

CHAPTER FIVE

Through the gathering STORMS: From community to societal change

*Who built the seven gates of Thebes?
The books are filled with names of kings.
Was it the kings who hauled the craggy blocks of stone?
And Babylon, so many times destroyed.
Who built the city up each time? In which of Lima's houses,
That city glittering with gold, lived those who built it?
In the evening when the Chinese wall was finished
Where did the masons go? Imperial Rome
Is full of arcs of triumph. Who reared them up?
Over whom
Did the Caesars triumph? Byzantium lives in song.
Were all her dwellings palaces? And even in Atlantis of
the legend
The night the seas rushed in,
The drowning men still bellowed for their slaves.*

*Young Alexander conquered India.
He alone?
Caesar beat the Gauls.*

*Was there not even a cook in his army?
Phillip of Spain wept as his fleet
was sunk and destroyed. Were there no other tears?
Frederick the Great triumphed in the Seven Years War.
Who triumphed with him?*

*Each page a victory
At whose expense the victory ball?
Every ten years a great man,
Who paid the piper?*

*So many particulars.
So many questions.*

Bertolt Brecht



In another life and time Winston Churchill may have been a ship's cook or Mao Tse Tung a singer!

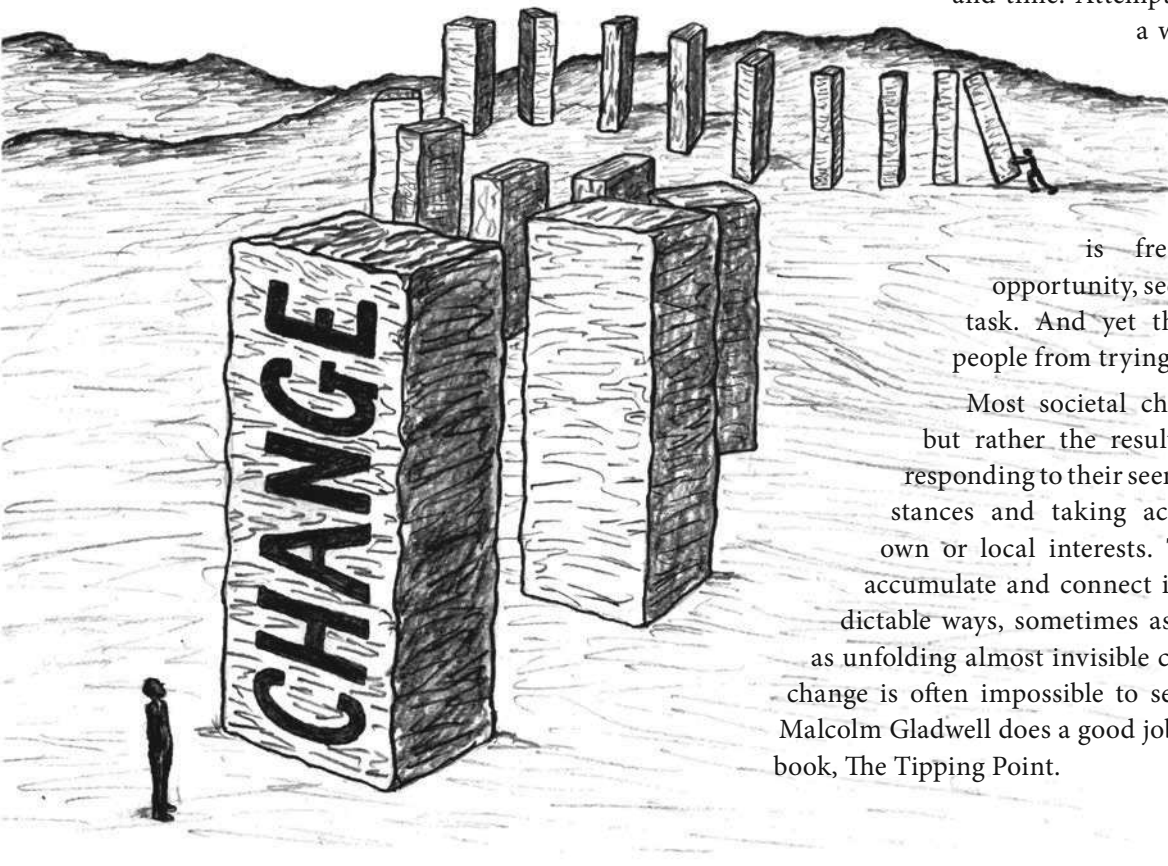
Our history books have tried to explain how societies change but they tend to focus on the achievements of a few powerful men (ignoring the women, of course), the wars they provoked, the laws they enforced and the organisations they led. The books focus on the dramatic events, seen as the turning points of history, because they are visibly rewarding and can be more easily captured in a story or on video. And of course they often only tell the stories from the viewpoint of the winners.

It is true that "great" leaders wielded great power, making bold or brutal decisions that shaped the course of history. But, as the Brecht poem invites us to do, we have to ask ourselves who gave them this power, who supported them or stood by when they acted? And what complex, developing forces of society came together to give them the opportunities to act as they did? Put Nelson Mandela or Genghis Khan in a farming community in Guatemala two hundred years ago and it is quite likely they would have become farmers, perhaps farmer leaders, known only to a few people but not of revolutions or empires. In another life and time Winston Churchill may have been a ship's cook or Mao Tse Tung a singer! Who else worked behind the scenes acting in unseen ways, no less influential, but still unrecorded and unacknowledged? Who and what were the kingmakers? We may think that history is made by great leaders, but actually great leaders are made by history.

What does it really take to make history, to make significant change happen at a societal level? Deliberately. Individual change is hard enough, as is observable from the people we live and work with and as we all make our way through the world. We may have all the knowledge or theory about the change we wish to see but find the new habits we have to practice and new ways of doing and being to be difficult and easily revert back to our old ways. For communities to discover their vitality and to thrive requires great dedication, patience

and time. Attempting to change the way a whole society works, to help it to become more human, a better place for its citizens, where the laws are just and where there is freedom, support and opportunity, seems to be an impossible task. And yet this has not prevented people from trying and even succeeding.

Most societal change is not deliberate but rather the result of people intuitively responding to their seemingly isolated circumstances and taking action, usually in their own or local interests. These smaller changes accumulate and connect in complex and unpredictable ways, sometimes as crisis, but most often as unfolding almost invisible change. And so societal change is often impossible to see or explain although Malcolm Gladwell does a good job of explaining it in his book, *The Tipping Point*.



Then there are those of us, NGOs, CBOs, change agents, facilitators, governments, consultants, communities and a whole host of others who come to this space deliberately. We have an agenda. Societal change initiatives taken by people who actively seek to advance freedom, equality or human well-being are a conscious force of history, to take courage and learn from. This chapter shares four stories, with some analysis, of groups of people who deliberately set out to change their societies, and how in different ways they struggled and succeeded, sometimes failed and in so doing learned their way forward.

We cannot copy any approach, method or understanding because what works in one society may utterly fail in another, but behind a story we may find new questions, learnings, connections and ideas to consider and try. And if we choose to work with change, we can learn to be more conscious of these considerations when designing or shaping our own actions.

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How to find the sleeping leader and wake her up!

The story of the creation and impact of a disabled women's movement in Central Asia

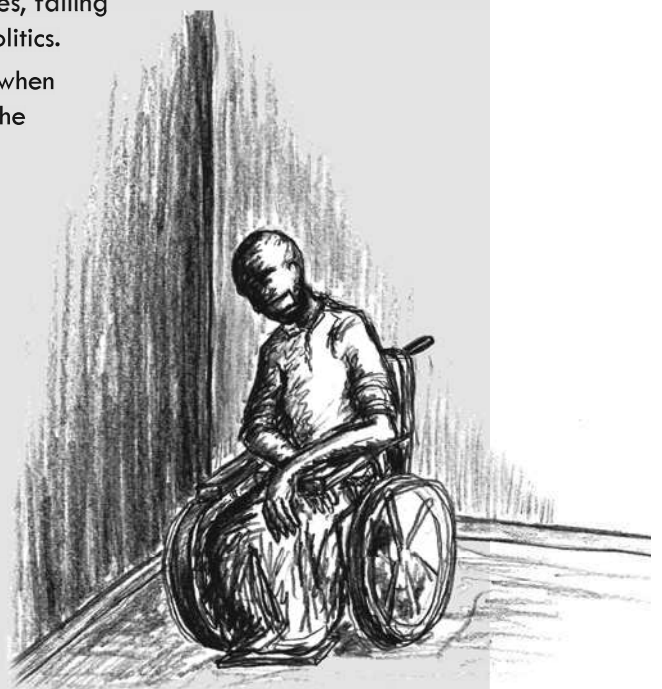
How to live, if you have a disability? What can you dream of, if in addition you are a woman and live in an Eastern society, where the role of the leader can only be filled by men? In a society where people with disabilities are sexless creatures surrounded by countless barriers?

At the time we were only observers of Life, but not active participants. Real Life, with its colors, passions, ups and downs was seething and in full swing outside the windows of our homes. While sitting at home and observing the Life outside our windows, we could not even dream of studying, working, going on dates, falling in love, having children, traveling or engaging in politics.

The turning point started just over a decade ago when several of us women, wheelchair users, from one of the Central Asian countries, were invited by a disabled people's organization to visit Finland. There we experienced a new way of thinking; a human rights based approach to disability issues. We saw strong women with disabilities give public speeches. We felt the power of peer support from these women.

When we returned home we decided: Enough with observing! We need to participate in Life! In our lives, nothing good will happen if we will not make it happen ourselves!

We started to dream of a Central Asian network of disabled women that would use role models and peer support to spread new ideas about gender issues. Working together built our courage to face society.



But after creating a small organization of women with disabilities, we were still strangers among our own: Men with disabilities considered the gender approach to disability as caprice and fancy, the women's movement saw us as only sexless persons with disabilities.

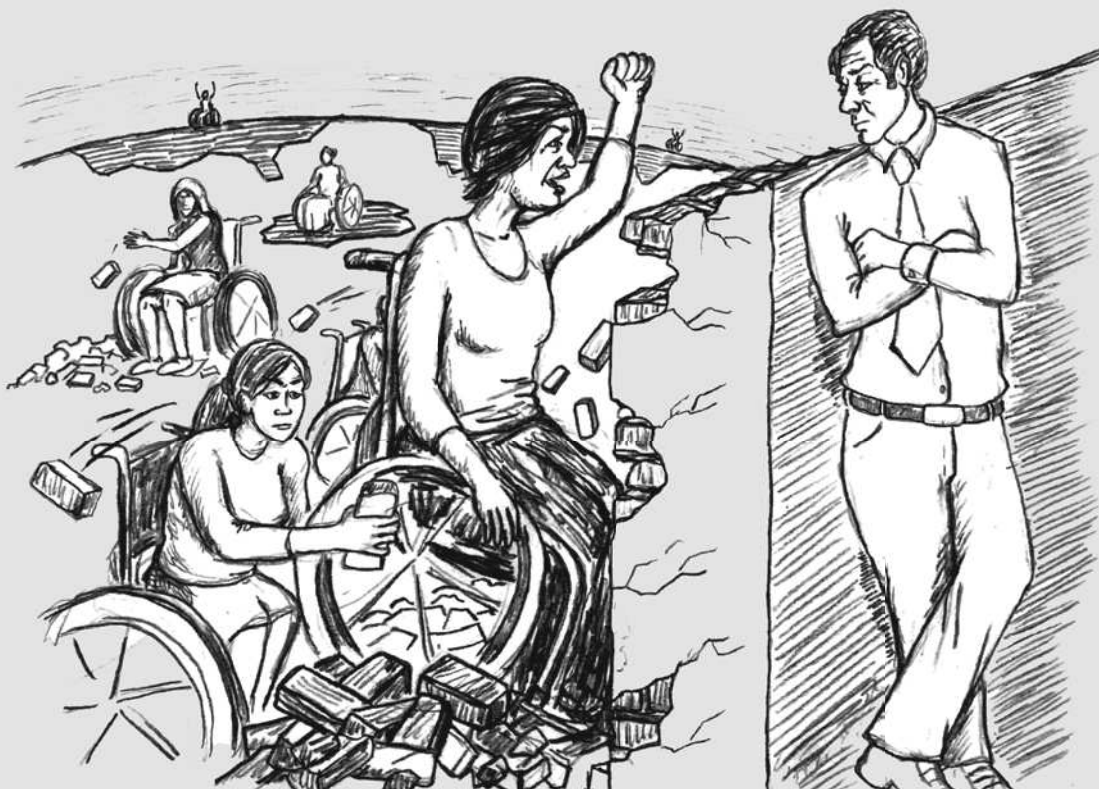
Then we realized that of all the barriers, the highest one is prejudice in the minds of people. To make changes in our lives, we needed to break stereotypes. Of course, we could have used the usual ways of raising issues such as education and employment, rehabilitation and accessibility. But we had seen how these issues have been discussed for decades and for decades nothing has changed.

So we developed our own strategy. We started talking about the sexuality of women with disabilities. We women gathered our courage to speak out about our rights. We went in front of parliament; we approached the officials – all men – and talked about our private and intimate lives, about access to toilets and washing sanitary napkins in the sink. This was extreme and very risky in our Central Asian countries.

We started in one city and in one country, and then it spread quickly to all regions and other countries. One bell ringing is too small, many bells are louder. An orchestra of bells can spread the same message. We rang our bells everywhere, in schools, in universities, in theatres, in the media, in meetings and conferences.

We published our research about the situation of women with disabilities in our countries with findings not only about education and employment but also taboo topics such as sexuality, abortion and suicide. At first the public reaction was shock and shame. But the day when our organizations were flooded with phone calls from the media, we knew our strategy was working.

Finally, society was paying attention to us. People noticed the humanity in us and more than that – that we are women that have the same needs as everyone else. We had caught the public's attention with taboo issues; next we could also discuss other rights.



Now, that they listened to us we talked about our needs that are not met, about dreams unfulfilled and the numerous barriers existing around us. We created a network of leaders and organizations of women with disabilities in the five Central Asian countries, to show that the problem is serious and those who face it are many.

Ten years have passed. All the barriers are far from disappeared from our lives. But we became visible in this Life. Some of us got married and became happy moms. Others received an excellent education, found work and built businesses.

We are often asked: You are so many, bright and strong leaders. How did you find each other? And then we say, when we started, we had been isolated units. We met with many people showing through our experiences that changes are possible. And we firmly believed that in every town or community a leader is waiting for us. Perhaps she sleeps still. It is important to wake this sleeping leader, give her the feeling that she is not alone and help her believe in her own power.

Wake up the sleeping leader, and then the next time you arrive in this community, you will see that not only one person has changed.

Lyazzat Kaltayeva, Association of Women with Disabilities “Shyrak”, Kazakhstan

Lyazzat’s story shows how change can emerge from small seedlings, sparked by an invitation and stimulated by in country and cross country peer support. A community of people with disabilities emerged and then a powerful vision developed, organisations formed and as people gained courage all kinds of possibilities were released. The women here broke from a more conventional advocacy approach to wake people up to the deeper personal and cultural issues of being disabled, which in the culture of Central Asia seemed almost impossible to talk about. This is an interesting challenge to those who see cultures of silence, taboos, patriarchy and exclusion as factors which limit people’s ability to stimulate change. They are missing the point, because challenging these factors are at the very heart of change, the very purpose of our endeavours, the real work of social change. Working at this level culminated in changes in policies and practices and more importantly, changing cultural perceptions.

Their approach was unique, but the real difference was the process that led to the courage and resolve they collectively reached to take on shifting mindsets and getting to the heart of the matter so that women with disabilities could have the life they wanted for themselves. Social innovation cannot only be a technical fix, it requires working with courage, not just with bravado, but with an intelligent courage that learns its way forward. So this story may not make the history books but we think it is an important one to share because it shows how people can change their community and so change the world. There are no hero leaders in this story because, well, everyone in the story is a hero.

The women here broke from a more conventional advocacy approach to wake people up to the deeper personal and cultural issues of being disabled...

Jansatyagraha - A non-violent action for People's control over land, water and forest

A story of the work of EktaParishad, a people's movement in India.

"Between Silence and Violence is Active Non-Violence"

"Satyagraha" was the name of Mahatma Gandhi's practice of non-violent resistance – meaning "insisting on the truth"

For these communities, land is a source of identity, dignity and security.

EktaParishad is a people's movement, in India, dedicated to non-violent principles of action. Our activists work towards building gram swaraj or community-based governance, gram swawlamban or local self-reliance and jawabdehsarkar or responsible government. Our aim is to see India's poorest people gain control over their livelihood resources, especially land, water and forest.

We are a federation of approximately 11,000 community-based organizations and have thousands of individual members. We are currently operating in 10 states working for the land and livelihood rights of India's most marginalized communities (tribals, dalits, nomadic communities, agricultural labourers, small and marginal farmers, etc.). Our work is expanding to over 20 Indian States.

Losing access to the source of livelihood, identity and dignity: land, water and forest

We see the problems of access and control over livelihood resources like land, water and forest as the fundamental underlying conflict that we are trying to mediate and resolve in the interests of marginalized communities. We do this by advocating for

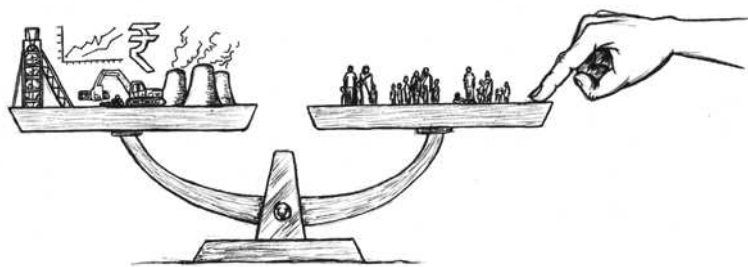
a pro-poor land-reform policy. In India, millions of people are at threat of being forced off their land due to schemes that include mining, logging and nuclear power. On one hand, government and corporations are colluding to transfer these livelihood resources to corporations in order to produce profits and increase the GDP of the country. On the other hand, in an agrarian economy like India, large sections of the society depend on these resources for their sustenance. 9% of India's population of 1.2 billion belongs to one of the many adivasis (indigenous) communities, 22 % are Scheduled Castes (Dalits) and 12% are from nomadic communities.

These communities depend on resources like land, water and forest for their sustenance but they do not have easy access and control over these resources. For these communities, land is a source of identity, dignity and security. Land also has a deep cultural importance.

Ekta Parishad



We see the creation of laws and policies that enable the transfer of these resources to large corporations as a form of systemic violence. Jansatyagraha is a non-violent action that was organized at such a moment of increased systemic violence on the landless and homeless, to advocate for a pro-poor land-reforms policy that will promote increased people's control over land, water and forest.



Our approach: non-violence and dialogue

EktaParishad is a 23 year old organization with a history of numerous non-violent actions in the Gandhian tradition and collaborating with the government to deliver justice to marginalized communities who are landless and homeless.

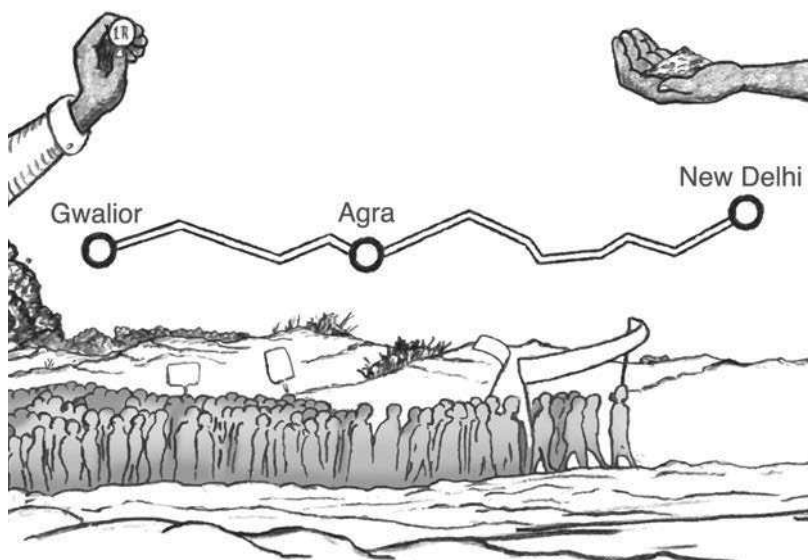
In order to mediate this conflict, EktaParishad adopted a twin strategy of struggle through large-scale non-violent actions and dialogue with government. Dialogue is always our first choice, but if the government is unwilling to talk then non-violent actions are organized to apply moral pressure on them to engage with the issues and set the stage for a dialogue. We do not threaten but peacefully compel change because people are suffering unacceptably under a sacred constitution that the government has sworn to uphold. Through dialogue we try to collaborate with government officials, to assist them in developing and implementing a pro-poor land-reform policy that will address the issues of landlessness and homelessness.

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Jansatyagraha

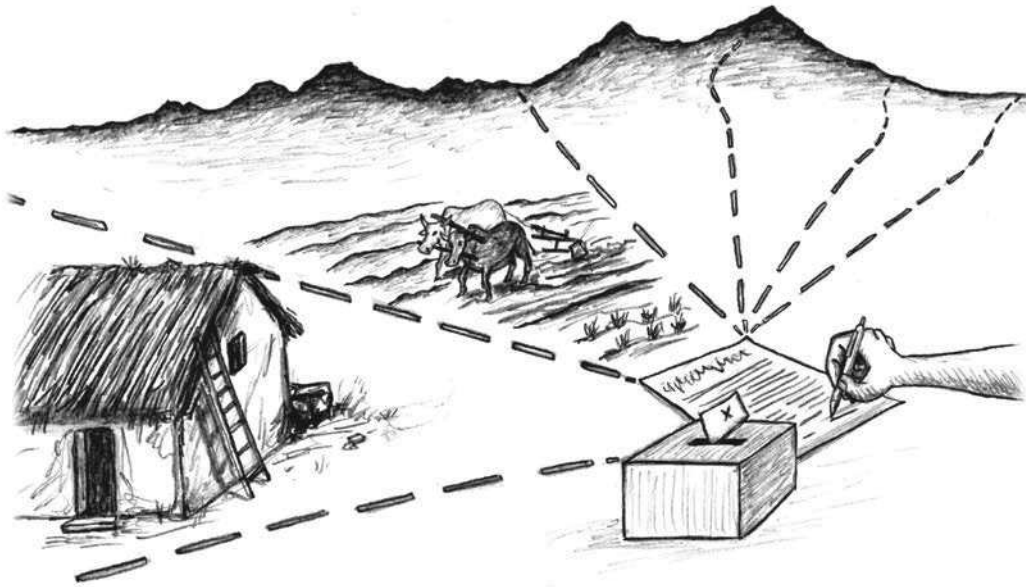
Jansatyagraha was our latest large-scale non-violent action in which 100,000 people from marginalized communities participated in a foot-march of over 350 km over a period of one month, from the 2nd of October 2012, walking together from the city of Gwalior in Central India to the capital city of New Delhi.

Many participants travelled 4-5 days to reach Gwalior. They ate, bathed, slept, defecated and washed their clothes on the national highway during this action. They spent their own money travelling to and from Gwalior. They had each saved one rupee and a fistful of grain everyday for 3 years to prepare for this action. The money they saved was used by them for their expenses and the fistful of grain they saved for 3 years were left behind for their family while they were walking.



To build public opinion for this campaign and to develop a participative agenda for the negotiations, Rajagopal P.V, the leader of EktaParishad, travelled around the country with a small group for a period of one year, through 80,000 km, visiting 335 districts of India. 2000 organizations and individuals had expressed their full support for this action and many of them were able to participate in the action.

The action convinced the government of India to sign the 10-point “Agreement On Land Reforms Between The Ministry Of Rural Development (Goi) And Jan Satyagraha” at the historic city of Agra to address the problems of landlessness and homelessness.



The underlying principles that inform our work

We try to convert these strengths into a visible show of power by organizing long foot-marches that make it possible for participants to undertake suffering on themselves to advocate for their cause.

EktaParishad’s philosophy and practice of non-violence is encapsulated in the four principles described below. The core thinking behind our understanding of non-violence is captured by the phrase “Between Silence and Violence is Active Non-Violence”.

1. Leverage the power of the ‘poor’

EktaParishad works with those who are considered to be at the bottom 40% of the society but instead of working from a deficit-based lens we work from the principle of leveraging the strength of the ‘poor’ for their own benefit. The ‘poor’ in India have the capacity to walk long distances even when they are on a minimalistic diet of a single meal a day. They have the capacity to withstand harsh living conditions like walking under the hot sun or sleeping under the open sky on a cold night. Their general levels of immunity is much higher in the sense that they are able to sustain themselves in conditions that would make a middle-class urban dweller sick. We try to convert these strengths into a visible show of power by organizing long foot-marches that make it possible for participants to undertake suffering on themselves to advocate for their cause. In this process they are able to exercise soul-force to counter the forces of systemic violence.

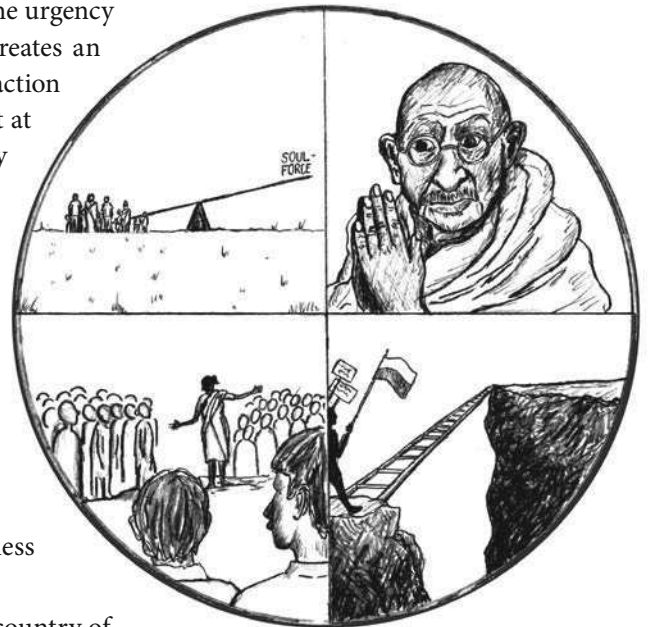
2. Discipline, a key component of non-violent soul force

We engage in non-violent actions only after we have exhausted all avenues of dialogue and advocacy and so we see our non-violent action as another form of dialogue with the 'other' party. During our non-violent action, our effort is to reach out to the heart of the 'other' party by making them uncomfortable but never going to the point of threatening them. For this purpose, we keep up our rhetoric at a level that conveys the urgency and importance of our agenda but never at a level which creates an environment of animosity. So our participants undertake the action in a celebratory mode, singing and dancing along the way but at the same time, maintaining a sense of serious intent. The key in this entire process is discipline among the participants and leaders of the campaign.

This discipline is developed over time by participating in many actions at local levels. We publish a guideline that has instructions on people's response under various circumstances so they can prepare for different contingencies.

Slogans like the ones mentioned below remind everyone to maintain the position of non-violence even in difficult circumstances.

- "Hamlachahejaise ho, haathamaranahinuthega" ("Regardless of the kind of attack, we will never raise our hands")
- "Gandhi kedeshmein, hinsakaraajnahinchalega" ("In the country of Gandhi, the rule of violence is not acceptable")
- "MarengenaManenge, Jo Hum se Takrayega, Usko Hum Samjhayenge" ("Neither will we hit nor will we accept, we will transform the one who fights with us")



3. Every social action is seen as an opportunity for learning

Every non-violent social action is seen as an opportunity for different kinds of learning for different groups of people. There will be a section of people who will take up different kinds of leadership roles that are commensurate with their abilities, and in the process grow in their leadership. During Jansatyagraha about 12,000 leaders were trained to take responsibility for different aspects of organizing the campaign. At the time of designing the campaign itself, we take into consideration the number of leaders who will need to be trained using different training methodologies and set about developing those capacities within our organization.

4. Social transformation is like climbing a ladder of success

The social action is organized with an intention to strengthen an ongoing dialogue process with the government. So during our negotiations, instead of engaging with an all-or-nothing mindset, we are mindful of the sacrifices and efforts people are making and strive to get the maximum from the current round of dialogue so that people can go back with a sense of accomplishment.

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... promoting the underlying principles of non-violence to speak to the fear, anger and doubt of the people and to inspire them to find the courage...

Such a success builds people's faith in the power of non-violence and collective action and they are more enthused for a larger action in a few years' time. This is another kind of learning that people go through. So slowly the spaces in the country where people engage in non-violent actions for addressing their problems grow and the culture of non-violence gets strengthened.

Some key outcomes of Jansatyagraha

Even though India has a long history of people's struggles on the question of land-rights, in the post-liberalization era, in the minds of planners and policy makers, welfare became the key strategy for poverty eradication and land-rights was pushed to the back-burner. A key achievement of Jansatyagraha is that government, policy makers and bureaucrats, who until now refused to consider land-rights as a key component of any strategy to eradicate poverty, have begun to take the issue seriously. In the recently held elections in the state of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, leading political parties took land-reforms more seriously while preparing their manifestos.

Concretely speaking, a draft land-reforms policy that outlines the government's stand on the different questions pertaining to utilization, and distribution of land has been completed. A Homestead bill has been drafted that guarantees 0.1 acres of land for every rural homeless person for the purposes of setting up a small shelter and having spaces for a kitchen garden, poultry, and cattle. The government has taken several pro-active steps to distribute land to the landless and homeless.

Principal writer: Ravi Badri of EktaParishad (ravibadri@gmail.com)

(More information about EktaParishad is available at www.ektaparishad.com)



The story of EktaParishad's campaign contains a clear set of lessons about how to pursue a deliberate and significant process of social change. The outside story is of a mass of people being mobilised to march on Delhi which woke up the politicians to change the law. But the inside story was of a long preparatory process,

spreading an idea and promoting the underlying principles of non-violence to speak to the fear, anger and doubt of the people and to inspire them to find the courage and solidarity to act in a disciplined way. The quality of endurance and discipline is what makes this story so unique. It is a massive achievement to bring together 100,000 people in a month-long and peaceful march. This story should be in the history books of tomorrow.

The next story is one where the change succeeded but subsequent delivery and achievements wavered to the extent that women's health indicators declined instead of improving or stabilising.

WE DID IT TOGETHER... AND THEN WE DID NOT.....

Written by Barbara Klugman

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead

This is a story of social change over time, how a victory may not remain a victory, how often a process of change has all sorts of outcomes beyond the articulated goal. It is also a story about strategizing and how, even though our strategies may change, many different stories of change illustrate the same processes of strategic thinking and action. It is a story about how we ensured that the values for which we were struggling were also embedded in the process of the struggle

– the way we did the work. It is a story of a type of leadership that aims to build and validate multiple voices rather than a few individuals holding onto that role; which makes writing it difficult because while ‘I’ am in the story, the whole excitement of the story is that it became ‘we’.

This story focuses on how we changed the abortion policy of the country.



A Time for Change – South Africa in the mid-1990s

Democracy was on its way in South Africa and recognising that huge opportunities were on the horizon for changing laws, policies and ways of seeing, I set up the Women’s Health Project. I wanted to involve people concerned with women’s health who wanted to, create a new society that recognised the dignity and rights of all people. I wanted to challenge the inequities created by apartheid and to frame what we wanted for women’s health in a new South Africa. I spent the first six months consulting across the country about what the Project should do.

What did we do? We networked and identified organised groups all over the country – pensioners groups, youth groups, women’s rights groups, nurses’ organisations, doctors’ organisations, rural women’s groups, religious groups, workers organisations and unions, sports groups. Over a period of two years, we invited representatives to meetings in sub-regions of provinces, asking them ‘what women’s health issues should we be taking up?’ From this we established ‘expert groups’ of academics and practitioners to write draft policies which we took back to the regional networks to get their feedback and input. There were huge debates in each group. We tried to use key values such as equality and equal access to services as the guiding principles to resolve differences. Each group sent one representative to debate and finalise each policy proposal at a Women’s Health Conference in December 1994.

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These were new experiences for most of us; being in groups with people we seldom met and worked with. The process was empowering and shifted many of our understandings of each other's experiences and needs, building solidarity between us. Many of us took that experience and debate back to our different constituencies and took up the issues there.



Coalitions for Strategic Thinking and Action

This process helped reveal the need to formalise a coalition to develop a strategy to get our abortion proposal, now owned by everyone involved, into law. The Reproductive Rights Alliance brought women's reproductive rights groups, reproductive research groups, legal rights groups, and groups focusing on primary health care together. The meetings allowed us to see who was doing what to prepare the ground for the legal process. For example the Reproductive Health Research Group was completing a major study under the auspices of the Medical Research Council of the costs of illegal abortions to the public health system; the Centre for Applied Legal Studies was identifying laws and legal arguments from other parts of the world from which we could learn.

The different groups in the Reproductive Rights Alliance carried out different tasks and we identified and worked with a range of people to push the process forward. This included identifying and engaging public figures such as Desmond Tutu, the Archbishop of the Anglican Church, to raise his voice on why women end up needing abortions and parliamentarians who already agreed with our proposal to draft the law.



We also spoke with those who were uncomfortable with our proposal, to understand how to build support among parliamentarians in the dominant party – the ANC – and others. This process demonstrated the importance of making the time for debate and negotiation in order to express a problem and develop a solution / policy option that works for as many people as possible, builds everyone's knowledge and motivation in the process, gets people on board and excited, and has everyone working in the same direction even while they make different contributions, and sometimes have varying priorities and perspectives.

Ultimately the Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act was passed in 1996 including some of the most controversial aspects of our proposal, namely that nurses (with appropriate training) should be able to do abortions, and that minors should be able to access abortions without parental consent. *Our reason for this was that many of these girls became pregnant because of coerced sex including in the home; if parents could not protect their girls from such coercion, they should not be allowed to prevent the girls from having abortions.*

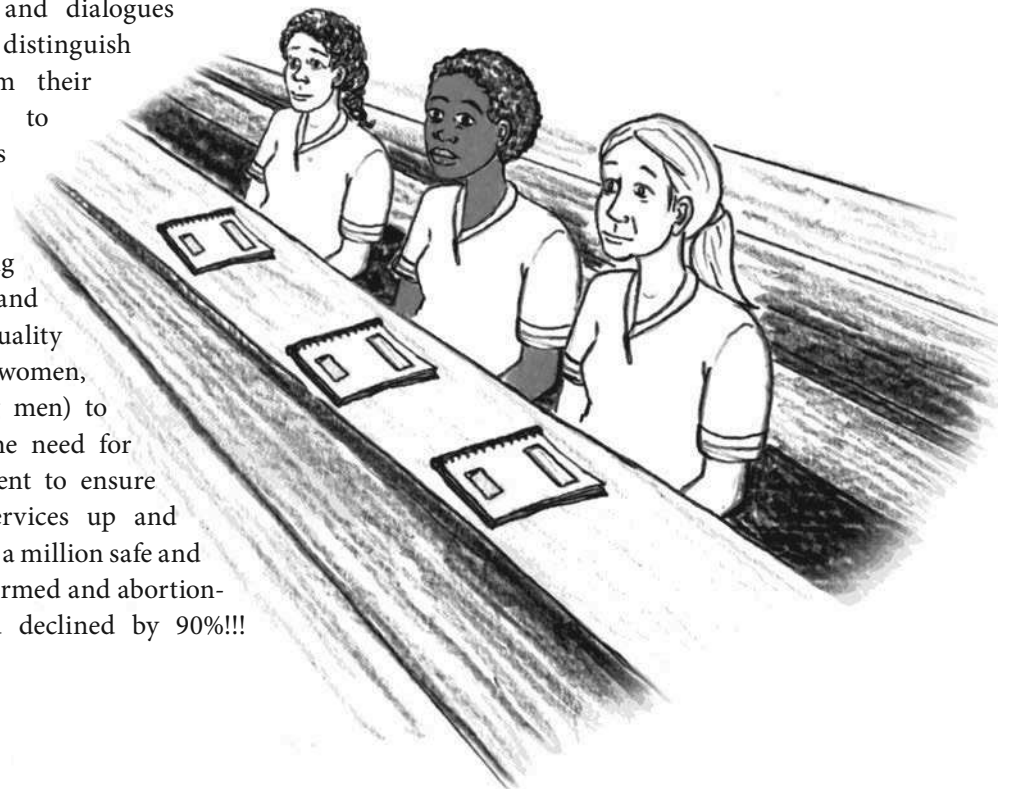
Winning the law was a victory for everyone who had participated. The country was on a 'high' - democracy had come and the aim was to end all forms of discrimination. Alongside arguments about human rights, dignity and preventing maternal mortality; in addition to being able to show that abortion was not 'unAfrican' but had been part of all of our cultural traditions (although often as 'women's business', not in the public eye), we could show that under the abortion law of the apartheid era, most of the approximately 1000 legal abortions done every year were for white women. We could 'fit' our goal of increasing access to safe abortions into the general commitment to end discrimination. This was a particular moment in history and it played a significant part in our win, especially since most people's gut response was to reject the idea of women having a right to abortion, despite being the same people whose sisters, mothers, wives, girlfriends, and daughters have had and will have abortions.

Yet, we also won because we strategized so well and we used the context effectively. Part of what made the strategy successful was the huge range of people we involved from the start, including people who went into the new government and who we knew in parliament. We learnt the value of identifying all the possible players and where they stand on the issue so that you can work out what kinds of strategies might bring them on board, or stop them from undermining your efforts (see the tool for analysing power and influence).

But what about Implementation?

Many of us focused on changing a law and didn't think about what had to be done to get it implemented. We soon realised, however, that once we had the law we needed additional measures and actions. For instance, regulations about how it would be implemented, training for health service managers and nurses and support for them to experience the kinds of self-reflection and dialogues we had, so that they could distinguish their personal feelings from their professional responsibilities to implement. Again many groups used the Reproductive Rights Alliance to develop strategies together, working with health care providers and health workers to improve quality and delivery of services for women, with communities (including men) to improve understanding of the need for abortion, and with government to ensure nurses were trained and services up and running. Within 10 years, half a million safe and legal abortions had been performed and abortion-related maternal deaths had declined by 90%!!! (NDoH, 2003).

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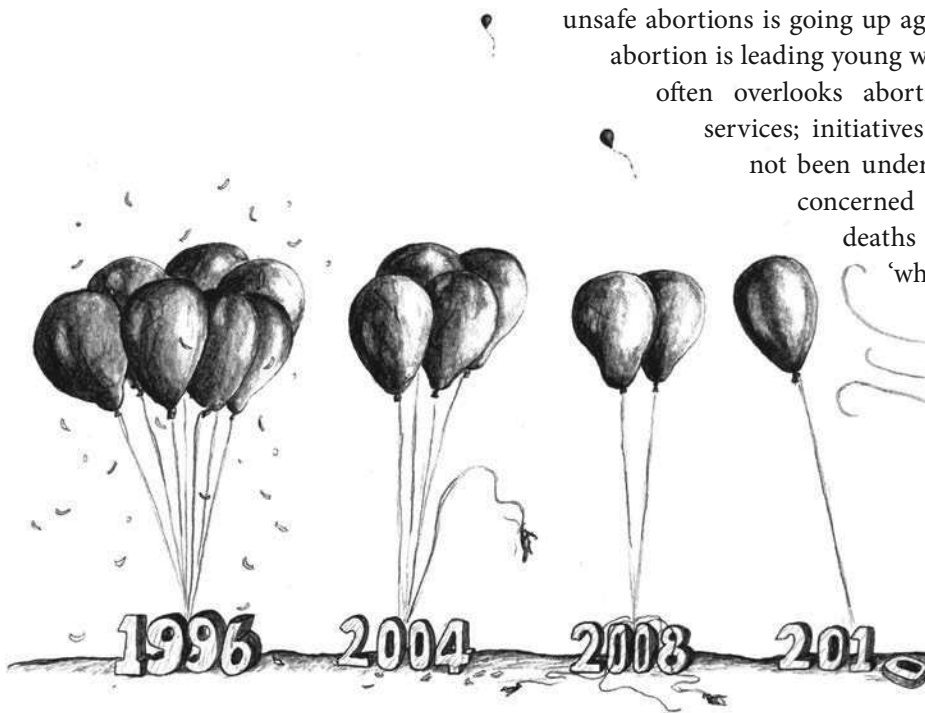


‘
... if we work
together,
thoughtfully,
intentionally and
respectfully, we can
move mountains.

Wow! Victory again!!

But as our organisations slowly demobilised after these victories, and new issues came up, particularly HIV, and funding for the work we were doing lessened, many of us as individuals and organisations took our focus off abortion. Slowly the impetus we had created declined, services that had been designated by government for abortions stopped delivering – by 2008/9 only 45% of Community Health Centres were providing termination of pregnancy services and by 2009/10 only 25% were doing so. (NDoH, 2010) There was no longer a women’s rights movement, the connections between groups were gone. Some of the groups that had been central to this process had closed their offices: the Progressive Primary Health Care Network in 2002, the Women’s Health Project in 2004, the Reproductive Rights Alliance in 2006, the Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa in 2008.

As I write this in 2013, the numbers of women dying from illegal and unsafe abortions is going up again; myths are growing that access to abortion is leading young women to be promiscuous; government often overlooks abortion when discussing strengthening services; initiatives to limit the need for abortion have not been undertaken and the few remaining groups concerned with women’s dignity and women’s deaths from abortion are asking themselves ‘what do we need to do to get this onto the agenda again?’. In addition, the kinds of interventions we had pushed for to limit the need for abortion – such as massive efforts to challenge the culture of sexual violence, to build the idea, ability and commitment of women and men to manage their fertility consciously, and to ensure that young women have access to friendly and supportive contraceptive services – have still not been realised.



On the other hand, so many of the people who were part of this process have taken the experience with them into new places where they are fostering change; the experience that if we work together, thoughtfully, intentionally and respectfully, we can move mountains. So while there were some lasting positives, we learned that victories can be rolled back. Therefore we must continually build and rebuild our base of support for an issue, reframing the issue as times change, and monitoring and holding those responsible to account. Social change is rarely a one-off or short-term affair.

My primary lesson from this, which I took into a new role as a donor, and more recently into my role in providing strategy, monitoring and learning support to donors and NGOs, is that no victory is forever secure which is why movements need ongoing mobilisation and support to keep engaging new generations of people on their values and practices and to keep monitoring government and other service providers to hold them accountable.

Useful Frameworks and Tools we used

Advocacy is a complex and multi-faceted process requiring some frameworks and tools to help us keep focused on what matters and to remember important questions. Frameworks and tools are not recipes which answer our questions but are useful for the questions and conversations that they stimulate.

TOOL 1: NAMING and LIVING OUR VALUES

One of the lessons we learned was the importance of naming our values and ensuring our process supports those values; believing that everyone has something to contribute, and creating a process that values people's diverse experiences. In this way the process models our goals of respect, dignity, and equality.

As I worked in different contexts and on different issues I realised that we have multiple names for the vision of “a better life for all” (a phrase from the anti-apartheid struggle) that was so much at the forefront in South Africa in 1994 when we said we were struggling for ‘our rights’: social justice, human rights, dignity, equality. There are three terms (that come from Nancy Fraser 1997) that together capture much of what we're hoping to achieve, and clearly highlight the unequal power relationships that define injustice:

- Remedies of Recognition
- Remedies of Redistribution
- Remedies of Representation

I like these because they are not just end goals; they recognise that achieving social change in challenging and complex times is a long struggle. When I apply these to our advocacy for abortion story I see them in the process and in the outcomes.

Remedies of Recognition

In the process: we recognised people with very diverse histories, levels of education and approaches to issues as experts. Many people had their first experience of being consulted about what would become national policy. Participants felt recognised and that built their self-esteem and confidence to take action, on this issue and elsewhere in their lives.

In the content: the abortion policy proposal, and the law, fully recognises women as people with agency, able to make decisions about their own bodies irrespective of class, race, or age. The law challenges the assumption that parents always know best for adolescent girls; it acknowledges those girls' agency. It also recognises nurses as people with the professional skills to provide a service that doctors wanted to retain for themselves.

... believing that everyone has something to contribute, and creating a process that values people's diverse experiences.





Remedies of Redistribution

In the process: While we raised funds through the Women's Health Project for the process of consultation towards the Women's Health Conference, we used the funds to enable the widest possible participation; we made choices in line with the principle of fair use of resources, such as bussing (not flying) people around and finding simple accommodation.

In the content: Before the new law, wealthy (predominantly white) women were frequently able to access safe

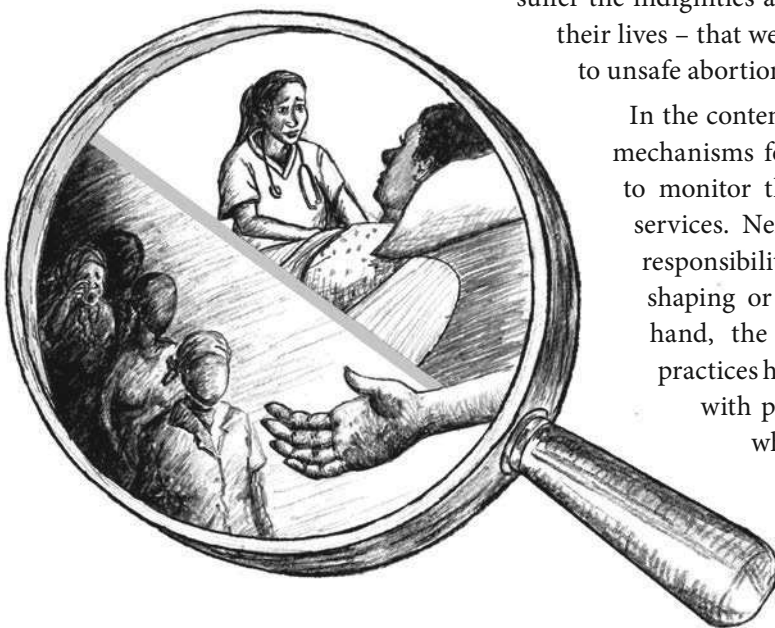
abortions illegally by paying their gynaecologists to do them secretly or flying to countries where abortion was legal. The new law made abortion possible for everyone regardless of their access to resources. In addition, by enabling nurses to do abortions the policy ensures reasonable access not only for women in the cities but for those outside cities as well.

‘ But by grounding the process in explicit values of equality and women's rights, we could work through these debates.

Remedies of Representation / Participation

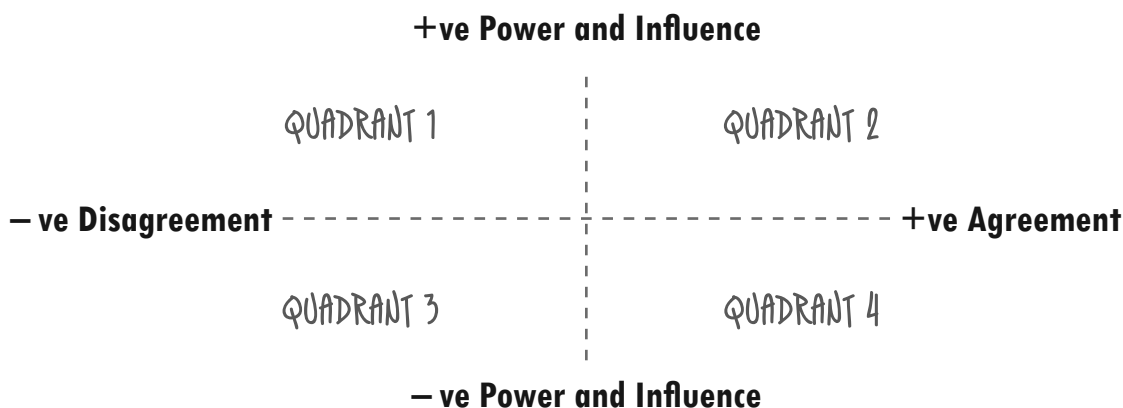
In the process: the underlying idea was that proposals for policies in the new democracy should be developed by the people for the people, especially those most affected by the problem. We included people who had little voice under apartheid, and gave as much weight to their participation as to those of the usual policy-makers, researchers, corporate players and national NGOs. This was risky given the silence and taboos around issues like abortion and other issues the process took on such as sexual orientation. But by grounding the process in explicit values of equality and women's rights, we could work through these debates. In addition, once in a safe and supportive space, participants found it easier to acknowledge the lived reality of women having to suffer the indignities and damage to their health – and sometimes their lives – that were resulting from them only having recourse to unsafe abortions.

In the content: Both the policy proposal and the law lack mechanisms for women's groups or community members to monitor the implementation and ongoing quality of services. Neither do they clearly set out the roles and responsibilities of nurses and nursing associations in shaping or monitoring implementation. On the other hand, the country's constitution and parliamentary practices have enabled civil society to continue engaging with politicians to push for better implementation when the law was under discussion.



TOOL 2: MAPPING & ANALYSING POWER & INFLUENCE

Here is an excellent tool for mapping the players and for stimulating conversations to work out who you need to engage with and for what purpose.



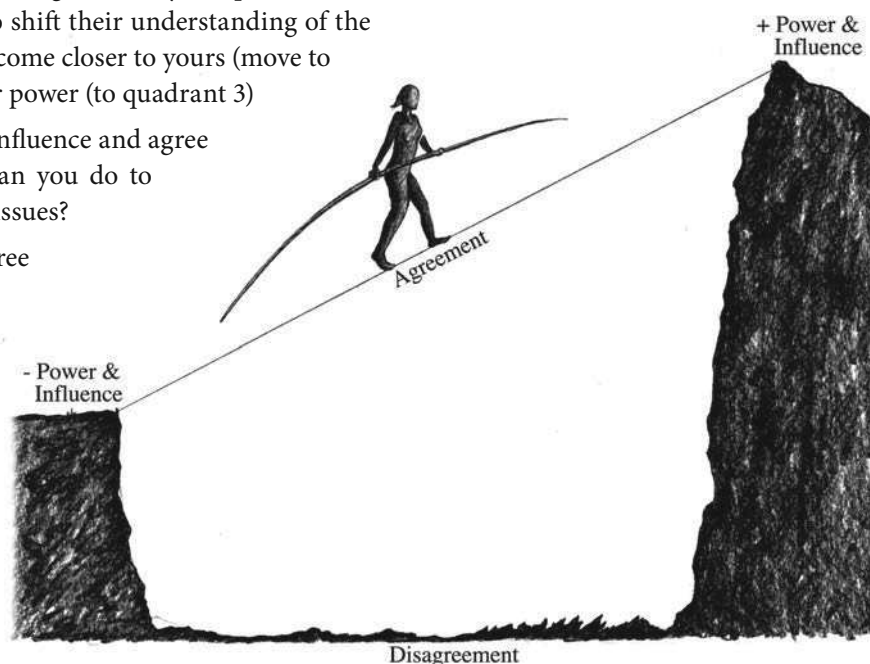
Viviana Waisman & Mónica Roa, Strategic Alliances,
Madrid: Women's Link Worldwide 2013.

The idea is to position all role players onto the map according to:

- a) How much they agree with you at this stage (to the left they disagree and to the right they agree).
- b) How much power and influence they have (up is high power and influence and down is low power and influence).

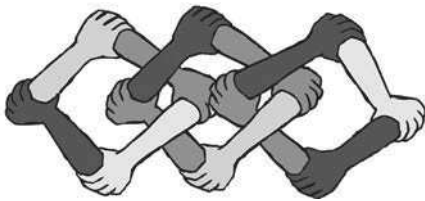
Once you can see where the players are, you can work out what you, as activists, need to do. You can talk together to answer the following kinds of questions:

- Which agree with you but do not have much influence (in quadrant 4)? What could you do to help increase their influence (up to quadrant 2)?
- Which have a lot of influence and disagree with you (quadrant 1)? Are there actions you could take to shift their understanding of the issues, so that their perspectives become closer to yours (move to quadrant 2)? Or even to lessen their power (to quadrant 3)?
- What about those who have some influence and agree with you to some extent? What can you do to motivate them to speak out on the issues?
- Should you ignore those who disagree with you and have little influence, or might they be persuaded by those who oppose you? Do you need to do anything to try to stop them from mobilising against your perspectives?



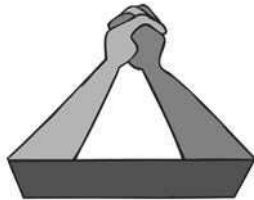
TOOL 3: OUTCOME CATEGORIES – naming where we are and the progress we make

This story shows some things that usually mark progress. Evaluators call things that mark progress ‘outcome categories’ (Reisman et al 2007). When we map where we are at the start, it’s worth thinking about all of them – where are we now (what’s our “baseline”) and where do we want to be. That can help us plan our strategies and to see how far we have come.



The first four form the basis for effective advocacy:

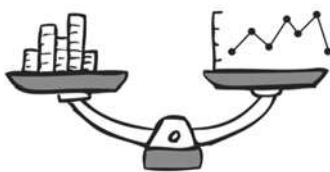
1. Strengthened organisational capacity – *without organisations to see the need, this action could not have taken place; had communities not been organised into religious groups, sport groups, women’s rights groups and so on, we would have struggled to find a way to consult people and get them involved.*



2. Strengthened base of support – *Such a large number of people working together developed the voice and credibility of our demands; famous people with huge credibility, like Archbishop Tutu, speaking positively about the issue increased the legitimacy of our demands and got us greater media coverage.*



3. Strengthened alliances – *it was not just a few small women’s groups, but also the labour movement, the professional organisations of nurses and so on, strengthened the legitimacy of our call. The debates among these groups helped build everyone’s understanding of the complexity of the issues, and forced us to develop a clear message.*



4. Increased data and analysis from a social-justice perspective. *This provided all the different kinds of evidence (on public health benefits, cultural relevance, similarities with progressive laws elsewhere) that more sceptical people needed.*

These four outcomes form the basis for conducting advocacy. They enable the following outcome, which indicates significant progress in advocacy:



5. The development of consensus around a common definition of the problem and possible policy options *by an ever widening constituency of people. This grew over time from a few people to a huge group, and the process aimed to achieve this. When the issue went to parliament many people in different positions supported us and were willing to speak out despite this being such a contentious issue.*

These form the basis for the advocacy movement as a whole - the individuals, organizations, and alliances that are continually adapting to changes in context in order to ensure the “readiness” of their organizational capacity, messages, and strategies. They make it possible to effectively engage in the policy process, and this comes under the sixth outcome category:

6. Shifts in access to & influence in policy processes; changes in or maintenance of a law/policy; policy implementation. *Our ability to engage politicians, to work discreetly, supporting them to develop the law, and to work publicly by accompanying people to give evidence, all influenced the final outcome. The law itself and the implementation of the law is also an outcome, but the latter has no end point since it can always be implemented more widely and with better quality. Moreover with new politicians and a shifting political context laws can be ignored or changed so maintaining links with politicians and government officials remains essential. Sometimes, of course, things change so badly that civil society groups have to go back to protesting from the outside, because all effective access to insiders has closed off.*



7. Increased visibility of the issue in policy processes, resulting in positive policy outcomes, including holding onto gains, and maintaining pressure through ongoing monitoring of policy implementation. *Our process generated media attention, and we actively pursued media to participate in consultations and especially in the final conference, and formed positive relationships with individual journalists who could contact us for our perspective when covering negative responses to the proposed law.*



Ultimate impacts, which are usually beyond the timeframe of any grant or set of grants:

8. Shifts in social norms, such as decreased discrimination against a specific group or increased belief that the state should provide high-quality sexuality education. Yet changes in public understanding and visibility of the issues may occur in the process as the definition of the problem or potential solutions become more socially accepted over time. *We did not give this area enough attention as we worked mostly with organisations, and usually with their leaders. For example, even though the nurses association supported the law they did not conduct ongoing work with their members to win and maintain their support for implementing it.*



9. Shifts in population-level impact indicators – *the numbers of women dying from back street abortions declined. The subsequent increase in these numbers shows the need for a new phase of struggle for better access (Klugman 2011).*



Principal writer: Barbara Klugman

It illustrates the importance of human beings coming together to tell their stories and reveal something of their soul so that the 'other' can see them, connect with them and know them.

Creating Social Spaces for individual agency, collective identity and intention and authentic community

"Healing means the creation of an empty but friendly space where individuals can tell their story to someone who can really listen with real attention"

– Henry Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer*

In our last story there are no hero leaders either, only ordinary people coming together to create a thriving, economically viable district. It illustrates the importance of human beings coming together to tell their stories and reveal something of their soul so that the 'other' can see them, connect with them and know them. When these conditions are met people can work together effectively because then they truly 'get' each other.

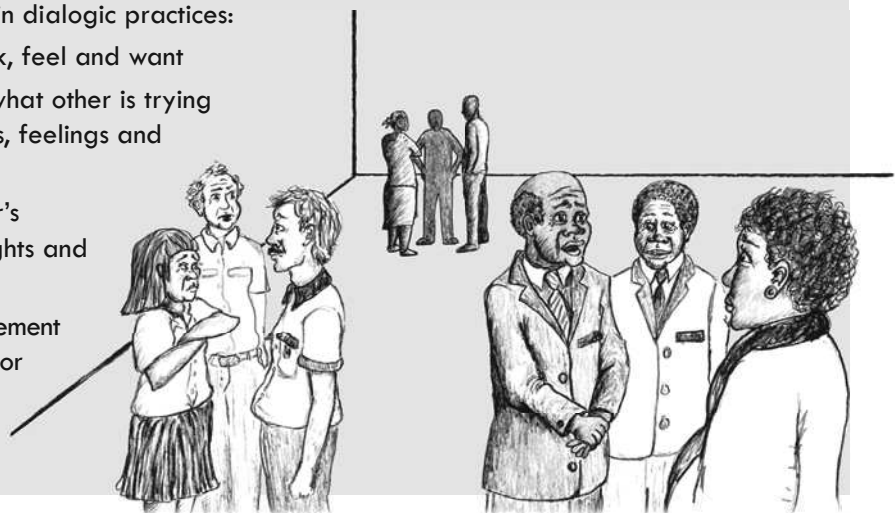
Shaping a dialogue: a story

Three years ago our organisation, a small development agency in Cape Town, South Africa, was requested to facilitate a process to help a diverse stakeholder group to develop a socio-economic framework to stimulate development in a particular rural area not far from the city. While we were excited by the opportunity, the size and diversity of the group filled us with trepidation. The stakeholders included poor, marginalised communities, research institutions, municipalities, provincial and national government departments, environmental organisations, land owners and both big and small businesses.

To prepare the ground, we decided to undertake an initial consultation with the different groupings to surface expectations, interests and priorities. After this, given the diversity of expectations, interests, culture and ways of working, we decided to start working in parallel sessions with the different groupings, to prepare each of them for engagement with the other.

Part of this work was helping people understand what genuine dialogue means by building their capacity in dialogic practices:

- Voicing what you think, feel and want
- Listening deeply for what other is trying to say – their thoughts, feelings and intentions
- Respecting each other's humanity, equality, rights and differences
- Suspending one's judgement and private agendas for the good of the whole.



These practices enhanced their abilities to express their intentions, fears and doubts whilst being able to listen to others. We worked attentively and slowly in the parallel processes; helping to allay fears and anxieties and to build confidence, particularly of those who were not used to speaking out or being listened to.

Although there was value in working in parallel processes, the real test would come when we bring the different groupings together into a shared space. We had to contend with the frustration expressed at the slow pace at which the process was unfolding. The agency wanted quick results.

The venue organised for the first stakeholder engagement was the town hall – in a small town this was the only option to accommodate a large group. Whilst government officials and business people felt very comfortable in the space, other groups felt uncomfortable. The community activists associated the town hall with power, with exclusion – there was an uneasiness being in such a space, but they were able to hold themselves together.

On the first day of the 3-day stakeholder engagement we began by allowing people to congregate in their own ways and, unsurprisingly, they stuck to their own groups, inside their own boundaries. We were aware that in order to build a stable collaborative system this situation would have to change. We needed to create a sense of solidarity between the groups, to transform the space itself, to lower the boundaries.

Positions were laid out. As the powerful land owners expressed fear of losing their land and the community activists expressed their scepticism about legitimising processes of those who hold the power and resources, it felt like the boundaries were reinforced. The groups were a hindrance and so on the second day we moved them into smaller mixed groups, allowing time and space for people to share personal stories and creating space for individuals to speak to each other about their fears, anxieties, scepticism, doubts and concerns. They began to connect as human beings.

By the morning of the third day, the conversation started to take on a different tone, gravitating towards common issues and concerns. Although the powerful land owners were uneasy talking about their personal circumstances, they listened to the indignation expressed by the community activists about the inequality in society and the role of those with power and resources in entrenching this. We had created space for the difficult issues to be raised and heard; for the hard questions to be asked and listened to. When all the groups started to recognise and express opinions about the inequality of society and amongst them, we recognised the opportunity to take this turn in the conversation to begin a process of developing the norms and rules that would govern the shared space.

It was the critical moment we had been waiting for and it came just in time. Through this we were able to establish the human foundation for the cooperation that was to follow.

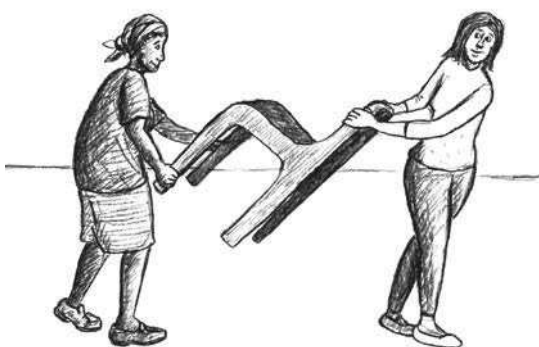


The question “Who is participating in whose process?” is vital.

The real work in preparing and facilitating collaborative social spaces

Government, business and civil society, if they are to creatively collaborate, are increasingly challenged to make the shift to working in a diverse and complex array of collaborative, participative social spaces, away from top-down expert consultations. Such spaces, if well designed and facilitated, allow for a flow of information, experiences and knowledge through which thoughtful and nuanced solutions emerge that are able to meet the complex problems we face.

The technocrats and officials, who often make the crucial decisions that make multi-stakeholder engagements possible, tend to bring a strong expert-driven, results-orientation, unaware of the importance of paying attention to social process and space. They are frustrated by these slow processes of laying foundations. Part of the work is to help them to see its value, for the quality and sustainability of the whole project, and that time invested up front can actually save much time, frustration and costs later on down the line.



Invited and Invented Spaces – who is participating in whose process?

The question “Who is participating in whose process?” is vital.

Typically, government *invites* others to a consultation where the space, agenda and process are decided by them, however well it may be facilitated. This may be appropriate for certain issues but often it makes a silent community even more silent.

But if community agency is critical, where their ideas, feeling of responsibility, energy and ownership are central to the viability and sustainability of the initiative, then the creation, or *invention*, of new types of spaces, *invented spaces*, where they are central to the organisation of the process, where it takes place and who facilitates, is key. Even the way the chairs are laid out and who does this can shift the whole space.



Cultivating authentic community – telling stories

If we are able to bring ourselves into social spaces with authenticity, where people can be their best selves, we stand a better chance of building authentic community. Many communities are built by subjugating the individual to the collective will (usually the will of the leaders) but authentic community relies on both the freedom of each individual to bring themselves fully to the other, and the consequent unlocking of further capacities that would remain dormant without community. This is the concept of *Ubuntu* - a person is a person through other people.

Practically this requires the telling of stories. Individuals and communities are not fixed objects but developing stories, each with a past, a present and a future. If you do not know my story you do not know me. Helping diverse stakeholders to share their stories not only builds shared understanding but lays the basis for authentic community, helping each person to see themselves and each other more clearly.

Individuals are links in the chain

Some individuals will need their own attention and need to be encouraged to speak – the quiet ones, who do not call attention to themselves, are easily ignored by the group and become disempowered and disaffected, creating problems down the line. And often the quiet ones are more observant and can see things that others have missed. Ask them to speak.

The loud ones, who look for attention, still need to be heard, but contained and helped to bring themselves more constructively.



Preparation is key

Facilitated preparation on all sides, before the stakeholder meeting, can be critical, so that when people enter the social space they come more open to the other, more confident, more skilled, and with equalised expectations.

Here the dialogic attitudes and skills mentioned below are key.

If there has been conflict or alienation then, assumptions about “the others” may need to be surfaced by the facilitators beforehand and given perspective and possibly questioned, suspended or “put on ice”, so that each group comes with a “willing to listen” attitude towards the other.

Dialogic attitudes and skills to enable good conversations

Good conversations are most of the process. Community representatives may arrive cautious and lacking in confidence or, if aggrieved or angry, they can be unproductively suspicious and aggressive. Government officials and business-people may, because of status or professional education, have a superior attitude or swagger, or an over-formal approach that stifles natural interaction.

“And often the quiet ones are more observant and can see things that others have missed.”

And so, attention must be given to the development of dialogic attitudes, skills and facilitated moments to enable people to:

- **Find their best voice** – so that they are able to say clearly and confidently what they think, what they feel and what they want;
- **Listen to each other deeply** – so that they are able to hear what people are trying to say, what they feel and what they want;
- **Ask powerful questions** that help people to look more honestly and deeply;
- **Respect and curiosity** - that all people, their opinions and experiences are valid and interesting
- **Suspend judgement** – to give people an opportunity to fully explain themselves, to appreciate difference and to try to see things from their point of view.

These attitudes and skills can be strengthened and taught before and during the processes. See the Barefoot Guide Resource Library for ideas, including the Barefoot Guide 2 Companion Guide to Designing and Facilitating Creative Learning Processes – www.barefootguide.org.



Working with Questions:

What social change approaches and strategies work best?

By Peter Westoby

First and second order change

Many change practices are one-dimensional, focused either only on very practical initiatives to improve the daily lives of people, or only on more political work to influence government policy and practice. But both are critical and can be mutually reinforcing.

During 2013 I worked as a researcher accompanying an NGO called the Southern Cape Land Committee (SCLC) that works across communities of the Western and Eastern Cape in South Africa. Their work has two dimensions:

- Practical *first-order change work* of supporting emerging black farmers to promote agro-ecology, as demonstrated by Via Campesina. This work supports farmers to produce their own food towards food sovereignty. This requires engaging local government to gain access to communal land and water.
- Strategic *second-order change work*, which is more explicitly political, to build consciousness, organization and the capacity of people to influence their context. They encourage *emerging farmers* to 'act as one voice' within local-level multi-stakeholder forums. Governments find it easier to relate to each individual group separately, buying off this one and ignoring that one. However, when groups organise horizontally, for example through learning exchanges, and then form cooperatives or coalitions then it is difficult for local municipalities to discard the arising issues or manipulate outcomes.

Part of this work revolves around raising awareness of poverty-producing processes. Here they work in close partnership with other NGOs like Khanya College, an organisation that is experienced in running 'critical schools', to help people to understand the world, particularly "why they are poor", and to stimulate and strengthen social movements.

Using participatory rural appraisal practices, farmers conduct their own analyses of their issues and what lies behind them and are then able to consider for themselves how to move forward. Leadership groups are formed from these processes, preparing them to participate in municipal forums, enabling them to more effectively engage with the formal structures of local government.

The SCLC community development field workers are closely embedded within the geographies they work. This ensures that they are quick to hear about emerging 'hot-spots' and can support the farmer's organisation to quickly respond, e.g. to organise mass meetings within the hot-spot, following these up with horizontal learning processes between different farmer groups, and building cross-locality networks to enable local people to learn about their rights. Each time, farmers are supported to organise more local structures that enable them to sustain their advocacy from the grassroots level.

This is a dual strategy that begins with first order social change work, enabling farm workers and potential emerging black farmers to 'survive the existing system' through para-legal work, seeding and supporting new agro-ecological initiatives, so people can grow food for themselves. As this proceeds they support second order social change work, 'to change the system' through community organising, campaigning and advocating for new models of land reform.

Working with Questions:

What social change approaches and strategies work best?

Five Strategies of Change

In our experience there is seldom one strategy that is sufficient to meet the complex processes of social change. *Very often a combination of strategies are called for.* Most of the approaches in the stories in this book involve two or three of these:

Top-down strategies. Democratically elected governments, legitimately appointed leaders and skilled managers are empowered to implement changes from above, particularly those that meet initiatives from below. Universal healthcare, sanitation, education, transport and communication infrastructure, police forces to combat criminality may all be top-down initiatives. Of course how they meet the varied needs of communities and at what point they require community engagement from below must be considered, but there are valid aspects of social change that are legitimately and developmentally brought from above.



Bottom-up strategies. Sometime change begins from below, where stuck power above cannot move, whether in its own interest or because of external uncertainties. Marginalized and oppressed people must free themselves. Communities cannot wait for a collapsed local government to deliver water before it takes matters into its own hands.

Inside-out strategies. All sustainable change begins as an inward journey. Before people and organisations can free themselves from their oppressors they must free themselves from their own self-identification as powerless victims (and on the other side as controllers, saviours and experts). This is a kind of transformative change, of individuals and communities unlearning what they have held to be true of and seeing themselves with new eyes, before embarking on changing the attitudes and even the laws and practices of society.



Sideways strategies. This is closely connected to horizontal learning, as a powerful motor of change, where people connect across boundaries within and between communities and organisations, perhaps involving some unlearning, to create new communities and to face their problems together and take advantage of new possibilities.

Do nothing strategies. Sometimes a situation needs the space and time to sort itself out, for a crisis to ripen, for the will to change to gain sufficient strength. We may need to spend time to simply observe to see if we do have a role and what that role might be. We should not assume that the kind of change that we can support is always needed or possible.



(adapted from Rowson, 2014)

Remember that complex or comprehensive change programmes quite often contain several of these strategies, running concurrently, or strategy paves the way for the next. Horizontal exchanges (sideways strategies) have proven to have surprising success in creating foundations of learning and solidarity for collaborative or co-creative initiatives. Top-down or bottom-up strategies seldom succeed unless they provoke some transformative inside-out change in key actors.