



# Community Mobilisation for Empowerment

JILDP Moldova

## Toolkit

*August 2011*

## Contents

Introduction.....	3
Glossary of Acronyms & Terms .....	4
Manifestations of ‘Community Based Organisations’ .....	7
HRBA & GE Community Mobilization for Empowerment Framework.....	8
Community Profile Template .....	9
Stakeholder Analysis matrix .....	13
SWOT analysis matrix and explanation.....	14
Some Qualitative Data Collection Tools .....	15
A Selection of Sampling Methods for Qualitative Data Collection.....	16
Managing Focus Group Discussions.....	17
Timelines .....	19
Venn Diagrams .....	20
Group Development - the Stages model .....	22
Problem Tree Analysis.....	23
Critical Path Analysis .....	25
Understanding ‘Power’ and Empowerment Frameworks : .....	28
Sources of Power – Images .....	30
Fish Bone Analytical Tool .....	31
Building Networks & Alliances.....	32
JILD P CME – Community Mobilizer’s Job Description.....	33
Case Studies of Mobilization for Empowerment .....	35

## Introduction

This toolkit is designed to accompany the JILDP Guide for Community Mobilisation for Empowerment. It is not a 'stand alone' document, nor a definitive list of tools for producing a Community Profile or undertaking mobilisation activities. It is rather some practical advice to accompany activities proposed in the Guide and should be used together with other tools and methods.

This version of the Toolkit is presented in draft form, with the aim of it being used on a pilot basis and the users providing feedback to JILDP on how it might be strengthened and updated for wider application in support of CME in Moldova. Thus, comments on the tools and experience in using them (and others) will be most welcome.

Comments can be sent to the drafting team at [simon.forrester@eurasiasocialchange.com](mailto:simon.forrester@eurasiasocialchange.com)

*Simon Forrester*

*International Consultant on CME for JILDP/UN Women*

*August 2011*

## Glossary of Accronyms & Terms

### Acronyms

CBO: Community Based Organisation (maybe informal or a formally registered group)

CME: Community Mobilization for Empowerment

CSO: Civil Society Organization

GE: Gender Equity

HRBA: Human Rights Based Approach

JILD: Joint Integrated Local Development Programme

LPA: Local Public Administration

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

SHG: Self-Help Group (an informal group)

### Some Terms Commonly Associated with Community Mobilisation for Empowerment

**Community:** The online resource 'wikipedia' notes that by 1950s there were 94 discrete different definitions of the term 'community'. It goes on to state that in *human* communities, intent, belief, resources, preferences, needs, risks, and a number of other conditions may be present and common, affecting the identity of the participants and their degree of cohesiveness.

**Community Action:** A clearly defined set of activities, designed, resourced and implemented by the community in order to achieve a mutually agreed purpose. The Action is likely to be undertaken in a relatively short period of time (3-9 months), and may have a purpose that requires physical outputs (eg. A refurbished school room, or wheelchair ramp at the local government office) or less tangible achievements (eg. Change in a local bye-law, or an increase in the local government's education budget.)

**Community Mentor:** Community Mentors are drawn from the staff and associates of the 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.

**Community Mobilizer:** Community Mobilizers are from within the target communities. The likely qualifications, profiles, tasks and responsibilities of the Mobilizers are described in the accompanying 'Job Description for Mobilizers'. 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 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.

Diversity:	<p>Diversity can be defined in many different ways. One approach is to view diversity as a commitment to recognizing and appreciating the variety of characteristics that make individuals unique in an atmosphere that promotes and celebrates individual and collective achievement.</p> <p>Examples of these characteristics are: age; cognitive style; culture; disability (mental, learning, physical); economic background; education; ethnicity; gender identity; geographic background; language(s) spoken; marital/partnered status; physical appearance; political affiliation; race; religious beliefs; sexual orientation.</p>
Empowerment:	<p>Implies people - both women and men - taking control over their lives: setting their own agendas, gaining skills (or having their own skills and knowledge recognized), increasing self-confidence, solving problems, and developing self-reliance. It is both a process and an outcome. (UN Women 2010)</p>
Evaluation:	<p>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.</p>
Gender Equality:	<p>Assumes that all people are free to develop their own personal abilities and to make choices without structural or social barriers, such as stereotypes, rigid gender roles, or prejudices. Gender equality means that the differential behaviours, aspirations, and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favoured equally at all levels and in all spaces, public and private. Gender equality does not infer gender sameness, but implies that substantive rights, responsibilities and opportunities are not dependent upon biological sex. (ILO 2000)</p>
Indicator:	<p>Indicators are a very important element of a monitoring and evaluation system. In this context, an indicator is an observable change or event which provides evidence that something has happened – whether an output delivered, immediate effect occurred or long-term change observed. They do not provide proof so much as reliable signs that the event or process being claimed has actually happened (or is happening). The evidence from a number of indicators will provide the convincing case for the claims being made.</p>

Monitoring:	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.
Social Capital:	Social capital is defined by Robert D. Putnam as "the collective value of all social networks and species (who people know) and the inclinations that arise from these works to do things for each other (norms of reciprocity)." Social capital in action can be seen in all sorts of groups, including, for example, the simple process of neighbours keeping an eye on each others' property when absent, or a friends borrowing money from each other.
Social Exclusion:	Refers to processes in which individuals and entire communities of people are systematically blocked from rights, opportunities and resources (e.g. housing, employment, healthcare, civic engagement, democratic participation and due process) that are normally available to members of society and which are key to social integration. (Institute on Social Exclusion at the Adler School of Professional Psychology, USA)
Transparency:	It is implemented by a set of policies, practices and procedures that allow citizens to have accessibility, usability, informativeness, understandability, and auditability of information and process held by centres of authority (society or organizations).
Vulnerability:	A person with vulnerability is a person highly susceptible to a specific hazard such as violence, especially gender-based violence (including sexual violence), illness, immobility, poverty, lack of shelter. Different categories of people such as women, men, single heads of households, children, youth, the elderly, people living with HIV/AIDS, people living with disabilities, LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transsexual, queer) and people experiencing traumatic or post-traumatic shock, encounter different hazards and to different extents – they experience conflict differently and they have different needs. (UN Women 2010)

And finally...

... **Poverty** - "A man who lived in a cottage was perfectly happy until a neighbour came along who constructed a palace. Then the cottager began to feel deprived". (Karl Marx, 'Wage Labour & Capital')

## Manifestations of 'Community Based Organisations'

There is a large body of work researching aspects of community development over the last 20-30 years, much of which attempts to explain how social capital might be leveraged and how communities manage to organise themselves in many different ways. From this literature it is possible to see that the most common reviews of typologies of CBOs look at a) their functions; b) their origins and associations; and c) their means of legitimacy. Thus, below are presented a number of different types of organizational forms of CBOs.

**Initiative Groups** - Usually an informal group of community members who come together and agree to work together in order to solve a common, urgent issue. The group membership can be quite large and varied (for example, all the adults in a small village), but an 'executive committee' of 5 or 6 members is usually endorsed by consensus to carry-out the management of the group's tasks. More often than not the group is abandoned once the immediate objective has been achieved, but in some cases the group may develop into a more permanent organisation and seek legal recognition.

**Self Help Groups / Mutual Support Groups** - Small groups formed around membership that has a common general interest establishing a mechanisms whereby individuals in the group are supported by the group as a whole, with solidarity and mutual capacity building the prime motivators. Such groups are likely to have memberships of between 8 to 15, and once formed will restrict expansion of the group. Initially the groups may meet simply for solidarity and to share problems, but eventually decide on actions that they can take collectively, which may, operationally-speaking, require some type of formal recognition (eg. To open a bank account). Such groups usually strengthen their positions by forming coalitions or federations with other similar groups.

**Credit & Savings Groups** - these groups are similar in size and membership to the SHGs, but are defined by their main function to assist group members on economic issues. This is done through the group management of savings and corresponding availability of credit from the group to individual members.

**Neighbourhood 'Committees'** - these are types of community organisations that are founded either through cultural/anthropological tradition to assist in administering a community defined territorially, or determined under specific legal regulations. Eg. The housing associations formed from the Soviet era in certain former Soviet countries.

**User Groups** - these are groups established as a mechanism by which the wider community (a village, or group of farmers, for example) can self-manage infrastructure serving the community. The groups are usually legally registered and operate under specific operational guidelines, with a clear, simple mandate (eg. The management of drinking water supply)

**Faith-Based Groups** - similar to the SHGs and Initiative Groups, but with a membership defined by their association to a particular religion, and usually a specific church, mosque, temple etc.

# HRBA & GE Community Mobilization for Empowerment Framework

## Individual change

### EMPOWERMENT

#### Benchmarks

- Gender/Age/ethnicity etc disaggregated data collection & analysis (for evidence based advocacy and joint group's identification of priorities)
- Vulnerable groups can form CBOs that can promote specific needs and interest in to local development process,
- Vulnerable groups/CBOs that represent them can influence local decisions in a relevant way,
- Vulnerable groups/CBOs that represent them can develop community initiative projects and implement them successfully,
- Vulnerable groups/CBOs that represent them can develop other project initiatives and succeed in getting funding other than JILDP.

#### HOW?

- Facilitate the creation of the CBOs.
- Involve as much as possible in the vulnerability study,
- link underlying causes to knowledge gaps and provide training and consulting, develop relevant competences.
- encourage to participation in local planning and local decision making, how local resources are distributed.
- develop community initiative, plan for sustainability.

### INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY

#### Benchmarks

- Gender/Age/ethnicity etc disaggregated data collection & analysis (for evidence-based advocacy & local development planning)
- Awareness on HRBA&GE of the public servants and local decision makers.
- Knowledge and skills on HRBA&GE of the public servants and local decision makers.
- Specific and clear roles on how to integrate HRBA&GE in local development.
- Tools used by the local decision makers and public servants to operationalize HRBA&GE in local development.
- Commitment to follow through HRBA&GE commitments.

#### HOW?

- Capacity assessment, plus targets to be achieved.
- Specific functional responsibilities towards HRBA&GE clarified or added,
- Training and consulting sessions on HRBA&GE,
- Provide support for new tools like vulnerability and gender segregated forms, computer.

## Right Holders

### COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

#### Benchmarks

- Vulnerable groups, men and women have access to relevant information linked to their rights (on employment, on social payments and services, on local decision making).
- Vulnerable groups, men and women are consulted when relevant decisions are taken, project initiatives are decided.
- Increased awareness in community on specific vulnerable groups (religious, ethnic, gender),
- Vulnerable groups, men and women have access and are able use redressing mechanisms to prevent human rights violation.

#### HOW?

- Encourage CBOs to get involved in peer to peer education and create support groups and networks in the community.
- Community project initiative,
- Encourage CBOs to initiate awareness campaigns in community

## Duty bearers

### INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

#### Benchmarks

- Political commitment to promote HRBA&GE principles in to local development,
- Strong commitment to address the capacity gaps on HRBA&GE. Enabling and encouraging environment to promote HRBA&GE.
- Internal policies and regulation on HRBA&GE,
- Tools and systems that are used to promote HRBA&GE.
- Financial commitment to promote HRBA&GE principles.
- Increased accountability on HRBA&GE. **Institutionalized vulnerability study.**

#### HOW?

- Institutional capacity assessment on HRBA&GE.
- Capacity development plan on HRBA&GE,
- Developing internal procedures on HRBA
- Community project initiative, Training and consulting sessions.
- Accountability, accountability, accountability.

## Institutions/System change



## Community Profile Template

# Community Profile

.....

(name & location of community)

Report compiled by

Xxxxxxx

(Name of 'Community Mentor', Organisation name and contact details)

date

# Contents

## Introduction

1. Methodology
2. Findings:
  - 3i. General Description of the Community
  - 3ii. Economic profile
  - 3iii. Environmental and natural disaster mitigation assessment
  - 3iv. Vulnerable Groups
  - 3v. Human Rights Concerns
3. Community Perspectives:
  - 4i. Social Mapping
  - 4ii. Timelines
  - 4iii. Distribution of Authority
  - 4iv. Priority Needs
4. Conclusions of Research Team

Annexes: map; graphic representations of the community; lists of informants; any additional data etc

*(In total the report should not be more than 50 pages, and if possible, less than 40. It has to be written in an accessible style, so that all literate members of the community can read it, and, wherever possible, should use visuals and graphics to explain the situation. It is also good if the Community Profile is illustrated with photographs.)*

## **Introduction**

*A brief description of the purpose of the Community Profile and the principles guiding the methodology and content. Remember that the purpose of the Community Profile should touch upon 3 aspects:*

*A study of the demographic, social, physical, economic and environmental characteristics of the village(s) or town or defined LPA area. The study may identify the needs of the community as well as the opportunities for future development and the constraints that might impede development;*

*An analysis of any groups within the community that share common vulnerability characteristics;*

*A profile prepared for and in cooperation with the community members.*

### **1. Methodology**

- *Framework for the analysis, and the 'key questions'*
- *Methods & Tools used*
- *Information about those collecting the data, the sources of data, and about the informants (and how they were identified)*
- *Dates for the data collection*
- *Remarks on any constraints and unexpected issues during the research*

### **2. Findings:**

#### **i. General Description of the Community**

*This section should include the general demographics, the location and physical nature of the community, along with its physical infrastructure, and any specific characteristics of the community which make it different to other communities (these might be 'positive' or 'negative' characteristics.)*

#### **ii. Economic profile**

*This should describe the economic infrastructure and local labour market, and explain the main sources of income for the community members. The type of data and the way it is presented should follow the recommendations of the UNDP ToT on Strategic Local Planning.*

#### **iii. Environmental and natural disaster mitigation assessment**

*This section should be completed in line with the methodology proposed by UNDP : Rapid Rural Assessment*

#### **iv. Vulnerable Groups**

*Described as per the 6 focus areas highlighted in the taxonomy, with statistical data provided in tables and brief summaries of any relevant qualitative data from interviews etc*

Identification, description and analysis of the vulnerable groups. Make the most vulnerable and less vulnerable classification. Provide problem tree analysis and possible interventions.

v. Human Rights Concerns

*Data presented in the matrix templates, followed by any footnotes and additional qualitative information.*

**3. Community Perspectives:**

*These sections may differ from community to community depending on the areas of focus suggested by the initial findings and analysis above, and depending on the degree of engagement and accessibility of members of the community during the profiling exercise. However, this section may contain the findings from a selection, (or selections), of the community members in some, or all, of the following participatory exercises:*

i. Social Mapping

*A geographical presentation of the community annotated to show the households and groups of households of those seen as vulnerable by the community, and the important assets and institutions in the community.*

Ortho-photo mapping distribution of households either digital or graphic (highly preferable)

ii. Timelines

*Can be used to show specific events or activities that have had significant impact on the community over the last 10 years (or more). The impact can be depicted as either positive or negative (or elements of both).*

iii. Distribution of Authority

*The community members use venn diagrams to demonstrate the importance, influence, and location of institutions or individuals that affect the quality of their lives.*

Mapping out power structure in the community, specific steps in the annex

iv. Priority Needs

*This may be a list of issues that are articulated by community members during any interviews, focus groups, or such interaction during the data collection process. The needs should be recorded against the community members expressing them (but not by personal names).*

**4. Conclusions of Research Team**

*Brief conclusions as agreed by the Community Mentor and research team, with recommendations that might be considered by the community members during their process of problem analysis. These should not run to more than one page.*

## Stakeholder Analysis matrix

Stakeholder groups		Role in the community issue	Policy impact on stakeholder groups	Stakeholder group influence over the community action		
				<i>Stage preparation</i>	<i>Stage decision</i>	<i>Stage implementation</i>
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						

### Legend:

U = unknown

1 = no importance

2 = low importance

3 = relative importance

4 = high importance

5 = critical

## Stakeholder Case Study Exercise

Pitești municipality pursued, all throughout 2001, the rehabilitation of a large area in the main park – Strand Park. In a first attempt to stimulate citizen participation, the Municipality identified those stakeholders who will be the main beneficiaries of the facilities provided by the park:

- ◆ athletes' association;
- ◆ students from a university adjacent to the park;
- ◆ tenant associations in the neighborhood;
- ◆ parents of the children who use the playfield in the area;
- ◆ students of nearby schools;
- ◆ the elderly, especially those in the Citizens' Advisory Group;
- ◆ Roma communities adjacent to the park;
- ◆ NGOs.

The stakeholder representatives were interviewed and invited to take part in focus groups, in order to provide information to the project team.

(Pitești Municipality, 24 Victoriei street, 0300 Pitești, county Argeș; tel: 048-626287; contact person: Dan Teodorescu, Division for Heritage and Social Activities)

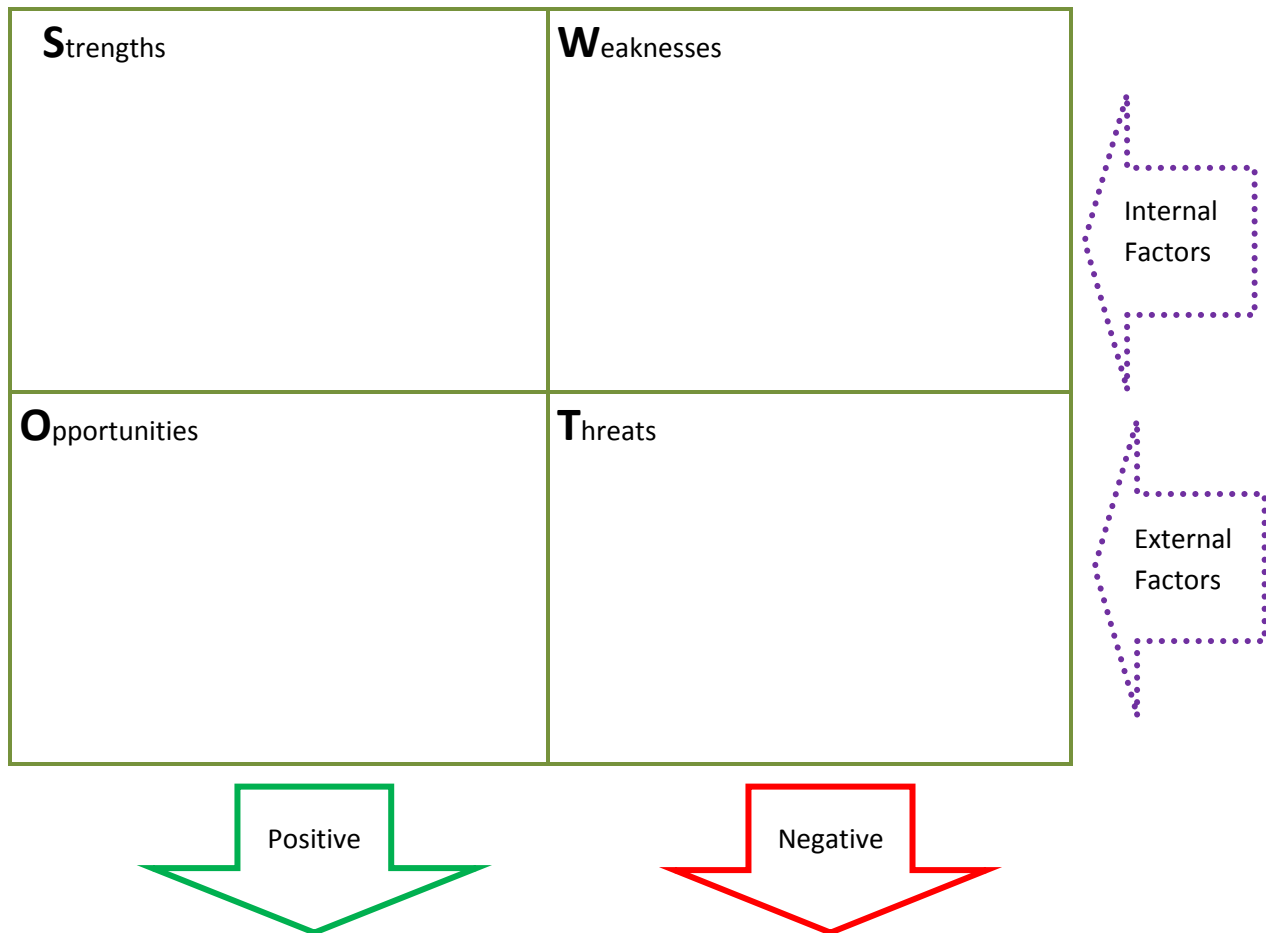
1. Do you think there are other stakeholders in the rehabilitation of the Strand Park in Pitești?

2. Assuming that you represent the interests of (a) Roma community / (b) tenant association / (c) athletes' association / (d) ecologist NGO – what questions would you ask the project manager?

## SWOT analysis matrix and explanation

An evaluation of the internal and external environment is an important part of the strategic planning process. Internal environmental factors usually can be classified as *strengths (S)* or *weaknesses (W)*, and those external to the organization can be classified as *opportunities (O)* or *threats (T)*. Such an analysis of the strategic environment is referred to as a **SWOT analysis**.

**Subject of SWOT Analysis:** (*define the subject of analysis here – eg. An organisation's position on empowerment of community groups* )



## Some Qualitative Data Collection Tools

*Below is a brief description of tools that can be used to collect qualitative data, including methods for facilitating participation of the informants in the collection process. A selection of these tools are further elaborated in the following pages.* Interviews and observation

**Informal interviews** – These aim to elicit information through conversations between interviewers and respondents. They explore, broadly, the views, experiences and values of the respondent by giving the interviewer freedom to pursue issues as they arise. Both the selection of informants and types of questions should be gender-responsive.

**Semi-structured interviews** – These make use of an interview guide with a list of questions to ensure that the main topics are covered. They use open ended questions in a flexible sequence which allows for interviewer discretion and can ensure there are gender considerations, and they leave room for additional questions to be asked to pursue particular topics of interest.

**Focus groups** – These use a small group of people who will discuss openly among themselves and with the interviewer, usually following up on topics identified by an earlier exercise. They can provide a good means of analysing how people interact and discuss issues as they rely on interactions between the members of the group and not simply interaction between the researchers questions and the participants responses. The selection of individuals to be invited to participate in a focus group discussion should follow a previously planned sampling process, allowing for gender, age, and other considerations. The group should be between 5-8 individuals and the moderator will need to plan in advance how to record responses (eg. With a tape recorder approved by participants, or with assistance from a note-taker). (More details below)

**Community interviews** – These are open for all members of a community or neighbourhood and must be very carefully planned if they are to be successful. A structured interview guide should be used to avoid conversations drifting and it is important that a gender-balance of people speak, and that the interview is not dominated by just a few individuals. As with Focus Groups, there is a need to have a clear strategy for recording responses.

**Participant observation** – this involves observing the normal daily lives of beneficiaries, possibly through staff living within the community or community members making recording observations. Or through a **Community Walk**, whereby the researcher walks through the community on a pre-arranged route, making observations and holding in promptu informal interviews with people on the street.

### Participatory Tools

**Asset Mapping** - A community map is a schematic drawing of an area, used to identify the location and types of resources used by a community, from the perspective of its inhabitants.

**Time Line** - An illustration of key events in the life of an individual, household, community or organisation over a specified period of time in the past. (More details below)

**Venn Diagram** - A Venn Diagram is a set of different size circles - each representing an institution - drawn to show the relationships between a community or household and the institutions that affect it. (More details below)

**Flow Chart** - A visual tool for tracking the flow of resources, benefits or negative effects in order to explore impacts of a project or a change. People, institutions, resources and so on are represented diagrammatically and arrows are drawn between them to indicate the flow or the linkages between entities

**Testimonials** - A recorded narrative - delivered in the first person - of an individual's attitude to and experience of a particular situation or projects

## A Selection of Sampling Methods for Qualitative Data Collection

Selection & types of random sample in qualitative procedures	
Types	Definition
<b>Selection on the snowball principle</b>	A key informant is first selected. He gives the names of other people who can provide further helpful information
<b>Selection on the basis of pertinent criteria</b>	The selection is made on the basis of the principle of achieving the widest possible variance by choosing people with different functions or in different situations, as far as is possible
<b>Selection on the basis of quotas or proportions</b>	The selection is made with a view to having representatives of all social groupings according to their importance in the social system, thus enabling weightings to be undertaken
<b>Random selection</b>	A person come across by chance is selected (or use of random sampling tables)

*Adapted from Naryan, 1996. Quoted from World Bank*



# **Managing Focus Group Discussions**

## **Preparing for a Focus Group Discussion**

1. Identify the major objective of the meeting - be clear about your information needs from the group.
2. Carefully develop five to six questions (see below).
3. Plan your session (see below).
4. Try to ensure that potential FG members are invited in advance to participate in the meeting. If possible, in advance, let the invitees know about the proposed agenda, session time and list of questions the group will discuss. Plan to provide a copy of the report from the session to each member and let them know you will do this.
5. On the day of the Focus Group call invitees to confirm the place and time for the discussion.

## **Developing Questions**

1. Develop five to six questions - Session should last one to 1.5 hours -- in this time, one can ask at most five or six questions.
2. Always first ask yourself what problem or need will be addressed by the information gathered during the session, e.g., examine if a new service or idea will work, further understand how and why a piece of policy or local service provision is failing etc
3. In addition to your main questions, draft a few supplementary questions to help guide the responses if the group 'gets stuck' on one of the questions. However, be careful not to ask 'leading' questions.

## **Planning the Session**

1. Scheduling - Plan meetings to be one to 1.5 hours long. Make sure that they are at a time convenient for the participants - perhaps during lunch time or at the end of the working day might be good.
2. Setting and Refreshments - Hold sessions in a room, or other setting, with adequate air flow and lighting. Configure chairs so that all members can see each other. Provide refreshments, especially box lunches if the session is held over lunch.
3. Ground Rules - It's critical that all members participate as much as possible, yet the session move along while generating useful information. Because the session is often a one-time occurrence, it's useful to have a few, short ground rules that sustain participation, yet do so with focus. Consider the following three ground rules: a) keep focused, so any 'rambling' responses will be cut short; b) maintain momentum; d) ensure every participant has an equal opportunity to speak; and c) get closure on questions.
4. Agenda - Consider the following agenda: welcome, review of agenda, review of goal of the meeting, review of ground rules, introductions, questions and answers, wrap up.
5. Membership - Focus groups are usually conducted with 6-10 members who have some similar nature, e.g., similar age group, status in the community, job function, vulnerability characteristic etc. Select members who are likely to be participative and reflective. Attempt to select members who don't know each other. Ensure that there is gender balance if you organise a 'mixed group' and where applicable plan to have single gender groups in order to be able to disaggregate data.

6. Plan to record the session with audio equipment. Don't count on your memory. If this isn't practical, involve a co-facilitator who is there to take notes. Remember to always get the permission of participants before starting the recording.

### **Facilitating the Session**

1. Major goal of facilitation is collecting useful information to meet the objective of the session.
2. Introduce yourself and the co-facilitator, if used.
3. Explain the means to record the session.
4. Carry out the agenda - (See "agenda" above).
5. Carefully word each question before that question is addressed by the group. Allow the group a few minutes for each member to carefully record their answers. Then, facilitate discussion around the answers to each question, one at a time.
6. After each question is answered, carefully reflect back a summary of what you heard (the note taker may do this).
7. Ensure even participation. If one or two people are dominating the meeting, then call on others. Consider using a round- table approach, including going in one direction around the table, giving each person a minute to answer the question. If the domination persists, note it to the group and ask for ideas about how the participation can be increased.
8. Closing the session - Tell members that they will receive a copy of the report generated from their answers, thank them for coming, and adjourn the meeting.

### **Immediately After Session**

1. Verify if the tape recorder, if used, worked throughout the session.
2. Make any notes on your written notes, e.g., to clarify any scratching, ensure pages are numbered, fill out any notes that don't make sense!
3. Write down any observations made during the session. For example, where did the session occur and when, what was the nature of participation in the group? Were there any surprises during the session? Did the tape recorder break?

## Timelines

Visual tools – such as maps, diagrams, timelines - are important elements of participatory research. They enable community members, particular those less literate or those less used to research processes, to explore complex relationships and link issues in ways not possible through verbal methods alone, generating a deeper analysis of local issues.

### What is a Timeline?

A list of key events in the history of the community that helps identify past trends, events, problems, and achievements in its life.

A key **purpose of generating a timeline** is that it helps the research team to understand what local or national events the community considers to be important in its history. The time line is prepared through discussion with a small group of community members (either a representative cross-section of the whole community, or a group selected according to a particular vulnerability characteristic.) The group composition should consider women and men.

The time lines can go back as many generations as villagers can recall, but it is most effective when tailored to the immediate Community Profiling needs and thus best limited to recent history (perhaps the last 10 years). Time line records could include political events, natural disasters, good/bad harvests, diseases, changes in public service, migration etc. These discussions provide a good opportunity to ask community members about previous trends and traditional responses, as well as about possible opportunities to resolve current problems.

Time lines are recorded by the community members, with the research team only assisting by asking probing questions. The group should be asked to identify events along a timeline (of 10 years) that shaped and influenced both individual and communal lives.

The research team will need to provide large sheets of paper and marker pens. The events along the timeline need to be written in large, readable letters.

If there is difficulty in establishing dates for particular events, try to relate them to a renowned event. Once complete, the facilitator should conclude the discussions with a summary of the timeline produced and photograph it for future reporting and feedback to the wider community.

The research team must note the characteristics of the participants (age range, gender) and the time/date of the exercise, and venue.

## Venn Diagrams

Venn diagramming is a method to find out who, what person or organizations are important in and for a community.

The **main purpose of using Venn Diagrams** is to identify groups and institutions operating in the community and to show how they interact with each other, and to show the degree of their cooperation and involvement in development. Fundamentally, Venn Diagrams also help community members to illustrate the important or influence of various institutions on their lives and on decision making in the community.

Specifically, Venn Diagrams can be used with a group of community members to discuss:

- The role and significance of various institutions
- Levels of communication between organizations
- The role of project bodies and their intervention
- Improving missing links between existing organizations
- Potential for working through existing organizations, which ones and with which links
- Potential roles for new organization
- Formal and non-formal groups and their levels of cooperation
- Community's perceptions of the institutions

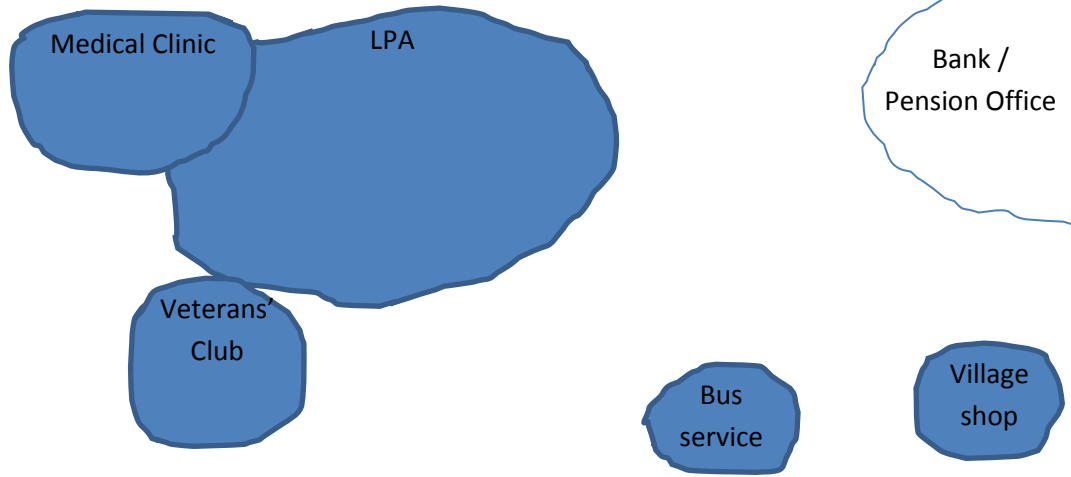
### How to Use Venn Diagrams

The research team identifies a group of key informants from amongst the most vulnerable and marginalised groups in the community (this might be done with 2 or 3 different groups, to represent elders, women, ethnic minorities etc) together they take the responsibility of listing and evaluating individuals and institutions influencing decision making of the community. This can be done as a 'brainstorming' exercise over 10-15 minutes. It is important that all members of the group express their ideas.

Make different sized circles and note which circle represents each institution i.e. big circle very important and decision maker, small circle with little importance.

During overlapping the circles, the size of the circle indicates the importance of the institution, the distance between the circles indicate the degree of contact between institutions. For instance, a large overlap high interaction. No overlap distant relationship.

Venn Diagram for group of  
Elderly in Village X



## Group Development - the Stages model

Bruce Tuckman reviewed about fifty studies of group development in the mid-sixties and synthesized their commonalities in one of the most frequently cited models of group development (Tuckman, 1965). The model describes four linear stages (forming, storming, norming, and performing) that a group will go through in its unitary sequence of decision making.

**Forming:** Group members learn about each other and the task at hand. Indicators of this stage might include: Unclear objectives, Un-involvement, Uncommitted members, Confusion, Low morale, Hidden feelings, Poor listening, etc.

**Storming:** As group members continue to work, they will engage each other in arguments about the structure of the group which often are significantly emotional and illustrate a struggle for status in the group. These activities mark the storming phase: Lack of cohesion, Subjectivity, Hidden agendas, Conflicts, Confrontation, Volatility, Resentment, anger, Inconsistency, Failure.

**Norming:** Group members establish implicit or explicit rules about how they will achieve their goal. They address the types of communication that will or will not help with the task. Indicators include: Questioning performance, Reviewing/clarify objective, Changing/confirming roles, Opening risky issues, Assertiveness, Listening, Testing new ground, Identifying strengths and weaknesses.

**Performing:** Groups reach a conclusion and implement the solution to their issue. Indicators include: Creativity, Initiative, Flexibility, Open relationships, Pride, Concern for people, Learning, Confidence, High morale, Success, etc.

## Problem Tree Analysis

### What is it?

Problem tree analysis helps to illustrate the linkages between a set of complex issues or relationships by fitting them into a hierarchy of related factors. It is used to:

- Link together the various issues or factors which may contribute to an institutional problem
- Help to identify the underlying or root causes of an institutional problem

The major assumption underlying the problem tree is the hierarchical relationship between cause and effect.

### How do I use it?

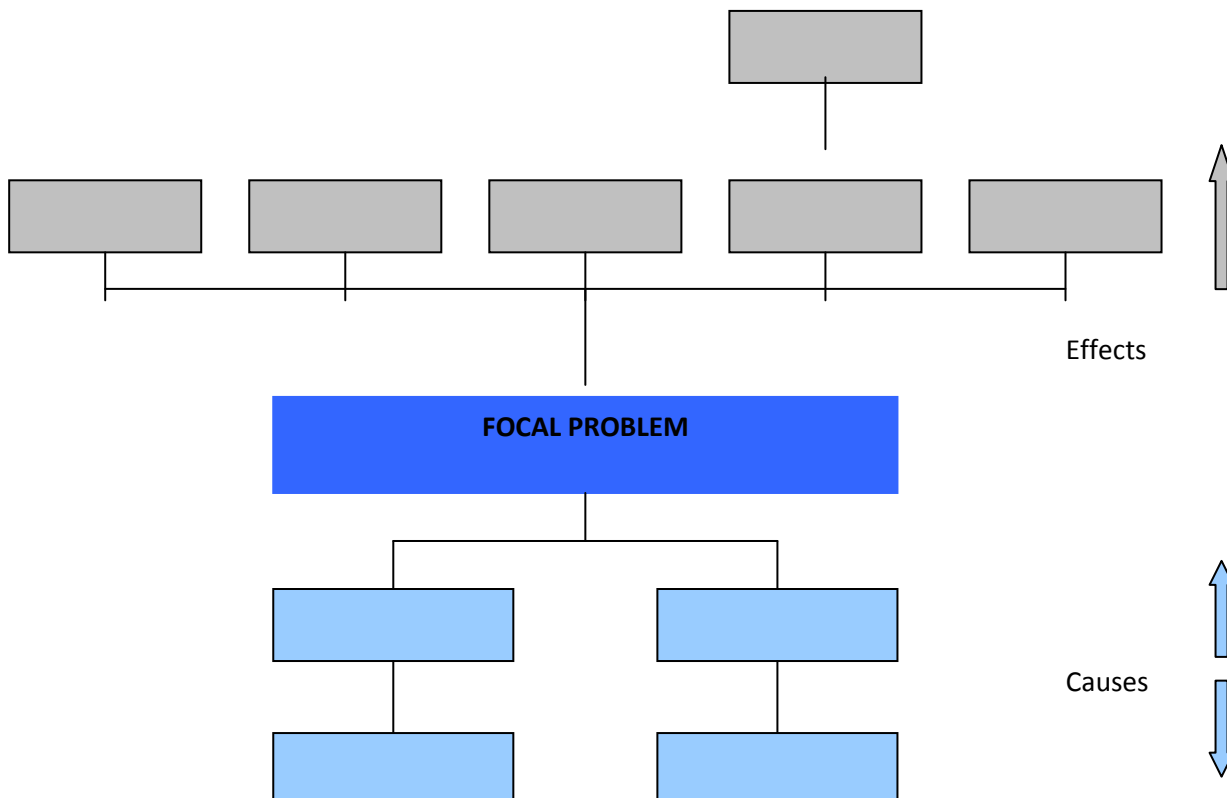
Identify the major existing problem/issues based on available information (e.g. by brainstorming)

Select one focal problem for the analysis e.g. poor communications to staff

Develop the problem tree beginning with the substantial and direct causes of the focal problem e.g. hierarchical and autocratic management culture

The following figure illustrates the process:

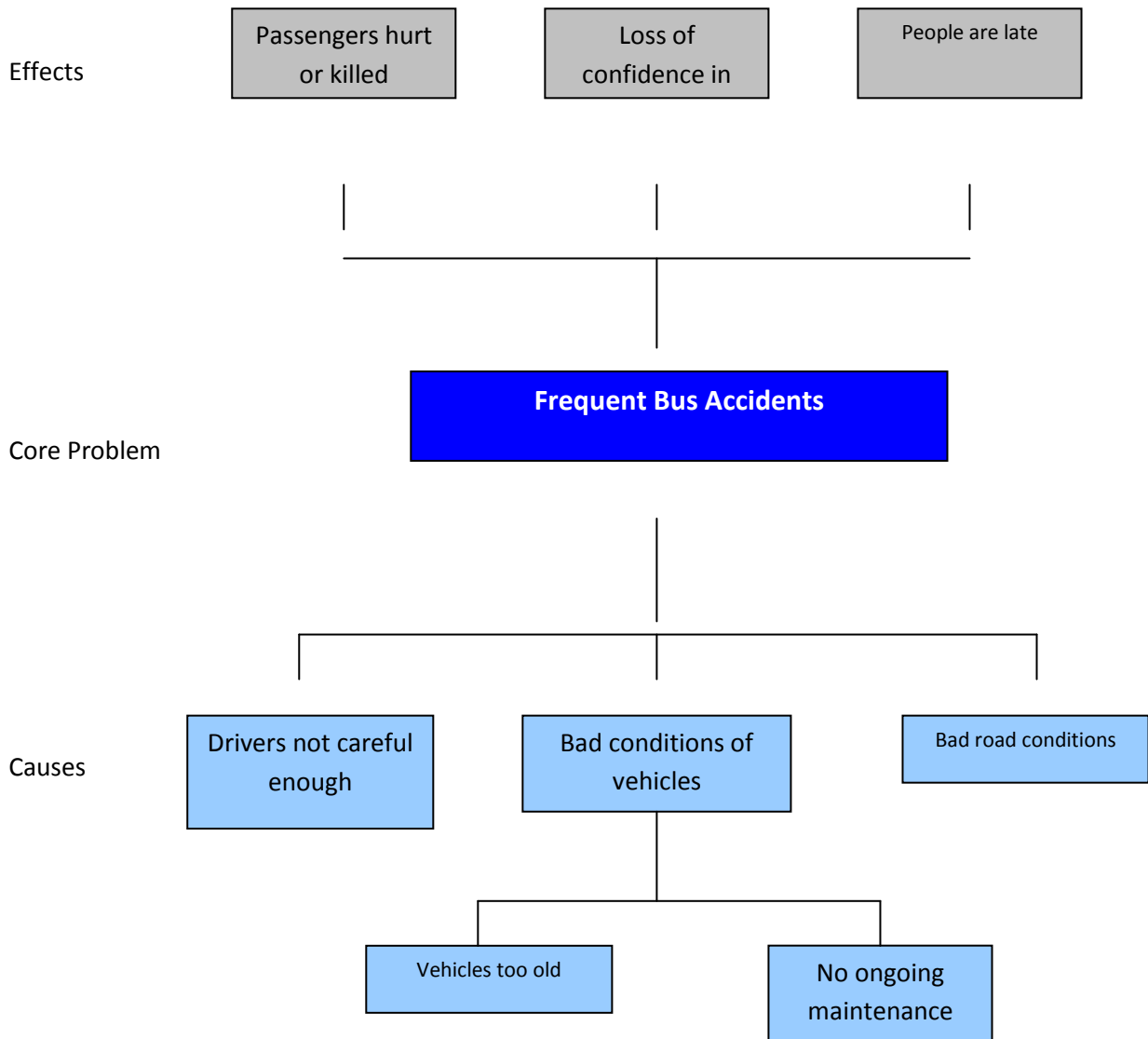
### Developing the Problem Tree



This process can help to distinguish the underlying or root of an institutional problem from their effects and guide advisers towards the critical issues that need to be tackled in institutional development. For

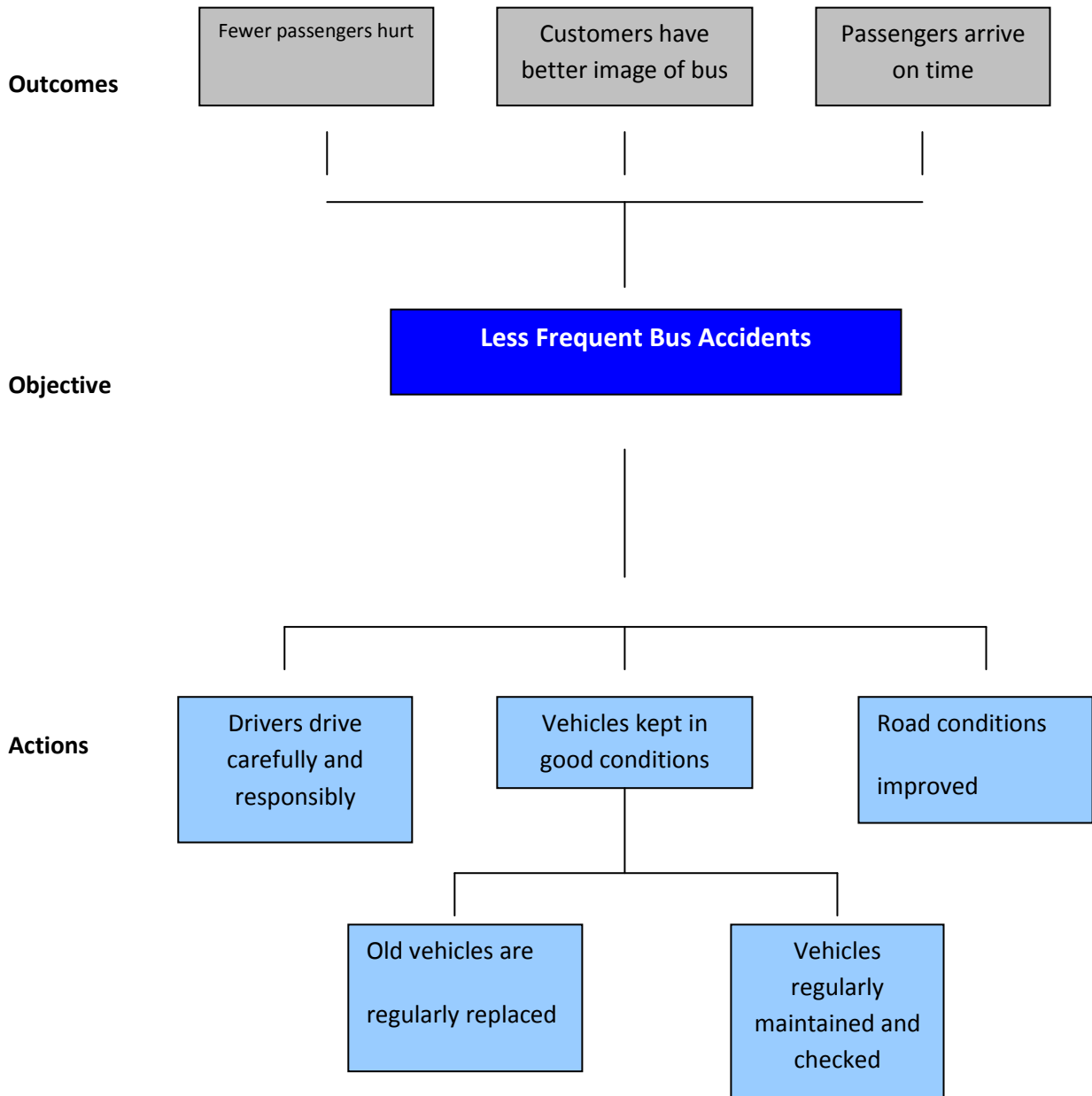
example, poor budgetary processes or late arrival of funds in a Ministry may be effects of poor or non-existent Public Expenditure Management process or poorly articulated priorities –or no money.

#### PROBLEM ANALYSIS: Bus Example





## OBJECTIVE ANALYSIS: Bus Example



# Critical Path Analysis

Critical Path Analysis is a powerful tool that helps you to schedule and manage complex projects/programmes. It was developed in the 1950s to control large defence projects, and have been used routinely since then.

As with Gantt Charts, Critical Path Analysis (CPA) helps you to plan all tasks that must be completed as part of a project. They act as the basis both for preparation of a schedule, and of resource planning. When you are managing a project, they allow you to monitor achievement of project goals, and help you to see where remedial action needs to be taken to get a project back on course.

The benefit of using CPA over Gantt Charts is that Critical Path Analysis formally identifies tasks which must be completed on time for the whole project to be completed on time (these are the tasks on the critical path), and also identifies tasks which can be delayed for a while, if resources need to be redeployed to catch up elsewhere.

The disadvantage of CPA is that the relation of tasks to time is not as immediately obvious as with Gantt Charts. This can make them more difficult to understand.

## How to use the tool:

As with Gantt Charts, the essential concept behind Critical Path Analysis is that you cannot start some activities until others are finished. These activities need to be completed in a sequence, with each stage being more-or-less completed before the next stage can begin. These are 'sequential' activities.

Other activities are not dependent on completion of any other tasks. You can do these at any time, before or after a particular stage is reached. These are non-dependent or 'parallel' tasks.

## Drawing a Critical Path Analysis Chart

Use the following steps to draw a CPA Chart:

### 1. List all activities in the plan

For each activity, show the earliest start date, the estimated length of time it will take, and whether it is parallel or sequential. If tasks are sequential, show which stage they depend on.

### 2. Plot the activities as a circle and arrow diagram

Critical Path Analyses are presented using circle and arrow diagrams.

In these, circles show events within the project, such as the start and finish of tasks. Circles are normally numbered to allow you to identify them.

An arrow running between two event circles shows the activity needed to complete that task. A description of the task is written underneath the arrow. The length of the task is shown above it. By convention, all arrows run left to right.

## Key points:

Critical Path Analysis is an effective and powerful method of assessing:

- What tasks must be carried out.
- Where parallel activity can be performed.
- The shortest time in which you can complete a project.
- Resources needed to execute a project.
- The sequence of activities, scheduling and timings involved.
- Task priorities.
- The most efficient way of shortening time on urgent projects.

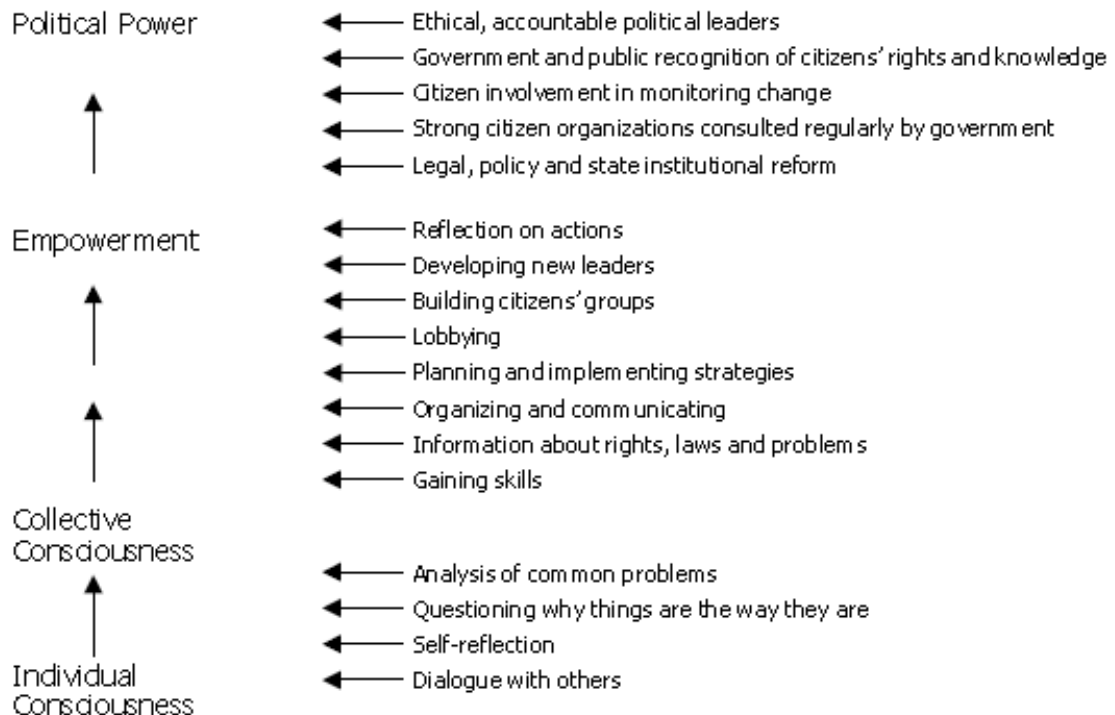
## Understanding 'Power' and Empowerment Frameworks :

Extracts from the Action Guide on Advocacy & Citizens Participation

Power, Political Participation, and Social Transformation			
MECHANISMS & STRATEGIES	HIDDEN POWER	INVISIBLE POWER	VISIBLE POWER
<p><b>Mechanisms: Different Expressions and Forms of Power</b></p> <p>Participation in public decisionmaking seems relatively straight forward on the surface. It appears to be determined by the political context, clout, resources and expertise of different political actors. Yet invisible mechanisms of power shape the effectiveness of citizen participation. These mechanisms can foster powerlessness, marginalization or resistance.</p> <p>Different strategies are required to counter these mechanisms so that political participation can be more democratic and so people can exercise their rights and responsibilities. (See below)</p>	<p><i>Exclusion &amp; delegitimization:</i> Certain groups are excluded from decision-making by society's and government's rules, practices, and institutions.</p> <p>They and their grievances are made invisible by intimidation, misinformation and co-optation. Leaders are labeled trouble-makers or unrepresentative; issues such as domestic violence are relegated to the realm of the private and therefore not subject to state action.</p>	<p><i>Socialization &amp; control of information:</i> 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.</p> <p>Among marginal groups, socialization internalizes feelings of subordination, apathy, self-blame, powerlessness</p> <p>Crucial information is concealed or inaccessible.</p>	<p><i>Formal Institutions, officials &amp; instruments:</i> Visible mechanisms that shape the formal ground rules of society.</p> <p>Formal institutions &amp; officials: President, Prime Minister, legislature, courts, ministries, police, military, etc. United Nations, IMF, World Bank, multinational corporations etc.</p> <p>Instruments: Policies, laws, constitutions, regulations, conventions, implementing mechanisms etc.</p>
<p><b>Strategies: Principal advocacy strategies to counter powerlessness and exclusion</b></p> <p>Effective advocacy for social transformation requires alliances and comprehensive action plans that address each of the different forms of both visible and invisible power.</p> <p>(The arrows reflect the relationships between the different forms of power and the different types of strategies.)</p>	<p>↑ ↓ ↔ ↔ ↔ ↔</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Building active constituencies around common concerns</li> <li>- Strengthening organizations, coalitions, social movements, and accountable leaders and structures</li> <li>- Mobilizing and demonstrating clout through direct action</li> <li>- Participatory research and dissemination of information that legitimizes the issues of excluded groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Education for self-esteem, confidence, citizenship, working collaboratively, political awareness and analysis around concrete problems</li> <li>- Activities that reinforce the above such as sharing stories, speaking out and connecting with others, affirming resistance, linking concrete daily problems to rights</li> <li>- Investigation, action research and dissemination of concealed information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lobbying &amp; monitoring by public interest groups &amp; expert lobbyists</li> <li>- Negotiation &amp; litigation</li> <li>- Public education &amp; media</li> <li>- Policy research</li> <li>- Shadow reports</li> <li>- Marches &amp; demonstrations</li> <li>- Voting &amp; running for office</li> </ul>

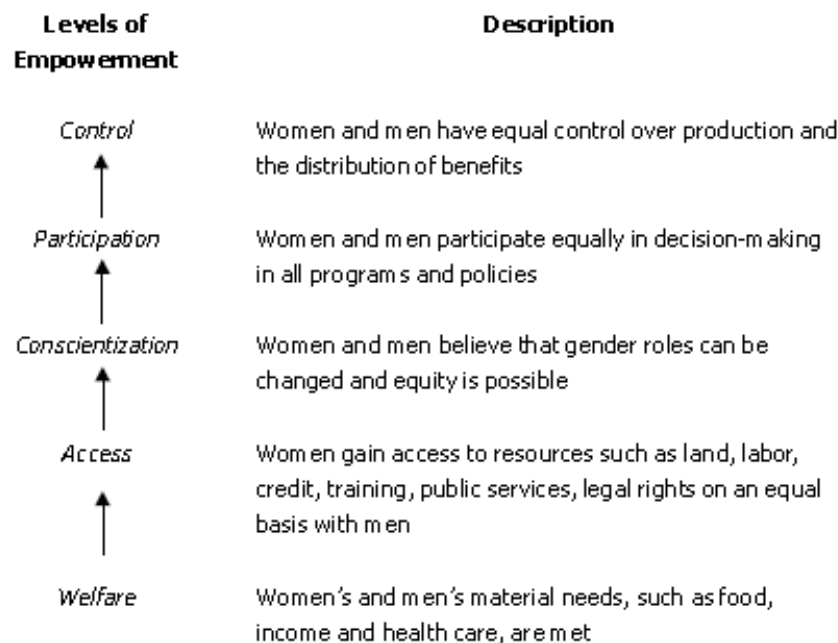
# Empowerment Frameworks

## The Political Empowerment Process



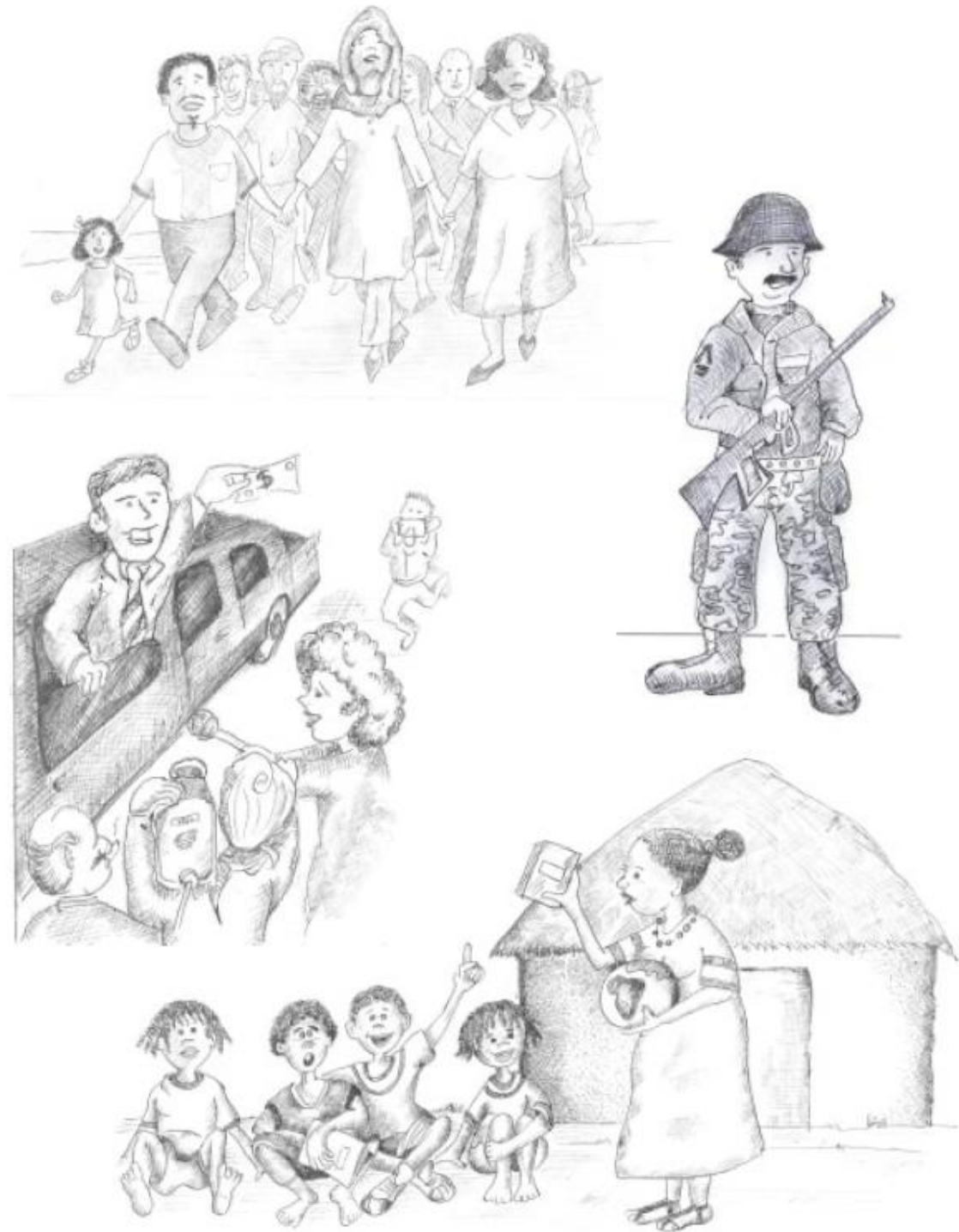
*Adapted from Margaret Schuler, Empowerment and the Law: Strategies of Third World Women, OEF International, 1987.*

## The Women's Empowerment Framework



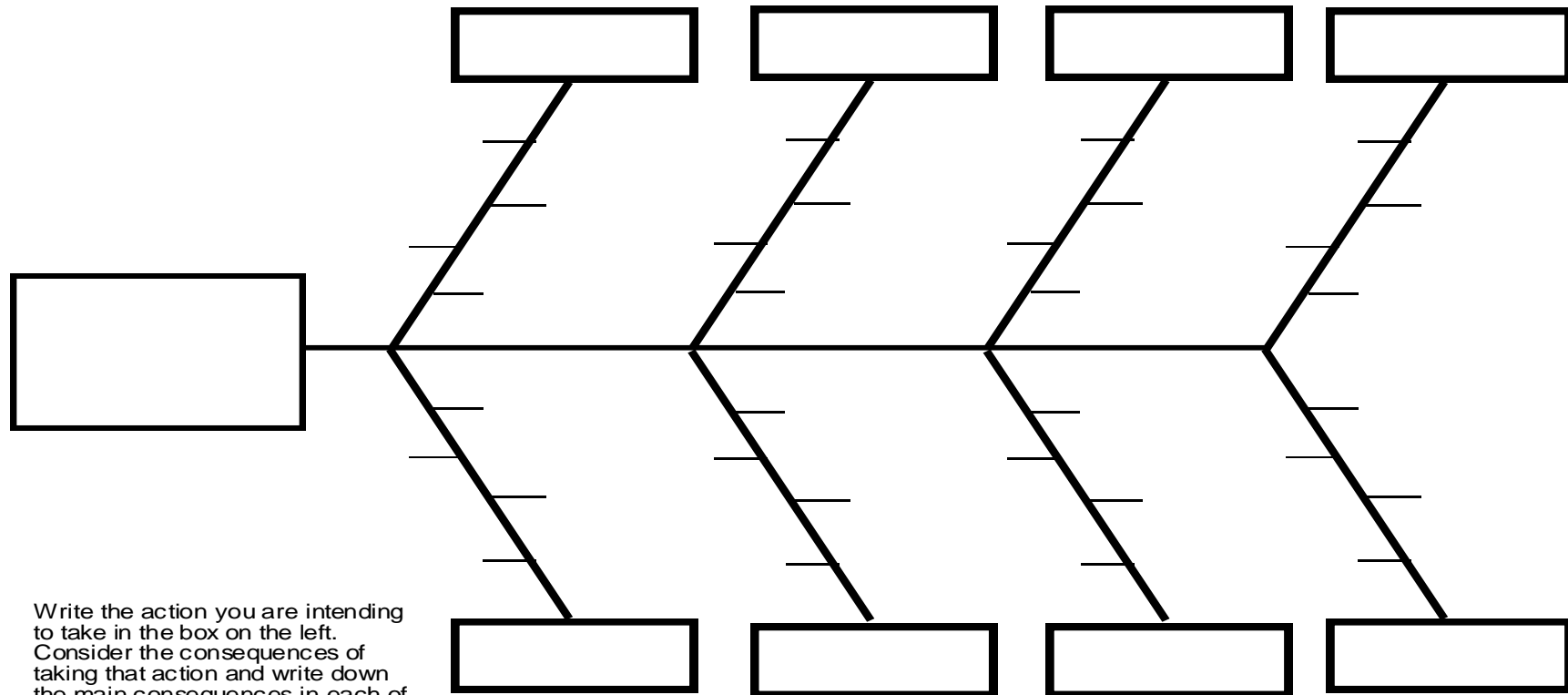
*Developed by Sarah Hupekile Longwe, Gender Specialist, Zambia.*

## Sources of Power – Images



## Fish Bone Analytical Tool

### Change Effect Analysis



Write the action you are intending to take in the box on the left. Consider the consequences of taking that action and write down the main consequences in each of the smaller boxes. Remember to consider the un-intended consequences of the action. Use the small lines to note minor consequences or other points.

## **Building Networks & Alliances**

### **- recommendations from an evaluation of community mobilisation in Uzbekistan (2010)**

There are a number of means by which community groups can extend and strengthen their relationships with other stakeholders, and build-up alliances with other 'like-minded' groups. Three examples of tools are listed below. These were taken from recommendations from an Evaluation Report of an ongoing community mobilisation programme in Uzbekistan.

**Exchange Visits** - *The capacity of communities to determine their own social and economic development is highly dependent on the communities' opportunities to dialogue both with the local administration and with other communities. To date, the networking between communities has been limited and thus during the next 6 months it is recommended that inter-community exchanges (between regions, and if possibly between countries), with delegations made up of Initiative Group members and staff of partners be facilitated. Such exchanges should be structured to maximise learning and reflection, thus, at the end of the exchanges the participants need to be facilitated in a workshop to identify and document what they have learnt, what they can apply in their own communities, what constraints have been overcome, what ideas for resource mobilisation etc. (There is obvious scope for exchanges between the regions of the programme, but in addition, if the political conditions allow, it may be possible to arrange visits to community development work in neighbouring countries - for example, the mobilisation work facilitated by the ICCO-funded network of NGOs in Kyrgyzstan or that of the communities supported by the Aga Khan Foundation in Tadjikistan).*

**Community Champions** - *Frequently community leaders have commented that one of the most effective ways of building confidence with community members is by showing them examples of successful projects in other communities. Thus, the programme partners need to establish a database of 'Community Champions' - Initiative Group leaders or members who are strong communicators and can be taken to visit other communities to demonstrate the realities of the mobilisation process. Such 'champions' would be strengthened by including as many women as possible and individuals who have had no previous leadership position.*

**Community Conferences** - *A number of the Deputy Hokims (Heads of local administrations) have suggested that after the harvest season they would like to see awareness-raising events whereby successful community projects under the programme can be showcased to other communities in their districts. This is an excellent idea and it is recommended that the programme partners formulate a structure for running 'Community Conferences' - this means that the events should not just be a formal presentation of successful projects, but that there must be some forum whereby community members can discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the Community Development Planning process and what lessons they have learnt.*



## JILDP CME – Community Mobilizer’s Job Description

*This is an indicative JD. The specific tasks and responsibilities will be written into the JD once the NGO partners have agreed the CME process with JILDP*

### Introduction

*Xxxxx a few sentences to introduce JILDP, its objectives, scope, and key stakeholders, and the role of CME, plus an introduction to the specific partner NGO*

### General Role of the Community Mobilizer

The Mobilizers will be guided and supported by the JILDP’s 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 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.

### Specific Tasks

*Partner NGOs will need to develop and finalize this list of tasks according to their specific mobilization plans and agreed set of CME ‘steps’. However, the tasks are likely to include all or most of the following:*

#### Steps 1-3

- To contribute to the baseline research of selected communities, and continue to monitor social change and new social information relevant to community empowerment;
- To identify potential leaders and/or community organizers;
- To motivate and encourage potential leaders to talk to their fellow community members about unity and empowerment;
- To initiate actions aimed at breaking down passivity, apathy and attitudes of letting others do things for them;
- To raise awareness that community members themselves can address causes of discrimination and social exclusion, and to show them examples of ways they can do this for themselves;
- To develop trust, tolerance and co-operation among community members;
- To facilitate interaction between the community members and the JILDP, and ensure that all members of the community can access that interaction;
- To encourage and stimulate community members to organize for action, using tools and methodologies provided by JILDP, and to guide them on the most appropriate type of group formation;

#### Steps 4-6

- To assist community members to organize events (meetings, workshops etc) and to use those occasions to help the community members to identify needs and to generate solutions, identifying priority issues and to analyse their problems;
- To contribute to providing community group members with management skills and knowledge that help make the groups self-sustaining, and to provide coaching on skill-sets needed to design, implement, monitor, and report on community actions;

- To assist the community in obtaining available outside resources, warning of the negative effects of becoming too dependent upon outside resources, and in negotiating with other stakeholders;

#### Steps 7-10

- To assist the community in monitoring the actions implemented by the groups and the changes emerging within the community, and how to effectively share such monitoring data and evaluation analysis with the wider community and other stakeholders;
- To assist the community in networking with other communities and possible empowerment support structures;
- To assist the community members in developing and implementing a sustainability plan to the point where they no longer need the services of you the mobilizer.

#### General/Ongoing

- To encourage and stimulate full participation by all community members; with special attention to those who are usually forgotten, marginalized and overlooked in community decision making;
- To assist the community in obtaining information and knowledge that may be available through governmental and non-governmental agencies, through extension and outreach programmes;

#### Competences for an Effective Mobilizer

- Ability to read and write well in local languages, and the national language;
- Ability to speak and listen well in local languages, and the national language;
- Basic computer skills, or potential to learn them;
- Internet skills, or potential to learn them, with a focus on using the internet for research and using email;
- Ability to stand in front of a group without showing fear or arrogance;
- Ability to learn mobilization skills that will enable the use of the various tools and methodologies proposed by JILDIP;
- A desire to contribute to national development through community empowerment;
- Strong morals viz. honesty, transparency, generosity, altruism and respect;
- Well motivated, team member able to work alone and/or without supervision;
- Ability to observe and analyse social indicators; and
- Willingness to undertake further training offered by and required by the programme.

#### Required Qualifications & Experience

- High school education;
- Experience of public speaking;
- Some work experience involving the drafting and maintenance of records and documents.
- Member of the target community

#### Desirable Qualifications & Experience

- Tertiary level of education;
- Educational background in the social sciences;
- Skills, training or experience in any of the following: management, social animation or extension work, social research, adult learning, journalism.

# Case Studies of Mobilization for Empowerment

## Empowering the Elderly and Reducing Vulnerability - a case from Kyrgyzstan<sup>1</sup>

The care of and provision of services to the Elderly in Kyrgyzstan remains stuck with, on the one hand, a failing Soviet infrastructure and legal environment, and on the other with traditional coping strategies and roles for the elderly. There are huge gaps between these two, making elderly people and their families especially vulnerable economically, and in many cases woefully exposed by a lack of social and healthcare. Large waves of external and internal migration, particularly of ethnic Germans and Russians re-locating outside of Kyrgyzstan, have left many elderly people isolated as their relatives and friends move away.

Up until 2006 the State did little to address the situation. Resources were being prioritized to ensure



pensions were paid in a more timely fashion, but the budget has been unable to sustain pensions to meet the rising costs faced by elderly in a market economy, where many former subsidized services are disappearing. Social workers in the State sector remain unreformed and do not have the skills nor resources to respond to the new challenges.

*'When I was young I was scared of the dentist's drill, but more recently I've been scared of the dentist's bill. But not anymore. Now I know how to get free dental treatment!'*

This situation has been changing over the last few years, with much of the driving force coming from the mobilization activities and alliances of a NGO which started its work in the small city of Balykchy. NGO Umut began implementing basic humanitarian work in the 1990s and from 1998 introduced a programme of supporting Self Help Groups (SHGs) of Elderly with the main aim of providing Food Security. Between 1998 and 2001 the NGO mobilized more than 300 of the most vulnerable elderly people in Balykchy into 19 different SHGs, with 13 of them forming a Federation in 2001. The mobilization approach of Umut proved to be extremely effective in empowering the Elderly and improving the quality of their lives. This in turn has led not only to a replication of the method in other parts of Kyrgyzstan, but encouraged NGO Umut to establish a national Resource Centre for the Elderly which more recently has facilitated the SHGs in collective lobbying on State policies.

### Changing Attitudes; Improving Lives

NGO Umut has made great progress in reducing vulnerability and exclusion through the services it provides to the elderly in self-managed groups and through its relentless awareness-raising work and inter-generational activities is changing attitudes in Balykchy: the elderly are less viewed as burdensome recipients of social assistance, but rather as valued members of the community. Through its various links with local governmental departments - the social services department, police, State utility managers -

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<sup>1</sup> The information for this case study is taken from an Evaluation Report of NGO Umut researched and drafted by Simon Forrester (INTRAC) in 2005

Umut and the SHG Federation were positioned to change State representatives' view of service provision of being only a one-sided supply-oriented process. The officials began to understand the complexities of the 'demand-side' of such services and the rights of the older people, and accordingly to change their attitude towards the groups in need of the services.

From the side of the Elderly in Balykchy, three significant changes were observed:

- There is a wealth of testimonies from older people in Balykchy that express a change in their lives that could be called empowerment. The **SHG approach has restored a sense of control to its members** that was lost in the anger and despair brought on by the failing Soviet-era infrastructure. Members no longer feel powerless and vulnerable in the face of inadequate and/or late payment of pensions; **they now collectively have mechanisms that help them self-regulate financial shortfalls and mechanisms for lobbying their interests.**
- Members of the 19 SHGs in and around Balykchy have benefited from both rights awareness-raising work of Umut and the provision of legal advice. For example, pensioners in the SHGs now have a **clearer understanding of entitlements for healthcare provision** and with support of the Federation have **established mechanisms for settling the cost of dental treatment.** This is no small feat given the confusion that abounds in Kyrgyzstan as the health service is reformed and a complex system of fee payments introduced. State agencies such as the Mandatory Health Insurance Fund and Republican Promotion of Health Centre are now raising awareness amongst the general population on these issues by demonstrating the actions pioneered in Balykchy.



*One of the younger members of the community commented:  
"My granny is participating in training - I'm so proud of her!"*

- At a local level one of the significant contributions to the **empowerment of older people is through the involvement of SHG members in 'Public Councils'**, an initiative inspired and supported by NGO Umut, with councils established in 9 districts of Balykchy to facilitate participatory local development planning and represent the needs of the most vulnerable. These Councils draw membership from across their neighbourhoods and have been meeting regularly since their founding in

2001. Discussions held and decisions made by these Councils are related to a higher level Big Public Council for consideration for action by the city Administration and/or the smaller 'territorial self-government units'.

## A Case Study: Rural Schools Empowering Marginalised Groups

In PDR Laos, a long-running programme supported by Norwegian Church Aid, has piloted some interesting activities to help counter the social exclusion experienced by various ethnic groups in the remoter parts of the country. Although the programme is primarily targeting children, through its mobilisation work a number of small community projects have focussed on the empowerment of the children's parents.

By assisting the parents to establish informal associations, the programme's outreach workers have facilitated a process whereby parents identified two main issues that they wanted to address: firstly, their own lack of education, and secondly, their poor access to the school's management. Parents felt that if they could address these issues, then in turn they would have greater capacity for engaging in and supporting the education of their children. In response, the programme supported a number of self-directed community actions, including the implementation of several 'evening school' projects. These were run in 9 villages, with groups of adults (mostly, but not exclusively, the parents of children from ethnic minorities) participating in 3 different levels of evening classes.

An external evaluation of the programme concluded that for the 'evening classes':

*The attendance was impressive as was the seriousness of the students. As a positive aspect that should not be underestimated is the opportunity for the teacher to interact with grow- up villagers.*

But the evaluation also highlighted some of the difficulties faced by the 'evening classes' and some ideas for how the activities might be improved:

*However, evening classes are not without challenges. The first constraint is the workload of the teachers. It should be taken into consideration that the teachers are involved in preparation work for day classes, as well as the actual teaching and attending meetings with the core teacher. Their main motivation for teaching in the evenings is likely to be the monthly supplement of 10\$. At present the evening classes takes place 5 days a week, following the ordinary school year.*

*Offering both day – and evening classes could be considered as an integrated or holistic approach to community development. On the other hand it could be argued, as it has been from an interviewee, that focusing on both formal education- especially as the teaching methodology is new to both teacher and learner- and non-formal education constitute the risk of "loosing them both".*

*Options to deal with this problem might be considered:*

- *Lobby the local Education Dept to assign one more teacher to the village to be in charge of evening classes;*
- *To set evening class teaching on halt until the teachers are more prepared-and hence more comfortable- to overcome the job;*
- *To pay a former graduate (if any) from the village to teach adults in the community*
- *To reduce the number of evening class days to 3-4 during the week.*
- *If evening classes are to be continued the electricity situation has to be looked into. (holding a torch while doing arithmetic is not very easy!)*

The programme is still on-going and it is not yet known how the 'evening class' projects have progressed. However, in addition to the 'evening classes' idea, the parents' associations are now also implementing new actions. These include:

- Parents assisting in the schools - the parents' groups meet with the school management and identify volunteer actions which they can undertake in the schools during regular school hours;
- Development of a 'local curricula' - under Lao law, up to 20% of the content of schools' curricula can be designed at the local level. Thus, the parents' groups of the ethnic minorities have started to work with the school directors in their villages to come up with their own proposals for contributing to the curriculum.

## **Case Study: Roma Women Empowerment**

*In this Case Study we see how specific individuals may play a pivotal role in strengthening the capacities and effectiveness of women's groups within the Roma community, and how the creation of dedicated 'spaces' for meetings of such groups contributes to the building of trust between individuals and the group.*

### **The Power of Women Role Models**

The Roma movement is mainly male-dominated: the voice of women is not often heard. The reasons for this are multiple and interrelated. For instance: women's status in their communities often does not allow them to speak out publicly and their level of education is lower than that of men. In fact, they face double discrimination: they are a marginalised group compared to both mainstream society and Roma men.

One can question if a movement is really representative if half of the people it claims to represent, hardly has the possibility to express its needs and make its voice heard. By including women, the movement gains in power and strengthens its claim on representing the needs and issues of the Roma population. Further many scholars state that through women entire families can be reached, especially the children and the young. Empowerment of Roma women contributes greatly to the creation of an environment in which Roma children grow up as aware citizens of their society. Women that are aware of their rights and place in society pass this self-confidence on to their children. It is what the International Step-by-Step association, a leading network of early childhood

education and development organizations from Central/Eastern Europe and Central Asia, calls the creation of 'good soil': the establishment of political, social, economic, and community contexts that can promote quality early childhood practices.

Research shows that the first years in a child's life are crucial in ensuring the child's later success, quality of life and ability to contribute as a responsible citizen. At the same time, children are citizens of today's society; therefore effective investments in the early years are also important to ensure that the rights and needs of young Roma children are met. Focusing on activism and the empowerment of Roma women and the creation of conditions for Early Childhood Development, thus contributes to both a better represented Roma movement and a better environment for Roma children to grow up.

Although exceptions exist, grassroots Roma women's activism tends to remain local oriented: women appear to be most interested in their direct living environment. Unlike the Roma youth, self-organization on other than local level is problematic for most Roma women. At the same time, the gap between the few 'elite' Roma women engaged on regional, national and even international level and their grassroots peers is wide. Linking grassroots Roma women to their more educated and elite peers is a method to bridge this gap. The latter function as role models that help in representing grassroots Roma interests on regional, national and international level. Identifying with role models can be a very empowering tool.

## **Role of Roma women brokers**

The cultural anthropological concept of broker mostly refers to people who facilitate the crossing over between different cultural systems. It is widely used in the health sector, where mediators have the tasks to facilitate the access of indigenous groups to health services. Brokering in a service oriented approach and in an empowerment oriented approach is, obviously, different. It requires specificities in the type of relationship, mechanisms to establish them and the nature of the ties with the grassroots groups.

Further, in the reality of Roma communities, the issue is not only related to different cultural systems, but also to access to strategic persons and lack of know-how, capacities and educational level. This hampers both the mobilization and activation of women and their possibilities to influence public decision making. The 'brokers' thus not only bridge different cultural realities, but also facilitate contacts between grassroots level and strategic persons. They develop and transfer know-how and they use their capacities to represent grassroots interests.

The women that could function as brokers need to be capable of representing grassroots interest, have a network within civil society and/or the Roma movement and/or the political scene. Women brokers can be found within, but also out of the Roma communities. They can be Roma women activists or women that work professionally with grassroots women. They could have professional jobs or be Roma "advocates" and mediators from other projects.

What makes the women brokers is that they have good relations with both the grassroots women groups and strategic other groups and/or authorities and/or institutions. They open new perspectives for the grassroots groups and facilitate their integrations into domains they would otherwise not have access to.

Their main role is to help grassroots women in effectively representing their interest. To be effective brokers that stimulate empowerment of the women around them, they need to be open to transfer their capacities to other women in the group and share leadership responsibilities.

## **Trust Building Between Brokers & Community Based Organisations**

Of essential importance is the process of trust building between the women brokers and the grassroots groups. The Mother Centres movement developed a methodology for trust building in grassroots women groups. Also, Spolu<sup>2</sup> and its partners have expertise in building trust in grassroots groups. Besides Spolu's partners, the Mother centres network (Mine) will be involved in providing regular coaching and support to both the grassroots groups and women brokers. A very important element of trust building within the women groups and between the brokers and the groups is space for informal

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<sup>2</sup> About Spolu: Spolu is a Centre of Expertise ([www.spolu.nl](http://www.spolu.nl)) on building human and institutional capacity among Roma grassroots groups in Europe. Over the years, Spolu capacitated numerous grassroots Roma leaders and organisations to be united in Roma grassroots networks, who in turn organise grassroots Roma groups and organisations to achieve their citizens' rights. With almost fifteen years of experience, Spolu is internationally recognized for its expertise and appreciated for the fact that it creates favourable conditions for Roma to improve their position in society. For instance, since 2003, Spolu is the driving force behind the [European Roma Grassroots Organisations \(ERGO\) network](#), which lobbies for Roma grassroots interests and its recognition on European level.



contacts. Within the Mother centres, this space is provided naturally, since the gatherings itself mostly have an informal character. Also in other groups, this space should be provided. Part of the coaching is the organisation of social events, in which the women can interact and bond informally.

In the course of the Strengthening the Roma Voice programme, successful experiences and examples have developed. An organisation with a philosophy close to Spolu's and ERGO's, is Mine, the International Mother Centre network. Mother centres are low threshold centres owned and managed by grassroots women in which lobby and advocacy activities develop naturally. Mother Centre Plamen in Bosnia received many Roma groups and inspired them to create their own centres. In Bulgaria, several Roma Mother Centres were an example for Roma women groups to that wanted to start their own centre. The Mother centre network Mine developed methods for women's grassroots empowerment that can help Spolu and ERGO in activating and mobilising Roma women.

## **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<sup>3</sup>.

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.

*This Case Study has been adapted from stories told through the WHO-supported Community Rehabilitation Programme (Empowerment Component) in South-east Asia, 2010.*

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<sup>3</sup> The 'commune' in Vietnam is a village, and administratively represents the lowest unit of local government

## Case Study: Photography as a tool for Empowerment

### Akyaka's citizens use photography to monitor their local authority

Akyaka is a small town on the Turkish Aegean coast.

In addition to its elected municipal council it has, like many other municipalities in Turkey, a citizens' body referred to as the 'city council'. This citizens' body draws membership from the CSOs active in Akyaka and works closely with the elected officials and local administrators. One of its recent innovations has been the launching of a photo campaign to encourage local residents to publish images of aspects of their municipality that they are unhappy about. The text below is an extract from the Akyaka city council's web site:



### "Let's See Our Problems"- Photograph Campaign

Did you happen to face an unwanted situation as you are walking with your camera in Akyaka? Please do not hesitate to take a photo of it and then send it to [bilgi@akyakakentkonseyi.org.tr](mailto:bilgi@akyakakentkonseyi.org.tr)

This way you will contribute to the understanding of governance in Akyaka. We will publish the photos we receive on our web site, keeping the name of the sender secret. We will discuss these problems together with the municipality administration and develop action plans to resolve them. As the problems get resolved, we will take new pictures of the related problems and publish them as well along with the description of the actions taken. Thus, resolutions will unfold effectively.

Giving simple digital cameras to groups, providing minimal training and access to computers for downloading and editing, can be an effective empowerment tool. Marginalised individuals can easily collect visual evidence of issues that handicap their everyday life, and groups can use the visuals for advocating change.

### Discussion Points:

*What visual evidence might help to support your lobbying efforts?*

*How else might photography empower vulnerable individuals?*

*What risks are there in using photography for empowerment?*