



C1 REVEALING WAYS OF TAKING ACTION

Mobilising people



Why use this tool?

Mobilising people can be a useful and effective advocacy activity. It aims to show decision-makers that people are concerned about, and want to see change on, an issue. Mobilising activity needs to communicate a clear message and will be most effective if linked to ongoing lobbying work and direct contact with decision-makers. It may also open up opportunities for lobbying in contexts where it seems impossible.



A brief description

This tool gives guidance on how to mobilise people to take collective action in order to influence powerful decision-makers.



The words we use

Advocacy - influencing the decisions, policies and practices of powerful decision-makers in order to bring about change

Lobbying – persuading a decision-maker to do something

Mobilising – one type of advocacy – organising people to take actions together to increase awareness of the changes they're asking for



Keys to success

- Have a clear, simple aim, for example, one specific policy change.
- Have a clear, simple message.
- Mobilise people in a way that relates to your wider aims.
- Choose effective and appropriate methods. For example:
 - peaceful street marches
 - petitions
 - public meetings
 - prayer vigils
- Choose your dates carefully – avoid clashes, and you could try to build on existing events.
- Collaborate with other local groups.
- Get permission for public meetings, marches or events.
- Comply with laws and restrictions, but be aware of your rights.
- Be aware of the impact of your event on those you seek to influence.
- Invite public officials to join your activities, when appropriate, but don't serve their agenda.
- Carefully consider the risks, especially in countries governed by oppressive or authoritarian regimes.



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Discrimination & inclusion

Food & livelihoods

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Influencing decision-makers

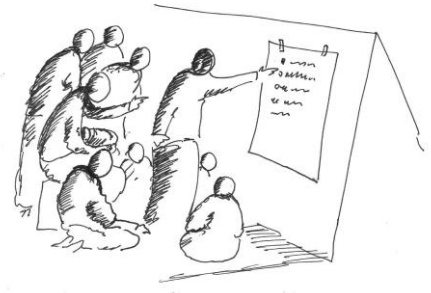
Migration & trafficking

Water, sanitation & hygiene



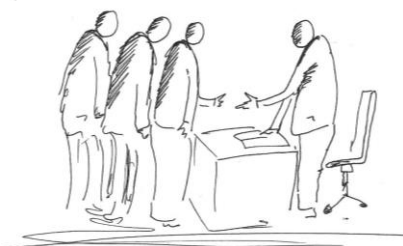
What to do

- **Identify people** who have similar concerns to yours. They could include:
 - affected communities
 - Community Based Organisations and Faith Based Organisations
 - local or international NGOs
 - people working in the private sector and local government
- **Arrange to meet** with some of these people who share your concerns. Discuss the problem together and ways of bringing about change.
- **Develop a plan** for change. Here are some of the things you could do to develop your plan:
 - Write down the **issues** that are affecting you. You could do this using a tool called a 'problem tree'. You can find this tool listed within **Introductory tool – Community assessment tools**.
 - Discuss and write down the **causes** of these issues that are affecting you.
 - Discuss and write down the **impacts** of the issues affecting you.
 - Identify what needs to **change**.
 - Identify the people with **power** that can bring about the change that you want to see.
- **Agree on a single issue** or change that you want to achieve or prevent.
- **Develop a clear and simple message**. The message needs to be striking and memorable, whether it is communicated through letters, postcards or placards. It should also aim to impact the way people think about the issue.
- **Within your advocacy plan**, mobilising people could be **one** of the ways of helping you achieve the change you're seeking. Mobilising should always connect with the wider aims of what you are trying to achieve and not just be an isolated activity.
- Discuss and agree an **appropriate and effective method of mobilisation**.



Methods can include:

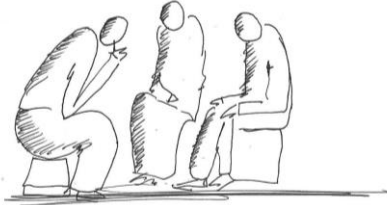
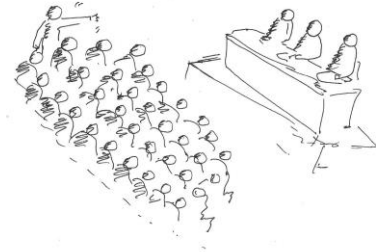
Street marches, demonstrations and peaceful protests – where a group of people gather or walk to a symbolic place to make a request to decision-makers. Often people carry signs or banners with a message on them.



Petitions – where people sign a sheet of paper, or sign or write a message on a postcard or in a letter to decision-makers. Keep letters short and to the point. Be passionate – but remain polite. Ask for a reply.

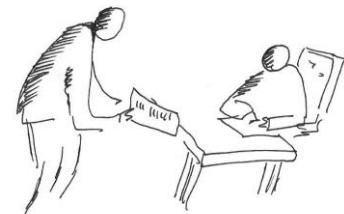
C1 MOBILISING PEOPLE

Public meetings – where people are brought together for a debate and decision-makers are open to public questioning.



Prayer vigils – where a group of people gather to show that they all think something is important to them through a public church activity.

- **Choose your dates carefully.** When planning any mobilising activities, you should take into account important dates and decision-making processes – both related to the issue you're mobilising on, but also wider issues – to try to plan when activities will be most effective. For example, if you're calling for better access to clean water in your community you might consider holding a protest on World Water Day. Another example may be to avoid protesting on a public holiday or festival when your activity may not be noticed.
- **Seek permission** from the relevant authorities for any public meetings, marches or events.
- **Find out and keep informed** about the relevant laws that permit public activities, the restrictions in places and the rights that protect all citizens, such as the right to peaceful assembly.
- **Collaborate** with local interested groups.
- **Organise people** so your event is successful. Roles and functions could include:
 - making signs and banners, collecting petition signatures, agreeing a common dress code
 - briefing everyone on what you will do, where you will meet, and what route you will walk
 - looking after everyone's safety and security
 - agreeing some rules – on what people can say or do that genuinely represents the whole group
- **Consider the potential effects** of your mobilising on your relationship with decision-makers. If you are in discussions with decision-makers about changes that they can make to their policies or practices, then you need to consider whether mobilising people will increase or decrease your chances of success.
- **Invite public officials** to join you, when appropriate, but be aware of the possibility of being used by public officials for political reasons (which is called 'co-option').



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- **In countries governed by oppressive or authoritarian regimes**, where there are limited rights for public assembly, restrictions on the press and so on, activities that involve mobilising people need to be considered more carefully, against potential risks.



Finding out more

- Tearfund (2014) Advocacy toolkit: http://tilz.tearfund.org/en/resources/publications/roots/advocacy_toolkit/
- Tearfund (2006) A PILLARS Guide: *Seeking justice for all*: http://tilz.tearfund.org/en/resources/publications/pillars/seeking_justice_for_all/
- Tearfund's TILZ pages on advocacy: <http://tilz.tearfund.org/en/themes/advocacy/>

Related tools:

- B – Advocacy work (Bible study) [*B: Influencing decision-makers-1*]
- B – Being an advocate (Bible study) [*B: Influencing decision-makers-2*]
- C1 – Ways of taking action [*C1: Awareness-raising-1*]
- C1 – Advocacy – communicating with people in power [*C1: Influencing decision-makers-1*]
- C1 – Working with the media [*C1: Influencing decision-makers-3*]
- C1 – Making the most of meetings with decision-makers [*C1: Influencing decision-makers-4*]

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