



## C1 REVEALING WAYS OF TAKING ACTION

# Different ways of taking action



## Why use the Tools in Section C1?

As a facilitator, you may need to help a community understand that there can be several different ways of responding to a particular problem on which they want to take action. Different approaches can be used at the same time, or just one could be chosen. Once a community has decided on the issue it wants to address, it may be helpful to consider these different ways of taking action before deciding exactly what action they are going to take.

Here we explain the different types of action:

- carrying out a development project
- speaking out to, and communicating with, those in power
- working with the local media
- working with other organisations or groups
- helping people become aware of issues affecting them

In the boxes, below, we give examples of what these might look like in practice. We use a case study where the church and community have decided that they want to address the problem of a lack of safe drinking water in their village.



## Carrying out a development project

This approach involves a community tackling a problem themselves through using local resources or through raising funds. This sometimes involves building something new, or improving something that already exists. It doesn't have to involve buildings or infrastructure. It may involve starting new groups in the community (such as Self-Help Groups - see the Tools in Section C2) or starting a process that brings about some kind of change for the better. There are many Tools in Section C2 that suggest key things to be considering and important questions to be asking when planning and carrying out different types of projects.

**Example:** The community may decide to protect a spring or construct a hand-dug well.



Awareness-raising

Children &amp; youth

Climate &amp; environment

Conflict &amp; peace-building

Corruption &amp; governance

Disaster risk management

Discrimination &amp; inclusion

Food &amp; livelihoods

Gender &amp; sexual violence

Health &amp; HIV

Influencing decision-makers

Migration &amp; trafficking

Water, sanitation &amp; hygiene



## Speaking out to, and communicating with, those in power

This is sometimes called ‘advocacy’, although the word ‘advocacy’ may mean different things to different people.

**Advocacy involves influencing the decisions, policies and practices of powerful decision-makers in order to bring about change.** Here are some other words that have the same meaning as ‘advocacy’:

*“promoting justice”*

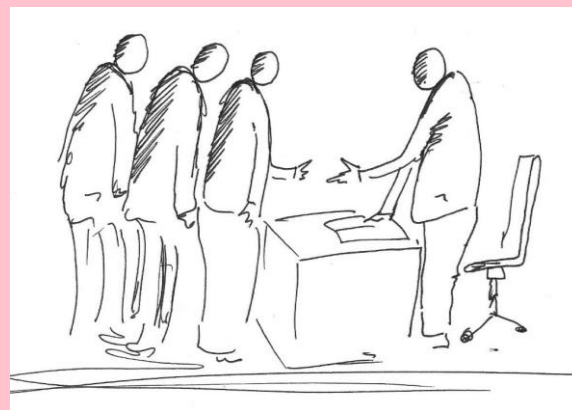
*“defending human rights”*

*“inspiring change”*

Anyone can undertake advocacy work: it does not need to be left to professionals or experts.

There are different ways of carrying out advocacy. For example, it can involve speaking directly to decision-makers in meetings or through letters, or it can involve influencing them through public actions such as street protests or rallies. Speaking out can also involve helping to raise the awareness of governments and helping to increase their capacity through working with them. Raising awareness and working with the media (see below) can also be useful tools in advocacy. See **Tool C1 – Advocacy: communicating with people in power** for more information.

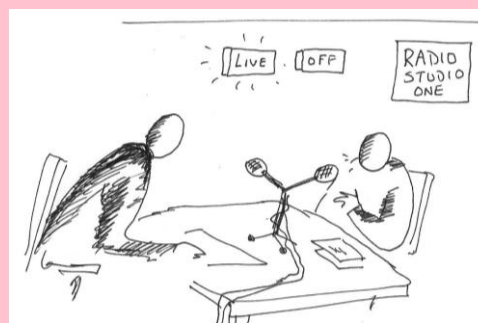
**Example:** The community may find out what local government policies say about water and sanitation. If the government has promised to provide safe water to communities, the community could then ‘speak out’, going together to ask the local government to fulfil its promises to come and drill a borehole in their village.



## Working with the local media

The ‘media’ includes radio, television, newspapers and magazines. It also includes electronic media such as email, the internet and social media such as Twitter or Facebook. It is a powerful force that can help people become aware of the issues facing them, and increase understanding among communities on different issues. It can also be a useful tool in advocacy (see above), as what is said in the media can sometimes influence decision-makers and policy decisions.

**Example:** Community members could write a radio programme to raise awareness of the health problems caused by dirty drinking water, and to tell people about the new Biosand filters that a local community group is producing.





## Working with other organisations or groups

**Example:** People learnt that another nearby community had recently protected a clean water spring. Some community members could visit this spring to see what lessons could be learned. They may also be able to share information they have learnt about the government's new water and sanitation policy.



This is sometimes called 'networking', 'partnering' or 'collaboration'. There may be other local organisations or groups who have identified the same problems and challenges as your community, and who are trying to find ways to address them. Your community may be able to share information, lessons learnt or even the costs of hiring people or machinery. This often means that the work becomes more effective.



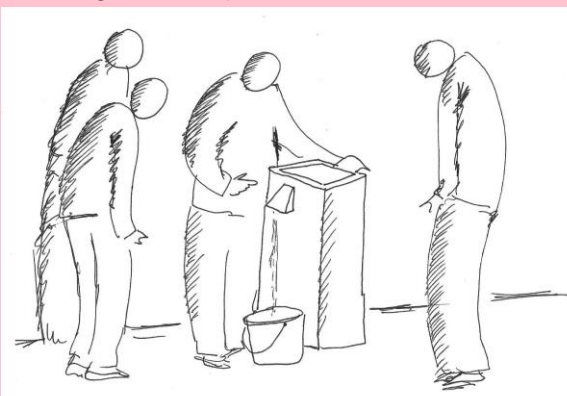
## Helping people become aware of issues affecting them (awareness-raising and training)

This involves giving people information about issues and how things can change. By giving people facts and information, they are empowered to make their own decisions. By becoming aware of issues and how they affect them, people are often inspired to change their actions and behaviour. This is sometimes called 'awareness-raising'.

Awareness-raising is not the same as advocacy (above), although it is an important step in encouraging and empowering people to speak out and communicate with those in power.

Storytelling and drama are important tools for awareness-raising. See **Tool C1 - How to write a community drama** and **Tool C1: Storytelling**.

**Example:** the community could train community mobilisers who will teach groups of women, men and children about how to use a Biosand filter and other water safety issues. They could also train on how to promote good hygiene, such as hand washing with soap.



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## The importance of keeping records of change (monitoring and evaluation)

Whichever type of action the community chooses to take, it is important to keep records of what the situation was like before they took action and how the situation changed after the action. Keeping these kinds of records and learning from them, is called 'monitoring and evaluation'.

There are many different ways of doing monitoring and evaluation, but the most important things to do are to note the situation before the action, such as health statistics, water quality, or economic output – this is called a baseline – and the situation after the action is complete – this may be referred to as the output or outcome, depending on what type of change was achieved.

Two different ways of doing monitoring and evaluation are briefly summarised here:



### Most significant change

This is one of the simplest approaches, which involves interviewing people involved in, or affected by, the activities and asking them what the most important or most significant changes were. This process will capture people's stories and feelings, which are really helpful when considering what people think has changed. However, this does not capture the level of information that could prove whether or not the activity was the direct cause of the change. More information can be found here: <http://mande.co.uk/special-issues/most-significant-change-msc/>

### Participatory Impact Pathways Analysis (PIPA)

This is a much more detailed method of monitoring and evaluation, which can take quite a lot of time to do. However, it is very effective. It includes all the people involved in, or affected by, the activity in making their own records of what the situation was before the activity (baseline), during the activity, and after the activity. Further information on this can be found here: <http://steps-centre.org/methods/pathways-methods/vignettes/pipa/>

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