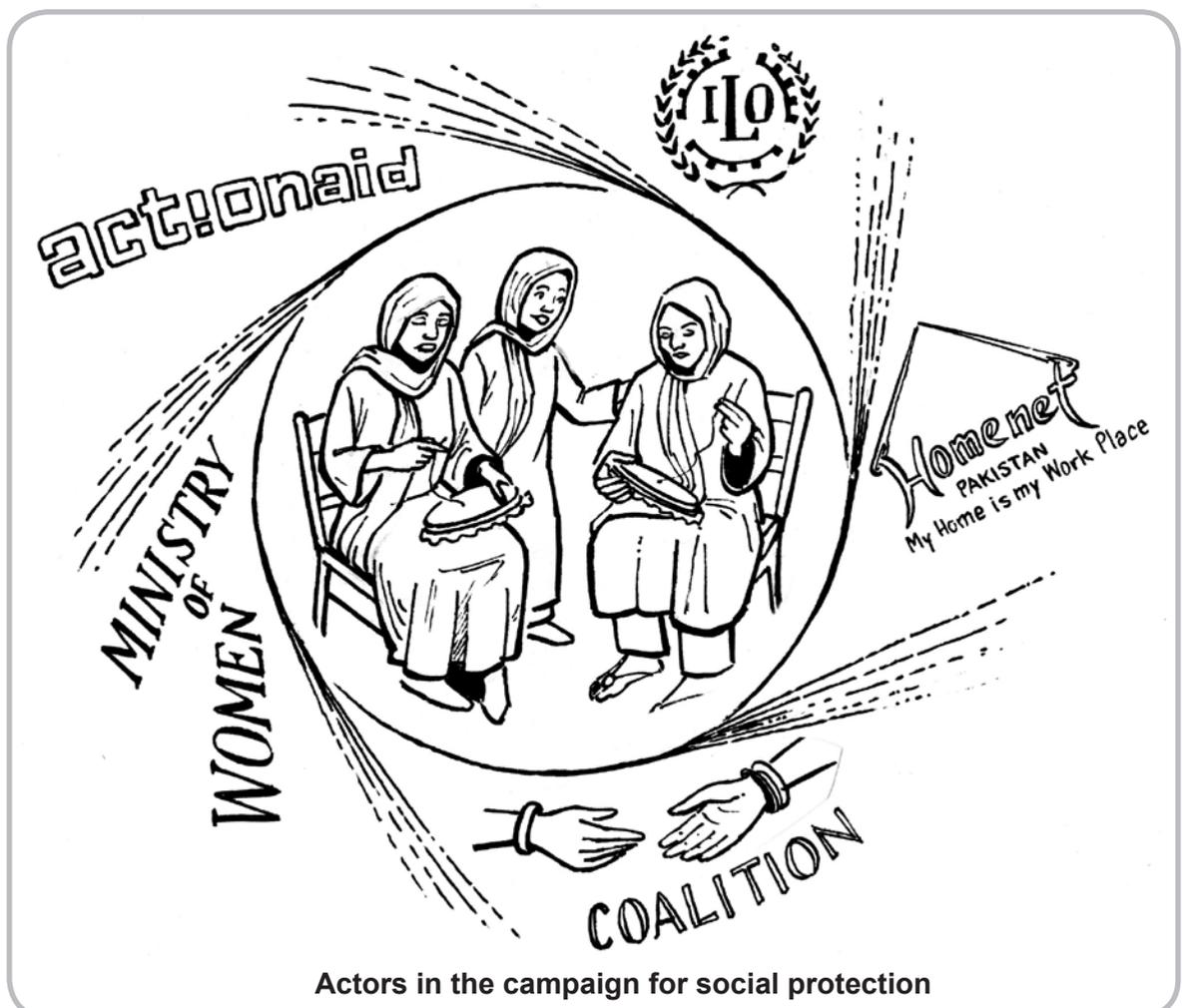
**Women workers saw the need for more sustainable, long-term change to improve their wages and protect them against old age, disability, and poverty**

<sup>1</sup> HomeNet is a global network established to coordinate work with homeworkers. HomeNet South Asia ([www.homenetsouthasia.org](http://www.homenetsouthasia.org)) comprises Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Its aim is to disseminate information about ILO's Home Work Convention (C-177) across the region so that all countries can work to implement the convention and pass laws or national policies for homeworkers.

In April 2008, ActionAid Pakistan and its partners organised a Grand National Convention on home-based work, during which representatives of the Ministry of Labour declared, for the first time, social protection for home-based women workers.

The home-based women workers formed their first-ever union – the Home-Based Aurat<sup>2</sup> Workers' Union, with support from ActionAid and its partners. They formed 25 primary associations at district level in all provinces. The Union took steps to mobilise and organise home-based women workers in other parts of the country, and kept up the pressure on the government to sign and ratify the Convention C-177.

Efforts to ensure legal and social protection for home-based women workers continues. The Coalition on the Rights of Home Based Workers, set up by home-based women workers with ActionAid and partner support, continues to research and advocate for legal recognition and protection. A national consultation, convened in June 2010, aimed to develop key aspects of protective legislation. The Ministry of Women Development and the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) support the legislative process to secure and safeguard the rights of home-based women workers. This consultation follows the development of a 2009 draft policy, led by the Ministry of Labour and Manpower, and yet to be presented to the cabinet.



Actors in the campaign for social protection

<sup>2</sup> Aurat means woman in Urdu.

#### THE CHANGE

The process of organising and working together helped the home-based women workers overcome their social isolation and silence. They have been able to support each other and learn from each other's experiences. They have become more expressive and vocal about their concerns and problems. Their position in patriarchal households has improved, as has their economic standing. They have long battled against exclusion and subjugation, but their collectivism and organisation helps them gain greater confidence and a sense of worth.

Their Union and the Coalition have strengthened and widened their organisation, giving visibility and voice to the 20-million plus women workers in this sector. Their campaigning brought public attention to the issue, and consistent pressure on government to act. They have developed strategic alliances with key actors within the state, like the Women's Ministry and the Women's Commission.

Home-based workers still have a long way to go in achieving their goal of government-sponsored social protection and improved wages, but their 1,000-mile journey has indeed begun.

#### ***In summary, what are the specific campaign elements in this story?***

The campaign has stretched well over three years. It has made significant gains for home-based women workers but has yet to achieve its main objectives of the Pakistan government ratifying Convention C-177, and adopting social protection legislation for women informal sector workers. The campaign has been made up of the following activities:

- Researching social protection laws in different countries and, together with home-based women workers, drafting a social protection bill for women informal sector workers in Pakistan;
- Provincial consultations with government representatives, members of trade unions, human rights activists, political parties, partner organisations, and NGOs, and a Grand National Convention to educate and apply pressure to government officials;
- Using radio and print media to highlight the problems facing home-based women workers to the wider public, to win support and public pressure for new social protection legislation;
- Organising home-based women workers, initially into local groups, later into a union, and in 2009, into a Coalition with others, to mobilise and apply pressure on government to act; and
- Forming tactical alliances with key partners in government – the Women's Ministry and the Women's Commission – to support the legislative process.

**Campaigning creates and harnesses people's power through organization, mobilization and communication around a simple and powerful demand**

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***What does this story tell us about ActionAid's approach to campaigning?***

OBSERVATION I: A COMPONENT OF INTEGRATED HRBA PROGRAMMING

This is a powerful illustration of ActionAid's work to support change in the lives of poor and excluded people through the coordinated interweaving of our three components of programming – **empowerment, campaigning, and solidarity**. The home-based women workers were **empowered** through their organisation into local groups; through the cooperative centres, which enabled them to meet, share experiences and support each other; through basic skills training; and very importantly through the building of a union of workers. They won some immediate concrete changes to their conditions through the bypassing of middle agents and hence improved income.

Civil society – other NGOs, labour organisations, human rights activists etc. – was mobilised to support the intensive **campaign** of home-based women workers for social protection. This campaign targeting the Pakistan government to fulfil its accountabilities to home-based women workers has included a significant range of civil society organisations, and has embraced a range of strategies from national forums to media campaigning to formal lobbying.

The ActionAid Pakistan example shows how **solidarity** can increase the power and voice of the rights holders and bring pressure to bear on the state. Solidarity took many different forms – the solidarity between rights holders in the union and the Coalition; solidarity between rights holders and allies like ActionAid Pakistan and partner organisations; and solidarity between the rights holders, ActionAid and an international institution like the ILO. Tactical alliances have been formed with women in the Women's Ministry and the Women's Commission.



***What is campaigning?***

Campaigning creates and harnesses people's power through organization, mobilization and communication around a simple and powerful demand, in order to achieve a measurable political or social change.

Campaigning builds on and integrates advocacy and organising techniques, but has some very distinctive features.

- First, unlike pure advocacy work, campaigning is based on the active involvement of large numbers of people and seeks to shift and mobilise public opinion. A campaign aims to reach the people who can make a difference and persuade them to support the goal of the campaign; and hopefully contribute actively to the campaign itself with time or money. Sometimes the support of a broad cross-section of citizens is needed to influence decision-makers. At other times it may be a particular constituency or interest group that can help you win your campaign.
- Second, unlike pure organising, campaigns seek to get a win on a very specific, time-bound issue. Campaigns try to achieve change through a series of steps where one leads to another like a line of dominoes. They don't address a holistic set of issues all at once, as we often do in our programme work or in policy analysis. This "step by step" approach can go hand in hand with a long term plan for building an organisation.

A campaign incorporates a range of activities to achieve its objectives – these may include research, documentation of best practice or piloting of alternatives, lobbying and media work – and backs these with mass actions such as marches and rallies, civil disobedience, petitions, consumer boycotts etc.

A successful campaign needs an excellent communication and organising strategy. Policy demands should be sharp and specific (e.g. ‘abolish school fees’, not ‘undertake a comprehensive reform to ensure quality and access in the school system’). Campaigning is about winning one small victory at a time while working towards the larger change each victory contributes to.

Campaigns can be purely local but because human rights are universal, participating in national or global campaigns is a great way to link people, movements and issues across localities in order to make a bigger impact on the causes of poverty.

Drawn from ActionAid Campaign Vision – [click here to access](#)

**Conduct campaigns in a way that strengthens the leadership, organisation and capacity of rights holders**

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#### OBSERVATION 2: LED BY RIGHTS HOLDERS AND THEIR INTERESTS

Rights holders should lead campaign efforts, shaping their focus, objectives and strategies. The better-organised rights holders are, the more effectively they can do this. ActionAid strives therefore to conduct campaigns in a way that strengthens the leadership, organisation and capacity of rights holders.

ActionAid can enter into dialogue with rights holders on the change agenda and can support, help organise, build capacity, provide resources, bring in specialist knowledge and offer strategic guidance. We must dialogue in ways that do not dictate positions and tactics.

Three main reasons why we say rights holders must lead are to:

1. Ensure that power and decision-making is with the rights holders and not us! Through our campaigns we are demanding that duty bearers change the way they use power – to stop using it for the benefit of themselves and their allies and to start using it to bring about a change in the lives of poor and marginalised citizens. This is their accountability to citizens as duty bearers. If rights holders do not lead we are contradicting and undermining our position and our HRBA;
2. Give legitimacy and credibility to the campaign demands and solutions put forward; and
3. Empower rights holders with new analysis, new skills, and new confidence to lead their own struggles for rights and justice.

ActionAid Pakistan spent a great deal of time and effort organising the home-based women workers and building their skills and capacity. Campaign strategies deliberately built the strength and skills of the women workers and their organisations. Where possible, home-based women workers and their organisations led aspects of the campaign. However, in order to advance the rights of the women workers ActionAid Pakistan, alongside partners and other allies, took strategic leadership of some aspects of the campaign. So long as we are always guided by the interests of the rights holders this is entirely appropriate, especially when a movement and its leadership is still emergent, as was the case with the union of home-based women workers.

**Decisions  
need to be  
made about  
what change is  
practical given  
the context and  
the moment**

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OBSERVATION 3: LINKS ACROSS THE LOCAL, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL

Local actions may result in a change in the way policies are implemented locally, or in the behaviour change of one company or landlord. But local action does not usually change policies or laws that frame government programmes or that regulate companies. To achieve the broader, more lasting change we seek we must escalate to the next level(s). This can happen in several ways:

- **Knowledge and awareness:** Our work at the local level should help rights holders understand how their struggle links with deeper structural issues and systems, including international systems (for example, the existence of the ILO and conventions related to informal work, such as Convention C-177; neo-liberalism and the ‘casualisation’<sup>3</sup> of labour).
- **Forging alliances beyond the local level:** The home-based women workers realised that they needed to join with others and build national and international alliances to change the laws governing their conditions of work. This was achieved in the Pakistan case by escalating from the local level to a national campaign, involving multiple actors, aimed at bringing about legislative change. In addition, the campaign and the union of home-based workers was linked into an alliance of home-based women workers, HomeNet, at the international level.
- **Taking demands to duty bearers at national level through a campaign:** Filing a lawsuit, demanding a government investigation, or submitting a complaint to the national human rights commission are examples of ways to amplify a local struggle into a national issue.

OBSERVATION 4: CLEAR OBJECTIVES BASED ON A SOUND ANALYSIS

Successful campaigning starts with an in-depth power analysis that looks at why the problem exists; an understanding of who benefits from the existing situation and therefore will resist change; an identification of allies; and the strategising of possible solutions. Building knowledge through research or piloting alternatives may be a critical part of the process of building understanding and analysis of the problem.<sup>4</sup>

Following the in-depth analysis, decisions need to be made about what change is practical given the context and the moment; the extent of power amongst your allies; which duty bearer you should be targeting for change etc. You may decide on a strategy to influence a change in policy over five to ten years, and a series of smaller steps, or milestones that will bring you to your ultimate goal. In the ActionAid Pakistan example, the long-term goal is to ensure just wages and social protection for home-based women workers. Milestones on the way to achieving this included the campaign to get public support and a commitment from government to take the bill into the legislative process.

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<sup>3</sup> Taking work out of formal work spaces into the homes of poor people, especially poor women, and removing responsibilities for minimum wages and social protection from companies and the state.

<sup>4</sup> For more on tools for analysis see Chapter 4, section 1, part B, building block 2.

OBSERVATION 5: A VEHICLE TO ORGANISE RIGHTS HOLDERS AND THEIR SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Campaigns must be planned, and implemented in ways that organise rights holders, strengthen their organisations, build their skills, deepen their consciousness, and support their social movements.



**What is a social movement?**

A social movement is a collective and sustained challenge to elites, authorities, opponents etc. by people who share a common purpose and solidarity.<sup>5</sup>

A social movement is comprised of members directly affected by a common rights violation or 'issue' around which an identity is forged through movement struggle. The movement is typically led by members from its ranks although you may find sympathetic intellectuals and middle-class activists playing leadership or support roles.

Campaigning offers great opportunities to build a wider political movement. Campaigns can link rights holder groups, create a sense of unity and identity amongst affected groups, marshal energy towards concrete changes, and help build and strengthen the movement. In fact, a campaign and its objectives could well be secondary to the main objective of movement building.

The ActionAid Pakistan example shows how rights holders were organised into local groups, which scaled up into a trade union, and later a Coalition. Not only were rights holder groups organised but they were empowered through consciousness raising, analysis building, advocacy and campaign strategising, and a range of confidence- building lobbying activities.

OBSERVATION 6: INCORPORATE A GENDER ANALYSIS AND ADVANCE WOMEN'S RIGHTS

ActionAid's HRBA places women's rights at the centre of our work. Through our work we aim to confront the domination of men over women and the inequality between men and women in access to services, resources and power.

When we undertake analysis to understand a problem we must ensure that we consider women's interests, and how women are affected given the existing gender power relations. When we think about solutions we need to ask if these solutions will expand or limit women's access to services, resources and power. When we strategise and act to empower rights holders we must organise women as a specific grouping within the rights holder group. We must build and advance women's leadership in campaigns or within social movements.

In conclusion, these six observations collectively represent ActionAid's people-centred, transformative, and integrated approach to campaigns in a local rights programme.

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<sup>5</sup> From Tarrow (1994).



## Section 2: Getting practical – campaigning in local rights programmes

### *Planning campaigns in a local rights programme*

At local level we plan in cycles. The **long-term rights programme strategy** sets out the change objectives for the life of the programme, and the **local rights programme strategic plan** sets out the change objectives and indicators for three to five year periods. **Annual plans** indicate change objectives over the period of one year.

**Your campaign objectives at local level can be oriented to changing policies held by local authorities, practices and/or budget allocations**

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A local rights programme long-term strategy, strategic plans and annual plans should set objectives for each of the three areas of HRBA programming – empowerment, campaigning, and solidarity. You must ensure that your objectives take into account the specific discriminations that women may face. So, if your policy change objective is to persuade the district government to introduce mobile HIV testing and counselling centres, for example, you may consider as a sub-objective that clinic staff receive training on issues facing HIV-positive women.

Your campaign objectives in a local rights programme will specifically relate to ‘issues’ you will be working on at the local level. But you will also be planning to participate in national and/or international campaigns, and so you should include these in your local strategies and plans.<sup>6</sup> Your campaign objectives at local level can be oriented to changing policies held by local authorities, practices and/or budget allocations. For example, you may find that a policy is in place but is not being properly implemented because of a weak programme, or inadequate budget, or because of discrimination in implementation.

The local rights programme strategic plan will also outline the types of **campaign strategies** you would use to achieve your objectives, including strategies to address women’s interests, organisation, voice, and leadership. Greater detail on campaign strategies and tactics will be developed in your regular annual plans, or in more detailed campaign plans developed with stakeholders.

Your local rights programme strategic plan will include **indicators** and ways of monitoring and measuring the success of your campaign efforts. These will often be ‘process indicators’ or what you might call ‘stepping stones’ – a set of supporting changes required year by year to reach the ultimate goal or change sought.

#### MONITORING POLICY AND BUDGETS AN ENTRY POINT AND TYPE OF CAMPAIGN

A very important dimension of our campaigns work is to help citizens to hold governments to account. Monitoring the implementation of public policy can reveal if government is actually doing what it promised to do. Monitoring budgets can reveal if government spent what it promised to spend. Policy and budget monitoring also helps reveal situations where existing policies and budgets, even when properly implemented, are short-changing the poor. Hence the monitoring of policy and budgets can serve as a springboard for demanding policy change.

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<sup>6</sup> How we can build links across levels is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, section 1, part B.

Our local level campaigns work is most likely to be successful if it is focused to improving implementation (i.e. changing local budget allocations, stopping corruption, changing local by-laws or regulations, holding office bearers accountable for the performance of officials etc.). A policy change focus at the local level is unlikely to be feasible, as this typically requires national level strategies.

Since government spending is one of the most visible ways in which government acts on the lives of the poor for better or worse, budget monitoring is the one major focus for our public accountability work. The framework and process that usually guides this work is the ActionAid Economic Literacy and Budget Accountability for Governance (ELBAG) programme.

The ELBAG methodology builds capacity and understanding amongst rights holders in order to hold government to account. ELBAG increases understanding in economic justice issues so that rights holders can analyse and understand reasons for underdevelopment and inequality at the local level. ELBAG is now being applied in over 15 countries in Africa, Asia, and the Americas.<sup>7</sup>

#### DEVELOPING A CAMPAIGN PLAN

(The following is a brief guidance on how to develop a campaign<sup>8</sup>)

A campaign will be one part of a bigger strategy or programme for bringing about a desired change. A plan clarifies the purpose of the campaign, the audience, the solutions and messages, and the actions. Your campaign plan should also include a risk analysis and strategy. A campaign plan may form part of a strategic or annual plan, or it may be entirely separate. As the campaign proceeds you will need to stop and reflect and, if necessary, make changes. Your planning process must involve the rights holders (including women), allied community organisations, NGOs etc.

Here are some questions to help you develop your campaign plan

1. What is the problem/rights violation you are addressing? What are its root causes? What aspect of the problem can you make a difference to now? Who does it impact upon (and remember to consider the ways it will impact differently upon women and men)? Who benefits and in what ways from the existence of the problem? How do they benefit?
2. What is the particular solution that you are advocating? Is it credible and compelling? Are there solutions that rights holders have already started to build in practice? Could we partner with rights holders to create alternative solutions to a problem that we could then advocate through the campaign?
3. What needs to happen to bring about the solution? What specific outcome or decision do you want (i.e. what is your campaign objective)? What are the 'stepping stones' (the actions that need to be taken, the things that need to be done) to achieve the objective?

<sup>7</sup> For more information and resources on ELBAG see the [ELBAG website](#); for examples of policy and budget monitoring see section 3 of this chapter.

<sup>8</sup> Drawn from ActionAid *HungerFREE toolkit and Women Won't Wait* campaign planning materials.

**A plan clarifies  
the purpose of  
the campaign,  
the audience,  
the solutions  
and messages,  
and the actions**

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**Pick a good clear solution that will be promoted through the campaign**

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4. Who has the power to bring about that outcome (your campaign target)?
5. What is the best way to get to your target/s? Who or what would influence them to do what you want? Who do you need to be working with/convincing/mobilising (your campaign allies, partners, secondary targets or audiences)? Who will be working against you (your campaign opponents)?
6. What action do you want your allies and audiences to take?
7. What does your audience believe/need/want in order to take the desired action? And how can you craft the right call to action (your campaign action message) and use the right people or media to reach your audience (your campaign channels)?

Your objective is at the centre of your campaign. An effective objective will:

- Be precise and realistic;
- Tell you what you want to change;
- Tell you who will make the change; and
- Tell you by how much you want to change and by when.

Going back to the ActionAid Pakistan example at the beginning of this chapter, the campaign objective could be something like this: *Social protection legislation for home-based women workers is in place.*

The time-frame for your campaign will vary according to what you want to achieve and the strategic spaces or opportunities that exist (such as elections, or a policy consultation, for example). Campaigns can run for many years or just a few weeks.

You need to pick a good clear solution that will be promoted through the campaign. The solution from the ActionAid Pakistan example is the passing of social protection legislation that will ensure sickness and maternity cover, injury compensation and disability pension for women working in the informal sector. When choosing a solution ask yourself:

- Is it a convincing solution?
- Is it actionable (i.e. can it be feasibly implemented)?
- Is it a solution that would be visible and measurable?
- Is it fully supported by all campaign allies?

Once you have identified and agreed on your solution, generate a plan of action and activities over the life of the campaign. Your analysis of the context, and of the actors you are seeking to influence, in particular, will tell you which are the best actions and tactics to use. Poorly chosen tactics may well alienate your audience, so be very careful. A few examples of tactics and actions that you can use in a local rights programme include:

- **Big public events** like street theatre, a public meeting, a concert, a rally etc.;
- **Lobbying decision makers** through a petition, or arranging for them to visit affected rights holders on site, a public debate or meeting;
- **Mobilising rights holders** through door-to-door visits, cultural events (music, poetry etc.), community information meetings, awareness sessions, a picket or demonstration;
- **Research and mobilise facts** – design and undertake participatory action research, mobilise and train rights holders to undertake surveys etc.; and
- **Mobilise allies/build solidarity** – a campaign delegation meeting with influential locals, a community radio station covering the issue from your vantage point, lobbying local priests/imams to your side.

### ***Analysing and managing risks***

A good campaign emerges from sound and deep analysis. We need to very carefully analyse the key institutions and groups in relation to the change we seek. We need to understand what power they have, what their vested interests are, and how we should relate to them. Analysis should be done together with partners and rights holders, including women rights holders, so that women's perspectives and interests are included.

Your analysis might be more intensive at particular 'moments', for example when you are building your campaign strategy as part of your local rights programme strategic plan, or when you are planning out a specific campaign. You may also revisit and deepen your analysis at the time of your PRRPs and annual plans. However, you should be engaging in ongoing analysis with partners and rights holders – after campaign actions, during field visits, during meetings etc. – with a view to identifying changes in context, shifts in the orientation of actors, emergent opportunities to build on etc.

In some contexts campaigns can result in tension with duty bearers, specifically the state. This is because we are working with rights holders and allies to hold duty bearers accountable and ultimately shift power away from the powerful towards the poor and excluded. This change will be resisted by those who stand to lose. This therefore introduces some tension, possibly even conflict to the relationship.

For more discussion on how and what we analyse in a HRBA programme, for information on and links to tools and frameworks we can use for analysis, and more discussion on risk identification and management see Chapter 4, section 1, part B.

### ***Strategic options: Being 'seriously' strategic in our planning***

#### **BALANCING LONG-TERM VISION WITH WINNABLE OBJECTIVES**

Much of our campaigns work must be geared to supporting and sustaining a movement for change, in which rights holders lead and others act in solidarity. In order to build and sustain a movement, we need immediate gains, some victories and sense of achievement, both for activists in the movement and for supporters to keep giving time and money. These are what we called 'stepping stones' earlier.

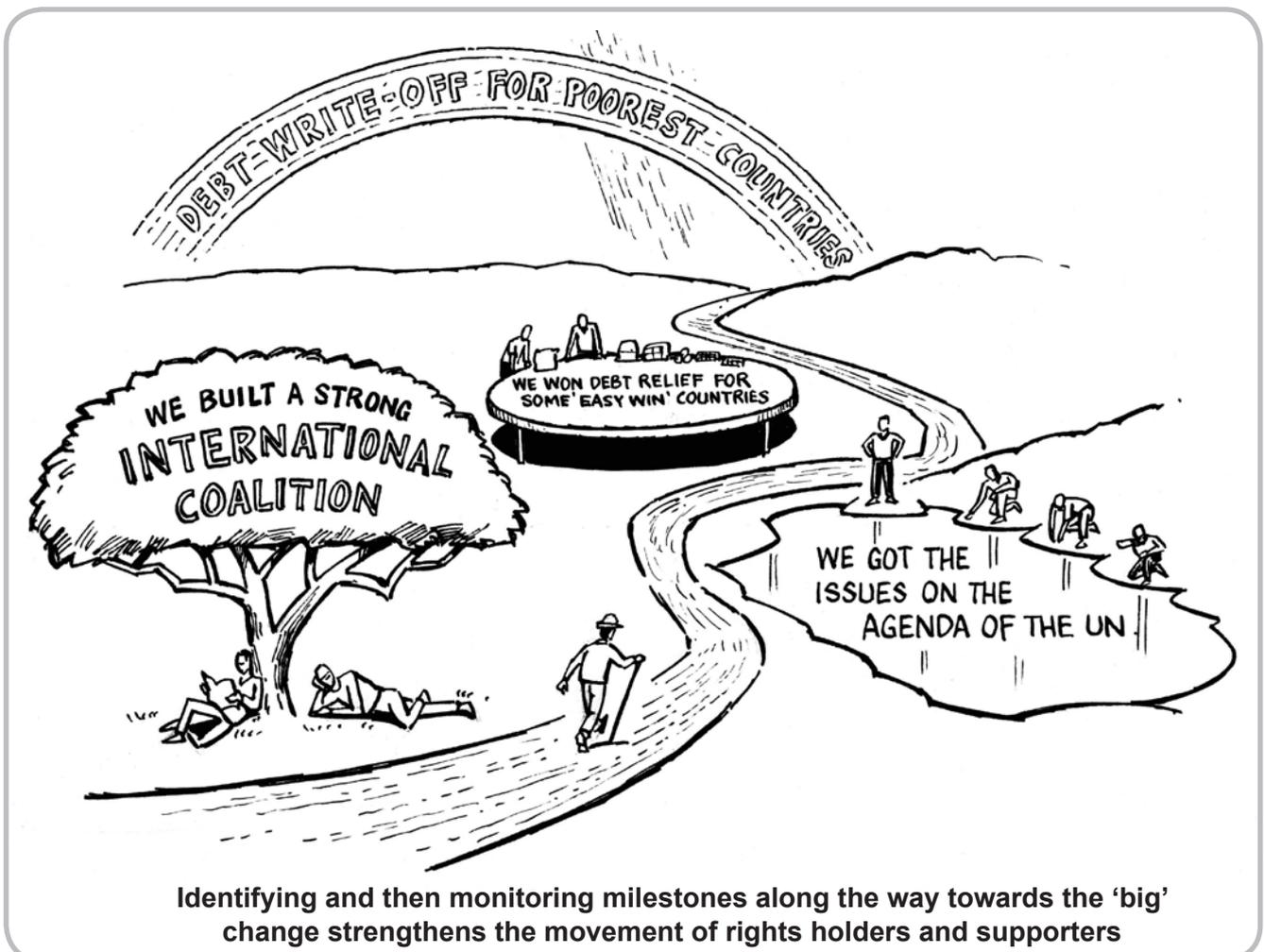
**In order to build and sustain a movement, we need immediate gains, some victories and sense of achievement**

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This has implications for how we plan and set objectives. If we only set realistic objectives then we don't dream big. But if we set objectives that are too ambitious they might take so long to achieve that rights holders and supporters will become demoralised and withdraw. If we are monitoring and regularly reviewing progress the changes can be more easily detected and we can win more support.

A good example of this is the Jubilee 'Drop the Debt' campaign, a global coalition of organisations and movements in 40 countries. Their call was for the unpayable debts of the poorest countries to be cancelled in the year 2000. For at least a decade, the campaign was considered 'unwinnable'. Some NGOs pulled out for that reason. While the campaign eventually benefited millions of people through debt write-off for some countries, and contributed towards the creation of a mass movement, it could have been more strategic in setting intermediary objectives. These 'in between' objectives could have included getting the issue on the UN agenda, or focusing on a couple of countries in which a debt relief win would have been morally or politically tenable for power brokers. Setting 'in between' objectives may have helped keep the movement intact, and strengthened the forward march to the big goal of debt cancellation.

So we have to be very strategic when we plan our campaigns. We need to keep the big change picture in mind always, but break it down into achievable campaign objectives that are steps towards the longer-term goal.



Identifying and then monitoring milestones along the way towards the 'big' change strengthens the movement of rights holders and supporters

STRATEGIC TIMING OPPORTUNITIES TO WATCH OUT FOR<sup>9</sup>

Opportunities and constraints shape campaigns, and this is why it is important that we constantly analyse and forecast changes in context, and watch out for opportunities. Here are a few political opportunities that can support campaigning:

- **Elections:** “Are an opportunity to involve a broad base of citizens in public debate, raise issues, criticize officials and current policy, influence candidates, political parties, and policymakers, and present policy alternatives and people’s platforms... You can use advocacy for a year or more before the elections, as well as between elections.” It is important to note, however, that elections are also a time when ruling parties may be at their most vulnerable and defensive, and campaign efforts that may be seen to ‘criticise’ or ‘undermine’ the party in power could place rights holders, ActionAid and other allies at risk. These are the sorts of assessments that you need to make in context and at the time.
- **Different stages of law or policy formulation:** When government is developing a new law or policy they may open space for ‘consultation’. This is often ‘controlled’ space – government may wish to create the appearance that it is consulting, but decisions have already been taken. There is the danger of being co-opted into unsatisfactory decisions if you are not strategic. The key to successful influencing will be the extent to which the constituency behind a position is visible, has significant numbers, and holds credible positions.
- **A crime, a highly visible tragedy, or a rights violation:** This can bring an issue into the public spotlight and to the attention of duty bearers. It ‘personalises’ (brings a human face) to a political problem. It can help to mobilise public support for a change and force decision makers to find a solution.
- **Public policy monitoring:** Our public policy monitoring work creates platforms through which we can campaign for change. In addition, the information that comes through public policy monitoring efforts can also be fed into our campaigns.
- **An emergency:** Can present opportunities for policy change, sometimes on a very significant scale. A disaster will usually impact different geographies, and particular groups within them differently because of the vulnerabilities created through the failures of government development orientation and policy. Sometimes these constraints on government may be imposed from outside in the way the country is inserted into the global system. The emergency will offer an opportunity to highlight these dimensions to the wider public and to global institutions, and will often open up opportunities for sometimes quite significant change in government thinking and policy.

**Key to successful influencing will be the extent to which the constituency behind a position is visible, has significant numbers, and holds credible positions**

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<sup>9</sup> Drawn in part from The Action Guide for Advocacy and Citizen Participation, pp 188–9.

***Timing: When are we campaigning?***

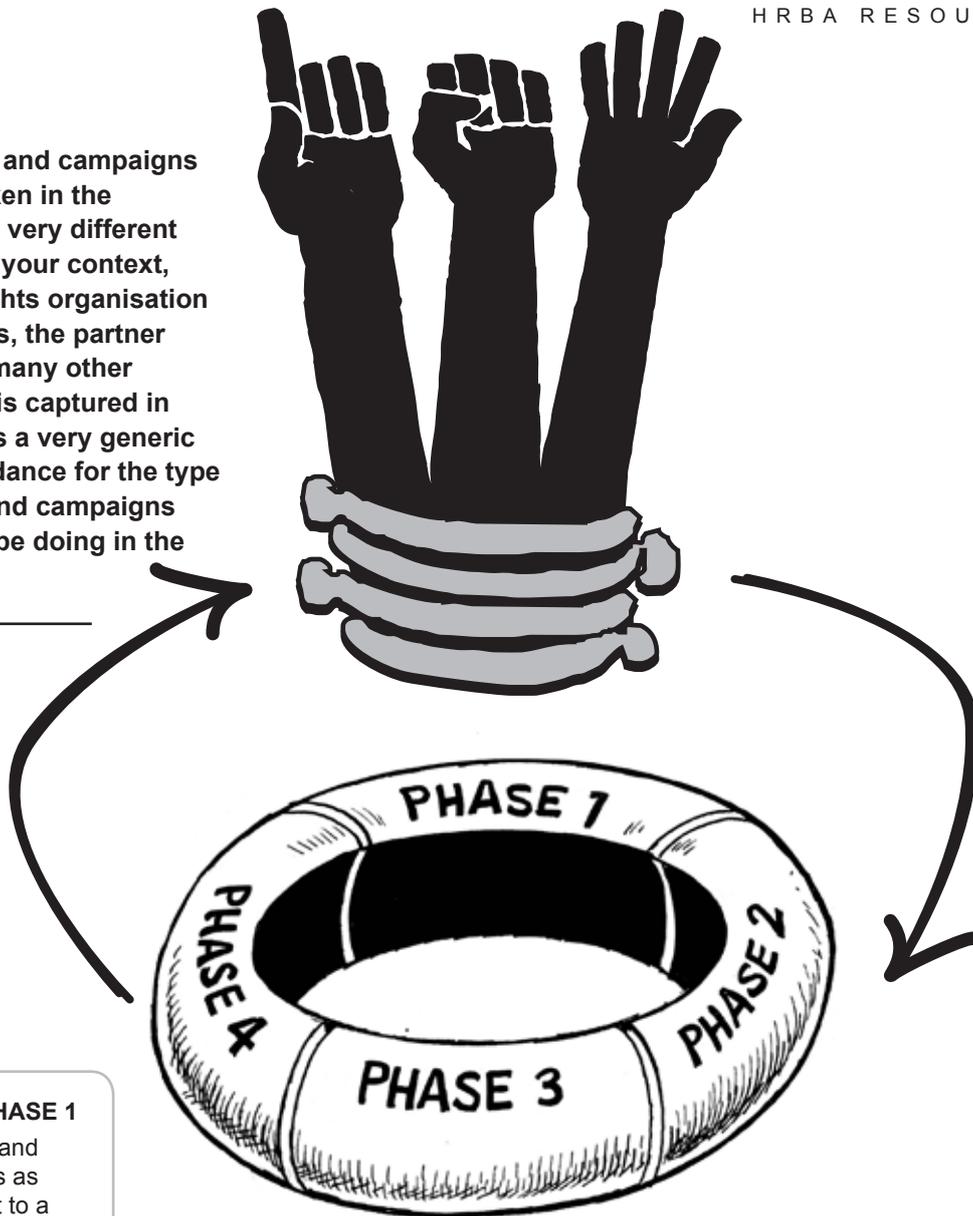
When is campaigning likely to feature in a local rights programme? There are many possibilities depending on the context. Below are a few examples.

**Scenario 1:** In a local rights programme where rights holders are not well organised and conscientised, and where there are few or no civil society organisations working in a HRBA, the first two to three years of intensive programming work may be focused to organising local groups, building awareness and critical analysis, and strengthening leadership skills. Alongside this, rights holders could undertake small 'easy win' campaigns at the local level, for example lobbying a local councillor to secure council budget for a basic service. In this scenario ActionAid and the partner organisation should be supporting the rights holders undertake the basic monitoring of public policy and budgets using ELBAG. This can help build knowledge, organisation and confidence of the rights holders. Once local organisations are strengthened the programme may be ready to move into more intensive campaign efforts outlined in scenario 2.

**Scenario 2:** In a local rights programme where rights holders are well organised, perhaps even linked to movements beyond the local level, and where support organisations are working in a HRBA, campaigning in the first year or two may be focused to (a) acting on 'issues' emerging from the public policy and budget monitoring work that can be addressed at the local level; (b) linking the local level through emergent movements, networks and alliances into national level campaigns of relevance to the local; and (c) working very strategically to build and strengthen rights holder organisations that reach beyond the community level – such as networks, alliances and movements. From early on ActionAid's role will be to create linkages and solidarity between the local, regional, national and international. This is the value we will add to campaigns in the context of strong networks, movements and civil society organisations.

**Scenario 3:** A local rights programme may grow out of a national campaign. For instance a national campaign for the recognition of indigenous rights to natural resources may see strategic value in creating a long-term presence in a specific locality. The campaign objectives might be to undertake action research to demonstrate how indigenous communities manage natural resources, and to pilot a joint government-community natural resource management model. A local rights programme would simultaneously support the national campaign, mobilise and strengthen local communities, and address local needs.

The advocacy and campaigns work undertaken in the phases will be very different depending on your context, the level of rights organisation and awareness, the partner capacity and many other factors. What is captured in this diagram is a very generic and basic guidance for the type of advocacy and campaigns work you will be doing in the phases.



**PRIOR TO PHASE 1**

- advocacy and campaigns as entry point to a local rights programme

**PHASE 1**

**EXPLORING PARTNERSHIP**

- very basic advocacy to duty bearers around service delivery

**PHASE 2**

**ESTABLISHING THE RIGHTS PROGRAMME**

- local level advocacy around service delivery
- starting up public policy and budget monitoring

**PHASE 3**

**ACTING FOR RIGHTS**

- deepening public policy and budget monitoring
- intensive advocacy around service delivery
- with time, intensive advocacy through campaigns linked to the national and international

**PHASE 4**

**SUPPORTING SUSTAINED CHANGE**

- advocating with movements and in networks and alliances

**Monitoring therefore lays the basis for campaigning to bring about structural change**

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### **Section 3: Examples of public policy and budget monitoring to hold duty bearers accountable**

The monitoring of public policy and budgets is an absolutely essential part of rights holder efforts to make claims against and hold the state accountable to its citizens. Through the monitoring of public policy and budgets, rights holders develop important knowledge and capacity that are part of the empowerment process. For example, rights holder organisations are developed or strengthened to undertake the monitoring. Rights holders access information and build new understanding about the role of the state, its duties to its citizens, and an analysis of why this role is compromised through the alignment of the state in many places to the interests of elites.

Specific entitlements promised through government policies and programmes, and budget expenditure on these, are monitored by rights holders with the support of partners and ActionAid. The monitoring leads to the identification of specific rights entitlement violations that rights holders can advocate around – these entitlements may be compromised because the delivery vehicles (i.e. programmes) are inappropriate, or because money is being misappropriated, or even because the policy and law itself is inappropriate. The monitoring therefore lays the basis for campaigning to bring about structural change.

Because of the importance of public policy and budget monitoring we have included some examples here to inspire and support your local level work.

#### ***Monitoring budgets***

Some examples of monitoring budgets as part of our public accountability work are described below.<sup>10</sup>



#### **BUDGET TRACKING FORUMS, BRAZIL**

Participatory budgeting was one of the first initiatives by the present ruling party to try to seize power at municipal level. In this context, ActionAid Brazil's partner organisation Conviver (DA9) launched a campaign in Mirandiba, Pernambuco state, to monitor local government expenditures, investments and funds collected from taxes. The campaign slogan was the 'public budget is your business'. Conviver leads the Mirandiba Budget Tracking Forum, which is made up of around 25 organisations. They have been able to ensure that community priorities are represented in the final budget. Their power comes from the authorities knowing that "... the Forum is serious in... defending... the will of society." In this example, the 'stepping stones' were groups joining the Forum, then getting the budget information and analysing it, and then publicly critiquing it. This led to actual changes to the budget, which is an indicator of greater public accountability.



#### **SOCIAL AUDITS, INDIA**

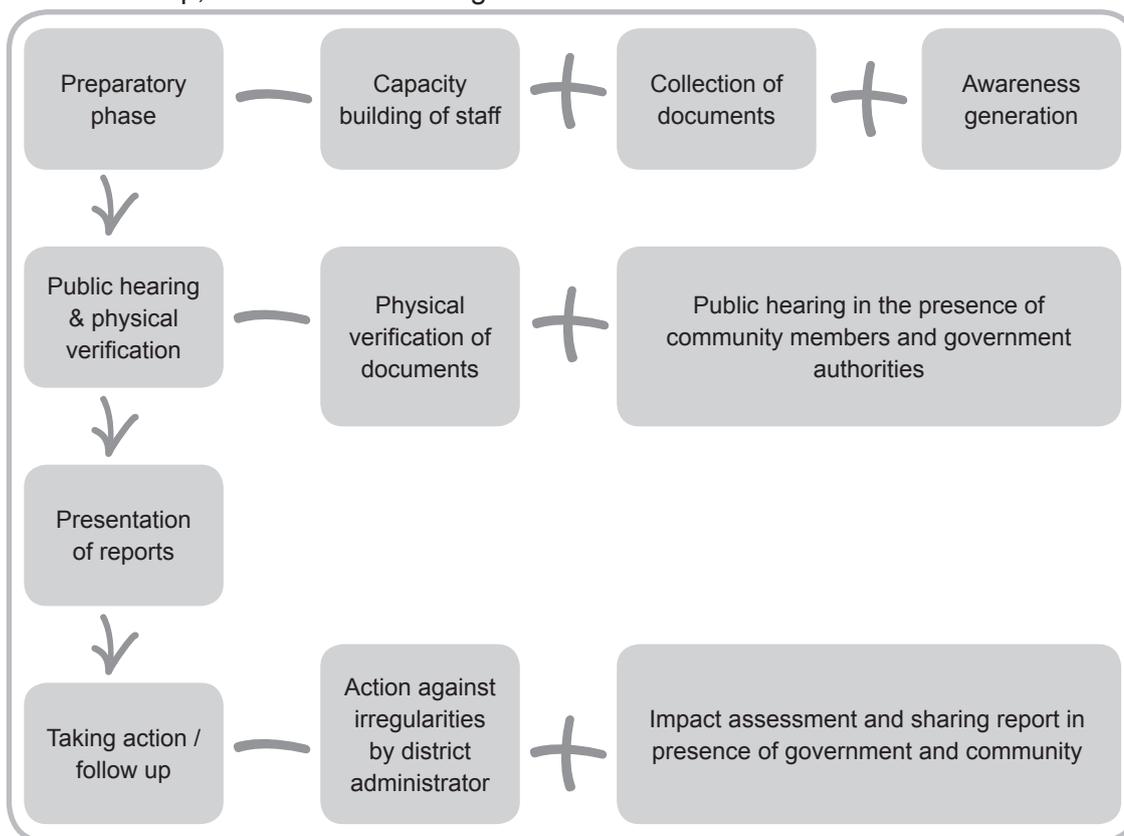
A social audit is an accountability tool to understand, measure, verify, report on and improve government's performance in the implementation of its policies and programmes.

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<sup>10</sup> Please see the [ELBAG website](#) for many of the examples discussed.

In India, ActionAid has been supporting the government of India to undertake a pilot social audit of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) in the state of Uttar Pradesh. The NREGA is an ambitious anti-poverty programme, providing a legal guarantee of 100 days of work a year to India's rural households whose adult members are willing to do unskilled manual labour. Social Audit is an essential feature built into the Act to provide citizens with a chance to monitor, evaluate and give feedback on how it is implemented. Since 2006, ActionAid has conducted 90 social audits in eight blocks<sup>11</sup> of a district in association with its local partner.

Social audit takes place in phases – preparation, verification, presentation and follow up, as shown in this diagram:



Much of the process is generally completed in two days: on the first day documents are reviewed and analysed; and on the second day the report is shared with the villagers present during a public hearing.

After the social audit in one block, Pratapgarh, actions were taken to address findings:

- Suspensions or warnings were given to officials found responsible for irregularities, and an evaluation was undertaken of work carried out by these officers;
- A NREGA helpline was started to receive complaints and forward them to concerned authorities; and
- Payment modes were adjusted, so that labourers' wages were paid through banks and post offices, while materials were paid directly by cheque to prevent corruption.

<sup>11</sup> The block is an administrative unit of the state which comes after the village and before the district.

**Report cards  
give people an  
opportunity  
to assess the  
government's  
delivery of  
public services**

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An impact assessment on conclusion of the social audits found that people's awareness of NREGA and its provisions had increased dramatically, and that NREGA was being implemented much more efficiently. The study also found that wages were being paid timeously, but that gender discrimination remained largely intact.

The baseline in this example was the level of take up of the NREGA entitlements prior to the implementation of the audit. Developing the baseline allowed a deep analysis of what the barriers to take up were. Indicators or stepping stones were then the adjustment of forms, and schedules, and ways of paying, until finally rights were claimed.



**COMMUNITY-BASED MONITORING, UGANDA**

The Uganda Debt Network (UDN) has been facilitating a Community-Based Monitoring and Evaluation System (CBMES) in seven districts. The sectors monitored are education, health, and water and sanitation.

ACBMES report and a public hearing in Katerera, Bushenyi district, discovered the following:

- 2.4 million shillings and 86 iron sheets from UNICEF for Complementary of Primary Education (COPE) schools in Katerera sub-county were nowhere to be found; and
- Funds deducted from taxpayers for the fiscal year 2004/5 for the COPE schools could not be accounted for by the sub-county sub-accountant.

UDN facilitated 72 radio programmes to disseminate findings of the community monitoring exercises. The programmes are moderated by community-based monitors and discuss how to monitor service delivery, ensure community participation and strengthen governance. The programmes are extremely popular because of their focus on making government accountable, and this has increased public support for community-based monitoring initiatives.



**CITIZEN REPORT CARDS, TANZANIA**

Citizens can report on the performance of public institutions and public functionaries through what are called Citizen Report Cards. Collected through surveys and focus group discussions, report cards give people an opportunity to assess the government's delivery of public services such as hospitals, schools and police services.

ActionAid Tanzania trained over 900 facilitators in eight districts to use community scorecards. The facilitators helped community groups monitor local government expenditure and performance. The analysis done in these local circles has fed into national advocacy on treatment, care and agricultural extension services for people living with HIV and Aids. Other forms of citizen-state dialogues include public hearings and poverty dialogues.

***Monitoring public policy***

Monitoring how national policies are implemented locally is another way in which we can hold our governments to account. Here are a few interesting examples of how we monitor public policy implementation in some of our country programmes.



**PUBLIC POLICY MONITORING OF DEVOLVED FUND, KENYA**

The government of Kenya has pursued decentralised development policies since independence. The rationale is that public funds should be diverted to the local level as communities are best placed to identify their own needs and prioritise projects. The Local Authorities Transfer Fund (LATF) of 1998 is one of the mechanisms for devolving funds. ActionAid Kenya and its partner, the Coast Development Lobby Group (CDLG), have been monitoring the use of LATF funds by the Municipal Council of Mombasa. Actions undertaken as part of the monitoring process included: extensive awareness creation within the community; engaging the Municipal Council; and social audits of LATF-funded projects. The CDLG demonstrated against misuse of resources; implemented grassroots campaigns such as the February 2006 Name and Shame Campaign; and petitioned the Ministry of Local Government. As a result of this monitoring the Lobby Group has:

- Created widespread community awareness about the LATF process and citizen rights; and
- Contributed to greater accountability of public officials and political leaders in their use of public resources.



**MONITORING AGRICULTURE SUBSIDY PROGRAMME, MALAWI**

In 2004, the government of Malawi launched a nationwide Agricultural Inputs Subsidy Programme, in which roughly half of Malawi's small farmers were given coupons to buy fertilizer and seed at a rate far below the market price. As part of the HungerFREE campaign, ActionAid Malawi has supported partners – the Salima Governance Network, the Coalition of Women Farmers, and the Coalition of Women Living with HIV and Aids – in three districts to monitor how the Agriculture Subsidy Programme is being implemented, and whether it is reaching resource-poor farmers including people living with HIV and Aids.

The process started with building the capacity of the above mentioned structures on the right to food, which can be partly fulfilled by accessing subsidized seed and fertilizers. The monitoring is done by counting and verifying if those who were registered are the ones receiving coupons. They also ensure that women living with HIV and Aids are not left out during



coupon distribution. Where anomalies are noted, the Division Agriculture Development Officer is notified and questioned.

This initiative has had many successes. For example, in one district, Rumpfi, monitoring revealed that few women were receiving coupons. The two coalitions called meetings with the chiefs and officials of the Ministry of Agriculture to ensure equal numbers of women received coupons. This is another great example of how monitoring is actually a programming intervention that can support and lead to change.

**We need to have evidence of both citizen mobilisation, and change in policies**

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## **Section 4: Monitoring campaigns**

In a people-centred approach to campaigns, change is evidenced not only in terms of changes in actual policy and practice, but also by an increase in active citizen mobilisation and a wider democratic space. Citizens are mobilising and more actively engaged in living their citizenship in the truest democratic sense – co-creating the society they live in, and insisting that the state be accountable to its citizens.

In fact, following from our theory of change, we need to have evidence of both citizen mobilisation, and change in policies. This is because we believe that changes to policies will not bring sustained change unless rights holders are mobilised to ensure that the changes are actually implemented and are not rolled back later by more powerful interests.

Campaigns are aimed at changing policy and practice and holding duty bearers accountable. Obvious indicators are change to the policy, or increased uptake of a government programme. These changes lead to concrete improvements in the lives of people. If we have good baselines in our local rights programme we can monitor change over time, using the data not only as evidence of impact, but also as data to inform policy and campaigns work, for example as part of public policy monitoring.

Because change takes time, it is important to establish a clear set of steps towards change – what some call a critical path with stepping stones or ‘process’ indicators. Process indicators/stepping stones are smaller steps on the way to larger change.<sup>12</sup>

Examples of process indicators/stepping stones for campaigns include:

- A group or set of individuals gained skills, confidence, understanding, commitment, inspiration and/or motivation through their participation in a campaign or action;
- Supporters of the cause grew (this could be numbers of supporters, or examples of powerful supporters that we targeted to bring in, such as a specific politician);
- Level of debate intensified or deepened, as evidenced by the content of articles or discussions; and
- A bill or discussion paper was drafted and scheduled for discussion.

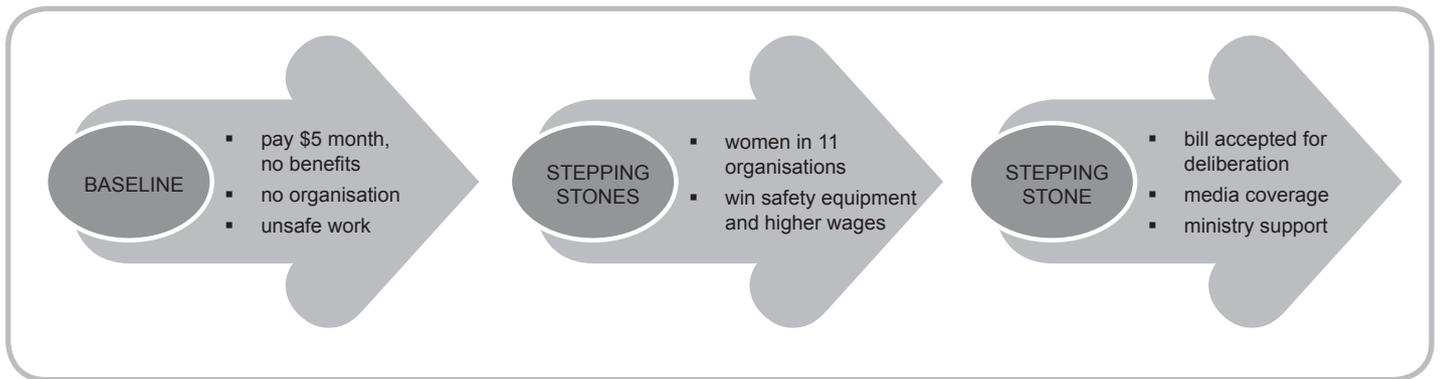
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<sup>12</sup> Veneklasen, L (2007), p 99.

Examples of outcome or impact indicators include:

- Numbers of children who accessed quality education due to increased spending after debt cancelled (Debt Campaign);
- Numbers of new teachers hired; a drop in teacher/pupil ratio after wage cap dropped (Education for All campaign); and
- Number of people accessing antiretrovirals (ARVs) after campaign (Treatment Action Campaign).

In the example from Pakistan, the following indicators or stepping stones were evident:



### ***Performance indicators***

In campaigns, we most often work through coalitions, and the change is brought about by a larger movement. Because of this we talk about our ‘contribution’ to the change rather than ‘attribution’ or us claiming the change. To understand our contribution, we first need to be very clear on the campaign role we seek, and that is most appropriate and helpful (this should be set out in plans) and then we need to get feedback from other stakeholders. In a campaign we are often trying to play a background role, and this raises issues of what space we take. This is one of the things we should monitor in order to assess how effectively we played our role. Our local and national plans should specify our roles and contributions and how we will monitor this.

### ***How to monitor***

Monitoring campaign work can be challenging. ‘Proof’ of our impact is often not easy to establish. Interviews with stakeholders to gather and record their opinions of the impact of our contribution can help improve our campaigns, and serve as evidence of what our contribution was. When designing review processes we should ensure women’s voices are heard, respected and taken into account. It is best to build monitoring and review into the ongoing process, collecting evidence, and deepening learning, along the way, rather than waiting until the end of the year or campaign.

It is important to assign responsibility for gathering the evidence to specific people, and/or make everyone take active part. ‘Participant observation’ and ‘real time evaluation’ is some of the jargon used to describe this. This means that you have someone who is involved in the campaign take on the role of actively seeking to understand the impact the campaign is having. This person can interview people throughout and record the responses.

Monitoring our role is not easy. Stakeholders sometimes don't admit to the influence we have had because they don't want to build our power. Then we ourselves may think we have less impact than we actually have.

Another monitoring mechanism (some call it a panel) is to seek out the opinions of knowledgeable people, who know about the issue, but who are not directly involved in the campaign. They can comment and give testimony on the campaign, its impact, and our contributions.

For more ideas on how to monitor campaigns follow this [link](#).



### ***What will you find in the next chapter?***

In the next chapter we explore what solidarity is and why it is important to local development in a HRBA. We consider the different forms of solidarity and different ways in which we can build solidarity over the life of a long-term rights programme.



### ***Questions for you to think about***

1. What are the main new insights or ideas you have about campaigns at the local level having read this chapter? Write them down or discuss them with your colleagues.
2. Have you got new questions or worries about campaigns? Jot these down, and discuss them with your colleagues or take them up with a manager.
3. What local campaign have you been working on in your local rights programme in the past year? Jot down your thoughts in response to the questions that follow:
  - a. What is the change you are trying to bring about? Is this change possible at the local level?
  - b. What have been your main campaign strategies and actions? Having read this chapter what new things could you introduce?
  - c. How have you tried to link to other local rights programmes and upwards to the national or the international? What barriers have you faced? And what can you do to address these in the next 14 months?
  - d. What are some of the main challenges you are likely to confront in bringing about changes in our approach to campaigns as part of a HRBA local rights programme?
4. What new knowledge, skills and support do you need to implement some of the ideas and suggestions contained in this chapter?



## Resources

ActionAid (2010) 'Campaign Vision' – follow this [link](#)

ActionAid *HungerFREE Campaign Toolkit* – [on the HIVE](#)

ActionAid (2005) *Critical Webs of Power and Change* (resource pack for planning, reflection and learning in people-centred advocacy) – [critical webs online](#)

ActionAid (2006) *Power, Inclusion and Rights-based Approaches: The ActionAid Gender Equality and RBA Resource Kit*

ActionAid (2009) Accountability Exchanges – Exchanges [online](#)

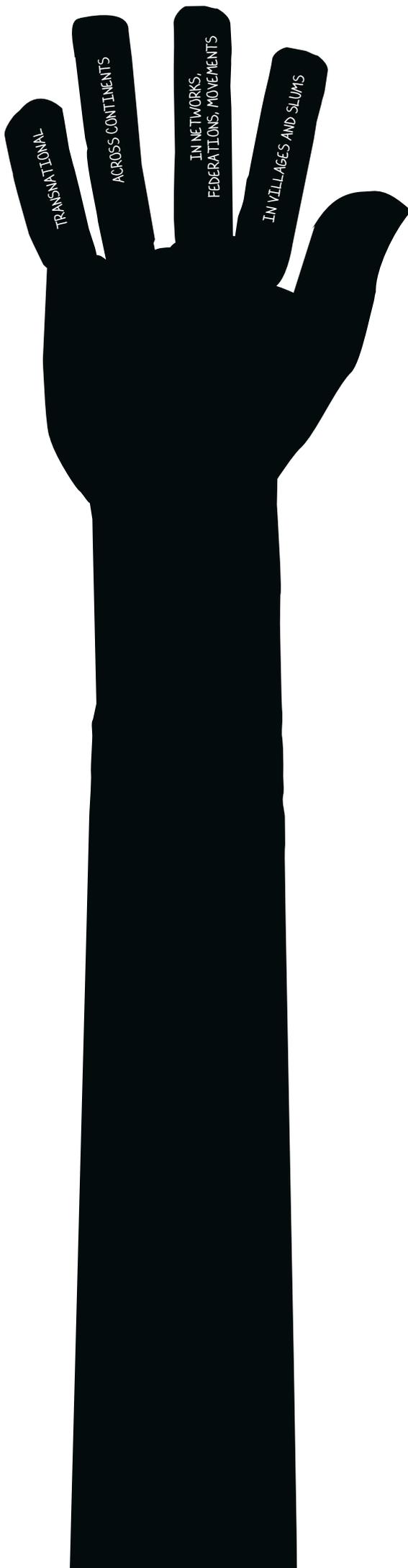
ELBAG website – <http://www.elbag.org/main/>

Samuel, J (2002) 'What is People-centred Advocacy?' PLA Notes, 43, pp 9-12 – [online copy](#)

Tarrow, S (1994) *Power in Movement: Collective Action, Social Movements and Politics*, Cambridge University Press

Veneklasen, L and Miller, V (2007) *A New Weave of Power, People & Politics: The Action Guide for Advocacy and Citizen Participation* – [guide online](#)

Women Won't Wait campaign (2006) (design meeting resource materials) – in hard copy only



# SOLIDARITY

## CHAPTER

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In this chapter we focus on solidarity – one of the three interrelated components of our HRBA programming – the other two components being empowerment and campaigning. In Chapter 5 we referred to solidarity in the context of empowerment and in Chapter 6 we referred to solidarity in the context of campaigning. This chapter turns the spotlight on solidarity.

Our solidarity work is geared to supporting and sustaining a movement for change in which rights holders lead. We aim to build solidarity among rights holders and between rights holders and other groups in society willing to become allies in struggles to ensure rights. This includes supporters and activists in other countries who want to become part of an international movement for change. Solidarity increases the number of people working for change, builds the power of rights holders, and challenges the duty bearers responsible for fulfilling rights. Solidarity is built on the basis of empowerment and solidarity is expressed through campaigns.



In section 1 of this chapter we set out the key elements of the ActionAid approach to solidarity, drawing from an example of solidarity work from Senegal.



In section 2 we look at how to practically build solidarity in local rights programmes.



And in section 3 we look at monitoring solidarity.

**Senegal's  
fishing  
resources are  
under threat  
by European  
companies**

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**Section 1: An introduction to solidarity in  
ActionAid – our approach**



***Solidarity to Stop SELFISH Europe!***

*Thanks to Moussa Faye for sharing this story with us*

In Senegal, where over half the population live below the poverty line, the fishing sector plays a very important role in food security and provides livelihood support to many. But Senegal's fishing resources are under threat – the main cause being overfishing over the past 30 years by European companies.

To safeguard Senegal's food security and the livelihoods of millions of poor people, a number of organisations – from the local to the international – came together to fight Europe's ongoing control of Senegal's fishing rights. The campaign led to the formation of the SELFISH Europe coalition which exposed and stopped the EU's plan to lock Senegal into ongoing exploitation.

THE PROBLEM AT COMMUNITY LEVEL AND NATIONALLY

In the early years of ActionAid Senegal's work with a fishing community in the Saloum Islands in Central Senegal, the community had highlighted various problems in the fishing industry. The main problems in their view were the depletion of fish resources because of European and other fishing trawlers, and the middle agents who undercut their incomes.

It was clear that this was not an isolated problem of just one community. Similar problems were experienced by other fishing communities, and at a national level the impact of losing fish resources to Europe affected food security and jobs. Fish is the most important source of affordable protein, and one in six Senegalese are employed in the fishing sector – men primarily in fishing and women primarily in processing and marketing.

GOVERNMENT TAKES ACTION, EUROPEAN COMPANIES AND THE EU FIGHT BACK

The Senegalese government decided to act. In order to promote food security and Senegalese control over its waters, government introduced new controls in 2006 and did not renew fishing agreements with European companies. Their actions were met with resistance from European fishing companies, and by the economic and political might of the EU. European fishing companies resisted government controls by forming joint ventures with local traders and by flying the Senegalese flag on their trawlers. Using these tactics they continued to bring in rich catches reserved for Senegalese boats.

The EU attempted to push Senegal into an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), which would entrench European control and leave the Senegalese government with limited powers to regulate the fishing industry in favour of local people.

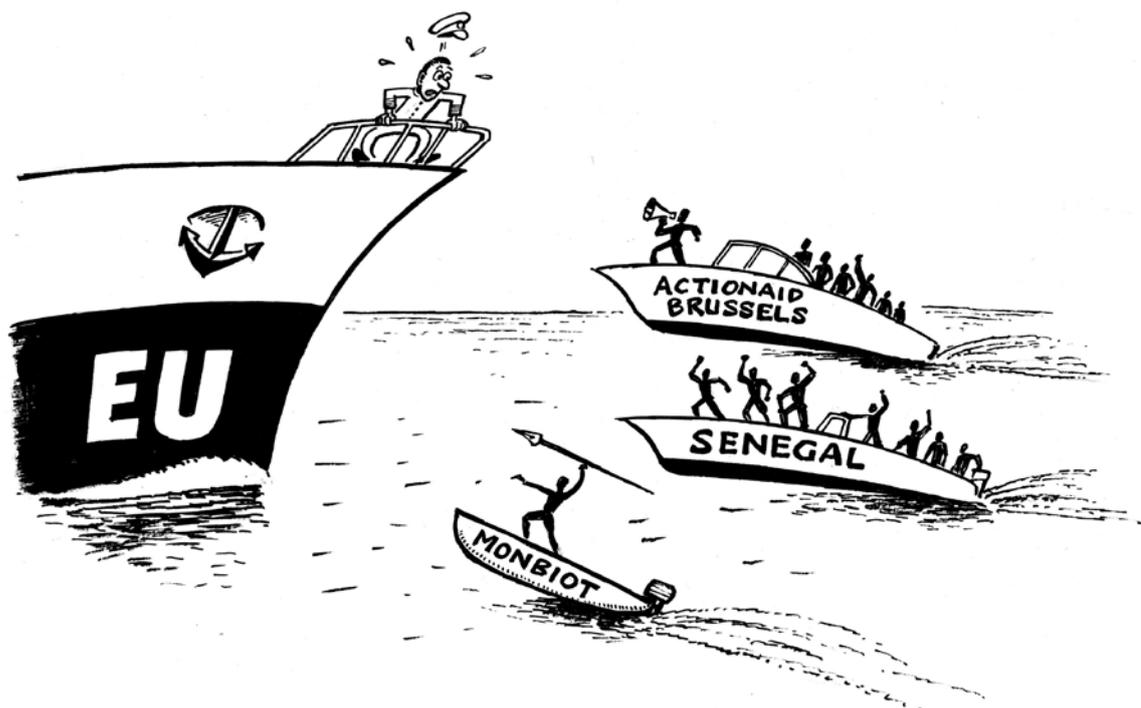
#### CAMPAIGNING AGAINST THE EU

It was clear that a coming together of forces, from the local to international, was necessary to resist EU efforts to push Senegal into the unfavourable EPA. Civil society groups in Senegal and in Europe came together in a cross-continental campaign that backed the Senegalese government's refusal to sign the agreement.

Over a period of more than five years, ActionAid Senegal allied with fishing communities at the local level, and with partner organisations and associations of fisher people at the national level. In Senegal the campaign was undertaken through the HungerFREE coalition of local partners, and included a wide range of women's organisations.

As part of the campaign ActionAid Senegal and its partners worked together with ActionAid's European policy headquarters in Brussels. ActionAid colleagues in Brussels, together with partners and Senegalese government representatives, conducted research to expose the potential impacts of signing the EPA. The study revealed that the EPA would result in reduced local catches, further threaten jobs in the local fishing industry, undermine national food security, and greatly reduce the ability of the Senegalese government to regulate the activities of foreign companies.

**A coming together of forces, from the local to international, was necessary to resist EU efforts to push Senegal into the unfavourable EPA**



**Cross-continental solidarity between a range of allies resulted in the European Commission backing away from the planned Economic Partnership Agreement**

**The pursuit of full humanity cannot be carried out in isolation or in individualism, but only in true solidarity**

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The EU responded defensively, insisting that ActionAid withdraw its report. ActionAid reasserted its position and refused to back down. A number of articles in the print media by political activist George Monbiot added to the pressure on the EU. Monbiot condemned Europe's continued colonisation of Africa's fishing and other natural resources, arguing "Where once they used gunboats and sepoy, the rich nations now use chequebooks and lawyers to seize food from the hungry... The rich world's governments will protect themselves from the political cost of shortages, even if it means that other people must starve."<sup>1</sup> It was in this climate of intense debate that the SELFISH Europe report was launched in Dakar, inviting media attention among others, from the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Radio France.

The Senegalese government's resistance to the EPA, backed by ActionAid Senegal and its alliance with local partners, supported by ActionAid in Europe and by international media, led to the European Commission backing off from the EPA. This was a great victory for fisher folk in Senegal, but also for the well-being and food security of the whole nation!

***In summary, what were the different forms of solidarity that assisted this change?***

The forms of solidarity were complex and bridged many different levels:

- Rights holders acted to support each other through local and national organisations and associations of fisher people.
- ActionAid and partner organisations in Senegal allied with fisher folk, including women as a specific constituency, to build their power (in a strategic alliance with the Senegalese government) to challenge the European Commission and the EPA.
- Cross-continental solidarity was present through the involvement of ActionAid in Brussels - which alongside other INGO and NGO allies - lobbied the European Commission.
- Monbiot, a political commentator and activist, stood alongside the fisher folk on the other side of the world, as a friend and ally, using his power and his voice to inform and mobilise readers of various newspapers across the world against the EPA.

***What does this story tell us about ActionAid's approach to solidarity?***

OBSERVATION I: OUR APPROACH INTEGRATES EMPOWERMENT AND CAMPAIGNS TOGETHER WITH SOLIDARITY

In order to improve living conditions and realise rights at the local level we work to empower rights holders, we build solidarity, and we undertake campaigns. The unity of oppressed or marginalised people is based on solidarity among them, and the pursuit of full humanity cannot be carried out in isolation or in individualism, but only in true solidarity.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Monbiot (2008).

<sup>2</sup> Freire (1970).

Solidarity is area of change 3 in the GMF, and must be linked with all the other areas of change if poor and excluded people are to enjoy the rights denied them. Change in only one area of the GMF will not enable us to meet our objectives. Campaigns will be successful only if we increase the rights consciousness and organisation of rights holders (empowerment) and if we are organising and mobilising civil society in support of poor people (solidarity).

As we saw in the ActionAid Senegal case study, ActionAid Senegal and its partners facilitated awareness and an increase in critical consciousness on the part of the fishing communities (the rights holders). They facilitated awareness that the problems of the local fishing communities were not isolated problems but were shared across communities and linked to the lack of control by Senegal's government over its waters. They built increased consciousness of the role of the EU in capturing Senegal's fishing resources.

The increased awareness brought about solidarity at various levels (as described in the box above) – solidarity among the rights holders within the fishing communities, solidarity between fisher folk and local CBOs and NGOs, and solidarity with allies in Europe able to campaign and influence the European Commission. This solidarity contributed to the development of the SELFISH Europe campaign, and in turn helped the campaign successfully challenge the EU.

In the past, we established solidarity coalitions and alliances almost as an end – and we saw the establishment of these as change. While they are a change – they are also stepping stones – that is, they are a means to the empowerment of rights holders, and a means to hold government to account.

#### OBSERVATION 2: LOCAL, NATIONAL, INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY LINKS

Local rights violations often result from the actions of powerful global actors such as global corporations, international financial institutions such as the World Bank and IMF, or northern institutions such as the EU. Building solidarity across local, national and international levels is often the most effective counter to such powerful actors.

Our understanding of solidarity is that it is most importantly about political struggle. Through solidarity we aim to bring about social change by uniting individuals to respond to injustice, oppression, or tyranny. Solidarity can take various forms including social movements, transnational networks, national coalitions, or locally based groups, including cluster and apex groups to name a few.

In the ActionAid Senegal example we saw how the rights of the fishing communities to an important source of food and to jobs was violated by the actions of European Fishing companies and was further threatened by the actions of the EU. Poor fishing communities on their own would be unlikely to successfully challenge the actions of powerful fishing companies and the EU. But solidarity links forged from the local, to national to international levels and coming together in SELFISH Europe enabled a transnational campaign to which the EU had to respond.

**Solidarity  
is most  
importantly  
about political  
struggle**

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**Political  
solidarity unites  
individuals  
against a  
particular  
injustice or  
oppression**

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Groups and individuals with different interests and skills came together as allies in the campaign to ensure food rights and rights to economic security of the local fishing communities, and to ensure control of the Senegalese government over its waters. By pooling their skills, their power, and their resources, the members of the campaign were able to wage a successful campaign.

OBSERVATION 3: SOLIDARITY MUST BE LED BY RIGHTS HOLDERS TO HOLD DUTY BEARERS TO ACCOUNT

While many other actors and institutions may join in solidarity with the rights holders, it is the interests of the rights holders that must drive ActionAid's role and contributions to solidarity. Our aim is that rights holders should be actors in shaping their own destiny, rather than passive objects of policy.

Political solidarity unites individuals against a particular injustice or oppression. Participants in a solidarity coalition or group may have different ideologies or motives but they support the cause around which the coalition was formed. Those directly affected by the problem can be expected to have the strongest most lasting commitment. Supporters or sympathisers who are themselves not directly affected by the problem may not have as strong or as lasting a commitment. This is one of the main reasons why we say that rights holders should be the driving force of our solidarity efforts.

In examples such as the SelfFISH Europe coalition it is a huge challenge to ensure that the voices and interests of the local communities whose food rights and rights to economic security are threatened actually drive the campaign. There is the ever constant threat that alliance partners who are more powerful, better known and better resourced become the spokespeople on behalf of the rights holders who are directly affected. By replacing the rights holders they are once more cast in the role of objects, although this time objects of the campaign!

It is important that we work with local groups at every point of the campaign – in empowerment activities related to information provision, awareness-raising and conscientisation – and that we look for ways to counter the power imbalances within solidarity alliances as an ongoing task.

OBSERVATION 4: VEHICLE TO ORGANISE RIGHTS HOLDERS AND MOVEMENTS

In order to contribute to long lasting change, and to ensure that rights holders can genuinely lead, our solidarity work must support the growth of a movement of rights holders and their allies for change. When we set our solidarity objectives and our strategies we must ensure that we keep in mind the question: *“How can our solidarity support the emergence and strengthening of a movement for change led by the rights holders?”*

Solidarity as a political resource, a relationship and a movement are urgently needed in all contexts – including democracies – to ensure rights. Rights cannot be taken for granted, but have to be fought for, especially by poor and oppressed groups. Organisations of the poor, labour and civil rights organisations are all examples of solidarity activity to advance rights. Rights holder groups engage in struggles locally, and they act in solidarity through apex structures, networks and social movements.

OBSERVATION 5: SOUND ANALYSIS AND CLEAR STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT ARE IMPORTANT

Sound analysis is critical if we are to strategise effectively. Analysis helps us to understand more clearly who is responsible for the rights violations, and who should therefore be the target of our actions. Analysis also enables us to assess who can be possible allies. In undertaking our analyses we need to understand the roles of various institutions and the links between them.

The ActionAid Senegal example shows that understanding the role of the EU and the significance of its plan – the EPA – enabled the campaign to move beyond fighting individual fishing companies. Drawing on ActionAid international links, and on ActionAid’s HungerFREE Campaign, the EU was targeted directly and this enabled more significant and sustainable results. This is a good example of the structural change we talk about in the HRBA programme minimum standards.

The target of solidarity actions will depend on the rights violation being addressed. In advancing worker rights, solidarity amongst workers may be aimed against capitalists. In asserting women’s rights, solidarity may be aimed by women against men in their households and communities. Often solidarity needs to be aimed against states, since state institutions or legal institutions may act unjustly against those very people whose rights they are expected to safeguard. The worst abuses of human rights have in fact been committed by states. Yet as we saw in the ActionAid Senegal example, government can be an ally. In this example the government of Senegal was directly affected by the EU proposal as this would have meant loss of government control over its waters and fishing resources. Government’s interests thus came together with the interests of the fishing communities and enabled an alliance over the EPA. Beyond this struggle, in the longer term future actions might need to be targeted against the Senegalese government to ensure that the rights of poor fishing communities continue to be protected. This means a need for ongoing analysis.

Some solidarity work in campaigns can result in tension with duty bearers. Since change that shifts power will be resisted by those who stand to lose, some level of tension is perhaps inevitable. A risk analysis,<sup>4</sup> undertaken as part of your context and power analysis, can help you to select the ‘right’ strategies and think through how you can limit risks. One of the advantages of transnational solidarity networks with high public visibility is that this can hold back repressive reactions of duty bearers.

OBSERVATION 6: ACTIONAID ROLE

ActionAid supporters and sponsors stand alongside rights holders in solidarity, supporting them to organise and advocate for their rights. We take sides with the poor and oppressed and act in solidarity with them. We challenge power in order to ensure that rights are realised. We work in partnership, in ways that are accountable and we are transparent in our actions.

One of our challenges is to find ways to transform sponsors who contribute money through CS into campaigners and activists who stand alongside communities whose rights are under threat.

**One of the advantages of transnational solidarity networks with high public visibility is that this can hold back repressive reactions of duty bearers**

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<sup>4</sup> See Chapter 4, section 1, part B, building block 2 for more discussion on risk analysis and management.

**Solidarity work must be geared to supporting and sustaining a movement for change, in which rights holders lead and others provide skills and support**

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OBSERVATION 7: ADVANCING WOMEN'S RIGHTS

ActionAid's HRBA places women's rights at the centre of our work. Through our work we aim to confront the domination of men over women and the inequality between men and women in access to services, resources and power.

When we undertake analyses and when we develop strategies we must ensure that we consider women's interests, and how women are affected by unequal gender power relations. When we engage in solidarity actions we need to ask whether these actions will expand or limit women's access to services, resources and power. When we work with solidarity groups or organisations we must ensure that women are participants not only in rank and file but also in leadership, and that women's interests are addressed at every point.



## **Section 2: Getting practical – building solidarity in local rights programmes**

We need to plan solidarity work carefully in local rights programmes – we need to support increased solidarity in local groups, cluster and apex groups, and social movements. We also need to work to create solidarity relations to national coalitions, and where appropriate international networks and alliances. You, as a local programmer, will need support from your colleagues at the national level to plan out and implement the solidarity work that goes beyond the local level.

### ***Planning solidarity work in a local rights programme***

Solidarity work is likely to feature across the life of a local rights programme. The possibilities for building solidarity will depend on the context. The starting point for our solidarity actions must always be about building solidarity among rights holders. In a local rights programme rights holders within and across villages should be supported to come together, and collectively build their awareness and consciousness around a particular rights issue. Solidarity work must be geared to supporting and sustaining a movement for change, in which rights holders lead and others provide skills and support.

#### SOLIDARITY AMONG RIGHTS HOLDERS WITHIN A LOCAL AREA

In the initial stages of work in a local rights programme where rights holders are not well organised and conscientised, and where there are few or no civil society organisations working in a HRBA, the focus might be on achieving solidarity among rights holders so that they become aware that their problems are not individual but shared problems that come about because of unequal power and exploitation. Care should be taken to include women and ensure that women's interests are addressed. Reflect circles could be one way of increasing awareness, of advancing critical consciousness and building solidarity among rights holders on the basis of their shared experience of a rights violation.

Solidarity can be enhanced through local actions – for example, public policy monitoring and budget tracking using ELBAG, through dialogue with traditional leaders, or through lobbying the local clinic or school for improvements in services.



**In Cambodia people of Toul Kou village** displayed solidarity when they joined together to ensure that their children received the education that they want, need and is their right. Bonat, a community facilitator, worked with ActionAid's partner AARR organisation, to organise and build solidarity between the villagers. His village did not have a school or teachers for many years, and most children in the village could only get education under a tree. The villagers tried without success to find volunteer teachers to teach the 300 or so children. They then decided to lobby the education department. Before going to meet the education department, Bonat facilitated a meeting of the villagers to build their understanding and confidence, and to develop a strategic plan. They set goals and built solidarity to fight for their demands together. The seven school committee members, two villagers and Bonat went together to the provincial education department with the supporting thumbprints of 458 villagers. The education department addressed their demands, and the community are now keeping a close watch on the performance of teachers.<sup>5</sup>

**In a local rights programme, ActionAid and the local partner often act in a solidarity role**

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In a local rights programme, ActionAid and the local partner often act in a solidarity role, helping the rights holders respond to a rights violation, and deepening solidarity between rights holders and supporters from other social groups through campaigns. The campaign would typically bring in allies from beyond the local level, who have knowledge, skills and contacts for public influencing at the national level. Planning and action in such situations should ensure that women are participants and that women's interests are addressed. Planning and action should also ensure that rights holders take the lead and that all participating individuals and organisations lend their support on the basis of rights holders' leadership.



One example of local rights holder-NGO solidarity in a campaign is from **Tamale in northern Ghana**,<sup>6</sup> where a farmer's group struggled against the violation of their right to use common land for vegetable production. In January 2007 the vegetable farmers group of 44 men and 50 women was asked by their chief to vacate the land they were farming. The chief had demarcated the land into residential plots and sold them to private property developers without the farmers' knowledge. The farmers had been working with UrbANet, a local NGO with support from ActionAid for four years. Having had training in leadership and on rights issues, the farmers were aware of their rights and confident to fight back. So one mid afternoon, when a private developer arrived with a load of sea sand to dump on their vegetables, the farmers blocked his access to the land. The chief summoned the chairperson of the group to his palace to answer charges of disobedience and breach of his authority. Honouring the chief's summons, the chairperson led a protest march of 40 men and 51 women to present a petition. Copies of the petition were sent to the Tamale Metropolitan Assembly, lands, and town and country planning departments, to register the farmers' protest against the chief's action and to seek their intervention as government agencies in land administration. The campaign included wide media coverage. In the face of powerful actors who tried to dispossess them of their land the farmers were successful in getting the dispossession overturned and their rights to use the land restored.

<sup>5</sup> Ratha (2009).

<sup>6</sup> Abubakari (2009).

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SOLIDARITY ACROSS VILLAGES AND SLUMS THROUGH NETWORKS, APEX GROUPS AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

As rights holders across local villages or slums increase their awareness and critical consciousness, solidarity can be built across these local areas through cluster groups, apexes, networks and social movements. These formations both build and play a role in maintaining solidarity.

As we develop our campaigns at local rights programme level, we need to think about the forms of solidarity that could assist and strengthen a campaign. Solidarity could take the form, for example, of legal advice, or the voice of a prominent public personality, or letters of support from a constituency. Individuals and organisations supporting the rights holders in their struggles may be of a different class, caste, ethnic group, geography, etc. from that of the rights holders but are willing to share their skills and resources in campaigns to challenge duty bearers and redress power imbalances.



An example from **Sierra Leone** highlights the impact of solidarity across a district when rights holder organisations came together in apex structures and networks to hold government to account for provision of quality education in poor communities. The problem these poor communities faced was that the war in Sierra Leone had destroyed education institutions. For poor villagers in Kambia district their children had never had good quality education. The community decided to take action and set up 49 schools in makeshift structures. ActionAid worked with these communities to improve the infrastructure and the learning environment. School Management Committees (SMC) were formed and trained, and a district-level federation – the Kambia District School Management Committee Association (KDSMCA) – was established. KDSMCA registered as an indigenous community-based organisation, and its members were trained in school management, budgeting, advocacy and lobbying skills. KDSMCA monitored the schools, and negotiated with the Ministry of Education for the recognition and eventual takeover of the schools. ActionAid also facilitated the formation of Kambia Budget Tracking and Advocacy Network (KABTAN). KABTAN has been very active in monitoring the allocation and utilisation of educational resources within the district and with grant support from ActionAid undertook research on ‘Educational Services Provision in Kambia’, providing evidence on the need for more investment in education in the district.

To amplify their call for support to the community schools, KABTAN and KDSMCA joined the Education for All Sierra Leone (EFA-SL) national coalition. This coalition, whose formation was also facilitated by ActionAid, is an umbrella body of many organisations working on education in Sierra Leone using evidence from the community level to engage policy makers at national and international level. The EFA-SL coalition forged strong links with the Sierra Leone Teachers Union to enhance quality education in Sierra Leone. KDSMCA used this platform to call for recognition of the community schools they were managing in Kambia. As a result of all these efforts, the local government in Kambia district officially absorbed all 49 community-owned and managed schools in September 2009. These schools will now receive government subsidies and teaching and learning materials, trained and qualified teachers will be posted to the schools and qualified teachers within the schools will be gradually absorbed into government’s payroll.

The right to education for children from 49 communities has now been guaranteed.

#### OPPORTUNITIES FOR CROSS-CONTINENTAL SOLIDARITY WORK

When planning local rights programmes we should think through, with national and theme staff, the opportunities that exist to build solidarity links and apply pressure for change at national or international levels. This requires that we understand well the institutional context, which institutions to target in order to achieve change, and which international networks to align with.

For example, in many country contexts violence against women and HIV and Aids are issues taken up in local programmes. Opportunities to advance work in these areas both nationally and at an international level are provided by the Women Won't Wait campaign, which addresses the links between violence against women and HIV and Aids. The Women Won't Wait campaign toolkit provides information and resources to assess national policies, budgets and plans on violence against women and HIV and Aids; and to campaign national governments and international donors to ensure that violence against women and HIV and Aids are more adequately addressed in plans and budgets.

Cross-continental campaigning has the added importance of transforming financial supporters into campaigners who can engage in solidarity action with rights holders. This is a significant shift that we should be working towards in all our programmes, as it ensures greater numbers of people committed to social and political change.

**Informed  
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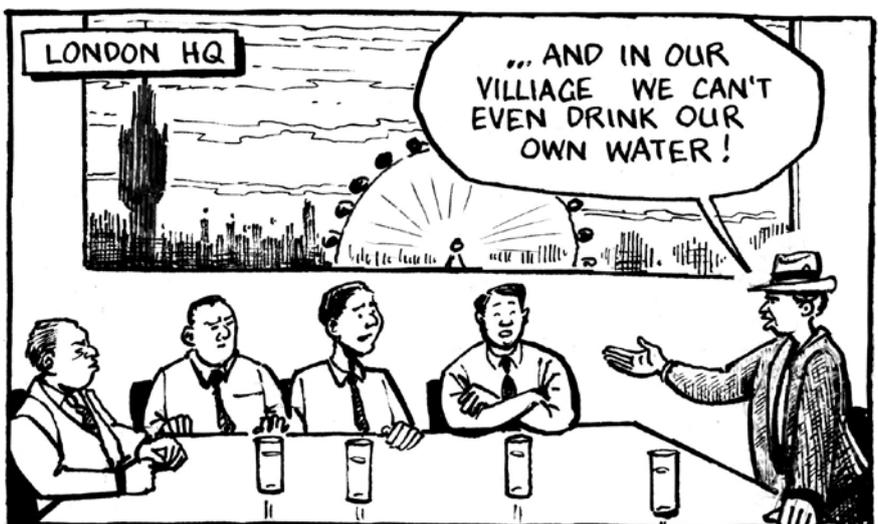


**People's Solidarity** (Peuples Solidaires), an ActionAid affiliate based in Paris, is one cross-continental collective that financial supporters could in some cases align with, and which local programmes could explore as a possible ally depending on the local rights campaign. Their starting point is that no government or company likes bad publicity, that informed citizens have the power to challenge the unacceptable and to show solidarity with those who are affected. They mobilise the support of people in Europe in solidarity with people who are fighting for their rights in other countries.

One of the rights People's Solidarity is advancing is the right of farmers to land. They believe that defending farmers' rights to land is key to resolving the ongoing global food and hunger crisis. People's Solidarity has targeted its campaigns against the EU because of their role in liberalising the agriculture sector and pushing small farmers in developing countries away from subsistence crops. Their campaign brought together 350 activists from Latin America, Africa, Asia and Europe to pressure the EU to address the issue of access to land in developing countries.



**ActionAid Hellas (Greece)** has developed an innovative venture 'A World Upside Down' which aims to support school children in Greece develop an understanding of abstract ideas such as poverty and injustice, and help them think through ways to take action as global citizens. The ActionAid Hellas Development Education Department has created a three-dimensional interactive exhibit that allows children to journey to the Bama community in Kenya. The centre is divided into two main exhibits: one is an airplane where children watch an educational movie that introduces them to the community of Bama; the other allows the children to explore recreated main locations in the village such as a school, a market and a house. The centre opened in October 2009 and more than 1 000 children have participated so far. Children who have visited the centre indicate that they have been emotionally touched and "understand that there are people who have much bigger problems than ours". This is just one of many initiatives targeting schools in Greece that aim to create bridges of shared experiences and common humanity across the North and South.



TRANSNATIONAL SOLIDARITY AS KEY TO CHALLENGING POWER

Solidarity across levels is particularly important when dealing with powerful international, national and local actors as is highlighted by the Vedanta campaign.



The four-year-long Global Campaign for the Dongria Kondh tribe against giant mining firm Vedanta won a victory in August 2010 when the Indian government's environment ministry blocked Vedanta's mining project in eastern Orissa state.

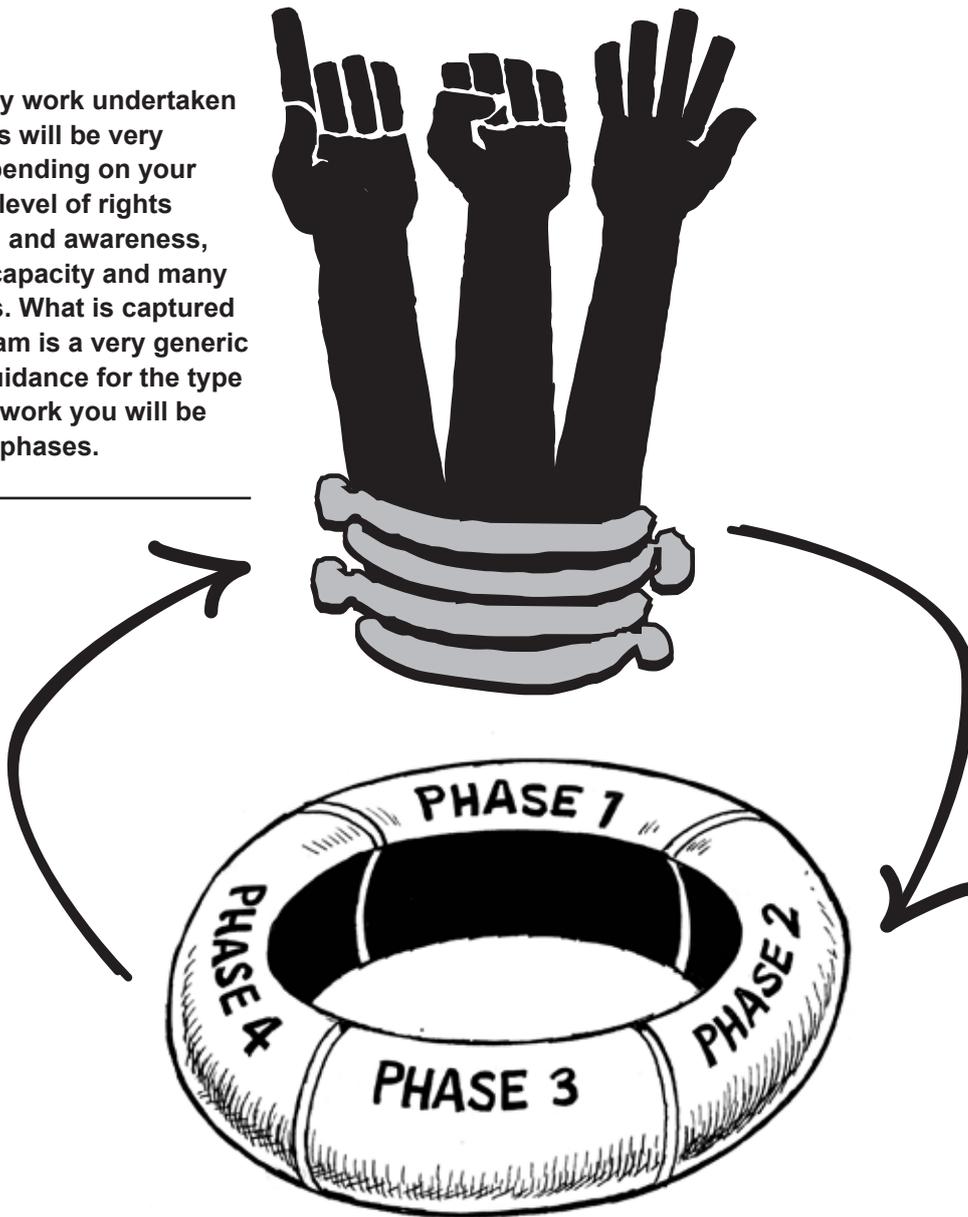
The tribe's victory against the powerful mining giant was possible because of the **Global Campaign against Vedanta Resources** – a campaign that spread over several countries and includes over 150 solidarity groups, grassroots movements, NGOs, activists, intellectuals, academics, students and professionals. ActionAid is a part of this campaign, as are other INGOs and networks, and national NGOs and networks in India.

Vedanta Resources is a multinational mining company, listed on the London Stock Exchange. Vedanta has a track record of violating environmental laws, abusing human rights and political corruption in Zambia, Armenia, India and other countries where it operates. Vedanta announced plans to start mining in the Niyamgiri hills of Orissa, India from October 2009. The community and their supporters resisted these plans on the grounds that Vedanta's mining operations would have a terrible impact on the fragile ecosystem, would poison the rivers and streams, and lead to the cultural genocide of the ancient tribal civilization of the Dongria Kondh and Majhi Kondh tribes. The campaign demanded that Vedanta should immediately abandon its mining plans.

Actions of the Global Campaign included disrupting Vedanta's annual shareholder meetings in London, bringing members of the tribe to Europe to describe how mining would devastate their forest-based livelihoods, and a letter-writing campaign to top government officials in India. In early 2009, 10 000 villagers and concerned citizens held hands in a 17-kilometre human chain around the Niyamgiri hills. In July 2009 Amnesty International called on the Indian government to withdraw permission granted to Vedanta for mining in the area. The Norwegian Government Pension Fund and the Martin Currie Scottish Trust Fund withdrew their investments in Vedanta on the grounds of environmental and human rights violations.

But it was not Vedanta that bent under this pressure. Rather, the government of India's environmental minister announced in August 2010 that Vedanta would not be allowed to go ahead with its plans for mining since this violated Indian laws on forest rights. This announcement followed the release of the findings of the Indian government appointed Saxena panel that Vedanta had violated numerous environmental provisions and laws. The blocking of the Vedanta mining project is a victory for the Dongria Kondh tribe and for the Global Campaign!

The solidarity work undertaken in the phases will be very different depending on your context, the level of rights organisation and awareness, the partner capacity and many other factors. What is captured in this diagram is a very generic and basic guidance for the type of solidarity work you will be doing in the phases.



**PHASE 1**

**EXPLORING PARTNERSHIP**

- building solidarity relations between rights holders, AA and partner organisation

**PHASE 2**

**ESTABLISHING THE RIGHTS PROGRAMME**

- building basic solidarity across groups at local level

**PHASE 3**

**ACTING FOR RIGHTS**

- deepening solidarity between groups at local level
- with time, intensive solidarity efforts across local rights programmes and from local to national to international

**PHASE 4**

**SUPPORTING SUSTAINED CHANGE**

- supporting solidarity within and between social movements, networks and alliances

### ***ActionAid role in building solidarity***

In summary then, ActionAid's role in relation to solidarity in a local rights programme includes:

- Building solidarity with and between groups of poor and excluded rights holders. This would happen by linking rights holder groups in and across local rights programmes to form apex structures, alliances, social movements etc.;
- Facilitating relationships between rights holders and other civil society organisations and sympathetic individuals that can support their struggles;
- Initiating and strengthening an alliance, coalition or platform through participation and/or by contributing support, information, analysis, leadership, training and/or funding;
- Mobilising the rights holders, communities, partners and allies we work with to support, join and/or act in favour of an alliance, coalition or platform; and
- Utilising sponsorship programmes as a form of development education to promote a shift in public consciousness in the North.

A key challenge that ActionAid needs to address in alliances, networks or coalitions is the power imbalance between members. It is critical that we pay attention to these differences in power and find ways of ensuring that less powerful voices and agendas are not marginalised. In a national coalition that includes other more privileged social groups, the rights holders from poor communities may be less powerful and their voices may be marginalised. In a local level coalition it may be community women who are less powerful and their voices may be marginalised.

One of the ways ActionAid has attempted to ensure the interests of rights holders are heard within larger alliances, is by working with rights holders to fully develop and articulate their own agendas prior to engaging with others. Our experience has shown that when this happens, rights holders are better able to advocate for and push their positions. The danger of losing agendas is also minimised when groups have their own processes in place for taking action to bring about the changes they wish to see.



### ***Monitoring solidarity***

Solidarity is a form of power. In the appraisal and strategic planning, programme participants should analyse where they already have allies they can draw on, and what forms of power these allies have. Then they can analyse who else they need as allies. This analysis forms the baseline.

Solidarity links are stepping stones towards empowerment and change brought about through campaigns. So, while it is important to set specific indicators (numbers of supporters in a campaign, action of those supporters, new sources of support) the analysis of the value of that indicator has to be linked to whether that support ultimately built power of rights holders, or contributed to change.

**A key challenge that ActionAid needs to address in alliances, networks or coalitions is the power imbalance between members**

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In the example of Senegal, the baseline would be the level of fish resources, the level of organisation and support for local fisher people, the relative power and income of men and women in the fishing industry, the position of the Senegal government, and the position of the EU government.

The indicators would be gaining the support of allies – for example Monbiot, campaigners in Europe, and members of the alliance in Senegal. The closeness (or difference) in positions taken by campaigners in Europe and those in Senegal is an important indicator of whether the EPA campaign was driven by the interests of rights holders.

As stated in Chapter 6 dealing with campaigning, when working in alliances and coalitions, our role in that alliance is critical. So, there has to be an agreed role and indicators of success for our role, which are reviewed on an ongoing basis.

Monitoring the impact of networks and alliances is a fledgling but growing sector. There are a number of tools available for doing network and coalition analysis. Information on these should be available by 2011 from the IASL/M&E Task Force.



### **Questions for you to think about**

1. What is your powerful new insight about what solidarity is and what we need to be doing to support solidarity in a local rights programme?
2. Can rights holders trust the solidarity that comes from middle-class intellectuals and supporters? What might be the potential dangers and how could these be managed?
3. What do you need to know and what support do you need to build solidarity bridges from the local programme outwards to national and international levels?



### **Resources**

Abubakari, I (2009) “You will not Bury our Vegetables in Heaps of Sand” – the Struggle of Poor Vegetable Farmers to Secure their Rights to Land’, *Stories from the Frontline Series*, ActionAid

Freire, P (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Continuum, New York

Monbiot, G (2008) ‘Manufactured famine’, *Guardian newspaper*

Ratha, P (2009) ‘Villagers together Fighting for Child Education’, *Stories from the Frontline Series 3 Cambodia*, ActionAid

Scholtz, S (2008) *Political Solidarity*, Pennsylvania University Press

## **Glossary**

### **Baseline**

In order to know what we have achieved through a local rights programme, we need to know our starting point. This is what we call a baseline. A baseline should address each of the areas of change in the GMF relevant to the programme and should capture the conditions of women and girls at the beginning of the programme in relation to the intervention areas. The baseline is referred back to during progress reviews and at the point of evaluation of the local rights programme. (Chapter 4)

### **Campaigning**

One of three interrelated components of ActionAid's HRBA programming. Campaigning creates and harnesses people's power through organization, mobilization and communication around a simple and powerful demand, in order to achieve a measurable political or social change. (Chapter 6)

### **Casualisation**

A trend that is associated with globalisation and neo-liberalism that involves work being taken out of formal work spaces into the homes of poor people, especially poor women, thereby removing responsibility for minimum wages and social protection from companies and the state. (Chapter 6)

### **Civil and political rights**

A category of rights that aim to ensure that all citizens can participate in the civil and political life of the state without discrimination or repression. They focus on what the state should not do to interfere with people's freedoms, such as the freedom of speech, association and belief. These are, in effect, 'keep-out' notices to the state saying that these freedoms must not be limited in any way. See also Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and Collective rights below. (Chapter 3)

### **Collective rights**

Otherwise known as 'solidarity rights' and focus on the rights of groups of people rather than on individual rights. They include minority rights, the right to development, environmental rights and the rights to sovereignty and self-determination. The right to development includes the concept that states can make human rights claims against other states or the international community. These claims could include the right to pursue a national development policy, or the right to an international environment conducive to development. (Chapter 3)

### **Consciousness-raising/conscientisation**

Processes through which oppressed groups achieve an understanding of systems and structures of oppression and exploitation, and of their own internalised oppression, and act with this knowledge to create a more just social order. Critical consciousness should help rights holders delve into why they are in such situation and also arrive at an understanding of how to change this situation. In this method, understanding and reflection are linked to action for social change. (Chapters 4 and 5)

**Country programmes**

Refers to all of our country level units, whether these have the 'official status' of country programmes, country offices, associates or affiliates. These country units are implementing work in a particular country context and this is what distinguishes this level of 'unit' from the regional or international levels. (Chapter 1)

**Duty bearer**

An individual or institution with the obligation to respect, protect and fulfil a right, for example governments, traditional leaders, family members etc. (Chapter 3)

**Economic, social and cultural (ESC) rights**

A category of rights that are focused to what the state should do to promote people's rights. They are concerned with equality of condition and treatment – for instance that the state should offer education for all or that it should guarantee the right to food. In 2008, ESC rights were elevated to the same level as civil and political rights internationally with the adoption by the UN General Assembly of the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966). (Chapter 3)

**Empowerment**

One of three interrelated components of ActionAid's HRBA programming. Together with campaigning, and solidarity, empowerment enables poor and excluded people to claim rights and make changes in their lives. Our main empowerment interventions are: facilitating awareness-raising, the building of critical consciousness, and the organisation of rights holders. Basic needs are an important component of our approach and are used as an entry point and vehicle for supporting these main empowerment interventions. (Chapter 5)

**Entitlement**

A guarantee of access to benefits because of rights or by agreement through law. (Chapter 5)

**Evaluation**

An in-depth process that takes place every six years, to assist in understanding changes (positive and negative) brought about as a result of the programme, and to serve as an accountability mechanism, on what was achieved, what was not achieved, and why. (Chapter 4)

**Government**

A term that typically refers to the actual bureaucracy or machinery of the state (see definition below) that carries out its affairs on a daily basis. This is the executive and includes government departments, municipalities, parastatals etc. (Chapter 3)

**Human rights**

Belong to a person by virtue of being born and are independent of a person's sex, religion, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, where they live, or any other status. They cannot be given or taken away. All human beings are equally entitled to our shared human rights without discrimination. (Chapter 3)

**Indicators**

In simple terms signs that we can see or measure and that tell us change has happened. (Chapter 4)

### **Institutions**

Refer to structures, systems and rules that govern the behaviour of individuals in society. Examples of institutions are the family, the community, the state, the market, the international arena, and religion. Institutions typically present themselves as neutral, but in fact always act to advance and preserve the interests of particular groups to the exclusion of others. (Chapter 3)

### **Monitoring**

Refers to the regular collection and analysis of information on the progress of a local rights programme, in order to assess change and the impact we are achieving on an ongoing basis. Some organisations monitor only whether they have done what they said they would do. In ActionAid, because we are monitoring for learning and adaptation, we monitor change and impact on an ongoing basis. Monitoring may include gathering data, stories, and testimony. (Chapter 4)

### **Neoliberalism**

A set of economic policies that have become predominant during the last 25 years or more and have had far reaching negative impacts on poor people across the globe. Policies include major cut backs in public spending and social subsidies; tax restructuring that has substantially benefited elites and reduced money in the state coffers for public services; the opening of markets that have left poor farmers vulnerable to competition from cheap imports etc. Social movements and popular struggles in the past decades have been substantially directed against neoliberalism, and its major proponents, which include the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). (Chapter 3)

### **(HRBA) programme framework**

This framework covers our understanding of what we want to achieve (i.e. what change we want to bring about) and how we want to get there through our programmes. It encompasses our change vision, programming areas, principles, building blocks and minimum standards that can be applied in every context. (Chapter 4)

### **Praxis**

In order to strengthen our HRBA programmes we engage in constant critical reflection. We analyse, reflect and learn about challenging power, and how change happens. This leads to new insights and we adapt our work to support new, stronger actions for change. We call this cycle of learning praxis. (Chapter 4)

### **Service/basic needs delivery**

Basic needs refer to things like food, water, sanitation, education, welfare, health care, shelter etc. These are often the priority issues for action by the rights holders we work with. These basic needs we refer to are typically delivered by governments as public services. These services are usually a government responsibility because they address needs upon which the survival, health and well-being of human beings depend, and generally require a high level of organisational machinery to deliver and maintain. When looked at from a human rights perspective, the state is obligated to ensure that all its citizens – especially the poor and other vulnerable groups – have access to these basic services. In ActionAid's HRBA we use service delivery strategically as a vehicle to empower rights holders so that they can ultimately hold to account the duty bearers responsible for the provision of the service or basic need. (Chapter 5)

**Rights holders**

One of the main parties in a HRBA, the other being duty bearers (see above). Rights holders refer to individuals and groups who are entitled to the enjoyment of civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights – not as a favour or act of charity - but as a right. We work with groups of poor and excluded people who do not enjoy rights or whose rights are violated because of unequal power, inequality and exclusion. (Chapter 3)

**Social movement**

A collective and sustained challenge to elites, authorities, opponents etc. by people who share a common purpose and solidarity. A social movement is comprised of members directly affected by a common rights violation or 'issue' around which an identity is forged through movement struggle. The movement is typically led by members from its ranks although you may find sympathetic intellectuals and middle-class activists playing leadership or support roles. (Chapter 6)

**Social protection**

Refers to different types of 'social insurance', benefits and services – typically delivered by the state – that provide protection against old age, disability, unemployment and poverty. (Chapter 6)

**Solidarity**

This is the third of three interrelated components of ActionAid's HRBA programming. Our solidarity work is geared to supporting and sustaining a movement for change in which rights holders lead. We aim to build solidarity among rights holders and between rights holders and other groups in society willing to become allies in struggles to ensure rights. This includes supporters and activists in other countries who want to become part of an international movement for change. Solidarity increases the number of people working for change, builds the power of rights holders, and challenges the duty bearers responsible for fulfilling rights. (Chapter 7)

**State**

A term that refers to a set of connected governing institutions that pursue certain common objectives or have particular consequences, such as the maintenance of law and order in society. This collection of institutions usually has sovereignty over a territory and its population. The state includes legal/judicial, military, and bureaucratic/administrative units. (Chapter 3)