



# End Child Marriages & Building a Social Movement

## Practices Literature Review



A Resource for Plan Southern Africa

“Workshop for The Development of Social Movement  
Guidelines On Ending Child Marriage”

from 19th to 21st January,

in Lusaka, Zambia.

by Nomvula Dlamini and Doug Reeler of the Community Development Resource Association



# Contents

<b>ENDING CHILD MARRIAGES</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>From Plan International:</b> .....	<b>5</b>
The causes of early and forced marriage.....	5
The consequences of early and forced marriage.....	6
Is early or forced marriage legal? .....	6
<b>How have other organisations in the world approached ending child marriages?</b> .....	<b>7</b>
From: The International Center for Research on Women (ICRW).....	7
From: Girls Not Brides:.....	7
From Care.....	11
<b>Evidence and examples:</b> .....	<b>12</b>
New research identifies what works best to delay marriage in Ethiopia and Tanzania .....	12
Learning from experience .....	13
Case Study - How rural girls are standing up to child marriage in India .....	13
Case Study: Supporting adolescent girls in rural Ethiopia: Berhane Hewan .....	15
Case Study: Getting girls back into school in Egypt: Ishraq .....	15
Case Study: Empowering girls with reproductive health knowledge in India: Maharashtra Life Skills Programme .....	15
Case Study: Using human rights based education to end child marriage in Senegal: Community Empowerment Programme .....	16
<b>References</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>BUILDING A SOCIAL MOVEMENT: DIFFERENT APPROACHES, STRATEGIES AND TACTICS</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>Building a social movement for progressive social change</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>Basic building blocks of successful social movements</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>What are different approaches, strategies and tactics?</b> .....	<b>18</b>
USE OF A RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE DISCOURSE .....	18
CREATE/SUSTAIN MULTIPLE LEVELS OF STRUGGLE.....	19
LEVERAGE THE POWER OF THE COLLECTIVE (the poor and those directly affected).....	19
CLARIFY THE POLITICAL PURPOSE.....	20
SOCIAL ORGANISATION FOR ACTION (BUILD SOCIAL NETWORKS AND COALITIONS) .....	20
ENGAGE, DIALOGUE AND COLLABORATE WITH GOVERNMENT .....	21
MAKE USE OF POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE SYSTEMS AND INSTRUMENTS .....	22
FOSTER HORIZONTAL LEARNING AND COMMUNITY EXCHANGES.....	22
WORK EXPLICITLY WITH THE AGENCY OF PEOPLE.....	23
<b>MAPPING &amp; ANALYSING POWER &amp; INFLUENCE</b> .....	<b>27</b>
<b>Five Strategies of Change</b> .....	<b>28</b>



# ENDING CHILD MARRIAGES

## Introduction

---

Before reaching womanhood, a girl is at a most wonderful stage of innocence and discovery, still dependent on the adults around her, and vulnerable to their whims and yet still trusting and wanting to believe that the world is a good place. She may be going through emotional and physical changes that are confusing and she needs adults to value and support her as she finds her voice and begins to wake up to what “growing up” means. To have this delicate awakening brutally interrupted by a forced marriage to an older man who is likely to treat her and abuse her as an unequal object, rather than a loved and respected peer, should be unthinkable. Every human knows this, despite the other voices in their heads that say otherwise. This individual and collective knowing must be surfaced and strengthened, not only as a political right, but as an undeniable human truth. And the lower voices that support child marriage must be turned and quietened forever. It has been done before, in countries on all continents, and it can be done again.

But social change is complex and unpredictable. Navigating complexity and reducing the risks of these “unpredictables” requires us to take both a systemic and a learning approach that not only leads to policy change but also impacts on and transforms the culture and discourse that supports the status quo. The key participants in that discourse are girls themselves, all girls, as “victims” and potential “victims”, and so they must be supported to transform the view they have of themselves, to take leadership of their own lives, and to free themselves of any stigma that tells them they do not deserve to be treated as equal human beings. Those “victims” who have been abused must be supported to become “victors” and all girls must develop the individual and collective strength to stop it happening again.

Systemic approaches also require that we work with all stakeholders, not only to maximise positive participation but also to reduce resistance, so that those who support child marriage should not be inadvertently strengthened. Working with many and diverse stakeholders in a respectful way, with an issue that is deeply embedded, requires a learning approach. A phenomenon like child marriage is also part of deeply cultured webs of relationships and so unexpected consequences must be identified and worked with along the way.

This is a compilation of some of the key approaches and practices to end child marriage as a resource to the Plan Southern Africa “Workshop for The Development of Social Movement Guidelines On Ending Child Marriage” from 19th to 21st January, in Lusaka, Zambia.

## From Plan International:

---

### The causes of early and forced marriage

The causes of early and forced marriage are complex, interrelated and dependent on individual circumstances and context. But the practice is driven by these main factors:

**Gender inequality.** Women and girls often occupy a lower status in societies as a result of social and cultural traditions, attitudes, beliefs that deny them their rights and stifle their ability to play an equal role in their homes and communities. In the ten countries with the highest rates of early and forced marriage, five have laws that permit girls to be married earlier than boys.

**Poverty.** In families on a low income, girls may be viewed as an economic burden. The perception of girls' potential to earn an income as comparatively poor pushes girls out of their homes and into marriage. Globally, girls from the poorest 20% of households are three times more likely to be a victim.

**Negative traditional or religious practices.** In many countries the importance of preserving family 'honour' and girls' virginity is such that parents push their daughters into marriage well before they are ready. There is a belief that marriage safeguards against 'immoral' or 'inappropriate behaviour'.

**Failure to enforce laws.** Sometimes families are not even aware they are breaking the law. In some countries early marriage is so prevalent, prosecutions are seldom brought.

**Conflicts, disasters and emergencies.** Disasters and emergencies increase economic pressures on households and many families that wouldn't previously have considered early marriage turn to it as a last resort.

## The consequences of early and forced marriage

Early and forced marriage contributes to driving girls into a cycle of poverty and powerlessness. They are likely to experience:

**Illiteracy and poor education.** When a girl enters into early or forced marriage, their family will remove them from schooling, as their role will then be to carry out domestic work and bear children. Girls with no education are 3 times more likely to be married before the age of 18 than those with secondary education. And the impact continues through the generations. Daughters of young, uneducated mothers are more likely to drop out of school and be married early, repeating the cycle.

**Increased mortality rate.** Girls who are victims of early and forced marriage have higher mortality rates than their unmarried counterparts. In developing countries the leading cause of death among girls aged 15-19 is childbirth, where they are twice as likely to die in labour as a woman over 20.

**Poor sexual health.** Most girls who are subjected to early or forced marriage usually have poor sexual health. They will have engaged in sex before being physically and emotionally ready, and due to marrying an older man will be at increased risk of sexual infections such as HIV. Research carried out in Nyanza, Kenya found that HIV rates in adolescent married girls was double that of the national average.

**Higher risk of abuse.** According to research carried out by the World Health Organisation, married girls aged 15 to 19 are more likely to experience violence than older married women. Due to lack of education, lower status, lack of control and powerlessness, girls subjected to early or forced marriage suffer higher levels of violence, abuse and rape.

## Is early or forced marriage legal?

Marriage is a formalised, binding partnership between consenting adults. Child marriage involves either one or both spouses being children and may take place under civil, religious or customary laws with or without formal registration. A child is usually someone under 18.

According to the Convention on the Elimination on All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), marriage before the age of 18 shouldn't be allowed since children don't have the 'full maturity and capacity to act'. Similarly, the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that marriage should be 'entered only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses'. Where one of the parties getting married is under 18, consent cannot always be assumed to be 'free and full'.

See more at: <http://www.plan-uk.org/because-i-am-a-girl/early-and-forced-marriage/#sthash.CHCXYmegg.dpuf>

# How have other organisations in the world approached ending child marriages?

---

Many nations in Africa officially denounce the practice. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child<sup>1</sup> -- a document adopted by the African Union, a government coalition to which nearly all African nations, including Mozambique, belong -- specifically calls for the elimination of child marriage. The charter states that cultural traditions that harm the "welfare, dignity, normal growth and development of the child" should be stopped.

## From: The International Center for Research on Women (ICRW)

In an effort to understand what works to end child marriage, the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) looked at the existing evidence: when it comes to delaying or preventing child marriage, what works?

They identified five strategies:

1. Empowering girls with information, skills and support networks
2. Educating and rallying parents and community members
3. Improving girls' access to high-quality education
4. Providing economic support and incentives to girls and their families
5. Encouraging supportive laws and policies

ICRW also looked at projects that have had a positive impact on the lives of girls by preventing child marriage or delaying their age at marriage.

## From: Girls Not Brides:

Ending child marriage requires work across all sectors and at all levels. It requires us to understand the complex drivers behind the practice in different contexts and adapt our interventions accordingly.

*Girls Not Brides* has developed a Theory of Change to demonstrate the range of approaches needed to address child marriage, and crucially highlight that everyone has a role to play. The Theory of Change stresses the importance of long-term, sustainable interventions that are coordinated, well-resourced and the result of shared learning.

Within the Theory of Change, four categories show where the majority of our efforts are aligned: empowering girls, mobilising families and communities, providing services and establishing and implementing laws and policies. Ending child marriage requires work which is mutually reinforcing across these areas.

These four strategy areas are used to illustrate the types of effective interventions that are helping to prevent child marriage and support married girls all over the world.

1. Empower girls
  - Safe space programmes
  - Supporting young people to be agents of change
2. Mobilise families and communities
  - Working with men and boys
  - Religious and traditional leaders
  - Community level change
  - Changing norms at scale

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://acerwc.org/the-african-charter-on-the-rights-and-welfare-of-the-child-acerwc/acerwc-charter-full-text/>

3. Provide services
  - Accessible, high quality and safe schooling
  - High quality, youth-friendly health services
  - Adequate child protection mechanisms
  - Economic security
4. Establish and implement laws and policies
  - Strengthening, implementing and resourcing laws and policies
  - Registering births and marriages

## Empower Girls

Using an empowerment approach can lead to positive outcomes for girls and their families by supporting girls to become agents of change, helping them envisage what alternative roles could look like in their communities and ultimately helping them to forge their own pathway in life.



### SAFE SPACE PROGRAMMES

Safe space programmes which offer a varied curriculum covering life skills, health and financial literacy can provide girls with an opportunity to build their skills, learn and meet friends and mentors in an informal setting and learn about the services they can access in their community.

Safe space programmes can successfully build girls' self-confidence, agency and self-efficacy, which they need to thrive. They can provide a good alternative for girls who do not have access to formal education such as married girls. Having a safe regular meeting place allows girls to meet with peers and share experiences which can reduce their sense of isolation and vulnerability.

Some of these programmes have economic empowerment components, such as conditional cash transfers, or the provision of a goat or chicken, which have proven successful in increasing the age of marriage.

### SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE AGENTS OF CHANGE

Supporting young people to be agents of change can be an effective and empowering process in and of itself. Many organisations work with young people so they can advocate for change as well as helping to inform the design of programmes that directly benefit their peers.

Youth groups, encouraging dialogue between youth and community leaders, and building the capacity of young people are all ways of supporting young people to be champions of change in their own communities.

## Mobilise Families and Communities

For change to happen, the values and norms which support the practice of child marriage need to shift. Working with families and the wider community to raise awareness of the harmful consequences of child marriage can change attitudes and reduce the acceptance among those who make the decision to marry girls as children.

### WORKING WITH MEN AND BOYS

Working with men and boys is a critical part of our efforts to end child marriage. In many communities it is the men who hold the power and make the decisions. Interventions targeting fathers, brothers, husbands and future husbands are important in helping men and boys reflect on the status quo and see the benefits of a community which values and supports girls and women to fulfil their potential.

### RELIGIOUS AND TRADITIONAL LEADERS

Religious and traditional leaders, too, have the potential to play a key role in speaking out against child marriage and changing community attitudes. In communities where religious and traditional leaders play a prominent role in decision-making or influencing the prevailing norms, targeted interventions can support them to become positive advocates for change who fully understand the implications of child marriage for girls and their families.



## **COMMUNITY LEVEL CHANGE**

Community level change underpins all of our efforts in preventing child marriage and mitigating the harmful effects for married girls. Without change at this level, the day-to-day reality for girls all over the world will remain the same.

At the grassroots, organisations are driving change by campaigning, holding community conversations and using a variety of creative techniques such as street theatre and art to reflect on the practice of child marriage and communicate its harmful impacts for girls and their communities.

## **CHANGING NORMS AT SCALE**

Changing norms at scale is integral to the process of change and a growing number of organisations are using mass media campaigns and other innovative methods such as radio, TV and digital media to raise awareness of girls' rights and the impact of child marriage.

Messages that promote new norms, role models and positive deviants show positive signs of being an effective way to change attitudes and behaviours around the value of girls and women.

## **Provide Services**

Addressing child marriage and supporting the needs of married girls requires us to consider the economic and structural drivers which act as a barrier to ending child marriage. The most vulnerable girls who have no access to a quality education, healthcare or child protection mechanisms, are at a much greater risk of child marriage than girls who do. Ending child marriage requires us to review the services available to girls as well as asking how they reinforce one another and how they can be strengthened.

- Accessible, high quality and safe schooling
- High quality, youth-friendly health services
- Adequate child protection mechanisms
- Economic security

## **Establish and Implement Laws and Policies**

Laws and policies play an essential part in preventing child marriage. Many countries lack robust legal and policy frameworks which can help to prevent the practice and support married girls. A strong legal and policy system can provide an important backdrop for improvements in services, changes in social norms and girls' empowerment.

However, for change to be truly transformative, governments must show strong political leadership by making the issue of national importance and providing adequate financial resourcing across ministries to tackle the issue holistically.

### **STRENGTHENING, IMPLEMENTING AND RESOURCING LAWS AND POLICIES**

Strengthening, implementing and resourcing laws and policies which prevent child marriage is an important step towards recognising and upholding girls' rights. While most countries legislate for a minimum legal age of marriage, the age of marriage is often higher for men than it is for women and many countries continue to have a legal age of marriage lower than in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Gender discrimination and loopholes in the law continue to be rife especially when it comes to issues around parental consent, the right to own and inherit property, separation and divorce and access to professional services and support.

Furthermore, many countries have a pluralistic legal system meaning customary law often contradicts and overrides national law making enforcement difficult.

### **REGISTERING BIRTHS AND MARRIAGES**

Registering births and marriages helps prevent child marriage by proving the age of a girl and her partner and means that girls and women are able to seek financial and legal redress if the marriage ends.

## VISION:

A world without child marriage where girls and women enjoy equal status with boys and men and are able to achieve their full potential in all aspects of their lives.



www.GirlsNotBrides.org

## IMPACT

Girls can decide if, when, and whom to marry

Married girls lead healthy, empowered lives

## RESULTS

Girls at risk of child marriage participate more in decisions that affect them, including regarding marriage

Girls at risk of child marriage benefit from improved educational and economic opportunities as alternatives to child marriage

Girls are better able to avoid early pregnancy and to refuse unwanted sex

Married girls are better protected from violence, exploitation or abuse

Married girls increasingly access and use services and support of all kinds

Married girls increasingly access divorce, annulment and child custody

Community, traditional and religious leaders take greater action to end child marriage and realise the rights of girls

Community, traditional and religious leaders increasingly support alternative roles for girls beyond marriage

Men and boys increasingly take action to end child marriage

Families engage less in exchange of dowry and bride price

Service providers take greater action to prevent child marriage and support the needs of married girls

Law enforcement officials increase implementation and enforcement of legal frameworks to prevent child marriage and protect married girls

Law enforcement officials increase use of civil registration systems for birth and marriage

## OUTCOMES

### GIRLS

- Girls are increasingly aware of their rights
- Girls have the opportunity to develop solidarity with one another through peer groups and collective action
- Alternative economic, social roles for girls and women exist and are valued
- Increased access of married and unmarried girls to health, education, economic, and legal support

### FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

- Families, communities and young people are increasingly aware of the harmful impact of child marriage and alternatives available
- Families, communities and young people value alternative options to child marriage
- Families and communities prefer not to marry girls as children
- Men prefer not to marry girls who are still children
- Increased use of media to inform and support norm change to end child marriage

### SERVICES

- Increased access to safe, quality formal and non-formal education for girls
- Increased access to health services for adolescent girls, married and unmarried
- Health and education services establish protocols on identifying the warning signs and addressing the risks of child marriage
- Improved economic security for girls
- Increased commitment of programmes to prevent and manage risk of child marriage

### LAWS AND POLICIES

- National laws reflect international and regional human rights standards
- Strong legal frameworks against child marriage in place that set 18 as the minimum legal age for marriage and protect girls' and women's rights
- Governments develop supportive policy frameworks with adequate resourcing across Ministries to increase educational, economic and social opportunities for girls at risk of child marriage and married girls
- Strengthened civil registration systems for birth and marriage
- Increased accountability and monitoring of national, regional, community institutions

## STRATEGIES

### EMPOWER GIRLS

A wide range of programmes invest in girls, their participation and their well-being

### MOBILISE FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES

Families, communities and young people are engaged to change attitudes and behaviours related to child marriage

### PROVIDE SERVICES

Services across sectors reinforce one another and are tailored to the specific needs of girls at risk of child marriage and married girls

### ESTABLISH AND IMPLEMENT LAWS & POLICIES

A robust legal and policy framework for preventing child marriage and supporting married girls is in place and effectively enforced

## CATALYSING STRATEGY

Ending child marriage will require long-term, sustainable efforts. Change will ultimately take place within communities, but has to be supported and catalysed by collective efforts at national, regional and international levels. Adequate resources must be made available to support effective implementation of strategies. All those working to address child marriage should evaluate programmes, share promising practices, and coordinate their efforts to achieve maximum scale and impact. Recognising that child marriage does not take place in a vacuum, efforts to end child marriage should not be isolated from broader development efforts and should play an integral part in achieving development goals around the world.

## PROBLEM:

Every year approximately 15 million girls are married as children across countries, cultures, religions and ethnicities. Child marriage is rooted in gender inequality and in the low value accorded to girls, and is exacerbated by poverty, insecurity and conflict. It denies girls their rights, choice and participation, and undermines numerous development priorities, hindering progress towards a more equal, healthy and prosperous world.

## From Care<sup>2</sup>

The project strategies included (a) Behaviour Change Communication, (b) Social Mobilization, and (c) private sector engagement

### Behavior Change Communication

The behaviour change communication strategy took a multi-channel communication approach with equal emphasis on mass media, local or other types of media (including traditional and modern communication aids) and inter-personal communication by peer educators. The project team involved eminent personalities such as local or national celebrities as “brand ambassadors” endorsing the messages and themes at national and district level as well.

The behaviour change communication strategy also took capacity building into account and provided ongoing support to peer educators. Peer education was one of the most critical interventions in achieving behaviour change outcomes and sustaining efforts beyond the project life. Peer educators went through counselling and were taught effective inter-personal communication skills. Each peer educator reached about 30 households every month.

### Social Mobilization

Social mobilization initiatives increased awareness, created an enabling environment that promoted and rewarded families delaying age at marriage, and contributed to developing young female leaders in the community. The success of social mobilization depended on the participating peer educators, child marriage eradication committees, anti-gender based violence forums and children’s clubs. These different groups raised awareness at the family and community level and advocate for law reinforcement at the district and national level.

### Private Sector Engagement

The project included innovative private sector engagement in preventing child marriage. Peer educators and child marriage prevention committees worked private companies providing wedding services such as caterers and bands to boycott child weddings, advertise their commitment to preventing child marriage, and introduce codes of conduct focused on prevention of gender-based violence, dowry and child marriage. Augmenting the work with private companies, project volunteers also worked with influential members of the community such as religious leaders and match-makers to speak publicly about preventing child marriage, dowry and gender-based violence.

## RESULTS

Specific outcomes of the project include:

- i.) An increase in the number of men and women in the community able to identify harmful effects of child marriages and willing to work to stop child marriages
- ii.) Child marriage and gender-based violence issues are mainstreamed in social mobilization and behaviour change communication efforts of other seven CARE-Nepal projects
- iii.) Key stakeholders at district and national levels identify with the issue and advocate publicly for stopping child marriages
- iv.) Law enforcement mechanisms activated

---

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.care.org/work/womens-empowerment/child-marriage>

## Evidence and examples:

---

### New research identifies what works best to delay marriage in Ethiopia and Tanzania <sup>3</sup>

The findings of Population Council’s research are from a USAID-funded project, “Building an Evidence Base to Delay Child Marriage,” which evaluated the effectiveness of four strategies to delay the age at marriage among girls aged 12–17 in parts of Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Burkina Faso with a high prevalence of child marriage:



- Community conversations (informing communities about the dangers of child marriage using community meetings and the engagement of religious leaders);
- Supporting girls’ education with cost-effective efforts, such as providing girls with school supplies or uniforms;
- Providing conditional economic incentives to families for keeping girls unmarried, such as chickens or a goat;
- Combining all these approaches.

The study found that strategies to delay child marriage that are designed to be simple and sustainable work best.

### What works best in northern Ethiopia?

In Ethiopia, it was possible to significantly delay child marriage with the following interventions:

- In communities where girls were offered **educational support**, girls 12–14 were 94% less likely to be married.
- In communities where girls were offered **two chickens for every year they remained unmarried and in school**, girls aged 15–17 were half as likely to be married.
- In communities that were engaged in **conversations about the value of educating girls and the harms of child marriage**, girls 12–14 were two-thirds less likely to be married.
- In communities where all the strategies were employed, girls 15–17 were two-thirds less likely to be married.

### What works best in Tanzania?

In Tanzania, in communities where girls were **offered goats for remaining unmarried and in school**, girls aged 15–17 were two-thirds less likely to be married than were girls of the same age who lived in a comparison area where the programme was not offered, a statistically significant reduction. The interventions to keep girls 12–14 unmarried and in school did not achieve a statistically significant effect.

However, in the case of the full model, which included provision of all three interventions, there is evidence of a positive effect among girls 12–14 and among girls 15–17.

The Population Council’s project in Burkina Faso is ongoing; it launched approximately one year after the Ethiopia and Tanzania studies. Results from Burkina Faso will be released in 2016.

“Our research shows that **the best approaches to delay child marriage are those that elevate girls’ visibility and status in their families and communities, build their skills and knowledge, and are cost-conscious and**

---

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.popcouncil.org/news/new-research-from-the-population-council-shows-child-marriage-can-be-delaye>



**economical,”** said Annabel Erulkar, Population Council senior associate, Ethiopia country director, and lead researcher on this study.

“Child marriage is not an intractable tradition. When families and communities recognise the harms of child marriage, and have economic alternatives, they will delay the age at which their daughters get married.”

## Learning from experience<sup>4</sup>

- **Recognise the economic elements of child marriage:** Marrying girls as children is often a response to poverty, seasonal scarcities, and emergency circumstances—not just a matter of tradition. Providing economic incentives can delay child marriage and keep girls in school.
- **Invest in the tough areas:** This study was conducted in child marriage “hotspots” where large proportions of girls get married as children. It is possible to succeed, even in difficult situations. It’s important to invest where girls are most at risk.
- **Tailor programmes by age and gender:** This study found that what works for younger girls—under 15—was different from what works for girls over 15. When programmes are tailored, they can have an impact.
- **Avoid duplicating efforts:** Virtually all regions with high levels of child marriage are in countries that receive development assistance from countries that have made commitments to end child marriage. To have the greatest possible effect, donors and NGOs should divvy up hotspots to avoid duplicating efforts.

## Case Study - How rural girls are standing up to child marriage in India

Thanks to Landesa's innovative programme, Jasmina, 16, can teach her parents about the benefits of delaying marriage. | Photo credit: Landesa



By Dipanwita Bandyopadhyay, [Landesa](#) on Monday 1st Jun 2015

The girls of Bal Khelar Math Takagach are fighting to remain children.

On this International Children’s Day, we should take note of their struggle and recognise that it takes so little to help them succeed. Eleven of the girls in this tiny hamlet in rural West Bengal, India, have banded together to form the “Child Marriage Prohibition Group.” Each signed their name on a sign proclaiming the establishment of the group in the small, dark concrete government building in the centre of the village.

The co-signers hope the small handwritten sign marks the beginning of a revolution here. Penning their signature on the declaration isn’t something the girls took lightly. In this village and in rural villages like this across India, the majority of girls marry before they turn 17.

Child marriage is the norm here. Jasmina Banu knows this all too well. Her two eldest sisters were married at 13 and 14 respectively. Now that Jasmina is 16, the proposal offers come steadily. Her parents have received more than one dozen.

Her parents see the many benefits of marrying their daughters young. By tradition, the younger the bride the lower the dowry the bride’s family must pay the groom. So there is an economic incentive to marry a daughter young.

---

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.popcouncil.org/news/new-research-from-the-population-council-shows-child-marriage-can-be-delaye>

Once Jasmina is married off, her parents will no longer have to worry about their daughter's future. They won't be afraid that she'll be left alone and unprotected after they are gone. And they won't be criticized for having loose morals and allowing an unmarried girl to run through the village barefoot and head uncovered.

What her parents are slowly learning through Jasmina is that there are also benefits to not marrying her.

An innovative new program launched by the government of West Bengal in partnership with the land rights non-profit Landesa, is helping drive home this message.

In more than 1,000 villages across the state, more than 40,000 girls like Jasmina are attending meetings twice a month where they are learning an important lesson: they have the right to an education, they have the right to not be married off before they turn 18, and they have a right to own and inherit land. Moreover, Jasmina and girls like her are learning skills they can use to make use of that land. No space is too small to be put to use to help change their future.

Look under Jasmina's bed and you'll find mushrooms that she is growing. Climb up to the roof of her parents' home and you'll find gourd vines.

All of it grown to help supplement her parents' income and help Jasmina earn enough money to head back to school.

In the girls' meetings, Jasmina's picked up language she uses to express what seemed unexplainable before: That her body isn't ready to bear children and that she should be in school and that child marriage is against the law. And Jasmina's made friends to help her navigate these next few years that are full of big decisions and life changes.

They share tips on gardening, and coach one another through these tricky conversations with parents about marriage. When the parents of one girl moved to marry her, all the girls banded together and formed their group to lobby the parents.

For a while Jasmina worried that the next marriage in the village would be her own. But armed with new information about her rights, she's changed her family's expectations.

After two years out of school, Jasmina is now back at in the classroom. And her father now acknowledges that it would be best for all if she married later – for her and for her future children.

And Jasmina is not alone. An impact assessment of the project found that participating girls are staying in school longer, marrying later, and developing an asset of their own. The project is being scaled to reach more than 1 million girls over the next three years.

A wealth of research makes clear that delaying marriage and keeping girls in school is critical. Educated girls marry later, have fewer children, are more likely to immunize their children and are better able to support them. In fact, according to the World Bank, an extra year of secondary school boosts a girls' eventual wages by 15 to 25 percent.

Likewise, ensuring girls understand their rights to land and can exercise them when they are women is critical to meeting a host of our most important development challenges from nutrition (children whose mothers have secure rights to land are less likely to be malnourished) to poverty (women with secure rights to land have higher savings rates).

## Case Study: Supporting adolescent girls in rural Ethiopia: Berhane Hewan

Berhane Hewan participants in Ethiopia

In the Amhara region of Ethiopia, Population Council's programme, Berhane Hewan ("Light for Eve" in Amharic) targeted married and unmarried girls, their families and their broader community to prevent child marriage and support child brides.



Girls, from age 10 to 19, were able to join groups where they socialised with girls their own age, helping them break the social isolation in which they often find themselves in rural settings.

Communities enrolled in the programme took part in conversations about child marriage and its detrimental impact on girls, and adult mentors were enlisted to guide and support young girls as they make their way into adulthood.

Because child marriage often occurs due to dire financial situations, families who decided to keep their daughters in the programme received a goat or a sheep as an economic incentive, as well as school materials to continue sending them to school.

The impact of the Berhane Hewan was significant: girls between the ages of 10 and 14 who joined the programme were 90% less likely to marry than girls in villages who had not.

## Case Study: Getting girls back into school in Egypt: Ishraq<sup>5</sup>

Girls who stay in secondary school are more likely to marry at a later stage. In Egypt, Population Council's Ishraq programme ("Sunrise" in Arabic) gives adolescent girls who are no longer in school a second chance.

To help them return to the classroom, Ishraq offers adolescent girls a safe learning space where they learn multiple skills, from literacy and numeracy to health and life skills, as well as how to manage their finances.

Girls also have the unique chance, considering their marginalised, rural environment, of learning to play different sports.

All together, these new skills and knowledge boost adolescent girls' self-confidence, giving them the drive to aspire to alternatives to early marriage and the tools to advocate for themselves.

At the end of the programme, Ishraq girls say they want to wait until they are older and to have a say in choosing their husband. In fact, the longer a girl stays in Ishraq, the less likely she will want to marry before her eighteenth birthday.

## Case Study: Empowering girls with reproductive health knowledge in India: Maharashtra Life Skills Programme<sup>6</sup>

The Maharashtra Life Skills Programme run by the Institute of Health Management, Pachod in India has a simple goal: getting unmarried adolescent girls together for one hour every week, for a year.

---

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.popcouncil.org/>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.ihmp.org/ihmp\\_pachod.html](http://www.ihmp.org/ihmp_pachod.html)

During this hour, they learn everything from reproductive and sexual health to communication and decision-making, and understanding local government.

Parents join monthly meetings on reproductive and sexual health, and community members are encouraged to enlist to become mentors to young girls.

The results? In a little over a year, girls' age at marriage increased from 16 to 17 years old. They gained the self-confidence and skills needed to negotiate with their parents and have a say in their own lives.

Fathers, community leaders, and those with a say in girls' lives, came to understand how child marriage presented a risk to girls' health and became supportive of their reproductive rights and needs.

## Case Study: Using human rights based education to end child marriage in Senegal: Community Empowerment Programme

Tostan's Community Empowerment Programme empowers women and adolescents in rural areas of Senegal with non-formal education in their local language. They learn democracy, human rights, how to solve problems, literacy and management of community projects, and about their own health and that of their children.

Through this three-year comprehensive curriculum, women and girls learn to apply human rights to their own cultural context and challenge harmful traditional practices, such as child and forced marriage and female genital cutting.

Eventually, village leaders and other community members are encouraged to join these conversations and stand up against these practices too. They then reach out to their social network to raise awareness on these issues and encourage relatives and friends to end the practices with them.

Since the beginning of the Community Empowerment Programme, thousands of villages in Senegal have made public declarations to end child marriage, and as Tostan programmes expand in the region, the movement to end child marriage spreads across West Africa.

## References

---

<http://www.plan-uk.org/because-i-am-a-girl/early-and-forced-marriage/#sthash.CHCXYm gg.dpuf>

<http://www.unfpa.org/end-child-marriage>

<http://www.care.org/work/womens-empowerment/child-marriage>

<http://acerwc.org/the-african-charter-on-the-rights-and-welfare-of-the-child-acrcw/acrcw-charter-full-text/>

[Building an Evidence Base to Delay Child Marriage - http://www.popcouncil.org/research/building-an-evidence-base-to-delay-marriage-in-sub-saharan-africa](http://www.popcouncil.org/research/building-an-evidence-base-to-delay-marriage-in-sub-saharan-africa)

<http://www.popcouncil.org/news/new-research-from-the-population-council-shows-child-marriage-can-be-delayed>

[Landesa - http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/members/landesa/](http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/members/landesa/)

[http://www.ihmp.org/ihmp\\_pachod.html](http://www.ihmp.org/ihmp_pachod.html)



# BUILDING A SOCIAL MOVEMENT: DIFFERENT APPROACHES, STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

## Building a social movement for progressive social change

---

In order to build a social movement for progressive social change, it is important to have an understanding of how social change happens. Social change is a process that is sometimes emergent, unfolding slowly over time and at other times, it is transformative and creates disruptions that create change. Sometimes social change is projectable, it can be planned for through step-by-step processes and interventions.

Progressive social change strives for changes attitudes, behaviours, policies, laws and institutions to better reflect the values of inclusion, equality, freedom, diversity, sufficiency and insists on accountability, responsiveness among institutions (including government, business, universities, church) – it strives for a shift in the discourse and practices of all the actors (state, business, community, organisations).

To realise progressive social change, transformation of the political, economic and social systems, frameworks and institutions to create a more equitable and just society where all people are treated with dignity and respect is critical. This is very challenging and requires working simultaneously on many different levels, making use of different strategies and approaches.

Social movements target and address the underlying causes of critical social problems such as inequality, poverty, discrimination, marginalization, exclusion, violation of political, social and economic rights, domination, exploitation. They set themselves an objective of expanding the meaning of democracy by involving those closest to the social problems in determining their solutions.

The following are helpful frameworks for describing how change happens:

Barefoot Guide *To Working with Organisations and Social Change – 3 Kinds of Change (Emergent, Transformative, Projectable* pp 20-21– [www.barefootguide.org](http://www.barefootguide.org)

The Smart CSOs Change Model this describes change happening at 3 levels: Culture, Regimes, Niches) - [www.smart-csos.org](http://www.smart-csos.org)

## Basic building blocks of successful social movements

---

**From: Z Magazine: The Spirit of Resistance Lives**

- Reach out to all groups, organisations, networks and people who you think might be interested in supporting the cause. Provide them with information about the movement – use information harvested from research well and strategically
- Articulate a powerful vision linked to strategies, approaches and tactics that have some reasonable chance of success
- Recruit people into the movement through existing social, political and cultural networks and coalitions
- Cultivate a core group of trusted strategic leaders and local activists who effectively mobilise, organise, educate and communicate with the politicized mass base

- Mobilise resources that are available, or can be developed to assist the movement to meet its goals
- Develop an institutional infrastructure integrating communication, coordination, research and policy think tanks, training centres, conferences and alternative media
- Learn to skillfully frame ideas and slogans for multiple audiences such as leaders, members, potential recruits, policy-makers and the general public
- Create an attractive movement culture that creates a sense of community through mass rituals, celebrations, music, drama, poetry, art, and narrative stories about past victories, current struggles and future successes

## What are different approaches, strategies and tactics?

---

In order to build a social movement for progressive social change, the struggle it will wage should make use of multiple and different strategies, approaches and tactics. From experiences of others, there is seldom one strategy, approach or tactic that is sufficient to meet the complex processes and challenges of social change. Very often it is a combination of approaches, strategies and tactics are called for to bring about change that will satisfy the needs, rights and aspirations of people.

The following are approaches, strategies and tactics that have been used by others and have proved effective in building social movements for progressive social change.

### USE OF A RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE DISCOURSE

For social movements to genuinely be a response to manifestations exclusion, marginality, discrimination and denial of rights, it is important to make use of the human rights and social justice discourse. Not only does this add legitimacy to the cause, it also ensures the following ideals that drive social change are pursued in a focused way: inclusivity, equality, freedom, community-based responses and democracy. In order to make use of a rights and social justice discourse, use various instruments such as constitutions, policy and legislation become instruments/tools that can be used to pursue the cause.

#### Examples from experiences of others

##### **Treatment Action Campaign (TAC from South Africa – [www.tac.org](http://www.tac.org))**

The South African constitution is strong on political as well as the social and economic rights of people – the TAC has and continues to use the constitution and the ideals of freedom, inclusion and human rights as an instrument to pursue the struggle for access to quality health care by all people. Whilst this adds legitimacy, it gives the social cause a moral basis that links directly to the ideals enshrined in the constitution – they used the constitution to demonstrate that not providing anti-retroviral treatment to people living with HIV & AIDS was a social injustice and a violation of their rights.

##### **The LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-gender, inter-sexed) Movement**

This is one of the fastest growing movements in the world and in many countries activists are using a rights discourse (political, civil, social and economic) to pursue the struggle for inclusion and justice and to fight discrimination, exclusion, stigmatization and other forms of violation.

[www.belongto.com](http://www.belongto.com)

[www.arcusfoundation.org](http://www.arcusfoundation.org)

[www.lifeintheusa.com/people/gaypeople](http://www.lifeintheusa.com/people/gaypeople)

## CREATE/SUSTAIN MULTIPLE LEVELS OF STRUGGLE

To be effective, it is important to create and sustain multiple terrains of struggle which can be spread thematically and geographically; these multiple terrains of struggle are held together by a coherent centre that supports/enables local activities that are immediate, pragmatic and logical. In addition, the work at community level that seeks to enhance the capacity of people by building knowledge, leadership and strengthen their organisation needs to be completed by work that seeks to bring about policy change at a national level as well as the work of building global networks and sourcing international support for the cause. The simultaneous nature of interventions at different levels is key; the advocacy for policy change happens at the same time as the community level organising and strengthening global networks.

### **Example from experiences of others:**

#### **La Via Campesina ([www.viacampesina.org](http://www.viacampesina.org))**

This movement is the international peasants' movement and has become the voice of landless people robbed not only of their land but also of their livelihoods from across the world. They are a good example of social movement sustaining multiple terrains of struggle – the movement is strongly entrenched in many geographical areas and its struggles have been spread thematically addressing the issues of: land/landlessness, women's rights, development of own solutions (protections of indigenous knowledge), food sovereignty and agricultural livelihoods for subsistence communities, engaging the power of multinationals such as Monsanto and advocating for policy change at national level)

## LEVERAGE THE POWER OF THE COLLECTIVE (the poor and those directly affected)

Social movements generate an energy that enables citizens and discontented groups to confront power with power (in many instances it is citizens using their collective power to confront and challenge the power of government). Collective power should be used to force negotiations, to open up spaces for meaningful engagement and dialogue.

It is critical to be aware that power lives in relationships and in order to transform relationships, power needs to shift. In addition, power is exercised in various forms and for social movements it is important to know what form of power is being engaged with. Different tactics have to be used to shift different forms of power. How power is used, abused or exercised affects people as it can include or exclude some people, prevent of blocks change and or limit or diminish people's influence. Social movements seek to empower and processes of empowerment seek to increase people's access to power, and connecting people to their own power. Social movements also see to strive for accountable political and economic power.

### **Examples from the experiences of others:**

#### **Shack Dwellers International (SDI) from India, South Africa, Kenya:**

[www.sdi.org.za](http://www.sdi.org.za)

Homeless people without shelter

#### **Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) from South Africa**

[www.tac.org.za](http://www.tac.org.za)

People living with HIV and AIDS denied access to health care

#### **Ekta Parishad from India**

Poor people without access to land robbed of their livelihoods

#### **Via Campesina from Latin American countries**

Poor people robbed of their land and livelihoods

In the examples mentioned above people are organized and use their collective power to engage government and other power holders; they use their collective power to negotiate, bargain and create spaces for meaningful engagement and dialogue.

In India, Ekta Parishad undertake suffering to advocate for their respective causes; their members walk long distances (often at great personal cost) to go and meet with and engage with government (story in Barefoot Guide 4 *Exploring the Real Work of Social Change* – [www.barefootguide.org](http://www.barefootguide.org))

## **CLARIFY THE POLITICAL PURPOSE**

Social movements with a single issue cause serve as a vehicle for achieving broader objectives of social justice; it has to have a clear strategic and political purpose and different campaigns become a means to an end. Within the framework of a clear strategic and political purpose, the actions to influence policy need to be explicit and should include: engagement, negotiation and setting boundaries/limits. The explicit actions need to veer between participation/reform and opposition/rupture. In order to clarify the political purpose, it is important to know your movement – know who you want to take action, what action you want them to take and what you would like such action to achieve.

As part of clarifying the political purpose, get educated on key concerns/discontents – what are the key concerns and discontents and what are the legalities you need to be aware of and what are the questions that matter in the situation and be clear about the evidence you need to be collecting. It is vital to draw on research. Towards this, popularize the movement and develop clear strategies for popularizing the movement.

## **SOCIAL ORGANISATION FOR ACTION (BUILD SOCIAL NETWORKS AND COALITIONS)**

The ability to organise and mobilise is critical – this is the power of social change organisations and movements. Strengthening people's ability to organise themselves to focus their collective power for collective, transformative action is critical. Towards this the building of social networks and coalitions and community level structures enables connection and people-to-people connections and exchanges. In this way relationships of solidarity, based on a common cause and values/principles of

equality, mutual trust, respect and humility are fostered. Building social networks and coalitions enables the building of collective power and voice – it is crucial to create space for the diversity of voices and drawing on this to build conversations that produce the impulses for change.

#### **Examples from the experiences of others:**

##### **TAC in South Africa ([www.tac.org](http://www.tac.org))**

The movement has established branches at community level – these serve as the smallest unit for organising people in their neighbourhood. These branches have become effective structures and spaces for developing active citizenship and ensuring citizen engagement and empowerment. Through its essential core processes the TAC has built on the practices of mobilising, organising, conscientising and learning. It has successfully helped people at community level to understand the deepest underlying systemic causes of unmet need and teaching this to those most affected by it: what are the systemic causes that need to be addressed when your fundamental needs / rights are not met? The TAC has been successful in helping poor communities understand this!

TAC's strength is its branches which work with individuals and communities. It supports individuals in making sense of information – “knowing the science”, understanding their rights, dealing with internalised stigma that prevents them from being able to take action, and gaining the motivation, confidence and competence to engage individuals and institutions with power in order to claim those rights.

##### **Shack Dwellers International + Housing Federation in India ([www.sdi.org](http://www.sdi.org))**

At community and pavement level SDI has supported the organisation of homeless and poor people to establish savings clubs (Mahila Milan). Similar to the TAC, the core processes of SDI have built on the organising, mobilising, educating and conscientising processes through which poor are empowered. In addition to being the smallest unit through which homeless and pavement communities are organized, the savings clubs are also a mechanism through which poor people exercise control over their own financial resources. Through the savings clubs, there are millions of rupees circulating within these communities. These community level structures are also the mechanism through which homeless and pavement people reach out to political leaders and local authorities.

## **ENGAGE, DIALOGUE AND COLLABORATE WITH GOVERNMENT**

Engagement, dialogue and collaboration with government is a strategy that many social movements adopt and use alongside other strategies and approaches. This strategy is effective in contexts where government is willing, open and demonstrates sufficient political will to work with citizens in a more collaborative way and has developed effective participatory approaches for engaging citizens.

This strategy works where neither social actor feels threatened or under attack but are open to more peaceful approaches and tactics to compelling change. In context where government does not demonstrate sufficient political will and where it is totally impossible to engage and dialogue, the social movement has to adopt a more confrontational stance through which it advocates and forces change. In other contexts, social movements rely on use of both collaborative engagement making use of dialogue and this is coupled with a more confrontational stance using advocacy and campaigning.

#### **Examples from the experiences of others:**

##### **Shack Dwellers International & Housing Federation (India and South Africa)**

[www.sdi.org](http://www.sdi.org)

This movement has developed a good practice of engagement with government using dialogue – through many years of lobbying politicians and policy-makers, they have succeeded in building relationships that enable regular dialogue. Both in South Africa and India they meet regularly with policy-makers and politicians and local authorities and this has enabled them to make a significant contribution to shaping housing policy and service delivery to poor, marginalized communities.

### **Ekta Parishad (India)**

For this social movement, dialogue and collaboration with government – their twin strategy of dialogue and non-violence has enabled them to peacefully compel change in the contexts in which the movement works. Through these strategies they collaborate with government and have become co-creators of solutions to social problems.

Barefoot Guide 4 *Exploring the Real Work of Social Change* ([www.barefootguide.org](http://www.barefootguide.org))

## **MAKE USE OF POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE SYSTEMS AND INSTRUMENTS**

It is important to know that the systems, constitutions, rules, policies, norms, procedures, conventions and treaties that form a regulatory framework for what people can or can't do are key instruments that people can make use to advocate for change of norms and practices. The actions of the state, business corporations and other national, regional and global institutions that are linked to key power holders can profoundly affect the living conditions of individuals and communities.

It is important that a social movement, as a collective force, frames its intent and tactics very clearly; this will enable it to design and implement calculated action and make use of different instruments and spaces to engage and facilitate changes. Such instruments could include policy and legislation to create broader debate and discussion in society aimed at shifting norms around the issue (aimed at cultural change = what is the potential of social movements to change culture = what does it take to change societal cultural practices)

## **FOSTER HORIZONTAL LEARNING AND COMMUNITY EXCHANGES**

From the literature reviewed, the act of learning with others helps to strengthen the connections between people and builds solidarity – learning together with others and from each other becomes a way of countering polarization as it shapes collective thinking. Through learning from each other people become engaged in conversations that stimulate change. Horizontal learning is as a natural and innate process in which transformation is embedded. In building a social movement, given the complexity of social issues there often are no blueprints, the process has to be allowed to shape its own path and for this reason, there has to be an openness and commitment learning your way into the solutions.

To this end, the creation of peer-learning networks, savings clubs, learning festivals, participatory enumeration exercises and community exchanges become important approaches for allowing the space for people to learn from each other. These approaches and practices allow people to bring their own knowledge & experiences which become an important foundational basis for collective action and transformation.

Through fostering learning, people are helped to: understand the systemic causes that need to be addressed when their fundamental rights and needs are not met, engage with complex social issues, translate policies downward to build knowledge, consciousness and expertise and access multi-

faceted experiences (when you bring people together or create spaces for horizontal learning and community exchanges you create a pool of diverse and multi-faceted experiences). In all the examples from the experiences of others, learning enables people to be listened to and heard and engaged with - not only is it empowering but, it is the foundation for change.

So, social movements striving for progressive social change should create/hold/sustain spaces for learning, dialogues and engagement. Learning for change transforms people!

#### **Examples from the experiences of others:**

##### **Shack Dwellers International (SDI) in India**

The women of the Mahila Milan (savings clubs) meet on a daily basis and this is a space not only to discuss the money but also to learn from each other about the social struggles they face in their lives.

##### **Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) in South Africa**

At community level when branch members meet it is an opportunity for joint reflection and monitoring service delivery. After every protest, conference, and meeting with policy-makers branches get together to reflect on and learn from their actions and to plan for new action.

##### **Subsistence Farmers Movement in Kenya**

The farmers have a regular practice of exchanges and farm visits – these have become important spaces where they exchange, share and learn from each other. These exchanges are organized and resourced by the farmers themselves.

##### **La Via Campesina**

Community exchanges lies at the heart of the mobilisation, organisation and conscientisation of the peasants' movement – in impoverished and marginalized communities this form of learning is not only effective, it is also empowering and validating – it respects and acknowledges the experiences and knowledge of peasants and poor people.

## **WORK EXPLICITLY WITH THE AGENCY OF PEOPLE**

People have agency and they use this to transform their own reality to make it better serve their own purposes. In the process of transforming their own reality, they transform themselves. In it is important to note that people do not only adjust passively to the requirements of the environment, they become active in changing their environment. They develop tools for transforming their reality; they remake their lives and this makes them engines of their own change.

##### **Case Study: Treatment Action Campaign (South Africa)**

The abolition of apartheid and the introduction of a democratic dispensation was a major turning point in the history of South Africa; it pervaded all parts of our societal system. Our constitutional democracy, underpinned by democratic principles, values and an ethos of human rights made transformation of our society imperative. Such transformation had to include all aspects of society – including our health care system.

Early into our democracy the country had to deal with challenges of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the denial of access to equitable health care and the non-provision of anti-retroviral treatment was action that was not consistent and compatible with the values/principles espoused by a democratic society. Our health system needed to transform; there was need for a new form to ensure access by all – the

system needed to be just and equitable and inclusive. Access to health care and equitable service delivery to all people became critical!

The TAC is one the most successful social movements in post-apartheid South Africa and a lead example of a civil society activist campaign type social movement. As a movement, TAC is an interdependent part of a complex system that continues to negotiate transformation of our health care system in the South African context. Crucial elements of this system include: all levels of government; other social human rights driven social movements, desperate poor communities, funding partners and the membership of the TAC. Internally there are an equally complex set of relationships between the members in branches, the political structures of the movement and the professional structures through which governance, implementation, leadership and management function.

In its essence TAC is a civil society activist movement; it has grown out of, and on, the efforts of ordinary citizens to protect their lives and those of their families from the devastating impact of HIV and AIDS. It draws its essential force or power from connecting ordinary citizens most directly affected by an unmet need to each other in pursuit of the means to have the need met.

This civil society identity is highlighted by TAC's early creation story fuelled by the need to overcome the barriers to getting access to anti-retroviral treatment for people living with HIV/AIDS. It came into being around mobilising those affected and infected in campaigns against a government that denied the problem and business interests that denied access to the anti-retroviral treatment needed.

At the heart of what this social movement is and does is a compelling striving, a drive, a force to wrest resources from those who have the power to control them to those who are in desperate need of them. It is a deeply formative impulse. It is this tension that shapes the movement and continues to motivate the people who populate and drive it. This compelling striving is an elemental force of living systems. It is a creative force that drives life and development in its deepest sense, it carries within it immense potential for the destruction of barriers to its achievement. It is a force that allows the TAC to address issues of inequality head-on.

TAC is an activist people's movement in the sense that it is driven by the actions of those affected and infected. It is a movement owned by the people in the sense that it has members who elect its leaders who represent the highest authority. These members are drawn from those who are most in need of the resources. To access the resources they are compelled to take on the powers that control access to resources. TAC's story reveals how immensely difficult it is to grow the impulse to the point of building it into societal systems for it to become an alternative to the dominant tendency to exclude and impoverish.

The work of the TAC highlights the important of citizens' engagement and empowerment towards transformation of society.

In the process of influencing and shaping the healthcare system TAC has developed great skill and effectiveness in delivering vital services to those most in need. This much needed delivery capacity introduces further tension into its identity. It introduces the function of service delivery NGO into a relationship with the activist, campaign, human rights functions. In looking to the future it is vital to address this tension in ways that strengthen the value and identity of the organisation rather than dilute and deplete it.

This is a challenge that faces many NGOs who are drawn into the function of service delivery whilst trying to influence and shape our societal systems.



So, what is the TAC contributing towards transformation of our health care system?

- Translating, articulating and voicing the need of people in communities upward to those in authority, those holding power and controlling resources. After in-depth analysis, translating and teaching the policies and science downward to build knowledge, expertise and consciousness of how the systems that exclude/disempower work.
- Mobilising individuals in community around issues of common need and strengthening their ability to use citizens' power to affect improvement in delivery systems and allocation of resources
- Organising communities to act effectively and building conscious and coherent processes and practices – in this way the action of people is informed and focused. People are enabled to strategize and campaign to counter underlying causes of barriers to getting their needs met and to draw on their own resourcefulness to addressing the needs.

TAC has managed to build a model of highly effective civil society activism. The foundation of the model is built on community-based branches through organisational structures that connect to broader networks and coalitions locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. The impact is evident in changes to health systems and the ability of people to better engage with and benefit from the government services provided by clinics and hospitals.

A crucial part of the model is a conscious and coherent practice driven and constantly improved through learning; learning from its own actions as well as learning from others. Through connections to the global world, the TAC had access to multifaceted experiences to learn from and draw on – the social learning process in South African was brought into a global framework through which solidarity was solicited. Also, the local lives/realities of people were connected to a global context. Through its global connections, the movement has demonstrated that the people of the world have a responsibility to one another.

As part of their learning, members of the movement have been enabled to participate in society as active and responsible citizens – they have been enabled to engage with a complex social issue as learners and have been helped to imagine a different future. Many of the members of the TAC have a deeper awareness and appreciation of human rights – their capacity to combat injustice, prejudice and discrimination has been enhanced. Its membership is not only knowledgeable, they are also critical thinkers who are aware of global issues and have a very deep commitment to taking action for a better world. On a daily basis as their members organise and mobilise, they can see how own actions are contributing to creating a new reality and improving the service delivery at clinics and hospitals. In this way they become responsible citizens instead of mere recipients of services.

TAC, as part of its learning, has not only engaged with its own critical questions; it has also had to engage with critical questions from others. The critical engagement with others from elsewhere in the world has contributed to its resilience as a movement. More importantly, the questions from others have helped it to remain connected to the world (beyond the boundaries of South Africa).

As a social movement striving for social justice for people living with HIV/AIDS, the TAC operates within and navigates complex, interdependencies and interrelationships with government, with communities, with funding partners, with policy makers. There are many tensions it navigates.

The practice of the movement operationalizes the work of conscientising, mobilising and organising individuals who are affected and infected by HIV and AIDS – this is most evident in the work of the

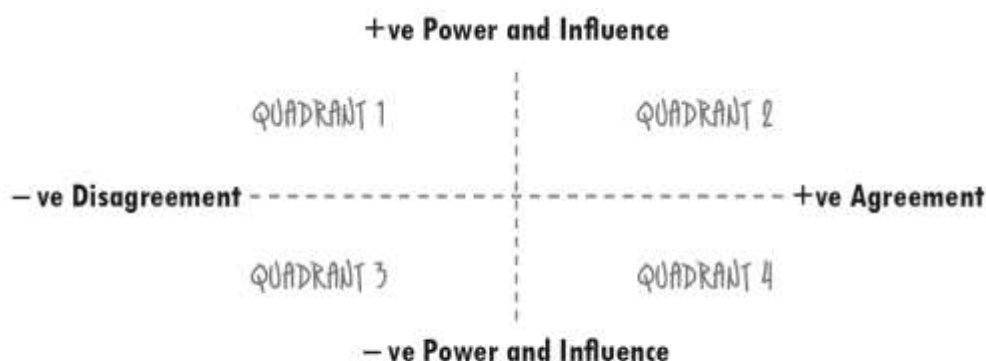
branches at community level. At the heart of what the movement is and does is a compelling striving, a drive, a force to wrest resources from those who have the power to control them to those who are in desperate need of them. This is more than simply creating access; it is about changing the rules of engagement. TAC knows that, the real challenge lies in transforming systems that are unsupportive of those who need support most (generally the poor, excluded and those on the margins of society)

At the core, the work of the TAC contributes to building an ethos of preparing people for a more just and enlightened future. Importantly, a just future of which they are co-creators!

## 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:

- How much they agree with you at this stage (to the left they disagree and to the right they agree).
- 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?

(from Barefoot Guide 4 – Chapter 5 – [www.barefootguide.org](http://www.barefootguide.org))

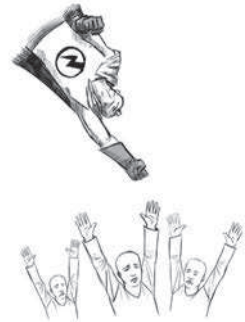
# Working with Questions:

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.