The Joint Integrated Local Development Programme

A Guide

Community Mobilisation for Empowerment

Moldova

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Simon Forrester, International Consultant on Community Mobilisation

Contents

Background

Drawing upon Moldovan and global expertise in facilitating local self-governance and community-led development, UNDP and UN Women are supporting the State Chancellery to implement a Joint Integrated Local Development Programme (JILDP). This programme provides knowledge-based policy advice at central and regional levels coupled with a scaled up community-level intervention that aims to integrate local authorities into regional and community level development processes. Not only does JILDP intend to deepen engagement with current targeted communities and local authorities, JILDP will seek to lay a foundation for regional and community-led development in selected districts and communities in target region/regions of Moldova.

At the central level and in targeted region and areas, UNDP and UN Women will help to strengthen legal and regulatory frameworks and to streamline local administrative procedures and systems. There will be a particular emphasis on a draft framework for the effective delegation of authority to LPAs, fiscal decentralisation to deliver essential services, and promotion of a greater role for women in decision-making bodies. Secondly, JILDP will build the capacities of targeted LPAs to plan, implement programmes and services and monitor their success, with greater citizen participation. Paired with this, we will support greater community and civil society participation in the development and implementation of local development plans and regional strategies. UNDP will work to develop the capacities of local NGOs to play more influential roles in local and regional development planning, programme implementation and monitoring.

Thus, the overall development objective of the JILDP is to assist the Republic of Moldova to ensure that vulnerable groups in poor rural and urban areas take advantage of sustainable socio-economic development opportunities through adequate regional and local policies implemented by LPA and partners in a rights based, gender sensitive manner. To achieve this programme has been designed with four components:

Component 1:   Policy Advisory and Advocacy

Component 2:   Local Self-Governance and Participation

Component 3:   Community Empowerment

Component 4:   Transnistria and Security zone

Under Component 3, the immediate objective of JILDP is:

To empower rural communities and CSOs in target regions to actively participate in local development planning, implementation and monitoring and have better access to improved service delivery and community infrastructure

This objective will be attained by mobilising and empowerment of communities and providing selected settlements with access to basic infrastructure (such as water and gas supply, waste management, roads, etc.) and improvement of social services (services for victims of violence), community crèches and kindergartens, assistance for the most vulnerable, business counselling, etc) that are planned, established and managed with maximum involvement of the beneficiaries and ensuring their ownership on the

initiatives. To ensure the appropriateness of the project initiatives to the needs of the communities as well as the ownership over the projects, the JILDP will ensure that the key focus of the Component's activities will be made on empowering the members of the communities with a particular focus on the vulnerable as per HRBA and gender mainstreaming approaches. This approach not only helps improving living conditions of women and men in these settlements, but also sets examples of sustainable community-based management that can be replicated at the national scale.

About this Guide

Given the Community Empowerment objective described in the above 'background' section, this Guide has been drafted to support the work of those engaged in achieving the objective. Thus, primarily, the Guide has been written for the personnel and associates of the partner organizations contracted by UNDP and UN Women to implement the activities of JILDP's Component 3. However, in addition, it is hoped that the Guide, or at least parts of the content of the Guide, will be useful for other stakeholders in the Community Empowerment process, such as the elected and appointed officials of the Local Public Administrations, other NGOs and civil society groups, as well as the community members themselves. In this way it is expected that the Guide will play a role in explaining and promoting the benefits of community mobilization across rural areas of Moldova.

More specifically, **the Guide sets out to assist practitioners** in the following ways:

- To strengthen the understanding of the key concepts related to gender and human rights considerations in local development planning and to create a common vision of how the most vulnerable in Moldovan rural communities can be empowered through mobilization;

- To provide clear guidance on how a process of community mobilization can be facilitated step-by-step, including advice on what tools can be used and how;

- To demonstrate how, where, and when the process of community mobilization can be integrated and complimentary to the planning and budgeting processes of the Local Public Administrations.

 Users of this Guide may include:

- The staff and associates of NGOs engaged in community development in rural Moldova, and most specifically those NGOs partnering UNDP and UN Women;

- Individual activists and community mobilizers, particularly those working directly with the most vulnerable groups in the communities;

- Elected and appointed officials in Local Public Administrations;

- Staff and associates of JILDP.

The Guide is made up of Two Parts and an accompanying Toolkit:

Part One - helps to explain the key concepts associated with empowerment, community mobilization, and the importance of mainstreaming gender and human rights concerns in local development processes in Moldova.

Part Two - is a Step-by-Step practical guide as to how a process of community mobilization for empowerment can be facilitated in the rural communities of Moldova. There is an explanation of what a 'full cycle' of community mobilization involves, what might be the most suitable institutional arrangements

for implementing the cycle, followed by a detailed description of the support and activities needed in each of the 10 Steps.

Toolkit - is a collection of methodologies and templates designed to assist practitioners during every step in the mobilization cycle.

Users of the Guide should note that this is a 'working document' and that, during the duration of the JILDP, the programme team intends to update the Guide to incorporate lessons learnt from piloting community mobilization activities. Thus, users are strongly encouraged to provide feedback and stories about the use of the Guide to JILDP(Anastasia Divinskaya, UN Women Programme Specialist/International Gender Specialist UNDP/UN Women Joint Integrated Local Development Programme, 21 Nicolae Iorga str, office 3, Chisinau, MD-2012, Moldova, Fax: (+373 22) 820 846, e-mail:anastasia.divinskaya@unwomen.org)

Part 1: Gender Responsive and Rights-Based Community Empowerment

Introduction

Understanding the key concepts

A **human rights-based approach (HRBA)** to development is a framework that integrates the norms, principles, standards and goals of the international human rights system into the plans and processes of development. It is characterised by methods and activities that link the human rights system and its inherent notion of power and struggle with development. HRBA is able to recognise poverty as injustice and include marginalisation, discrimination, and exploitation as central causes of poverty. In HRBA poverty is never simply the fault of the individual, nor can its solution be purely personal. However, HRBA also refuses simply to place the burden of poverty and injustice on abstract notions such as society or globalisation. Human rights claims always have a corresponding duty-bearer. A central dynamic of HRBA is thus about identifying root causes of poverty, empowering rights-holders to claim their rights and enabling duty-bearers to meet their obligations.

In this way HRBA calls attention to a number of central features of poverty and development:

• The re-emergence of the state and governance as a central element in development, through a focus on the interrelation between the state and its citizens in terms of duties and rights. HRBA draws attention to the basic obligation of the state to take care of its most vulnerable citizens, including those not able to claim their rights for themselves.

• The acknowledgement that severe poverty is a human rights violation, and that poverty in itself is a root cause of a number of human rights violations. Looking at poverty through a lens of justice, calls attention to the fact that poverty is something that often is imposed on people as an active act of discrimination and marginalisation. It also calls attention to what is *not* done. Sometimes the cruelest violations are through acts of omission.

• The growing recognition that poverty is about more than economic needs and that growth-centred development has to address more complex and fundamental causes of poverty and inequality such as discrimination, exploitation and abuse. This also ensures that poverty is not merely seen as a fact of individual circumstances or capacities, but rather perceived within the structures of power and inequity embedded in the local, the national and the global context.

Decentralization and Local Governance Reform in the Republic of Moldova is being carried out on the basis of a Human Rights Based Approach, as well as with a view to gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment. Accordingly, the JILDP strives to ensure that the programme activities mean that a) the end result shall be improvement of applicable gender equality and human rights standards; b) access to improved human rights standards shall be ensured to everyone in compliance with the underlying gender equality and human rights principles; c) improvement process shall be carried in compliance with the underlying gender equality and human rights principles.

Violations of human rights of the groups and individuals who are characterized as 'vulnerable' based on one or several **vulnerability criteria** are observed to strongly correlate. Therefore, understanding the real situation of the vulnerability of various groups allows for a better understanding of the possible and actual human rights violations, many of which are not captured and formally recognized. The thinking and analysis of the human rights-based approach in the development interventions refers to the vulnerable groups based on some criteria and de facto situations of the groups and segments of the society. Thus, we need to have a clear understanding of how 'vulnerability' might be defined. (The paragraphs below are based on a **Vulnerability Study carried out in Moldova in 2010 for UN Women by NGO CReDO**).

Vulnerability is frequently linked to certain fault lines. These fault lines are those characteristics that formally divide society into criteria such as language, social status, income, and age. Fault lines might trigger vulnerability status for some groups depending on the real situation state of these groups. Generally, the characteristics of fault lines transform into vulnerability criteria and subsequently groups become characterized as vulnerable groups when we authoritatively find violations of these groups' rights and also in comparison with other groups. It is not always that fault lines transform into vulnerable criteria, yet depending on the exact social situation and the underlining causes, we can state that human rights of some vulnerable groups are violated and it is given the groups belonging to these particular criteria.

Vulnerability is not a commonly accepted concept. The concept has interlinks with the notion of social exclusion, poverty, discrimination and marginalization. Social exclusion is the result of interplay of some determining factors. The **social exclusion** represents the effect of series of the interrelated problems that are, in sequence, determined by some root causes, or interplay of factors. The interplay of the determining factors are associated and manifested along some specific lines and characteristics that make up the vulnerability characteristics. The link between social exclusion, vulnerability and causes is visualised in the graphic below.

Scheme: Relation between social exclusion, vulnerable groups, vulnerability factors and causes
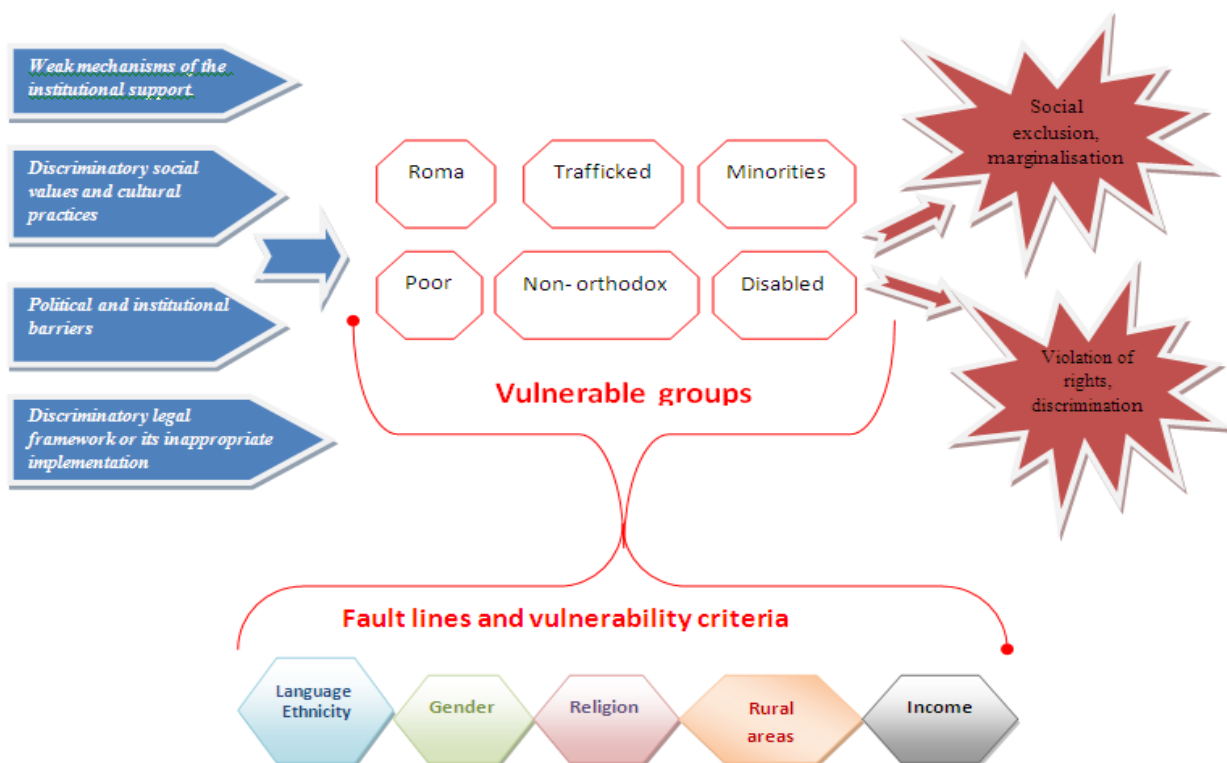
Understanding the dynamics of the power 'structures', that not only influence, but in many cases dominate local decision-making and perpetuate vulnerability, is crucial for any intervention aiming to empower those women and men most marginal to the centre of power. And to understand these 'structures' we first need to understand how power might be defined and manifested.

Power can be defined[1] as the degree of control over material, human, intellectual and financial resources exercised by different sections of society. The control of these resources becomes a source of individual and social power. Power is dynamic and relational, rather than absolute — it is exercised in the social, economic and political relations between individuals and groups. It is also unequally distributed – some individuals and groups having greater control over the sources of power and others having little or no control. The extent of power of an individual or group is correlated to how many different kinds of resources they can access and control.

Different degrees of power are sustained through social divisions such as gender, age, class, ethnicity, race; and through institutions such as the family, religion, education, media, the law, etc. Our understanding of power would be incomplete, unless we recognise its partner, ideology. Ideology is a complex structure of beliefs, values, attitudes, and ways of perceiving and analyzing social reality. Ideologies are widely disseminated and enforced through social, economic, political and religious institutions and structures such as the family, education system, religion, the media, the economy, and the state, with its various administrative, legislative and military apparatus. The economic, political, legal and judicial institutions and structures set up and mediated by the state tend to reinforce the dominant ideology and the power of the dominant groups within it, even though their stated objectives and policies may be superficially egalitarian.

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[1] This definition is taken from an FAO paper 'Women & Empowerment in South Asia' drafted by S Batliwala, 1993

While ideology does a far more effective job of sustaining an unequal power structure than crude, overt coercion and domination, we should not forget that it is always being reinforced by the threat of force, should anyone seek to rebel against the dominant system.

In addition to the different degrees of power, it is also evident that crudely-speaking there are three **different power characteristics**: power that is visible; power that is invisible; and hidden power. These three characteristics can be briefly unpacked as follows:

- Visible Power is that which is exercised through formal institutions and officials (Prime minister, legislature, police, courts, mayors, LPAs) which shape the basic foundations of our societies.
- Invisible Power involves processes, practices, cultural norms and customs that shape people's understanding of their needs, roles, possibilities and actions in ways that deter effective action for change. Among marginal groups, socialization internalizes feelings of subordination, apathy, self-blame, powerlessness. Crucial information is concealed or inaccessible.
- Hidden Power is the root cause for certain groups to be excluded from decision-making by society's and government's rules, practices, and institutions. These groups and their grievances are made invisible by intimidation, misinformation and co-option. Leaders of such groups are labelled trouble-makers or unrepresentative; many issues, such as domestic violence, are relegated to the realm of the private and therefore not subject to state action.

Gender Equality

Equality between women and men (gender equality): refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female.

Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men.

Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development[2].

Gender mainstreaming is globally accepted strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres. It is advocated that consequently women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated.

In the context of Decentralization reform, mainstreaming involves ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of equality between women and men are central to all decentralization activities - strategy development, capacity development of central government, local public authorities (LPAs) and communities, research, dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, as well as planning, implementation and monitoring.

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[2] Concepts and Definitions, UN Women, http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsandefinitions.htm

An important tool for gender mainstreaming in Decentralization reform and local development, which can ensure gender responsive policy planning and resource allocation as well as service access and delivery is **gender analysis**. Different communities and groups of men and women in Moldova have diverse needs (based on their different roles and responsibilities in society) and unequal access to opportunities and resources, including capacities and means by which they can they support various local services financially. The gender analysis helps to examine differences in women's and men's lives, including those which lead to social and economic inequity for women, to apply this understanding to national, sectoral and local policy development and service delivery and to achieve positive change for women subject to discrimination based gender, income, ethnic or religious identity, disability or other factors, which make them vulnerable. Thus, applying gender analysis at the very early stage and throughout the whole process of decentralization reform removes the possibility of policy planning and resource management being based on incorrect assumptions and stereotypes.

Women's empowerment concerns women gaining power and control over their own lives. It involves awareness-raising, building self-confidence, expansion of choices, increased access to and control over resources and actions to transform the structures and institutions which reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and inequality.

Applying this approach in the context of decentralization implies targeted actions aimed at increased representation of women in the local governments, including though but not limited to affirmative actions like quotas, and their increased impact on local decision making, enabling women's local residents to engage in participatory planning and budgeting, encouragement of elected officials to respond to the concerns of disadvantaged groups of women.

Community Mobilization is a process through which action is stimulated by a community itself, or by others, that is planned, carried out, and evaluated by a community's individuals, groups, and organizations on a participatory and sustained basis to improve overall standards of living in the community. It is a process which is defined by the fact that a group of people transcend their differences to meet on equal terms in order to facilitate a participatory decision-making process. In other words it can be viewed as a process which begins a dialogue among members of the community to determine who, what, and how issues are decided, and also to provide an avenue for everyone to participate in decisions that affect their lives. As such, the process of community mobilization can be seen as a powerful tool in the empowerment of women and vulnerable groups, and the means for communities to address violations of rights.

The JILDP Approach to Community Mobilization for Empowerment

Who is being mobilised and why?

Local development is primarily the responsibility of local actors, both residents and those affiliated with non-local organizations—whether national or even international—who work locally as contributors to grassroots development processes. People living and working affirm their responsibility by making the decisions, mobilizing and managing the resources, organizing the collective action, delivering the services, and ensuring the accountability of officials and organizations that contribute to local development. Without this commitment to responsibility by local actors, desired economic and social development will remain dependent on decision-making and management from above.

In Moldova, the evidence on how the most vulnerable people are affected by the local development – and the extent to which they have been involved in shaping its implementation and results – indicates that such groups still face significant challenges at the local level. In this regard, it is clear that unless the decentralization reform includes specific measures to mainstream human rights, gender, and ensures meaningful participation of the vulnerable groups in it, the progress remain minimal. Similarly, without such provisions, local plans, budgets and monitoring systems will not adequately reflect their interests or priorities in the local governance.

As seen above, **empowerment** is the starting point for local development and its core element along with the local governance and local service provision. Empowerment is the process of enhancing the real possibility that an individual or a group, especially those frequently marginalized, socially excluded and discriminated, can make and express choices, and transform their choices into desired actions and outcomes. Individuals, households, and communities need both *opportunity* for meaningful decisions and actions and *capacity* to make meaningful choices and act on them or express them through institutions open to their voice in order to be truly empowered.

In Moldova there is a range of specific social groups demonstrably vulnerable to human rights violations (particularly discrimination) and social exclusion, and these therefore should be a primary objective for mobilization activities. These groups are:

Poor households make up 26% of the society; most of them concentrate in rural towns and in rural areas, and 5% of them are under extreme poverty. Starting from 2008 absolute poverty increased for the first time in the previous three years reaching 26.4%, compared to 25.8% in 2007, mainly due to its extension into rural zones and a drop in remittances. Poverty hits stronger women-led households, households led by persons with disabilities, Roma households, households with many children.

Persons with disabilities officially represent about 5% of the population, yet it is considered to be underreported, the real figures standing at more than 10%. The situation of persons with disabilities in rural areas presents most concern. In 2009 the number of people with disabilities increased by 2.1 per cent compared to 2008. Though men make a majority among the disabled, women become invalids at a younger age. The disability concept that emphasizes the medical and health component rather than the social integration one, for some severe forms impedes or limits access to labor market, both for disabled persons as well as the family members caring for them (predominantly women) for the rest creates a framework of dependency. People with disabilities face an increased risk of persistent poverty, accounting for 22.4%

compared to 17.5% of the other households. In over 80% of cases these are the mothers who care for disabled children.

In Moldova, while women and girls of all ages rarely enjoy the same status and power or access to and control over resources as men and boys, certain groups of women face additional forms of discrimination and social exclusion based on grounds of age, ethnic or religious identity, disability, education level, marital status or other factors.

Ethnic minority women - particularly Roma - women with disabilities, older women, single mothers, and poor rural women are only weakly represented in local decision making, where represented at all.

They have less access to quality education, health, other public services and facilities and they are more vulnerable to poverty, violence, human trafficking and social exclusion.

Deficits in women's power and voice are at the heart of gender inequality in local development. The needs and status of vulnerable women and girls are accorded low priority in local development agendas and little action is taken to address their needs.

Abandoned elderly

Poverty incidents in households of elderly people were over 37.2% in 2008, which is by over 10 percentage points higher than the average for the country. Allowances for elderly amount to less than 70% of the subsistence minimum. There is an overall trend of abandonment of elderly people, especially in the rural areas. Abandoned elderly experience heightened levels of vulnerability due to limited resources that would allow them to ensure normal living standards. The expenses necessary for the healthcare of elderly people further contribute to their vulnerability. Single old women own less property, receive smaller pensions, thus for them there is a significantly higher risk of poverty at old age especially in rural areas, than for men. In quantity term the number of 60+ elderly women is 1,5 times higher in Moldova than 60+ elderly men (16,0 elderly women per 100 inhabitants against 11,2 elderly men per 100 inhabitants in 2007).

Abandoned children

31 percent of children under age 15 years do not live with both parents. 7 percent of Moldovan children do not live with either of their parents. The majority of these children (79.5 percent) live in rural areas. 37 percent of migrants from urban areas and 45 percent from rural areas left at least one child behind and 40 percent left two or more children behind.

Unemployed youth

Young people in Moldova suffer clear employment discrimination. There is a negative correlation between age and the risk of being unemployed. Those in the 15-24 age group face more than twice the risk of being unemployed than the next age segment (25-34). Youth unemployment is higher in rural areas. In the first quarter of 2009 youth unemployment (i.e. involving those in the 15-24 age groups) rose to 16% (compared to previous trends where youth unemployment fell from 17% in 2006 to 14% in 2007). Unemployment also heavily hits young people with good education and training background, because of lack of the work experience. Only 22% of young people found a job immediately after leaving the educational system.

Ethnic minorities: Roma

In Moldova Roma represent one of the most discriminated and excluded ethnic minority and vulnerable group of population in Moldova. Reports signal inequalities in Roma's access to justice, difficulties in access to school education, housing, employment, racial profiling by police, and restricted access to other services. As a result of these and other factors, many Roma work in the parallel economy and/or emigrate.

According to a recent survey, 30% of Roma in Moldova live in housing in a high state of disrepair or other forms of poverty housing, as against 7% for the population-at-large. Instances of forced eviction of Roma from housing are reported in cases where Roma in situations of extreme vulnerability attempt to rent housing in mainstream areas of towns, villages or cities. International and regional monitoring bodies, as well as civil society, have indicated a number of concerns, including reports of denial of emergency health care services in excluded Romani settlements (including at least one recent case in which the person concerned died), as well as stereotypes among health care professionals, giving rise in some cases to fear, and unfair or arbitrary treatment. In addition, there is a troubling gap between Roma and non-Roma in rates of coverage by health insurance. Media broadcasting about Roma in the media is dominated by stereotypes. Roma women experience greater risks of social exclusion and poverty than the men from their community and ethnic majority women, especially in accessing employment, education and social services.

Linguistic minorities: Russian/Bulgarians/Ukrainians/Gagauz

In 2009, 25% of the population represented ethnic linguistic national minorities, of which 8% are Ukrainians, 6% are Russians, 4% are Gagauz, 2% are Bulgarians, 0,4% are Romani. At least 11% say their native language is Russian, 6% Ukrainian, 4% Gagauz, 1,6% Bulgarian.

Education system in Moldova stands on the monolingual education principle. School language education for minorities is carried out in Russian language. Only 0,06% of all Ukrainian children study in Ukrainian as language of instruction. And only 0,02% of all Bulgarian children study partially in Bulgarian. Gagauzian school authorities have sought an expansion of possibilities for mother-tongue education, including expansion to four hours per week, from the current two hours per week, for early primary education. There are reported cases of discrimination in employment of those, whose first language is not state language.

Religious minorities

The non-Orthodox religious minorities (Seventh-day Adventists, Muslims, Jehovah's Witnesses, Judaists, Falun Gong) were periodically subject to discrimination and denial of some of their fundamental human rights.

The Ministry of Justice has repeatedly declined to register any *Muslim community* in Moldova. Muslims are also refused allocation of separate sections in cemeteries, and burial plots oriented towards the Kaaba. *Jehovah's Witnesses* reported numerous cases of religious restriction of their activity, including eight cases of prosecution for objection to military service in Transnistria. There are regular reports of assaults on Jehovah's Witnesses and other proselytizing Christian groups in rural areas of Moldova, including assaults by mayors and/or Orthodox priests. In 2009 group of demonstrators led by Orthodox priests vandalized and disassembled a Judaic Hanukkah menorah that had been authorized and placed in the main park in Chisinau by a group of Jews, with no endeavour on behalf of public authorities to stop the vandals and to

replace the menorah.   There are various reports on other discriminatory acts against *Seventh-day Adventists* and followers of the *Falun Gong* movement.

Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender (LGBT)

LGBT continuously face discrimination in exercise of their right to freedom of assembly. The annual Gay Pride in 2009, and in previous years has been restricted and/or left unprotected by the Chisinau municipal authorities with no acceptable ground. Allegations of denial in employment or medical servicing, as well as of regular police harassment, are brought by LGBT organizations.

In general information about vulnerable groups in Moldova, especially vulnerable women, such as rural women, single heads of the households, those belonging to the ethnic groups, particularly Roma, disabled and elderly, remains scattered and does not allow for in-depth analysis and development of the evidence based local development policies.

A Framework for Gender Responsive & Human Rights-Based Community Empowerment

How can these concepts be applied in practice?

In Part Two of this Guide we will go step-by-step through the process of community mobilization for empowerment. In the first few steps it will be explained the importance of 'getting to know' the community and understanding its needs, particularly those of the most vulnerable members, and how to start the process of forming groups within the community to represent the interests of the marginalized and vulnerable. These initial steps are underpinned by a number of key activities which help us to apply the concepts of gender equality and HRBA in practice.

These activities include:

- **Identification of the vulnerable groups** based on the taxonomy from the vulnerable study.

- For every group (depending on their size) gender equality and **human rights concerns will be assessed** in relation to basic community human rights like: Education, Social protection, social services, participation, health services, access to basic infrastructure, access to community facilities and institutions, access to employment and employment services, access to pensions, access to decent working conditions, access to worship places.

- **Community Groups (CBOs/SHGs) will be formed**, representing and including women and men from the community considered most vulnerable (as per the taxonomy and findings of the assessment of the gender equality and human rights concerns). These groups will then benefit from capacity building activities and be supported in analyzing, designing, and implementing initiatives to address their own prioritized needs.

- A **mechanism for monitoring and evaluating** the work of the JILDP at community level will be designed and implemented using criteria that reflect the vulnerable nature of the communities and their specific gender equality and human rights concerns.

CME as an Integrated Component of More Effective Local Development Planning

How does the mobilization process fit to the plans of the LPAs?

Community mobilization is one aspect to improving local development planning and the decision-making over the use of scarce resources. However, in isolation, it is a process which has limited impact. To strengthen its impact and to ensure that the empowerment gains are sustained by the most vulnerable groups it is essential that the process is fully integrated with the planning processes of the Local Public Administrations. Thus, within JILDP, the community mobilization for empowerment is a complimentary and inter-twinned series of activities to those activities implemented in support of LPA capacity building.

It is therefore vital for practitioners of mobilization that they align their activities with those designed to achieve the objective of JILDP's component on capacity development of the LPAs. This objective is presented and described below:

To develop capacity of local authorities for rights based and gender responsive planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development initiatives

Thus, JILDP will support local authorities to elaborate Local Socio-Economic Development Strategies in a non-discriminative, participatory transparent and accountable manner emphasizing local socio-economic development priorities and aligning local-level development initiatives with the international frameworks that support HRBA, as well as with national and regional strategies (NDS, MDGs, Regional Strategies, relevant Sector strategies). Human, institutional and financial capacities will be developed in the selected regions, areas and districts; local governments will receive support in development and adoption of systems and procedures that will allow planning, budgeting, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of development activities in a rights-based and gender responsive manner to better respond the needs of the people, including the most vulnerable. The capacity of the municipalities to *manage efficiently* service delivery in the targeted areas, as well as the capacity to *provide* services will be assessed and strengthen. Capacities of Associations of Local Authorities will be enhanced to advocate for better decentralisation and local development policies. A special focus will be paid to the capacities of women – mayors.

Part Two: Practical Steps for Community Mobilization for Empowerment

Introduction

What is this part of the Guide all about?

In this section we will describe who might be involved in a full cycle of Community Mobilization for Empowerment, provide insights into the time, skills and other resources required to run such a cycle, and look at how the process of Community Mobilization for Empowerment can be broken down into 10 clear 'steps'.

For each of the 10 Steps there will be guidance for practitioners explaining the following:

- What is the purpose of each step and what minimum results are needed before moving on to the next step;
- What tools and methodologies can be used for achieving the expected outputs from each step;
- Some examples of the tools and methods in practice;
- Top tips for success at each step;
- And any risks and how to mitigate them.

Throughout every step in the process it is important that gender considerations and the Human Rights Based Approach are mainstreamed. How this can work in practice is explained after the description of each step, and finally there is a chapter to highlight how to make the outputs of the process sustainable and expandable.

Organizational Arrangements for Facilitating Effective Community Mobilization

Who are the key actors in the mobilization process?

Self Help Groups (SHGs) and other types of Community Based Organization (CBOs)

During Step 3 in the CME process (Establishing Empowerment Groups) community members will form different types of groups according to their needs, profiles, and expectations. These may manifest themselves as Self Help Groups (SHGs) with relatively small membership numbers and homogenous characteristics, or larger Community Based Organizations (CBOs) with more mixed characteristics. With assistance from the Community Mobilizers and Mentors the Groups will determine their missions, set out how they will regulate themselves, and how they will operate. Depending on the needs, profiles and expectations the gender composition of the groups can be mixed, men's and women's. Thereafter, the SHGs and CBOs will be the main organizational drivers of the CME process.

Community Mobilizers

The Community Mobilizers will be from within the target communities and will be identified during Step 2 (Community Profiling). The likely qualifications, profiles, tasks and responsibilities of the Mobilizers are described in the 'Job Description for Mobilizers' in the Toolkit. The Mobilizers will be guided and supported by the Community Mentors and will receive reimbursements from the Programme both for any incurred expenses and for specific periods of time contributed to the CME process. The NGO partners will need to take their own measures to ensure that Mobilizers are motivated and rewarded for their efforts. The main role of the Mobilizers is to initiate and develop a social process within the target communities for collective analysis of community needs, collective action leading to solutions of those problems, and to make the process self-sustaining and self-managed. Self-management will be channelled through the formation of groups (SHGs/CBOs), with the Mobilizers playing an important role in identify potential group members and catalysts. The Mobilizers will ensure the processes are gender responsive and HR based.

Community Mentors

The Community Mentors are drawn from the staff and associates of the programme's partner NGOs. The main role of the Mentors is to provide leadership on the initial steps of the CME process, provide capacity-building support to the Mobilizers and community groups, both through organised workshops and 'on-the-job' coaching, and to facilitate activities that will contribute to self-sustaining empowerment of the SHGs/CBOs. Throughout the CME process the Mentors will be the main interface between the partner NGOs (and programme) and the target communities, and, through the use of participatory tools, will ensure the mainstreaming of gender equity considerations throughout the cycle. The Mentors will also play a significant role in establishing networks amongst the CME actors, particularly in contributing to peer-support activities with other Mentors.

 Partner NGOs

It is important that all those involved at the local level - the Mobilizers, Mentors, and the groups within the communities themselves - are supported in their organizational development and advocacy work by NGOs that are mandated to engage in community and local development and which are driven by the values and principles of gender equality and human rights based approach. These organizations will provide the communities with access to training, mentoring, networking, and various resources needed to reach their empowerment goals. The main interface between the communities and the partner NGOs will be through the Community Mentors, who will be assigned by the NGOs. The NGOs will also be organisations that work at regional, national, and even international levels, and thus able to assist the community groups to network with other such groups and other stakeholders, as well as supporting Mobilizers to network and build their capacities.

Local Public Administrations (LPAs)

The programme has specific objectives to bring about changes within the local authorities, particularly in respect of mainstreaming GE and HRBA into local planning processes. Thus, it is paramount that the community groups, Mobilizers, Mentors and partner NGOs reinforce these changes through their engagement with the LPA actors, including the provision of training to LPAs on issues related to CME, and lobbying of the community groups.

Other Stakeholders: Businesses, Civil Society Organisations

During the initial stages of the CME process, various interest groups from both business and civil society will be identified. The community groups and Mobilizers will need to adopt strategies of how, if necessary, to engage with these stakeholders, particularly in respect of those that may either offer opportunities for alliances in achieving empowerment goals or those that may pose threats to achieving those goals.

Programme Supporter: JILDP

In 2010 UNDP and UN Women in partnership with the Government of Moldova launched the Joint Integrated Local Development Programme (JILDP) funded by the Government of Sweden. The programme, described in more detail in Part One of the Guide, is being implemented with human rights based approach and gender equality as the core elements in four key areas:

- Policy Advisory and Advocacy
- Local Self-Governance and Participation
- Community Empowerment
- Transnistria and Security zone

A core activity of the Programme (under Community Empowerment Component) is launching of full cycle of community mobilization for empowerment in various pilot localities of Moldova. This activity will include providing technical and financial support to a group of NGO partners.

These various actors generally operate at different levels in Moldova. Thus, the relationship between them can be summarised spatially as per the diagram below:
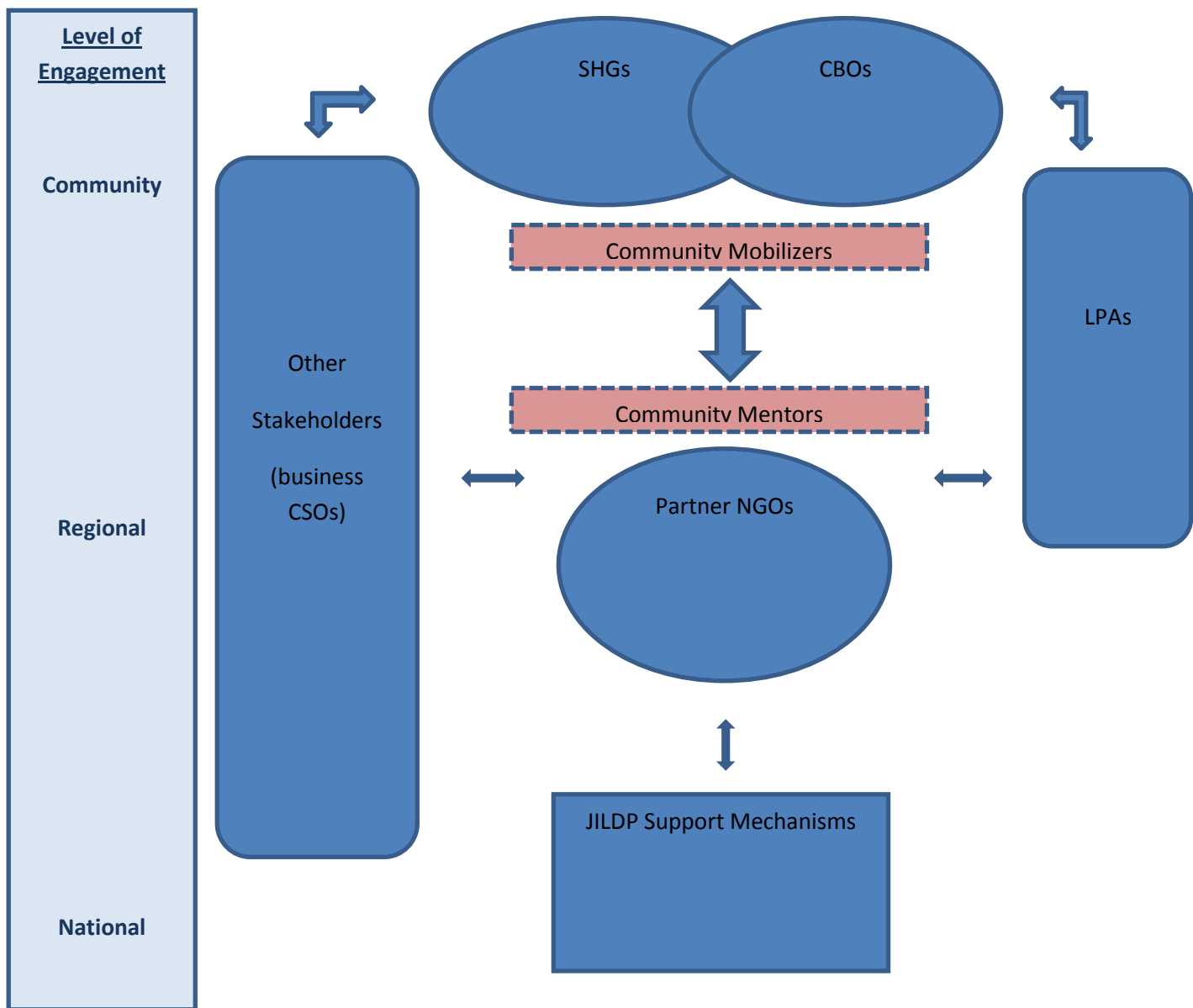
In practice, how do all these 'actors' work together?

To illustrate these various actors and the profiles that they may have, we can look at an example of Community Mobilizers, Mentors, CBOs, NGOs, and other stakeholders from an exercise in community empowerment in Kazakhstan.

In the rural areas of southern Kazakhstan, a NGO called Moldir, which actually has its base in the former Kazakh capital of Almaty, has been supporting women's Self Help Groups which are focused both on economic empowerment and in using HRBA to address the high instance of domestic violence involving young brides. NGO Moldir receives support for its work, both in the form of finance and technical

assistance, from a consortium of Dutch donors (ICCO), which enables the organisation to send its own Social Workers and Community Development Workers on bi-monthly trips to villages where they have helped to establish informal groups. Within each of the 8 villages where Moldir works, it has identified a Community Mobilizer who has received basic training in mobilisation and who, from time to time, is supported to join networking and peer-learning seminars in Almaty with other similar Mobilizers that Moldir works with in other areas of the country.

In the targeted villages in southern Kazakhstan, the staff from NGO Moldir have supported the formation and growth of SHGs. The SHGs have two main functions: assisting group members (who are single and married woman of between 18-40 years) to manage savings and use group credit, for either self-development or micro-enterprises, and to lobby for the interests of the group members in respect of issues such as access to legal advice, law enforcement, and further educational opportunities. To achieve their objectives the SHGs, with assistance from workers from Moldir, have built-up relationships with the local government and the local police, with several other NGOs operating in the area (eg. Lawyers Association and local branch of the Union of Scientists), and with a large rural enterprise which owns much of the agricultural land in the region.

The Community Mobilization for Empowerment Cycle

Why is it called a 'cycle'?

The mobilization cycle is often referred to in different ways depending on the purpose of the mobilization: 'The Community Participation Promotion Cycle', or the 'Problem Solving Cycle', or 'The Community Development Cycle', or 'The Social Animation Cycle'. The cycle is a series of interventions (carried out by one or more mobilizers) designed to increase the level of involvement of a community in the decisions that affect its own development. With the case of Community Mobilization for Empowerment, the interventions (or various 'steps') are designed to empower the most vulnerable and marginalised women and men of the communities.

It is called a "Cycle," in that it is repeated, each time building on earlier successes, errors, and lessons learned.

The cycle:

- Is a series of interventions in a logical and progressive order;
- Is facilitated by a mobilizer, or mobilizers, recognised and legitimated by the community;
- Uses the community choice of action as a means of strengthening, not as an end in itself;
- Requires that the mobilizer(s) be informed and sensitive to community characteristics;
- Can be implemented by a ministry or department at central or district level, or by a non-governmental organization;
- Is not "bottom-up," community-based or "grass-roots" in its origin, but aims at "bottom-up" community-based or "grass-roots" strengthening as its goal; and
- Promotes (encourages, advocates for, trains in skills necessary for, and supports) community participation in control and decision making of all actions affecting the community as a whole, and empowers the individual members of that community.
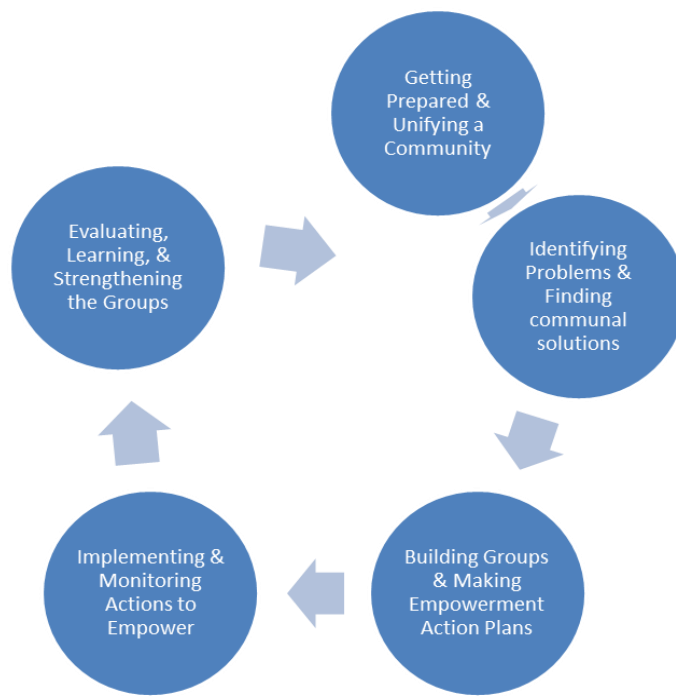
Time, Skills, and Other Resources

How long does the cycle take, and what skills and other resources are needed?

Experience shows that there is no standard **timeframe** for completing a 'cycle', but rather that it is entirely dependent on the local context and the needs and priorities of the community, as well as the availability of mobilizers and other supporters. In some cases a full cycle can be completed in 6-9 months, whereas in other situations a cycle might not be completed in less than 24 months. Factors that may affect the 'pace' of the mobilization include:

- The population demographics and physical layout of the community;

- Types of livelihoods of the community members and other economic demands on their time;

- The state of unity of the community;

- The types and nature of any opportunities or threats to the mobilization process;

- The levels of motivation of the community;

- The degree of support available to the process from mobilizers and others;

- The competence and motivation of mobilizers;

- The types of priority actions chosen by the community;

- Natural disasters.

In terms of the **resources** required to successfully complete a cycle, the most obvious ones have already been mentioned: the levels of motivation and engagement of the community members themselves, and the time, availability, experience and skills of the mobilizers. This second resource is looked at in more detail in the paragraphs below, but there are also other practical considerations in terms of the needed resources. These will include items such as suitable venues for meetings - accessible, suitable for different weather conditions, 'neutral' (and not open to manipulation by power elites), with basic furniture (eg. Tables and chairs), basic equipment and materials for meetings and workshops, and access to the internet for research and communication purposes, as well as regular telecommunications, transport for less mobile members of the community, and external trainers/advisors for capacity building activities and technical expertise.

Experience around the world has demonstrated that in most cases the communities themselves are able to resource a large percentage of the mobilization needs, however, mobilizers and supporters often assist in identifying and providing limited cash and technical assistance, and in assisting in the 'levering' resources from other stakeholders. Issues concerning the resourcing of community mobilization are covered in the detailed mobilization steps below.

The **skills** that the community mobilizers need are not exceptionally difficult to learn, but can be very powerful when put to good use. They need to learn how to be a public speaker, but not just any kind of public speaker. The kind of public speaking the community mobilizers need to know is the kind for leadership and facilitation. The community mobilizer must learn how to draw information and decisions out of groups, which requires a full understanding of the goal and relaxed confidence in front of people. They must be able to recognize preaching, lecturing and making speeches and avoid those styles. The technical skills they need as mobilizers thus includes public speaking, planning, managing, observing, analyzing and writing. Along with these skills, community mobilizers also need to develop a personal character that is honest, enthusiastic, positive, tolerant, patient, and motivated.

The community mobilizer must know how to listen and understand when people talk, and they have to know how to:

- Ensure that information is accurate;
- Know how to illustrate a point and make it interesting to a listener, especially in terms of the local context;
- Encourage dialogue and open speech, and discourage rhetoric and 'sermons';
- Be sensitive to gender considerations;
- Acknowledge rights and speak out when rights are being oppressed;
- Ensure all voices are heard and avoid discussions being dominated by one or two individuals.

Since the community mobilizer will help organize community groups and form executive committees, they also need some organizational skills in terms of basic management competency, ability to use basic computer programmes and research on the internet, draft simple project designs, and be able to maintain accurate records, including basic financial reports.

10 Steps to Community Mobilization for Empowerment

Step 1
- Touching The Ground

Step 2
- Village Profile / Community Mapping

Step 3
- Establishing Empowerment Groups

Step 4
- Identifying Priority Needs & Group Consolidation

Step 5
- Coming Out !

Step 6
- Implementing The Project

Step 7
- Secondary Projects & Actions

Step 8
- Working With LPAs

Step 9
- Usiing Monitoring for Learning, Sustainability, & Empowerment

Step 10
- Evaluation & Next Steps

GOAL!
- Sustainable Independent Groups

STEP 1: Touching the Ground

What's the objective?

Programme partners get to know the key local actors, present the programme, and raise awareness to the concept and goals of Community Mobilization for Empowerment. The partners will also get to understand the particular local context and existing power structures, using the conceptual analysis presented in Part 1 of this Guide, and identify both potential threats and opportunities for CME.

What are the minimum requirements before moving on to the next Step?

- Establish a clear picture of the various interests of the key local actors in local government, business, and civil society (including religious organisations), especially with regard to the forthcoming 12 month period. This will help to identify possible opportunities and threats for the target community.

- Make sure that women and men are equally covered by the programme partners' intervention of Step 1.

- Key local actors show a basic understanding of what Community Mobilization involves and that the objective is empowerment.

- Ensure free movement of the programme partners in the area of the target community.

- Take note of any significant actors you weren't able to meet, and plan to meet them at a later stage.

> Step 1 activities will be conducted by the Community Mentors and staff of the NGO partners

How to achieve the objectives at this Step?

Map the stakeholders in and around the target communities by conducting some 'desk research' to draw up a list of institutions and organisations, and be prepared during the forthcoming field visit to use a '*snow-balling*' technique to identify any stakeholders missing from the list. ('Snow-balling' means that if during one meeting with one particular stakeholder you hear about another important stakeholder, you then add that stakeholder to your list and go and meet them.)

Prepare basic awareness-raising materials on the programme, including a clear message on Gender Equality and HRBA, and a description of the expected change process outlining the cost-benefits of empowerment. These materials might be in printed format (a simple leaflet or 'flyer'), or a hard-copy presentation, or a simple powerpoint presentation. It is important that the key messages of the programme can be simply conveyed in a meeting environment in 10-15 minutes. It is also important to prepare a simple list of questions (not more than 5) to explore the scope and interests of the stakeholders. These questions can be based on a *SWOT type analysis* of the stakeholders.

Undertake a series of bi-lateral meetings at the premises of the different stakeholders. Make sure you arrange meetings with those stakeholders, which would allow identifying the gender patterns, inequalities or particular needs of women and men in the community. These meetings should not be too long (perhaps 30-45 minutes). Apart from presenting the programme, it is useful to quickly ascertain what might be the Strengths and Weaknesses of the stakeholder in terms of supporting Community Empowerment, and what Opportunities and Threats the stakeholder might pose to the process. Take notes from the meetings and produce a summary report covering all the meetings which you can later share with the Mobilizers and communities.

Where necessary, ensure that you have met with any authorities that may otherwise restrict or hinder the work of the Mobilizers. (Eg. security forces)

What risks are there? And how to reduce their impact?

It is important at this early stage that the Community Mentors and the NGO partners are not seen to reinforce existing power elites by seeking their 'permission' or endorsement for the mobilisation process. This step is only about providing and seeking information, and, where possible, checking the understanding of other stakeholders on the concepts and implications of empowerment. For this reason it is fundamental that, in any meetings, stress is put on the fact that the actions and outcomes from the process will be entirely determined by the communities themselves and not by the local authorities, local business leaders, NGOs, informal leaders nor by the programme.

Top Tips

- When mapping stakeholders, at every stage ask yourself 'who's missing?'

- Field notes (from meetings and observations) should, ideally, be typed-up the same day, otherwise information can lost and scrawled notes left unread!

STEP 2: Community Profiling

What's the objective?

Aligning the existing data gathered centrally by the programme from 'official' sources with analysis from information gathered in a participatory manner from the communities themselves. Applying a Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) approach will also help to provide a baseline to the communities and will assist them and the Mobilizers in the process of identifying and analysing the needs and problems of the community in Step 3. The community profiling is an exercise, which helps collecting various types data about the community and its residents, the analysis of which allows to identify the potential equality gaps, power patterns, gender disparities and human rights concerns etc. The community mapping exercise is also an opportunity to raise awareness amongst the community of what 'mobilization' is and the benefits that can come from it. A final objective of this Step is identify individuals who are willing and competent to act as Mobilizers. This latter objective may be achieved early on in the process, and in which case the Mobilizers may also use this Step to become acquainted with RRA techniques.

> Step 2 activities will be conducted by the Community Mentors and staff of the NGO partners, and, if already identified, the Community Mobilizer

What are the minimum requirements before moving on to the next Step?

- A Community Profile template must be completed;

- In compiling the profile it is essential that the data collection has involved gender-balanced interviews and focus groups, that special provision has been made to meet marginalised individuals, and that meetings have been held with any women's groups or CSOs;

- There must be at least one Community Mobilizer identified and assigned to each target community before embarking on Step 3.

How to achieve the objectives at this Step?

In order to allow the communities to engage in comparative studies and contribute to regional or national studies related to improving public policies on empowerment and social inclusion it is important that at this Step a standardised approach is taken. Thus, data needs to be collected in order to complete agreed template for Community Profiles. The *Community Profile template* can be found in the Toolkit section of this Guide.

The template for the Community Profile report provides a framework for which data needs to be collected, analysed, and presented. Such a report should be drafted as a 'working document', which means that it is not an academic research paper, but rather a practical document that can be used by all the stakeholders (LPA officials, community members, central government bodies, civil society groups, JILDP staff etc) in both the local development planning process and for monitoring and evaluating changes in the areas of human rights concerns. Thus, the Community Profile should not be a large document full of endless statistics, but rather a concise snapshot of the community, clearly illustrated with both a standardised analysis of HR and

gender equality concerns and with the views and perspectives of the community members themselves, particularly those from the most vulnerable groups.

In more specific terms, the Community Profiling exercise is designed to assist all the stakeholders in finding answers to the following questions:

- What are the **basic demographics of the community:** total population, its structure (gender, age etc), ethnic composition, men & women in migration, types of households (many children, single mothers/fathers, elderly/children headed families etc);
- What are the **vulnerable groups** populating the community and along which human rights concerns are they vulnerable? How many are they and how they are distributed across the locality? What are the conditions of men and women representing vulnerable groups?
- What are the **gender disparities and concerns** in the community in general and among the vulnerable groups in particular?
- What is the **social profile of the community**?
- What are the underlying **reasons and root causes for the identified human right concerns** and vulnerability issues? Also to be considered here are the sources of power in the community? Power structures? Social norms & institutions embedded in the community impeding women and men representing vulnerable groups to participate in development, decision making, addressing their needs and concerns.
- What is the profile of **community duty-bearers** with regard to addressing identified human right concerns and vulnerability issues?
- What is the **economic and infrastructural profile** of the community?
- What is the **environmental and disaster profile** of the community?

A comprehensive data collection plan will need to be drawn up and implemented by the Community Mentors, other staff of the NGO partners, and, if possible, any recruited Mobilizers, for every community targeted by JILDP. The data should be able to be collected through a series of activities in the community over a number of days. An indicative table of data collection activities is included below, including a series of meetings and application of research tools such as:

- Meeting with LPA and any governmental agencies (such as Social Security offices; Health Centres) serving the community that can provide the required data;

- Meeting with any CSOs working with the community, particularly those focused on women (e.g. women's NGOs, associations of single mothers etc);

- *Focus group discussions* with community members, or *community interviews. In some of the communities, you may need to arrange additional separate women's and men's groups to understand better the gender discrepancies*;

- Neighbourhood meetings and door-to-door visits to both collect specific household information and to verify data from other sources. These must include short, informal interviews with

individuals from the most vulnerable groups, especially women. These can be undertaken as part of a 'community walk' or as proposed from other informants.

- Production of *Timelines or Venn Diagrams*, or other similar participatory data collection methods, which facilitate the collection and presentation of concerns as seen by community members themselves, particularly the most vulnerable women and men. Such data helps to illustrate the causes of the HR concerns and to demonstrate the power structures within the communities.

An Indicative Data Collection Plan Outline:

	Activity	Purpose	Data Collection Records	Human Resources
Step 1	First visit to meet mayor and social assistant	To introduce ourselves, and to get a sense of the community	First Visit Form	1 working day
	Identification and meeting with resource persons	To collect detailed information on community and women and men representing vulnerable groups along human rights / gender concerns	Resource Person Interview Forms	3 working days
Step 2	Narrowing the Scope	Based on previously collected information, to narrow down the scope of further in-depth profiling to most vulnerable groups and most serious human rights / gender concerns	Preliminary Analysis and Scoping Form	1 working day
	Collection of Additional In-Depth Information	To collect additional in-depth information on women and men of vulnerable groups, their geographical distribution across the locality, and on underlying root causes of vulnerability through interviews / observation, focus groups, site visits, other relevant and valid instruments	In-Depth Forms	5 working days
	Totaling and Analysis of the Collected Data	To total and analyze the collected data and to draft on its basis First Draft of the Community Profile Report	First Draft of the Community Profile Report Form	1 working day

	Presentation and Validation of the Community Profile Report findings	To present to the community and to validate (to legitimize) the findings of the community profiling	Minutes of the Community Events	3 working days
	Finalization of the Community Profile Report	To finalize the community profiling	Final Draft of the Community Profile Report Form	1 working day

Tools & Methodologies

As mentioned above, in order to collect the various data for the Community Profile, the Community Mentors will need to apply a number of qualitative and quantitative data collection methodologies. For guidance on how to use these methodologies, particularly those which are participatory and which involve direct inputs by members of the most vulnerable in the communities, please refer to the accompanying **Toolkit** and reference materials provided by UNDP on conducting rapid environmental assessments.

Examples

<u>Verifying existing data</u>: *in the city of Balykchy in Kyrgyzstan, NGO Umut discovered from their participatory research that the official list of persons of retirement age and above was 38% inaccurate. The NGO's research, undertaken through a door-to-door campaign by a team of volunteers to identify elderly people, demonstrated that many of the people on the local authorities' lists were either dead or migrated, and that a large number of newly-arrived older people were not recorded at all.*

What risks are there? And how to reduce their impact?

For many vulnerable community members, the act of external agents collecting information is another aspect of reinforcing their exclusion and adding to disempowerment. Thus, it is essential that the process of collecting information is carried out in as participatory manner as possible and as transparently as possible. Potential informants must be fully informed of the purpose of the data collection and must feel comfortable to either agree or disagree to participate. Any note-taking must be agreed by the informants and at the end of the interview/meeting the notes can be shown to the informants. All informants must also be aware that the findings from the data collection are communally owned and will be presented and discussed during the next Step in the mobilization. No information given in confidence should be shared with others.

Ideally, if early on in the mapping process (or even before) the Community Mentors have identified a suitable Mobilizer, that person should be involved in collecting data for the Community Profile.

Another risk during this and the next Step in the cycle of CME is that of raising overly high expectations. It is common in most vulnerable communities that, if someone with 'outside' connections begins to talk about community development and problem-solving, it is assumed that that 'outsider' is also going to provide the solutions to the problems.   Therefore those involved in raising awareness during the

Community Profiling exercise, must be firm in stressing the HRB Approach and that the solutions will come from within the community. The Mentors and Mobilizers must ensure from their very first interaction with community members that their role is simply that of facilitators.

Top Tips

- Disaggregate by gender all relevant questions when designing a data collection for the Community Profile. Gender or sex-disaggregated data means every data that is cross-classified by sex, presenting information separately for women and men, boys and girls. Gender-disaggregated data reflect roles, real situations, general conditions of women and men in every aspects of the society. For instance, education levels, business ownership, employment, wage differences, dependants, house and land ownership, loans and credit are all included.

- Without gender-disaggregated data, it will be more difficult for us to identify the real and potential contributions of half of the population to the community, and could hinder the development of effective local development plans.

- Do NOT undertake any Community Profiling if you are not fully prepared for the process of using the data collection tools - mismanaged interaction with the target community at this Step can undermine the whole mobilization cycle.

STEP 3: Establishing Empowerment Groups

What's the objective?

Community Mobilizers are trained and activated to support the communities throughout all the next Steps. Community groups, with different formations, are established and their organisational development needs assessed.

> Step 3 activities will be conducted by the Community Mentors and Community Mobilizer.

What are the minimum requirements before moving on to the next Step?

- The Community Mobilizers must have received training on the basic concepts (GE/HRBA/Empowerment), the cycle of CME, and on the fundamentals of group dynamics ('forming', 'storming', 'norming' and performing?), the different group modalities, and the basic competences that they need.

- Mobilizers must feel confident that the targeted communities have a sense of unity.

- Community members, particularly the most vulnerable women and men, have formed at least one organized initiative group or several smaller Self Help Groups through a facilitated process of 'self-selection', reflecting the prioritised needs of the specific members of the group (which might be just women, just men, or mixed).

- The community groups have had facilitated meetings whereby they have begun a team-building process, identified the general problems of the community and have assessed their own capacity for basic management know-how and problem analysis.

How to achieve the objectives at this Step?

NGO Partners will arrange an introductory training module for identified Community Mobilizers. An indicative *'job description' for a Community Mobilizer* can be seen in the Toolkit. This module will run over a 2-day period (ideally consecutive days, but could be delivered in a series of divided sessions.) The sessions will assist the Mobilizers to:

- Understand the key concepts and place themselves in the context of GE & HRBA (and become familiar with a *Glossary of Terms*);
- Know the objectives and expected outputs from each Step in CME;
- Review the Community Profile of their community;
- Strengthen their skills required for unifying and forming groups, and knowledge on different types of CBO;
- Fill any skill or knowledge gaps related to record-keeping, basic financial management, simple computer and internet use.

Once trained, Mobilizers can begin the process of unifying the community. Depending on the situation, this can be achieved through either a series of small neighbourhood meetings or focus groups with community members of a specific vulnerability characteristic, or larger **'town hall'** *type* **public meetings** with a larger number of participants. The methods used will depend on the Mobilizers judgement about the degree of unity or otherwise within the community. If there is already a sense of common purpose and unified interests, a larger meeting (30-40 people) would be suitable, but where there is more diversity and clear distinctions in interests and capacities, smaller group meetings (3-12 people) would be better. At all times the Mobilizer must ensure that:

i)   meetings are sensitive to gender considerations (include adequate representation of women and men)and include the women and men representing the most marginalised groups;
ii)   as Mobilizer, she or he remains neutral;
iii)   while conflicts must be avoided, differences need to be articulated and accepted.

The Mobilizer will need to prepare for these meeting so that she/he can make a brief presentation about community mobilization and the benefits of empowerment, and provide examples and tell stories to illustrate the concept and purpose. The illustrations need to be context-specific - there is an example below from Tanzania, which may or may not be suitable in Moldova, and also other **Case Studies of CME** from the CME ToT materials. Mobilizers need to have several 'stories' of their own. It is also important that the Mobilizers do not lecture at these meetings, but they do need to act as firm facilitators, encouraging community members to speak and not to allow discussions to become too focussed on any one individual's issues. The aim of the meetings is by the end to have agreement from all or most of the participants that community mobilisation should go ahead in their community, and that there is a common understanding of what mobilisation will involve. The meetings do not need to be long, but long enough for affirmations to be given. (30-60 minutes).

Once there is a sense of unity amongst community members, or at least amongst certain sections of the community (for example amongst the women, amongst the elderly etc), the Mobilizer can organise one or two '**Group Formation Workshops**'. These workshops can be run as large events (with 30 or 40 people sub-dividing into a number of different groups during the workshop) or as smaller events aimed at specific participants (eg. Group of 5 or 6 single mothers). The workshops will need to be held at a suitable venue within the community (see comments above about Resources) and will require 1.5 to 2 hours, so the timing must also suit the participants' schedules.

The Group Formation Workshops will:

- Assist participants to reconfirm their desire for mobilization and demonstrate the *different kinds of CBO*;
- Explore the requirements of teamwork and identify what kinds of skills and knowledge might be required to run a successful CBO;
- Facilitate participants to identify what skill sets and experiences they can offer to the group;
- Involve a brainstorming exercise to give a name to the group.

Examples

An experienced Mobilizer in Tanzania explains: "It is useful to be a bit of an actor or "show person" when mobilizing. You can use the match sticks demonstration, for example, but take your time with it. Call for a volunteer or two to help you; repeat yourself in various ways; make a drama out of this. Hold up a single match stick and ask the group to say if it will be easy to break it.

Get their responses. Then ask your volunteer to break it. Congratulate your volunteer and make a big fuss with the group about how easy it is to break the match stick. Then take a hand full of match sticks and tie them together with an elastic band; show the bunched match sticks to the group. Ask the volunteer to break the group of matches as a single item. The volunteer will have difficulty or (we hope) will not be able to break the grouped match sticks.

Thus you say that each match stick is a different faction, but all of them together is the whole community. Poverty and weakness will easily break the community if the different factions continue pulling in different directions.

Show the group the matches again as you explain the analogy (metaphor, parable) again, breaking one match as you identify it as a faction, struggling to break the bound matches as you identify it as a unified community. Do this in several meetings at different times. (Never be afraid to repeat your principles). Continue it with other demonstrations and stories that you may think up yourself or borrow from other mobilizers."

What risks are there? And how to reduce their impact?

Given that the mobilisation process is being supported by the JILDP programme, there will always be the temptation for Mobilizers and Mentors to overly encourage community members to make decisions that are convenient for the programme's constraints of time and resources. Thus, during the Group Formation Step there is a risk that the type of group, the group membership, and roles of group members can be dictated by the Mobilizer. It is important that this does not happen. To avoid this kind of manipulation Mobilizers should consider the tips below.

> **Top Tips**
>
> - Suggest to the community members that, if they are not in agreement on the structure of the group, they hold a second meeting to finalise the group formation, rather than rush the process;
>
> - Step outside of the venue of the workshop to leave the community members on their own to discuss the details of formation, and then on return respond to any questions that the group may have about their proposed formation.

STEP 4: Identifying Priority Needs & Consolidating Groups

What's the objective?

Groups have self-defined action plans and have capacity of a basic set of skills for group management, gender-responsive project design, and for basic lobbying & advocacy. This is a very intensive Step in the CME process, but also a highly rewarding one for both Groups and Mobilizers, as the Groups move through the stages of 'storming' to 'norming'. (These terms are part of a *Model of Group Development*.)

What are the minimum requirements before moving on to the next Step?

- Groups have the capacity to both analyse problems and to design solutions which are gender-responsive and which are formulated against HRBA, and to be able to present and explain their analysis and solutions to others;

- Groups have a clear mission statement, organizational structure, and set of simple operational guidelines. (This may include formal registration and a legal identity if required);

- Groups have an Action Plan, which includes at least one costed proposal for implementing a community project/action;

- Mobilizers have agreed with Groups on the feasibility of the proposed community projects/actions.

How to achieve the objectives at this Step?

Step 4 will involve an intensive period of training, coaching, and action planning for Groups, Mobilizers and Mentors. It is therefore advisable that Mobilizers meet with the Groups to carefully plan the activities to ensure availability of group members and other resources (such as venue for training). Group members need to understand that during this period they will need to devote a lot of their time. This

> Step 4 activities will include implementation and facilitation by the Community Mentors and Community Mobilizer.

is unlikely to be resisted by the group members, as usually at this Step the community is highly motivated. Mobilizers and Mentors will also need to meet to plan their own division of labour in implementing these activities. The series of training and planning workshops, and group meetings should follow this sequence:

1. ½ day Training Workshop to explore HRB actions and GE

Objectives: Group members able to reflect upon their own positions and those of others in terms of fulfilment of rights and equalities.

Method: Mobilizer/Mentor must tailor an approach according to the group profile.

2. ½ day Training Workshop on Problem Analysis & Needs Prioritisation

Objectives: Group agrees situation assessment; Group uses a *Problem Tree* (or other tool) to identify and agree on key issues; Group agrees on priority issues to be addressed.

Method: Mobilizer/Mentor presents Community Profile and facilitates Group to discuss and make their own assessment; Mobilizer/Mentor introduces *Problem Analysis Tools* and Group uses tool; Mobilizer facilitates discussion to help Group prioritise issues.

Materials: copies of Community Profile; flip paper & pens

3. ½ day Training Workshop on Action Planning

    Objectives: Group uses a *Solution Tree* (or other tool) to guide selection of change objectives they want to meet; Group agrees on possible activities that will help them achieve their objectives. (These might be collected under a single project, or a series of connected actions, some of which might be elaborated on in Step 7).

    Method: Mobilizer/Mentor introduces Solution Tree tool (or similar) and Group uses tool; Mobilizer facilitates discussion to help Group clearly define change objectives; Mobilizer facilitates discussion to help Group identify activities to achieve objectives and to sequence activities and estimate what kind of inputs will be needed; Group drafts an Action Plan which includes both project activities and activities related to the Group's operational development (eg. Need to open a bank account; need for any specialised training etc)

    Materials: Problem Tree chart; flip paper & pens; (Mobilizer will need to refer to different examples of community empowerment projects - see *Case Studies* in the Toolkit)

4. Facilitated Group Meeting (2 hours) to confirm mission, structure, roles of members, simple operational guide

5. ½ day Training Workshop on Basic Financial Management & Record Keeping

    Objectives: Group members able to do basic cost analysis and budgeting, to report on expenditure, keep minutes of meetings and record decision-making; Group members understand benefits and practice of 'peer-learning'.

    Method: Mobilizer/Mentor presents overview of the need for these skill sets and basic principles of financial management and record-keeping, and elicits experiences from the Group; Mobilizer/Mentor facilitates a series of exercises whereby group members practice cost analysis, drafting a simple budget, and updating an expenditure spreadsheet; Mobilizer/Mentor presents a checklist for record-keeping; throughout the exercises and review of the checklist, the Mobilizer should ask the more experienced group members to assist and work with the less experienced.

    Materials: flip chart paper/pens; copies of exercise and checklist

6. Group meetings (as many as is necessary) for Groups to work on their Action Plans and any operational issues

7. ½ day Training Workshop on Communication Skills and Basic Lobbying

Objectives: Group members confident and have basic skills to implement a communication strategy to address any tensions/conflicts inspired by opposition to their aims, and/or to undertake a basic lobbying action.

Method: Mobilizer/Mentor to develop as per group needs.

8. Facilitated Group Meeting (2 hours) to review feasibility of Action Plans

Examples

The photograph below is an example of a Problem Tree developed during a training exercise on CME:
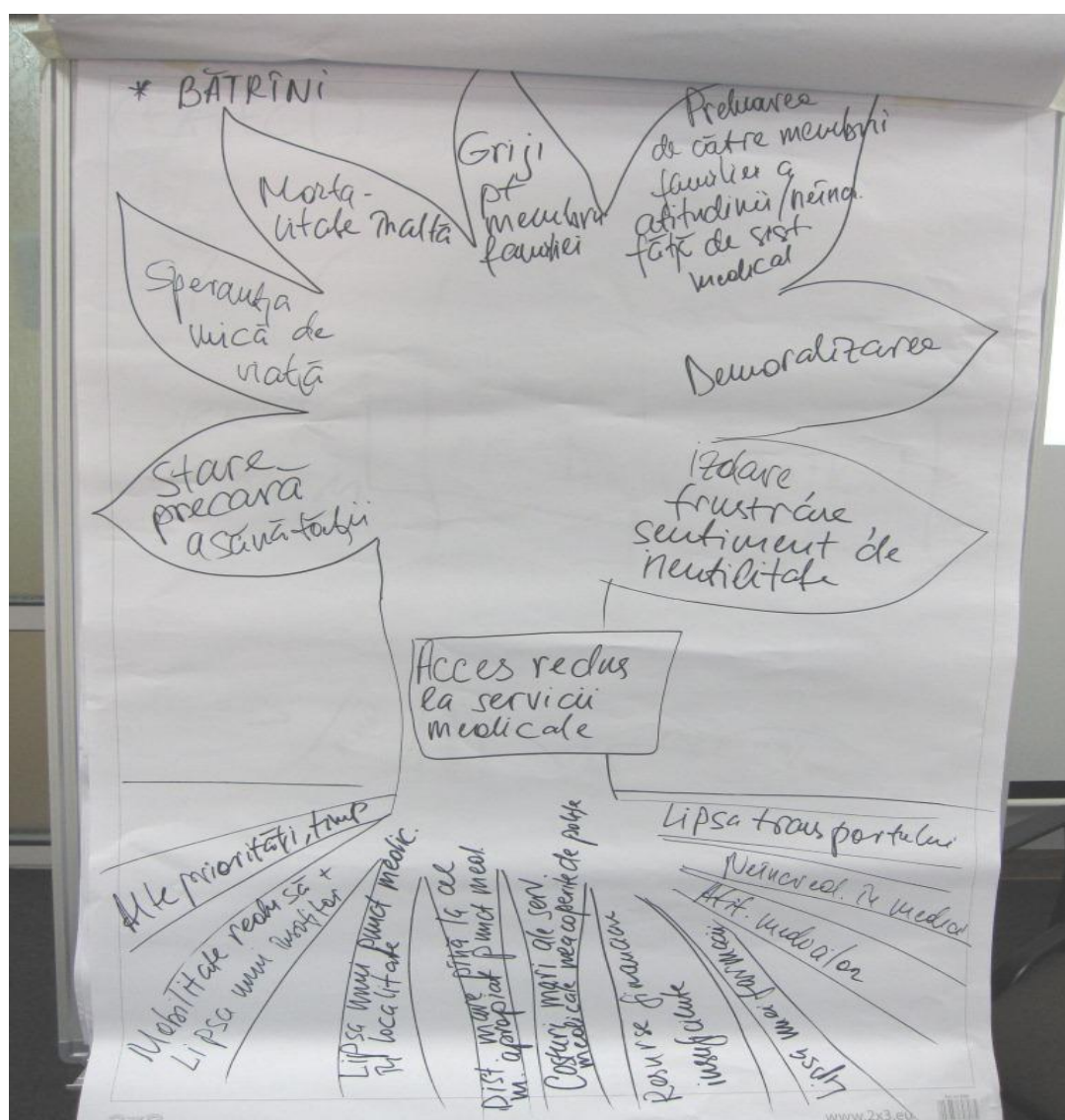
What risks are there? And how to reduce their impact?

Step 4 is very focused on the personal development of individual group members and on addressing the organisational needs of the Groups. For this reason, given that group members will have varying existing capacities and experiences, it is important that Mobilizers carefully monitor the pace of the various learning

activities. There is a risk that the pace can be too fast for some group members and that they feel 'left behind', confused, and demotivated. To avoid this, Mobilizers need to have checking mechanisms during and after the learning events. These might include simple observation of the levels of participation and the body language of group members, discussing directly with individuals during exercises to check their understanding, and ensuring that the practical tasks of the Group are shared out amongst the members (rather than Group leaders assuming the majority of responsibilities).

> **Top Tips**
>
> - The Problem Analysis/Action Planning process can be used by the groups to identify a number of projects or actions that will contribute to an overall empowerment objective. The Groups can then both prioritise and sequence the proposed actions so that they have a 'pipeline' of projects that they wish to implement.
>
> - Always critique 'problem trees' to ensure that 'causes and effects' are not mixed up, and that groups identify the real rather than proxy 'root causes'

STEP 5: Coming Out!

What's the objective?

Groups present their priority objectives and plans to the wider community and make clear their advocacy goals. The Groups and any allies will also ensure that any specific barriers to the CME process identified in Step 1 are addressed. Lastly, Groups secure agreements on cooperation and resources to enable them to begin to implement the project/activities described in their Action Plans.

What are the minimum requirements before moving on to the next Step?

- Groups able to demonstrate their capacity to present their interests and address challenges to them;

- Stakeholders in the wider community recognize the objectives and intended actions of the Groups (for example, through formal statements, cooperation agreements etc);

- Groups have secured the minimum inputs they require to begin implementation of their projects/activities.

How to achieve the objectives at this Step?

The Mobilizer will help to facilitate a Group Meeting whereby the Group discusses strategy and ideas on how to present their Action Plan to other stakeholders in the community. This meeting should include the Group making decisions about who they want to inform and lobby, how, where, and when they will do this. Thereafter the Mobilizer, with support from the Community Mentor, can assist the Group with preparing any required presentation materials, fixing appointments with specific stakeholders, arranging venues for meetings, setting up meetings with any other similar Groups in the region etc. However, during any 'external activities' of the Group (such as meetings, 'Town Hall' events, networking visits) the Mobilizer must not take any active role other than that of facilitator.

> Step 5 activities will mostly involve inputs from the Community Mobilizer, with support from the Community Mentors.

The first 'external activities' of the Group are likely to include some or all of the following:

- Presentation and discussion with the LPA

- A Public Meeting ('Town Hall' style)

- Bi-lateral meetings with specific stakeholders

- *Exchange visits* with other similar Groups

The Group is also likely to make a formal agreement with the JILDP programme in order to secure support for the implementation of their Action Plan. This agreement can be facilitated by the Mobilizer and may use a written *Cooperation Agreement template*.

Examples/Discussion Point

A Community Empowerment Programme in Uganda provided an initial list of ideas for sources of support for community actions as provided below. How might such a list differ for a community in Moldova?

Donations: cash, land, buildings, supplies and equipment, donated by individuals who want to support their community. *(Acknowledged and thanked in public meetings);*

Donations: cash, land, buildings, supplies and equipment, donated by internationally supported development programmes. *(Acknowledged and thanked in public meetings);*

Commercial: gifts from firms and businesses that want to advertise their good will and support of the community. *(Acknowledged and thanked in public meetings);*

Communal Labour: time and labour donated by community members, some unskilled *(clearing grass, laying bricks),* some skilled *(carpentry, masonry),* meetings, planning, supervision;

Agricultural: farmers may donate food for the project:
- to communal workers who are working on the project, *or*
- to the Group to sell to raise cash for the project;

Food: people who donate the preparing of food and refreshments to the community members on communal working days;

Contributions and fees: for credit club and similar financial projects, contributions from all members; service fees, such as for obtaining water;

Governmental: partial funding from central, district or local governmental sources.

Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs): local community based organizations, churches, outside NGOs working locally; *and*

Anonymous Donors: benefactors who remain unknown.

What risks are there? And how to reduce their impact?

The process of CME is by its very nature challenging to existing power structures, thus at this Step (as also with other Steps to a lesser degree) there is a high probability that certain interest groups within the wider community will try to influence or 'co-opt' the Groups' Action Plans. This risk can be best mitigated by prior analysis of the stakeholders (as discussed above in Steps 1 and 2) facilitated by the Mobilizers, and for

Groups to be prepared for any challenges. This might take the form of arranging a number of additional bi-lateral meetings and through building alliances with similar Groups. At all times Mobilizers must motivate the Group members to remain assertive of their Action Plans.

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Top Tips

- Mobilizers should also be aware that any challenges to the Groups' plans are mostly likely to be 'positive' signals, as they are indicators of empowerment - that is to say resistance to change is often a sign that an existing power structure senses that a re-distribution of power is imminent.

- Groups need to be aware of the difference between 'cooperation' with other stakeholders and 'co-opting' by other stakeholders.

</div>

STEP 6: Implementing The Project

What's the objective?

For this Step there are two main objectives. Firstly, the Groups achieve initial empowerment objectives and demonstrate capacity to the wider community. And secondly, group members have strengthened management and advocacy skills.

What are the minimum requirements before moving on to the next Step?

- Group members trained in basic project management skills and demonstrate their competence to manage the implementation of activities;

- Groups have capacity and understanding for monitoring and evaluating their activities from an empowerment and gender-sensitive perspective, and are able to a) use the information to make decisions about managing activities, and b) share and celebrate what they have achieved and learnt with others;

- Groups have some kind of plan for sustaining the results (or expected results) from their project/actions;

- Groups demonstrate commitment as sustainable CBOs.

> Step 6 activities will mostly be implemented by the Groups, but the Community Mobilizers and Community Mentors are required to provide some training, mentoring and encouragement.

How to achieve the objectives at this Step?

At this stage the Mobilizers and Mentors will begin to change their roles. In the previous Steps they will have been as 'active' as the group members, but in Step 6 the emphasis should be on the Groups performing, with the Mobilizers providing backseat encouragement and assisting in the provision of any needed technical training and mentoring. The may also be required to assist in networking activities amongst the Groups and with stakeholders in other districts of the region.

Prior to beginning, and during, the implement of their Action Plans, the group members will need to benefit from Training Workshops on various aspects of Project Management. These will vary from community to community depending on the nature of the Groups and their planned Actions. As a minimum, all Groups will need to have access to the following workshops:

- ½ day Training Workshop on Basic Project Management

  Objectives: Group members have the knowledge and basic skill sets for managing the implementation of a project.

  Method: Mobilizer/Mentor assist the Group to undertake a critical analysis of each stage in their Action Plan and identify what key management skills are need at each stage. (Eg need to manage

procurement of some supplies, need to make logistical arrangements for a public event, need for financial reporting on the project etc) The Group then reviews its own capacities at each point and the Mentor/Mobilizer explains how 'gaps' can be filled.

- ½ day Training Workshop on Monitoring

  More will be covered on the topic of monitoring in Step 9.

Later during the implementation of their Action Plans, Groups should be offered the following training:

- 1 day Training Workshop on Basic Advocacy

  This should e carefully tailored according to the needs and context of each Group. The NGO Partners should be consulted on how to design and deliver such a workshop.

In addition to the planned minimum trainings for the Groups and on-the-job coaching of group members, Mobilizers will need to discuss with Groups and monitor the implementation of their Action Plans with a view to identifying and 'plugging' gaps in the skills required within the Groups for successful completion of their projects/actions. These 'skill gaps' can then be shared with the Community Mentors and appropriate action taken to build the relevant capacity.

Examples

The UK's International NGO Training & Research Centre (INTRAC) provides many definitions of the terms Monitoring and Evaluation, including the follow:

Monitoring is the systematic and continuous assessment of the progress of a piece of work over time, which checks that things are 'going to plan' and enables adjustments to be made in a methodical way.
Evaluation is the periodic assessment of the relevance, performance, efficiency and impact of a piece of work with respect to its stated objectives. An evaluation is usually carried out at some significant stage in the project's development, e.g. at the end of a planning period, as the project moves to a new phase, or in response to a particular critical issue.

Thus, if we were to use an analogy to going on a road trip with a group by bus, the journey will be monitored by the driver and others as the journey progresses. The driver and passengers may monitor the route, the speed, the amount of fuel, and make adjustments in order to get to the right destination safely and on time. Once at the destination, the passengers may evaluate the journey in terms of how costly or timely it was compared to other forms of transport. How comfortable the journey was, and what might be improved in terms of services offered by the bus on the way.

Feuerstein 1986:19

What risks are there? And how to reduce their impact?

The obvious risk during implementation is that the activities themselves fail, either due to under-resourcing, bad planning, or technical weaknesses. However, these are not major risks. During implementation there are sure to be some failures and it is the Mobilizer's role to work with Groups at these times to understand and learn from the failure, and take steps to avoid repetition of the failing. Thus, the philosophy of 'learning by doing' should be encouraged.

Top Tips

- Mobilizers begin to take more of a 'back seat' from now on, however, it is vital that they continue to monitor the performance of the groups and to make suggestions to the groups should they see deviations from the empowerment objectives - for example, it is popular for groups to have an agreement for rotating leadership, but in reality the leadership and management tasks often gets 'stuck' with one or two individuals. Thus, Mobilizers should remind the groups to share the roles.

STEP 7: Secondary Actions & Projects

What's the objective?

Groups have strengthened skills for developing solutions and advocating for change, and have reinforced the emerging changes in empowerment.

What are the minimum requirements before moving on to the next Step?

Once Groups have matured to the point that they are able to engage in the development and implementation of actions secondary to their initial community project, Mobilizers can be confident that they no longer have a central role in the process and that they can complete their contributions in the remaining Steps without outputs from Step 7 being finalised. However, at this stage, Mobilizers need to be able to advice Groups that their progress and organisational development will depend on:

- Being able to apply lessons learnt from the initial project implementation to the design of future actions, particularly in respect of applying principles of GE and HRBA;

- Having the necessary knowledge and skills to raise resources to implement further actions;

- Using their organisational unity to ensure all group members benefit equally from the process of designing and implementing actions.

How to achieve the objectives at this Step?

The readiness for Groups to embark on secondary actions after their initial community project/action will vary greatly from community to community. Some of the variables include the scope/scale of the initial action and the time and resources required to move towards completion; the maturity

> Step 7 activities will mostly be implemented by the Groups, but the Community Mobilizers and, to a lesser extent, the Community Mentors, will need to provide mentoring, constructive criticism, and encouragement.

of the Group and how successfully it is moving from 'norming' to 'performing'; and the emerging changes (or resistance) in the environment in which the Group in operating. Mobilizers will need to discuss with Groups and assist them in making judgements about what further actions to develop and commit to within the first cycle of CME.

Part of the process and decision-making in developing secondary actions will involve:

- ½ day Workshop to Review Problem Analysis and Progress To Date

  Objectives: Groups understand the practical management aspects of monitoring and are able to make decisions about planned actions according to changes in circumstances.

  Method: Mobilizer facilitates a review of the original 'problem analysis' flip chart and Action Plan and gets Groups to note a) what has been done; b) was it done easily, or were there problems? c) are the activities actually helping to achieve the objective set out in the Action Plan, or is nothing

changing? The Group then looks ahead at the remaining activities and decides what course of changed action, if any.

- ½ day Workshop on Further Action Planning & Resource Mobilisation

  Objectives: Groups agree on one or more 'secondary' action, which will compliment or directly contribute to the objective targeted in their original Action Plan, and which they can feasibly resource.

  Method: This workshop should follow the review process above. It will basically involve the same discussions as per the original Action Planning, but this time the group needs to identify actions which it can resource by itself and/or identify possible donors or additional partners.

These workshops will then facilitate the implementation of additionally planned actions, with elements repeated from Steps 6 and 7.

Examples

Indicatively, Groups may decide to carry out secondary actions such as:

- Collaborative actions with LPAs to establish innovative mechanisms that facilitate the most marginalised to participate in decision-making;

- Local campaigns to advocate changes in service provision based on the results of pilot actions under the initial community project;

- Peer-learning and support to mobilization in other communities;

- Coalition-building or networking activities with similar groups.

See Case Studies for examples of such actions

What risks are there? And how to reduce their impact?

Given that partner NGOs are under some constraints of the supporting programme and of their own organizational strengths, there is a risk that Community Mobilizers may feel obligated to 'push' Groups to perform beyond their nascent capacities within the first cycle of mobilization. To reduce this risk, Mentors must ensure that through thorough monitoring they are able to assist and advise Mobilizers on issues related to the organizational development of the Groups. Both the group members and the Mobilizers must feel comfortable that they have the capacity and Group commitment to embark on secondary actions.

> **Top Tips**
>
> - Avoid any 'secondary actions' which require contributions to 'hard' infrastructure

STEP 8: Working with the LPAs

What's the objective?

The process of community mobilization for empowerment is a process which is most effective when independent of local government planning and community groups formed from the process should be able to resist being co-opted by locally elected officials. However, it is essential that both the process and outputs from the mobilization process are aligned to the activities of the LPAs and that they are seen as parallel and complimentary to the local government planning. Thus, the objective of this Step is that all the stakeholders, particularly the officials of the LPA, understand the concept and purpose of the community mobilization and not only welcome the outputs into their planning activities, but provide adequate 'space' for this to happen.

It is important that locally elected officials understand the difference between the mechanisms for representative democracy, participatory decision-making, and empowerment of the most vulnerable. They are all inter-related, and LPAs need to be able to manage these relationships.

What are the minimum requirements before moving on to the next Step?

Considerable institutional capacity already exists in communities and local governments. This capacity has been cloaked by a lack of local empowerment to use it. Any definition of capacity that focuses only on technical capacity will miss the huge potential that exists. Existing capacity is best defined as the ability to solve problems. People who have survived by trying to solve problems in difficult economic and political conditions have considerable capacity to put their experience and skills to work, once they are empowered. Thus, this Step is somewhat different to the other CME Steps as the activities to be undertaken need to be done so in a continuous manner rather than on a sequential basis, as the objective of the Step is to change attitudes of LPA officials so that they are aware of the tremendous benefits of the empowerment of the most vulnerable.

> Step 8 activities will actually be carried out throughout the CME cycle and will mainly be the responsibility of the NGO partners and Community Mentors

There are three key indicators which can be used to measure how much LPAs (and other stakeholders) are providing for the minimum requirements of CME:

- LPA officials organizing and improving community participation – Participation is a central pillar of empowerment. Rather than being mere recipients of services and grants, communities, and particularly the most vulnerable groups, take the lead in the development process. Only women and men of the communities know their local conditions and issues and are best placed to decide what their priorities are. The participatory process gives communities the opportunity to analyze and discuss their local situation in systematic fashion, identify community needs and implement action plans. The participatory process is inclusive of all the different social, gender, ethnic, and other vulnerable groups within a given community. It provides the space for the heterogeneity of the community to be exposed and thus would lead to identification of community needs and

priorities that are reflective of all the different social groups involved. Participatory planning processes also tap into existing social capital, and also help build and strengthen the community' social capital. Many of the methods, tools and techniques needed for community participation are incorporated in the various Steps in this Guide, particularly the Community Profiling.

- Financing communities through matching grants - In order to develop local planning and resource allocation capacities, it is important that there is a shift from earmarking to matching untied grants where communities have control over the funds. Untying matching grants does not mean giving money with no rules or conditions at all. On the contrary, it must be accompanied by guidelines to ensure wide local participation; to promote transparency and accountability; to prevent fraud and misuse; to avoid elite capture and social exclusion. The money will not be tied to specific projects, but its disbursements must be based on the observance of approved procedures, and ultimately on performance. The concept of matching grants implies that local communities will contribute part of the share of project costs. Good social accountability mechanisms accompanied by a strategic communication and information dissemination campaign is a pre-requisite. Communities must be equipped with the information and knowledge required for them to actively participate and contribute towards the design and implementation of their own development initiatives.

- Targeting interventions to ensure the participation of socially excluded sections - It is important that LPA officials recognize that communities are not homogeneous, and targeting may be needed to reach normally excluded vulnerable groups. Such targeting and recognition of the need will be demonstrated as LPAs embrace the findings of the Community Profiles and plan in accordance to them.

How to achieve the objectives at this Step?

For the NGO partners and Community Mentors, Step 8 requires a number of actions:

- During the initial meetings with the LPA officials (in Steps 1 & 2), the concept and process of Community Mobilization for Empowerment needs to be clearly and carefully explained. Such explanation can be aided by using the visuals in this Guide of the 'Cycle' and flow chart of 10 Steps. Copies of the Guide should also be made available to the officials.

- NGO partners need to elaborate integrated Action Plans that shows the various complimentary activities of CME and the local development planning cycle. This integrated plan needs to be shared and agreed with the LPAs.

- As part of the formal capacity building activities within the LPAs, a training module on CME needs to be designed and delivered to both elected and appointed officials. This training should include sessions to: explain the CME concept and key Steps; demonstrate the Community Profiling exercise, including the matrix for reflecting upon HR concerns amongst the most vulnerable; review the process of Group Formation and the cooperation that might be required from the side of local government (eg. Registration needs etc); and basic training on Participatory Monitoring & Evaluation and how comments from community members can be effectively incorporated into formal LPA reporting.

- Training (either through a formal workshop or through 'on-the-job' coaching) of LPA officials on how to organise and facilitate 'town hall' style meetings so that community groups can present to and interact with administrators on finalising local development plans.

Examples

A Case Study: Self Help Groups Empowering the Disabled in Vietnam

Landmine Survivors Network - Vietnam (LSN-V) is a non-governmental organization operating in Quang Binh Province, Vietnam, since 2003. Created by and for survivors, LSN-V empowers individuals, families and communities affected by landmines to recover from trauma, reclaim their lives, and fulfill their rights.
The network has helped establish a range of self-help groups for landmine survivors. Many of these survivors have injury related impairments but a unique characteristic of the groups is that they also include people with disabilities unrelated to conflict and landmines. These groups aim to facilitate the process of self-empowerment by overcoming social exclusion, enhancing participation in decision-making processes and improving the quality of life. The ultimate goal of LSN-Viet Nam is to have a self-help group in each commune[3].

Outreach workers from LSN-Viet Nam, many of whom have a disability, are responsible for supporting communes that have expressed an interest in forming a self-help group. These workers start by fostering collaborative relationships with the local authorities as well as with major representative organizations such as the Farmers' Association, the Women's Union and the Veterans' Association. They provide training on the concept of self-help groups for the organizing group and guidance on the legal steps associated with registration of the group with the local authorities, and arrange initial stakeholder meetings.
Once groups are formally registered and formed, they are run independently by the members. Outreach workers provide on-going support where required. For example, they may provide training for group members on disability issues and/or group facilitation (e.g. how to chair meetings). Group members are responsible for directing activities which have included: **inviting representatives from local authorities to discuss health services for people with disabilities, working with local authorities to improve the quality and accessibility of health services for people with disabilities, organizing local sports events, participating in national sports events, providing peer education on health care and treatment, creating small business ventures and work opportunities**, and promoting a positive image of people with disabilities in the local community. Many self-help groups have assumed responsibility for the National Day of People with Disabilities in Viet Nam by setting the agenda for the day and leading public celebrations.

One of the greatest achievements of the self-help groups is the impact they have had on raising the awareness of local authorities about the needs of people with disabilities and the important participatory role people with disabilities can play in addressing their needs. The next step is to bring all self-help groups together under one umbrella.

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[3] The 'commune' in Vietnam is a village, and administratively represents the lowest unit of local government

What risks are there? And how to reduce their impact?

Many locally elected officials may be confused and, at worst, feel threatened by the process of Community Mobilization for Empowerment. They may consider that as democratically elected officials they are already a genuine mechanism for representing the needs and views of the most vulnerable in their communities, and many may feel that it is inappropriate that the concerns of a minority in the community (for example, the needs of a vulnerable group such as the disabled, or a linguistic minority) should prevail over the concerns of the majority.

These feelings of LPA officials can result in a major constraint to meaningful mobilization. The only effective way to mitigate the risk is through continuous awareness-raising and training. Officials need to understand:

- The complimentary nature of representative democracy and participatory development

- The fundamentals of GE/HRBA and how they impact on poverty and social problems in the community

- That the process of empowerment can unleash latent capacities in the community and make the whole community more self-reliant and robust

- That a community that embraces diversity and inclusiveness, and is able to come up with solutions to its own problems, will be seen as a much more attractive target for external investors (public and private) than communities which fail to address the problems of social exclusion.

STEP 9: Using Monitoring for Learning, Sustainability & Empowerment

What's the objective?

Groups have capacity to collect and analyse monitoring information and use it to inform on decision-making and self-management. The analysis of their progress towards initial empowerment objectives must also inform Groups on how they will sustain the results of their actions and sustain the development of the Groups themselves.

What are the minimum requirements before moving on to the next Step?

- Groups have a robust framework for collecting monitoring information and the capacity to use it for decision-making and for producing information bulletins for the wider community;

- Groups have a drafted Sustainability Plan for the outputs of their actions to date, and have a basic Organization Development Plan for the Group.

How to achieve the objectives at this Step?

Over the period of the implementation of the community projects/actions, activities must also run in parallel in order to achieve the objectives of Step 9. Such activities will include:

> Step 9 involves the delivery of some training by Community mentors, but is largely driven by the Groups themselves, with facilitation from the Community Mobilizers.

- Facilitated Group Meeting (2 hours) on reporting on Participatory Monitoring.

  Mobilizers assist Groups to look at monitoring data collected since the training on Monitoring and to assess its relevance and usefulness, and how the information might be analysed and shared within the wider community.

- ½ day Training Workshop on Evaluating Empowerment

  Potential contents for this workshop will be guided by outputs from the ToT in critiquing the Competences Framework for the community groups.

Another important area of performance of the Groups to which Mobilizers and Mentors can offer support, is that of Communication. During Step 4 the group members will have received some training on communication skills, but during implementation the Mobilizers will need to remind Groups the importance of sharing information within the community and to other stakeholders. This will contribute to transparency and strengthen the empowerment of the groups. The types of communication may include the printing and distribution of community posters or simple newsletters, and events like Public Meetings. It is equally important for the Groups to publically celebrate success and achievements.

During this Step the organizational development of the Group will benefit from undertaking exchange visits and site visits to other similar Groups, as well as the opportunity to network with CSOs engaged in their

field of interest. Mobilizers and Mentors should place particular emphasis on supporting peer-learning and information sharing with women's organisations.

As the Groups move towards the end of implementing their initial activities, Mobilizers will need to facilitate the Groups in a process of planning the sustainability of the outputs of the actions. In some cases this may simply involve the Group planning follow-up actions, but in many cases (particularly in respect of projects related to access to and delivery of services) the Groups will need to establish dedicated committees/units or other entities that will take responsibility for managing the outputs and scaling up the benefits, and mobilising the necessary resources to support this management.

Top Tips

- If a Group is clearly not going to be sustainable as an entity (for whatever reason), Mobilizers should assist the group members in implementing a 'handover' strategy so that a partner, or new organisation, can take on responsibilities of project outputs and for the existing group members to plan what they want to do next as individuals.

STEP 10: Evaluation & Next Steps

What's the objective?

Groups have capacity to undertake analysis through an 'empowerment lens' and demonstrate to others good practices in advocating for gender equality and more inclusive local development.

What are the minimum requirements before moving on to the next Step?

- Groups have undertaken a participatory evaluation of their actions to date and recorded their findings and impressions in a format appropriate for their own learning, the learning of others, and for sharing with other stakeholders.

- Groups have a feasible organisational development plan, updated after any identified 'lessons learnt' from the project evaluation.

How to achieve the objectives at this Step?

During Step 9 the group members will have benefitted from a training activity on Evaluating Empowerment. Following this, as the Groups near to completion of their initial actions, Mobilizers will facilitate a Group Meeting for the development of an evaluation plan. This plan will confirm the indicators to be used to help measure changes, the methods for collecting the information and sources of information, who will participate in the process, and the timeframe for undertaking the evaluation. Given that the task of measuring 'change' is a big challenge for everyone, the Groups may need support from the Community mentors as well as Mobilizers.

> Step 10 will be driven by the Groups themselves, with facilitation from the Community Mobilizers. Community Mentors and the NGO partners will need to engage with the Groups as they present their evaluations and next steps.

Once the Group has collected its evaluation information, it should hold one (or more) meetings to discuss the findings and decide what to do with them. This may include:

- Producing some kind of simple document to record what has happened as a result of the Group's actions and what actions were the most or least successful and why;

- Presenting the evaluation findings at a Public Meeting;

- Sharing the evaluation with specific stakeholders, such as LPAs, at bi-lateral meetings;

- Working with the Mobilizers and Mentors to create '*Success Story*' material.

Mobilizers will also need to support Groups in a process that reviews their organisational development plan drafted in Step 9, by taking on board any relevant findings from the evaluation process and from comments and feedback from other stakeholders.

What risks are there? And how to reduce their impact?

Mobilizers will find that Groups reach the final Steps in the CME cycle at different times. If Groups are still engaged in the activities under Step 6 at the time that the programme supporter concludes its support, there is a high risk that Groups will not mature to a point of sustainability. To mitigate this to some extent, Mobilizers should work closely with the Community Mentors and NGO partners to help the Groups identify alternative supporters at least 3 months prior to the anticipated withdrawal of the original programme supporter.

Top Tips

- The key to documenting success is not to focus on the question of 'what have we done', but rather on the questions of 'what has changed in our lives?' and 'what have we achieved?'

- Never underestimate the 'power' of celebrating success!

GOAL !

What's the objective?

Men and women representing vulnerable groups have created sustainable bodies (SHGs, CBOs, NGOs) which are able to effectively promote and advocate for their needs and interests to be included in the local development process.

How to achieve the objectives at this Step?

This will have been achieved through the successful implementation of Steps 1 to 10, and should be finalised through public events to promote and celebrate the achievements of the Groups.

Is sustainability always necessary?

There will circumstances where Groups formed through the CME process have achieved their initial objectives and are no longer valid in their existing form. Thus, group members may seek to sustain their achievements by transforming into a different kind of group or merging with an existing organization.