Power and social change

Ruth Mayne and Jim Coe

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Campaigning Effectiveness, NCVO supports and empowers people and organisations to change their world through campaigning and influencing policy.

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This publication aims to help voluntary organisations think strategically about how to bring about change. It seeks to complement the various practical guides about how to do a power analysis or design and implement a campaign.

It draws on theory and practice to:

- provide an introductory grounding about the nature of power, how change happens and the role of governments and voluntary organisations
- provide strategic ideas and guidance as to how voluntary organisations can best promote change
- contribute to and promote discussion in the sector about these issues.

Introduction

The publication is primarily aimed UK-based voluntary organisations addressing themes that are relevant for staff engaged in advocacy and those working with and providing services and advice to communities.

It may also be relevant to voluntary organisations in other countries, and others with an interest in the subjects covered

It is divided into the following four stand-alone sections:
• Power and change
• How change happens
• Routes to change
• Sector and government

Themes covered in each section overlap and we have tried to highlight the key links in the text.

For further information and practical tools on power please refer to:
• Carnegie UK Trust
  http://democracy.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/ democracy/power_tools/power_-_useful_resources
• IDS participation group
  www.powercube.net
• IIED power tools
  www.policy-powertools.org
• Campaigning Effectiveness, NCVO
  www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/campaigningeffectiveness

Some definitions
We recognise that terms are contested and definitions are themselves political. But this intended for practical use rather than as a theoretical discussion piece so we will be defining terms simply:

Voluntary organisations
We use this term to describe any grassroots, community, membership or non-governmental organisation, or social movement

Change
We use the term 'change' as shorthand for positive and progressive change, defining change as 'improvements in people's lives – whether political, social, economic or environmental'. We use the term 'transformative change' to mean change that addresses root causes of problems and brings lasting and meaningful improvements in people's lives.

Advocacy
There are many different terms to describe efforts to secure change through influencing policy. We have chosen to use the generic term 'advocacy'. We use the word 'campaigning' to talk specifically about public campaigning and popular mobilisation.

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Power and change

Over the years, voluntary organisations have won many battles. However, social injustice, poverty and inequality still persist in the UK and underpin many other social problems.[1] Certain communities and social and ethnic groups continue to be marginalised or discriminated against.

There are many barriers and opportunities to making change happen – financial, technical, socio-economic and cultural – but a key factor underlying many of them is power. Various studies indicate that power is unevenly distributed in Britain.[2] This can put a powerful break on change. For example:

- powerful vested interests may resist change if they perceive it to threaten their interests
- people may underestimate their own individual or collective power to bring change
- structural constraints may prevent people from questioning the status quo or restrict their access to resources, opportunities or ability to take social action.

This chapter aims to explain how power operates and how you can best to respond it's challenges. There is no common understanding of power so we draw on different perspectives as well as case studies. The information is intended to complement practical guides for developing a campaign strategy.

'One of the great problems of history is that the concepts of love and power have usually been contrasted as polar opposites ... [but] power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love'
Dr Martin Luther King Jr

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What is power?

Many people have a negative view of power. This is not surprising given that the conventional understanding of power is a relationship in which one actor has 'power over' another. More precisely it is defined as 'the ability to get someone to do something they would not otherwise do'.[3]

This type of power tends to involve a 'zero-sum game' in which a gain in power for one actor means a loss in power for another. It is often seen or experienced as involving some form of coercion or domination. It is also open to abuse. History is littered with examples of individuals, groups or governments using their 'power over' others to benefit themselves.

Despite its negative associations, 'power over' plays a central role in our democratic system. We elect governments to govern on our behalf and to promote public interest for example by upholding certain basic rights, raising taxes to provide public goods and protecting the vulnerable. Similarly, within our own organisations we give managers the power to make decisions 'over' us such as staffing or the prioritisation of resources. We may also have power over groups that we fund.

However, depending on the forces at play governments may also use their power to further their own interests or the interests of elite.

Similarly within our own organisations managers or staff may misuse their power or make poor decisions.

Because of the potential for misuse, 'power over' has to be carefully managed and controlled. Democracies have sought to develop a sophisticated system of checks and balances to help ensure that governments are accountable to citizens, these include a balance of power between the legislative, executive and judicial arms of government, an independent media, and political and civil rights for citizens. Similarly, in our own organisations, we can develop consultative, participative and accountable ways of working to act as a check on power.

In addition, the way in which 'power over' is used and the values that underpin this are crucial. For example, within our own organisations, even though we may have hierarchical management systems, we need to develop transparent, accountable and inclusive ways of working.

But **'power over'** is only one possible type of power. Practitioners and academics have identified alternative understandings of it:[4]

- **Power 'with'** refers to the collective strength that is generated when people work in alliance with each other in pursuit of common interests

- **Power 'to'** refers to the capacity that individuals or groups have to influence and shape their life and wider society. This is influenced by their position in society as well as their skills, knowledge, awareness and confidence

- **Power 'within'** refers to the awareness, identity, and sense of self worth and confidence that is necessary for individuals to be and do what they value

These views suggest that power can be used not just to dominate, but also to empower and promote collective goals and transformative change. Crucially, they also suggest that power can be a variable sum game in which working together produces mutual gain and that there need be no losers.[5]

One implication of this is that those who currently hold power may be willing to support or tolerate an increase in your power if they do not feel threatened by it. Arguments to support this case may include:

- policy making will be improved if decision makers listen to those affected by an issue
- your skills or expertise can help decision makers improve a policy or find a solution
- you can help mobilise the public or get press coverage in support of shared goals.

What is power?
continued

Implications for voluntary organisations

How you understand power will in play a large part in shaping your understanding of how to make change happen.

For example, focussing exclusively on addressing or using 'power over' may mean:

- you overestimate the power of your opponents and underestimate your own personal and collective power to bring change
- that you neglect to help empower marginalised groups – whether on an individual or collective level
- you replicate dominating forms of power in your own ways of working
- you fail to exploit opportunities to persuade decision makers to share power more widely.

Conversely, if you ignore 'power over' and your strategy involves only using enabling forms of power i.e. power 'with' and 'to' – you may be inadequately prepared to combat the sometimes ruthless strategies that powerful actors may use to defend their interests. For example, target institutions may seek to de-legitimise people who criticise them or threaten to cut their funding.

In practice, a number of different forms of power may be at play and you may need to use and/or address different types of power to promote change.

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Sources and distribution of power

To be effective in tackling power relations and making change happen it is important to understand where power comes from – its sources, how it is exercised and how it is distributed.

In the table on the following page are four influential perspectives about power and their implications for how to make change happen.[6]

One current view is that power is distributed and exercised horizontally through networks of diverse state and non-state actors, in contrast to much of the post war era when it was concentrated within and exercised hierarchically by government, big business and organised labour.[14]

This change is seen as part of a wider shift in society away from the rigid post-war systems of mass production and consumption to more flexible, networked societies where wealth is increasingly based on knowledge rather than capital or land. In this view, knowledge and expertise become critical sources of power, while persuasion networking and strategy become crucial ways of exercising power effectively.

Sources and mechanisms of power	Distribution of power	Implications for change
Derives from 'hard' economic, political and/or military resources. Exercised through coercion or threat of coercion (power over).[7]	Unequal and rigid. Concentrated with governments, business/elites.	Collective action (power with), or force (power over) to take, or increase control of, power resources.
Derives from a range of 'hard' and 'soft' resources (authority, reputation, knowledge etc). Exercised via a range of mechanisms including persuasion (power to and with), coercion (power over) and consent.[8]	Fluid and relatively evenly spread across different interest groups with the state arbitrating between different groups.	Use power resources to persuade and pressure governments and elites to make change (power to). Increase your influence by creating alliances with other groups (power with).
Derived from, and created by, society.[9] Exercised through consent e.g. via a social contract (power with), or manipulation (power over).	Concentrated among individuals and institutions that are perceived to have legitimate authority, particularly the state.[10]	Question or shape prevailing consensus. In extreme cases, withdraw consent to pressure authorities to make change happen (power with, to and over).
Power is a process between a web of different actors and is constantly renegotiated.[11] Exercised through dominant attitudes, beliefs and social/institutional controls.	Power is pervasive: 'power is everywhere' and 'comes from everywhere'.[12] Everyone creates power and is shaped by power to different degrees.[13]	Resist and challenge 'invisible' forms of power, including dominant ideas, social controls and internalised oppression (power within, with and to).

Table 1: Perspectives on power

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Sources and distribution of power continued

Implications for voluntary organisations

In practice, sources and distribution of power may vary according to the particular context and issue. Therefore, voluntary organisations need to conduct regular power analysis to develop an effective strategy. This involves assessing the relative strength and influence of different power holders as well as, the different individuals and interest groups that influence them. It also involves identifying political opportunities for change. These may result from changes in government, shifting political alignments, divisions among or errors by elites, new laws or reform processes or the emergence of new social movements calling for change.

Capitalising on errors

One key factor in the success of the anti-GM campaign in the early 1990s was the inept handling of the issue by the American bio-tech industry promoting the technology. Leading industry figures underestimated both the levels and the significance of resistance to GM in the UK, leading them to make no serious attempts to engage on the issue, even with the major retailers. Similarly, pharmaceutical companies made a disastrous PR error when they decided to take Nelson Mandela's government to court over a new law designed to make medicines more affordable.

Campaigners and developing country governments were able to capitalise on global public concern to drive through a reinterpretation of global patent rules at the World Trade Organisation.

The different theoretical perspectives outlined above can help inform your power analysis by helping to ensure that you ask the right questions and are alert to changing power dynamics. But because power operates through ideas, cultural processes and social structures – not just individual actors – your power analysis also needs to be integrated with an analysis of the wider forces supporting or constraining social change. These may include powerful individuals, ideas, cultural or social norms and structural constraints etc.

- ● **See How social change happens**

Sources of power for voluntary organisations

To achieve change it is crucial that you understand and maximise your own mechanisms and sources of power and those of the communities you work with and support.

Mechanisms of power for voluntary organisations

Below are three key mechanisms of power that voluntary organisations typically use to achieve change, although in practice there is not always a clear division between them.[15]

Persuasive power

Also sometimes referred to as soft power[16] or power 'to', persuasive power comes from an actor's capacity to attract or win others over to their cause without the use of coercion. It can involve appealing to reason, shared values, empathy, common humanity, duties or legal obligations i.e. the winning of hearts and minds. Its effectiveness rests on your authority, reputation, knowledge, group power, reward power, position power or charisma (see below). Persuasive power can, however, be used to manipulate others and may then become coercive (see below).

Voluntary organisations tend to have large and often under-exploited sources of persuasive power. If used effectively it can compensate for their relative lack of coercive power (see below) and allow them to punch far above their economic weight or at least to change the way their influence is perceived by others. It also explains how throughout history, social movements, pressure groups and progressive organisations have been able to prevail over the 'powerful' and achieve transformative change.

Voluntary organisations typically exercise their persuasive power through research, lobbying and dialogue with decision makers as well as by influencing public opinion through the media and social marketing.

You can also exercise your soft power by making – or modelling – the change you want to see happen. The campaign to make Modbury in Devon free of plastic bags was the first in Europe. Inspired by this example, dozens of similar campaigns have sprung up all over the country since. As the instigator of the Modbury campaign puts it in her advice to others: "You are in a far stronger position than when we did it because you now have Modbury as a success story'.[17] Many low carbon communities are successfully modelling how to reduce CO_2 emission which is not just resulting in practical change on the ground but also influencing the terms of debate and government funding decisions.

A major study of government regulation found that one of the main ways policy change occurs is by decision-makers adapting and copying innovative and successful policies from others.[18] Pre-packaged models have enormous appeal to decision makers because they have limited time and energy and limitless range of issues on which they want to be seen to be making progress. You can therefore draw on your experience, or that of other voluntary organisations to offer practical solutions or float innovative policy ideas to decision makers.

The timing and the way policy models or solutions are packaged and framed can be crucial. Good ideas may be more likely to be taken up if you catch an opponent off balance, frame it to appeal to public audiences, a specific interest group or find a solution to a problem.[19]

Sources of power for voluntary organisations continued

Floating policy solutions

In 2008, local voluntary sector representatives presented a proposal to Ealing Council's Scrutiny Panel about how the voluntary sector could play a bigger role in tackling unemployment and poverty. Their ideas were not taken up by the Council at the time but eight local groups (including childcare providers, local regeneration charities, a community group based on a deprived estate, groups which worked with older people, those with mental health problems and disabled people, and a Somali-led group) went ahead and set up 'Ealing One Stop Shop Jobs Network' to offer personalised and effective support to people looking for work. Subsequently this group secured funding of £650,000 from Ealing Council and London Councils. (The Ealing Communities and Neighbourhoods Building Effectiveness (CANBE) Project).

Coercive power

Also sometimes known as **hard power** or 'power over', coercive power stems from an actor's capacity to use physical force or deprivation (or the threat of it), or to offer (or withdraw) inducements/rewards, to achieve their ends. It may also involve manipulation of ideas and information.

To exercise coercive power effectively you generally need to have control over economic, military or political resources. For example, governments may threaten to cut off aid, apply trade sanctions or invade another country to get their way. A company may threaten to move its operations to other countries if they do not like a government decision. However, coercive power may also be exercised through the manipulation of ideas and information which makes people 'consent' to actions that are not in their deeper interests.[20]

Voluntary organisations and other civil society organisations do not generally have access to large economic, military or political resources so their coercive power is limited compared to governments or business elites. The coercive power they do have has traditionally relied on the power of numbers – or 'group' or 'noise' power.

● **See Invisible power**

For example, strike action has widely been used as an attempt to coerce employers to raise wages or improve conditions. Environmental groups have attempted to use direct action to force business or government to change policies.[21] Historically, mass civil disobedience and/or direct action have been used (combined with powerful moral persuasion) to force a change of policy or direction on decision-makers or to overthrow governments. Classic examples include the non-violent direct actions of the 1960s civil rights movement, Gandhi's campaign of mass civil disobedience during the struggle for Indian independence, and the 'Velvet Revolution' in Czechoslovakia in 1989. More extremely, civil society has sometimes used collective armed action to overthrow governments.

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Sources of power for voluntary organisations continued

Non-violent direct action:
The power of moral authority

As Martin Luther King explains, non violent direct action *'seeks to create such a crisis and foster such a tension that a community which has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue'*. [22] For King, non violence was an effective strategy because *'non violent resistance paralysed and confused the power structures against which it was directed'*. [23]

Non-violence can expose the illicit mechanisms of power: *'instead of submitting to surreptitious cruelty in thousands of dark jail cells and on countless shadowed street corners, he would force his oppressor to commit his brutality openly – in the light of day – with the rest of the world looking on'* [24]

At the same time, *'it is not only suitable as a remedy for injustice; its very nature is such that it challenges the myth of inferiority'*. [25] Hence King describes it as, *'a weapon unique in history, which cuts without wounding and ennobles the man who wields it. It is a sword that heals'*. [26] As a practical example, supporters were expected to pledge that the non violent movement in Birmingham sought justice and reconciliation – not victory. [27]

The effectiveness of these actions relies on the ability to mobilise a critical mass of people – 'group' power – and therefore may only be feasible in extreme situations such as a breakdown in democratic legitimacy. Moreover, the disadvantages of coercion suggest that it should only be used as a last resort, i.e. strikes can cause severe disruption resulting in loss of public support or business and civil disobedience may provoke a violent reaction from authorities.

Pressure

Pressure lies somewhere between coercion and persuasion. Voluntary groups often use it to strengthen their persuasive power if the issue is contentious or if there is resistance to change. It involves using high profile methods to make an issue visible and pressurise targets to take action. Its effectiveness derives from the voluntary organisations' 'group', 'noise' and 'reward' power. It typically involves high profile media to make an issue visible or to name and shame targets into action and/ or mobilising the public to signal opposition to a policy, through demonstrations, protests and petitions.

In practice, many voluntary organisations typically use a combination of persuasion and pressure. The effectiveness of these mechanisms depends on the following sources of power.

Types of power

Hard Power   **Soft Power**

> COERCION   PRESSURE   PERSUASION

Sources of power for voluntary organisations continued

Sources of power for voluntary organisations [28]

Group or noise power

The ability to act together in an organised manner is crucial to the acquisition and use of power and particularly so for those with limited economic resources.[29] Traditionally the power of voluntary organisations has depended on the numbers of people they can mobilise or the breadth of support they can draw on. This may include:

- the numbers and diversity of your members/ supporters
- the quality of your relationships with them – including your accountability to them
- your alliances with actors with other sources of power
- the level of support your organisation/issue enjoys from the wider public
- the 'attractiveness' of those who support you.

However, it can be difficult and resource intensive for voluntary organisations to mobilise a critical mass of people. Geographically dispersed groups, such as the unemployed or homeless, may find it difficult to organise collectively.[30] So voluntary organisations can also substitute 'numbers' with the creation of 'noise' through media and opinion formers, and/or by mobilising allies, in part because of these difficulties

Socio-economic constraints – such as poverty, poor education, lack of health – may also prevent people from taking social action. Lack of confidence or discrimination may also restrict the participation of some groups. One study showed that over three quarters of Black and Asian women involved in community governance in Birmingham and Wolverhampton had experienced gender, race or faith discrimination.[31] In these cases it is important to tackle the underlying structural causes of low participation.

Authority

This is the power you gain when people believe in your legitimacy and capacity to speak and act on an issue. Its effectiveness was famously demonstrated by Milgram's 1961 experiment which showed the willingness of people to obey an authority figure – doctors in this case – even when asked to inflict pain on others.[32] Voluntary organisations' may derive their authority from:

- the extent to which you promote values that are widely recognised in society
- your knowledge/expertise (see below)
- your moral conviction and force
- the extent of support from the public and other actors in society
- your past effectiveness
- the quality of your relationships with, and accountability to, stakeholders, particularly to the communities and social groups you support
- your financial and political independence
- your legal status e.g. as a charity or other recognised legal form.

Sources of power for voluntary organisations continued

Community groups, or those directly affected by an issue, have particularly high levels of authority deriving from their direct experience of an issue, or moral conviction, however, this is not always fully recognised or exploited. However, their legitimacy – and hence authority – may be weakened if they do not fully represent the diversity of their communities they seek to represent.

Reputation

This is power arises when people trust you and want to identify with or support you. This is an important source of soft power for voluntary groups as opinion polls consistently show that charities and pressure groups are more trusted by the public compared to other actors within society and governement.[33] As your reputation grows, your name (or brand) can become an important source of influence in its own right. Your brand can then in turn be used to express your values and generate more supporters and income.

Knowledge, expertise and information

Knowledge has always been an important source of power, and has become increasingly so with the shift to knowledge-based economies. Policy debates are increasingly influenced and shaped by elite policy networks and hence expert knowledge is an increasingly important source of influence for voluntary organisations.

You need to have an in depth understanding of an issue to maximise your influence and help you withstand counter arguments or attempts to dismiss you. You also need to have good quality research, analysis, realistic practical recommendations and solutions. A solid power analysis in order to understand the decision-making processes is also crucial.

That said, voluntary groups sometimes underestimate the power they may have because of their personal, direct or practical experience of an issue. Some voluntary organisations campaign on 'behalf' of other groups without directly involving them. Yet campaigns which involve people directly affected by the issue are likely to be far more powerful.[34]

The power of personal experience

As part of the successful campaign to ban cluster munitions, Handicap International Belgium facilitated the involvement of a number of people – Ban Advocates – who had been injured by cluster bombs in the recent international negotiations for a ban on cluster munitions. Their involvement is credited with having played a key role in securing the ban by increasing the legitimacy of the process, and strengthened the moral force of the humanitarian argument in favour of a ban, *'The BAs simplified things down to the bare bones and changed the 'rules of the game' for the diplomats… 'Their capacity to move people was important. It was quite difficult for diplomats to keep their humanity in check in order to represent institutional positions. The BAs brought their humanity to the fore – and were very powerful in doing so'…. 'They brought moral force to the negotiations –they were bearing witness in a very direct way.'* [35]

Read more on the Ban Advocates
www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/count-me-in/banadvocates

The way your organisation manages knowledge can itself be a key determinant of your power, whether investing in individual capacity, developing systems for learning or sharing and disseminating knowledge.

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Sources of power for voluntary organisations continued

Incentives/reward power

Voluntary organisations generally do not have the economic resources to offer material rewards but if they have a positive reputation they can use this to publicly give or withhold public praise and hence provide incentives to decision makers to take progressive social action.

Position power

This is the power you derive from being involved in a decision making processes e.g. on a forum, committee, advisory board or working group. Your involvement may be a result of your existing reputation, your expertise or direct experience of an issue.

It is also the power you derive from being well networked. The more networked or better placed you are, the more power you are likely to accrue. This is becoming increasingly important with the shift to a 'network society'. Those who are already well connected are more likely than others to attract new contacts.[36] This can work in your favour but it can also polarise power. Some become more and more linked into decision making structures, while others remain outside and may find it difficult to make a way into them. This highlights the importance of partnerships and accountability between groups and good communications and links between those who are involved and those who are excluded.

Charismatic power

This is the power and ability that individuals have to attract others and build loyalty. It may be based on personal charisma, leadership or interpersonal skills, specific traits or celebrity status. It can make others want to identify with or follow the individual or group they are associated with.

Although communities may have strong charismatic leaders, if they lack effective participatory skills they may exclude, disempower and alienate others. Other individuals may lack the inner confidence ('power within'), knowledge and skills to take social action.

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Sources of power for voluntary organisations continued

Implications for voluntary organisations

"Power is increased as legitimacy is earned"
Talcott Parsons

Your sources of persuasive power often have to be earned [37] but much also depends on perceptions 'Power is not only what you have but what the enemy thinks you have'. [38]

It is important that voluntary organisations invest in strengthening their own sources of power. Many of these sources of power interlink with each other – so strengthening one may strengthen another.

Enhancing your organisations' sources of power may involve capacity building and/or developing or improving internal systems for knowledge management, strategic planning, learning and accountability.

However, it is crucial that voluntary organisations don't just seek to increase their own power, but also act to empower the communities and groups with whom they work. They need to be sensitive to power imbalances between voluntary and grassroots organisations and ensure they don't drown out, or substitute for their voices. This is in itself important but also necessary to ensure that policies and services reflect the needs and priorities of the groups they are supposed to benefit.

It is also important to acknowledge and be sensitive to the 'hard' power your organisation may have over partners or beneficiaries due to funding relationships or contractual obligations that may exist.

You can help enhance the power and voices of constituents and partners by:
- strengthening your accountability to stakeholders including systems of complaint or redress
- ensuring consultative and participative ways of working
- developing, applying and monitoring equitable partnership principles
- supporting processes to help individuals and communities groups to map, strengthen and make effective use their own sources of power.

The latter may involve may involve:
- *personal empowerment* to help individuals question and challenge negative attitudes, and build their self confidence and capacity to make change happen – relates to 'power within' and 'to' [39]
- *civil society strengthening* to help marginalised groups and communities maximise their collective sources of power and make effective use of them to make change happen – relates to 'power with' and 'to'.

● **See Strengthening civil society**

Sources of power for voluntary organisations continued

Strengthening community voices

The Communities and Neighbourhoods Building Effectiveness (CANBE) Project in Ealing, which is the fourth most diverse area in the country, helps local people and groups get the knowledge and skills to be able to work as equals with local decision-makers by:

- building strategic skills: helping voluntary and community representatives to get the skills to be effective representatives on decision making bodies through one to one support and a comprehensive training programme
- influencing policy: by helping local groups keep up to date with local and national policy updates, respond to policy change , influence priorities and policy of decision makers, and float policy ideas to local authorities that would benefit local people
- proving an equal voice for the least heard: empowering local groups to identify and address local needs by developing their own neighbourhood action plans
- developing new ways to communicate, consult and engage: hosting a weekly community radio show and training groups in using new media and social networking websites.

Read more on CANBE **www.urbanforum.org.uk/ insights/communities-and-neighbourhoods- building-effectiveness-canbe-project**

It can be helpful to conduct awareness raising and civil society strengthening through a human rights prism:

- stressing that people have entitlements that cannot be given or taken away
- providing people with a simple and useful tool that they can use in advocacy – people with disabilities have successfully used the 1988 Human Rights Act to overturn prejudicial practices in a variety of settings for example[40]
- helping educate communities about the rights of others and challenge discriminatory attitudes which may be prevalent in some communities.

A crucial way for voluntary organisations to help strengthen the power and voice of local communities and marginalised groups is by supporting the development of coalitions and networks. Local Community Forums help strengthen the voice and influence of community groups by providing them with a space to share experiences and then use as a platform to influence local decision making processes.

The voluntary sector can also play an important role in forging links within and between diverse communities and other groups. For Citizens UK, a key first step in linking organisations and individuals is to conduct a neighbourhood audit. This can help organisations see how they affect and are affected by others, and to develop an approach in response. For example, if a school understands parents' concerns it is better placed to help address them, for instance by using its access to the levers of power to call for improved housing where overcrowding is affecting pupils' education.

You can also help strengthen individual and group power by providing participatory leadership training to help ensure that they do not repeat the 'power over' patterns learnt from wider society which may otherwise alienate and disempower group members.[41]

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To broaden participation – and hence strengthen group power – you may also need to address structural or socio-economic constraints which prevent people taking social action. This may involve linking up with other groups to campaign to tackle socio-economic inequalities. It may involve ensuring that projects and campaigns provide a source of training or income can enable people to get involved who otherwise would not. Photovoice works with marginalised groups such as drug addicts, the homeless, people with HIV/AIDs and others. Professional photographers help train individuals through a series of workshops to express their stories through photography. The process helps raise self awareness but also provides them with a practical skill that they can then use to earn an income.

You can also help community groups broaden participation by encouraging inclusive ways of working. This in turn can enable people to help shape projects and make them relevant to their lives.

Broadening participation

To ensure that there is wide participation, you first need a good understanding of the community you represent and are working with so you can identify the actors to engage with and what 'representative participation' would potentially look like. In reaching out, you need to understand the barriers and then consider:

- when to hold meetings. For example, it might be appropriate to meet at the stage when you are gathering information and trying to understand the problem, rather than leaving it until the 'issue' has been decided and you are looking for support to achieve your goals
- how convenient meetings are for those you are inviting to participate, in terms of access, time, frequency etc.
- how to make the format of any meeting accessible and welcoming
- addressing practical needs such as lack of time, meeting skills, language
- you may also need to provide positive discrimination by providing quotas on projects and courses for certain groups.[42]

Read more on participation
www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/count-me-in/howdoI
www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/count-me-in/inpractice

Finally, you must be aware that empowerment is a process. You cannot bestow it on others or control its outcomes. Real empowerment may take unanticipated directions. When you facilitate empowerment processes, it is vital to be clear that any power you have over 'beneficiaries' could and should be challenged.[43]

Additionally, you must be vigilant to the fact that processes used to empower people can end up reinforcing power imbalances. For example, if you seek to work only with those who are easiest to reach or most willing to participate, then others may become increasingly marginalised.

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Addressing visible, hidden and invisible power

It is not enough to have access to power resources, you also need to use and exercise them effectively. In other words your ability to achieve your goals is determined not only by the cards you hold, but how you play them i.e. your strategy.

To develop an effective strategy you need to be aware of and address the different ways in which power operates. Much of our conventional understanding of advocacy and campaigning focuses on 'visible power ' – i.e. who participates, wins or loses in struggles over observable laws, institutions, policies and decision-making processes.

Tackling visible power is of crucial importance but on its own is not always sufficient to achieve change. This is because power may also operate through less visible forms by influencing what does or does not get on the policy agenda (hidden power) and/or by shaping social norms, beliefs and behaviours (invisible power).[44] When hidden and invisible power is exercised, conflicts may be suppressed or even prevented from arising in the first place.

To achieve change you need to be aware and capable of addressing the different dimensions of power.

Visible power

Visible power operates at the level of observable laws, policies, constitutions, budgets, regulations, conventions, institutions and decision making processes. Depending on the forces at play, it may result in progressive or biased and exclusive laws being introduced.

How visible power is exercised

There is often a strong correlation between economic and military might and effective power. Employers have power over employees, large companies can skew government-decision making to their interests and governments from the wealthiest economies and with the biggest militaries tend to dominate international decision making.

However, the use of coercive power suffers from several disadvantages and therefore decision makers often prefer to use it only as last resort. It can disrupt important relationships, be difficult and expensive to maintain over long periods or through long decision-making chains or complex networks and it is more likely to promote defiance or resistance.[45] If you jump too quickly to coercive or aggressive strategies, it can actually undermine your future influence.

In practice, governments and decision makers often prefer to use persuasion – or dialogue with each other – because it is seen as more legitimate and effective than hard power and helps build consensus and cooperation.[46] A major study found that governments use dialogue more frequently than coercion (e.g. trade sanctions or withdrawal of aid) to achieve their aims because they believe it is more effective in securing their negotiating goals.

The benefits of persuasive power open up the opportunity for weaker actors – with limited coercive power – to punch above their weight. At international government levels, Nordic countries are able to punch far above their economic or military size because of their effective use of persuasive power.[47] Similarly, voluntary organisations are sometimes able to use their persuasive power to make change happen against the odds.

An actor's influence may also be determined by how effectively they use and combine their different power sources. A major academic study showed that the US owes much of its international influence to effective strategy, rather than simply its hard power. In the trade arena, this involves it using an escalating pyramid of rewards and sanctions – from dialogue, horse-trading, monitoring, threat of sanctions, sanctions and regime change.

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Addressing visible, hidden and invisible power continued

This kind of strategy is effective because people modify their behaviour on the basis of how they believe power holders will act.[48] As Saul Alinsky wrote, *'The threat is usually more terrifying than the thing itself'*. [49] Although if you have a big stick you need to be prepared to use it.[50]

Although voluntary organisations will not want, or be able to, to copy these strategies in their entirety, they do offer useful lessons for how to make effective use of visible power.

Hidden power

'Hidden' power is when powerful actors, whether formal or informal, operate behind the scenes to influence decision makers and shape the political and public agenda.[51]

It can be used to promote positive goals but it often works to exclude particular groups and keep certain issues off the agenda by devaluing them. This can, in turn, result in skewed, biased and exclusive polices and laws or the circumvention and non-implementation of progressive polices.

For example, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has protested that, despite formal laws prohibiting discrimination in the UK, significant de-facto discrimination exists against people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities and people with disabilities. Similarly, despite important legal advances women still suffer discrimination in employment.[52]

How hidden power is exercised

Some of the mechanisms which powerful actors may use to exclude controversial groups or issues include:[53]
- defining matters as private affairs
- excluding them by endless red tape
- delegitimising or intimidating them
- excluding people spuriously on the basis that they lack certain qualifications
- choosing a time that is bad for others
- co-opting disruptive groups to their agenda
- defining issues as inappropriate
- handing over decisions to 'experts' who are known to favour a political outcome
- creating selective precedents
- creating committees that never reach decisions
- not publicising material
- withholding knowledge; information files getting lost
- not committing enough time.

Examples of hidden power include:
- Government departments, local authorities or Local Strategic Partnerships only inviting those voluntary organisations or community groups to the table who they think will not rock the boat
- Powerful corporations lobbying behind the scenes or financing political parties; threatening to shift operations when they disagree with government policy
- The media preventing certain issues getting on the public agenda, distorting them or only providing coverage when there is 'trouble'. One study on the coverage of the asylum issue by six British newspapers concluded that they distorted the 'scale and nature of the asylum 'problem' and disregarded concerns about the human rights and welfare of 'vulnerable asylum seekers and refugees.' [54]

These forms of hidden power mean that marginalised groups – often women, ethnic minorities, religious groups and disabled people – can find their issues either excluded or repeatedly slipping down the policy agenda.

Addressing visible, hidden and invisible power continued

Invisible power

'Power is at its most effective when least observable'
Stephen Lukes

'Invisible power' operates by shaping ideas, beliefs and behaviours which in turn influences the way people see, understand and behave in, the world. Invisible power can either be used to create consensus and empower people[55] or to dominate others.[56]

How invisible power is exercised

Elites exercise invisible power when they create ideologies to justify and defend their interests and secure consent for their policies. During the George W. Bush administration, the Republican Party succeeded in getting working people to vote to reduce inheritance tax even though this would mainly benefit wealthier people and reduce funds available for government services. By framing the tax as a 'death' tax they transformed public understanding of it from a progressive redistributive tax on the super rich, into a punitive tax by a predatory state which persecuted individuals even after death.

Elites also use invisible power when they manipulate existing values or ideas to further their own interests. Many so-called ethnic conflicts mask power struggles over economic resources. Powerful interest groups may also seek to distort public debate or keep important information secret. For example, large oil companies often sow doubt about climate change while some drug companies have been accused of repressing the results of clinical trials to advance their own interest.

These ideologies may then become accepted by and promoted through state institutions, the media, business and churches. Over time, they create deeply held cultural beliefs, values, norms and behaviours that may not even be fully understood or consciously exercised by any particular actor. Once established, these cultural assumptions are perceived as 'truths' which become almost impossible to question. They shape how people think about themselves, their social identity and place in the world. They can prevent people from questioning the status quo, envisioning any possibilities for change or seeing themselves as agents of change. People who experience systematic racism, poverty and sexism may accept this as a natural state affairs and blame themselves, rather than the system, for their position.[57]

Identity, inequality and discrimination

Karl Marx's analysis that social class was a key determinant of wealth and power has been, and continues to be, hugely influential. But from the 1960s onwards a range of 'new social movements' began mobilising around identity issues – whether gender, race, ethnicity, physical disability, sexual orientation, and faith. These movements focussed attention on how socially constructed and culturally defined 'identities' can also determine wealth and power, and interact with class to create multiple forms of discrimination (or privilege) depending on the context.

On a personal level, a respected black professional doctor may find himself unable to hail a taxi at night because he is stereotyped as dangerous in the media and popular culture (Just Associates). On a societal level socially constructed identifies may create institutional discrimination or structural inequalities. Evidence shows, for example, that Muslims in the UK face multiple deprivations relative to most of the rest of the population.[58] This suggests that it may not be possible to improve the position of individuals without also tackling the position of the group in society.

Addressing visible, hidden and invisible power continued

Implications for voluntary organisations

When seeking change you may need to address one or more of these different forms of power, depending on the issue and the forces at play. The strategies you use to address these different forms of power may overlap and interact with each other. So for example you may need to use civil society strengthening to address both visible as well as hidden power. (see Forms of power table on page 22)

In most cases you will also need to address practical needs resulting from structural – or socio-economic – inequalities that can restrict people's ability to participate in political processes.[59]

As well as addressing visible, hidden or invisible forms of power, you may need to address different levels of power. Feminist theorists have shown how unequal gender relations operate at the personal and family level as well as the public level. They also point out that the personal is political: so for example the fact that a man is unwilling to share child care at home can restrict a woman's ability to participate equally in the labour market. Democratising the family is therefore an essential step in democratising society.

You also need to address the operation of power at different geographical levels. Much policy change now also requires action at the local, national and international level.

Power also operates differently in different types of political forums – closed invited or claimed.[62] In recent years, the UK government has created a range of participatory initiatives to involve communities and the voluntary sector in decision making. You need to understand how and when these opportunities provide meaningful opportunities for change and how best to respond to them.

John Gaventa has sought to represent how power operates through different dimensions in a conceptual tool called the Power Cube.

● **See www.powercube.net**

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Forms of power [60]	Change objectives	Strategies	Example: We can – Oxfam's Violence Against Women campaign
Visible power determines which group wins and loses in policy and decision making	Changing policies and decision- making process	• Persuasion through research, lobby, and dialogue • Pressure/protest (or the threat of it) through alliance building, media coverage and public mobilisation • Coercion (or the threat of it) through strikes, direct action or civil disobedience	• Lobby, networking and public mobilisation to change policies at local, national and international level [61]
Hidden power operates behind the scenes	Helping get issues on the policy agenda and involving marginalised groups	• Civil society strengthening to increase the capacity of marginalised groups to take action in political processes, • Persuasion through lobbying, dialogue; promoting research and information that legitimises your concerns and recruiting powerful allies to advocate • Pressure/protest on visible and hidden decision makers through high profile media, building and strengthening alliances with and between groups and mobilising public support	• Building community networks and alliances • Establishing support networks for women • Public mobilisation to get the issue up the public agenda • Identifying male champions in positions of authority
Invisible power shaping people's view of the world and their place in it	Challenging dominant attitudes, values and behaviours that perpetuate exclusion and inequality.	• Awareness raising and empowerment processes critically assess and challenge dominant truths/power relations that prevent change • Civil society strengthening to increase the capacity of marginalised • Changing dominant attitudes and behaviours (the way you frame your message becomes critical here)	• Empowering women and men to act as change makers and encourage more positive attitudes and behaviour towards women within their families, communities and work

Table 2: Forms of power

Effective strategy

In tackling different forms of power, voluntary organisations can increase their influence by being more strategic about the way they use, combine and sequence their use of power resources.[63]

As noted above, voluntary organisations will often need to supplement persuasion with pressure when the issue is contentious or where there is resistance from powerful vested interests. High profile forms of pressure are often necessary to help raise the visibility and voice of neglected issues or marginalised groups.[64]

The international campaign to increase access to medicines combined rigorous research with high profile media coverage and public mobilisation to target pharmaceutical companies as they had effectively captured government policy. In contrast, although states involved in the negotiations for an international ban on cluster munitions faced resistance from defence ministries, there was no powerful commercial lobby opposing a ban. In this context, face to face lobbying by people who had been directly affected by cluster munitions (having lost limbs or family members) not only had a powerful effect on how decision makers saw the issue but also contributed – along with media coverage and reporting of government positions – to some of them changing their positions on the issue.[65]

You can also increase your effectiveness through the strategic sequencing of power resources. Developing an escalating pyramid of rewards and sanctions is one way of doing this:[66]

Pyramid of rewards and sanctions

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

THE THREAT OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

PUBLICLY WITHDRAWING FROM A FORUM

THE THREAT OF PUBLIC WITHDRAWAL FROM A FORUM

POPULAR MOBILISATION

THE THREAT OF POPULAR MOBILISATION

PUBLIC NAMING AND SHAMING E.G. THROUGH THE MEDIA

THE THREAT OF PUBLIC NAMING AND SHAMING E.G. THROUGH THE MEDIA

RESEARCH AND LOBBY

PUBLICLY SUPPORTING/REWARDING POSITIVE POLICY DECISION

DIALOGUE/LOBBY TO FIND WIN-WIN SOLUTIONS

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Effective strategy
continued

Campaigning on climate change

An effective example of the 'threat' of direct action is used by the campaign linked to 'The Age of Stupid' film about climate change. Campaigners applauded the government for the Climate Change Bill and its pledge to cut emissions by 80% by 2050, but criticised it for approving a third runway at Heathrow and planning to build a new generation of coal stations. They developed a campaign climate change pledge, which they presented to the Secretary of State. It read: 'Dear Secretary of State, if you commission a new dirty coal power station at Kingsnorth thereby increasing our emissions when you should be massively decreasing them, then you are clearly unfit to represent the people of Britain at the Copenhagen climate change summit. If you do this I promise to (the pledge gave possible examples):

• ask the Queen to dissolve Parliament
• vote for anyone but Labour at the next election
• join a cyber shutdown of 10 Downing Street
• help take direct action to stop emissions at source
• take to the streets.

This campaign may have contributed to the government's subsequent decision to tell the energy company EON, that it could only build Kingsnorth power station if it uses carbon capture and storage techniques to sequester 30 % of its CO_2 emissions. EON has subsequently withdrawn from the project, citing the recession as an explanation.

It is important that whatever mix of approaches you use they are underpinned, as far as possible, by ethical values. This is important in its own right but can also strengthen your moral force. For example, if you plan to use a mix of persuasion and pressure it is important that you are open and upfront with decision makers from the start about this in order to manage tensions and avoid unnecessarily disrupting relationships. You can tell them you wish to engage in dialogue with them but reserve the right to use public or other forms of pressure if necessary.

Managing conflict

To use power effectively, you need to be able to manage the conflicts it may reveal as well as the criticisms and resistance it could invoke.

Public campaigning may bring previously hidden or latent conflicts to the fore and so you need to have a strategy in place to deal with a backlash. If managed well, by leaders that encourage grievances to be aired in constructive, reflective and non-violent ways, an intensification of conflict can lead to an airing of views and cause a potential shift in public policy debate and power relations.

However, even when managed well, you should be prepared for some sort of backlash. If you are on contentious grounds, you need to secure yourself against attacks on your legitimacy by being sure of your position and the evidence underpinning it as well as your ability to communicate. You will need to develop a plan for how you will respond in such circumstances.

Combining persuasion and pressure can be a difficult balancing act so it is useful to do an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of different strategies before you start and have a clear plan to manage any tensions with decision makers that may arise.

If your campaign involves public mobilisation, high profile media coverage or vulnerable people, you should do a risk assessment and ensure you have protective measures in place. Mobilising public support requires meticulous planning, and liaison with the police for a campaign involving vulnerable people (such as those living with HIV/AIDs or recovering drug addicts), may need a strategy for dealing with an intrusive media.

As you increase your own power and ability to hold decision makers to account, you may well be viewed by others as a power holder yourself. There is substantial evidence at all levels (locally, nationally and internationally) to show that voluntary organisations that become influential can be subject to more public scrutiny and sometimes attack from targets, with questions raised about their legitimacy, especially in response to criticisms or when disagreements emerge.[67]

You need to ensure that your organisation retains the support of grassroots networks, allies and sections of the media. This requires good communication, alliance building and negotiation skills as well as effective forms of accountability.

You must be aware of the restrictions placed on you by charity law and other regulations. Charities' ability to campaign and to engage in political activity and the limits that apply to these have been clarified by the Charities Act (2006) and the Charity Commission's March 2008 guidance, CC9 Speaking Out: Guidance on Campaigning and Political Activity by Charities. CC9 states that charities may undertake campaigning and political activity as long as it furthers or supports their purposes and does not form a major part of their activity.

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Summary of implications

To achieve change, voluntary organisations need to understand power. A distinction can be made between coercive power, which derives from control over economic, political or military resources and persuasive power, which is the ability to attract and persuade others to your cause without the use of force.

The main mechanisms of power typically available to voluntary organisations are persuasion and pressure – (which rely on power 'with' and 'to') rather than coercion (which relies on power over) – the pressure lies somewhere between coercion and persuasion. How effectively you use these mechanisms in turn depends on your group power, authority, reputation, reward power, individual charisma and position power.

To shift the balance of power in your favour or prevail over the 'powerful' (those with coercive power such as governments and big corporations), you need to:
- identify and address different forms and levels of power
- identify and strengthen your own sources of power and those of the communities you work with
- address the structural – or socio-economic – constraints and inequalities that can prevent people from taking social action
- address the different forms, levels and political spaces through which power operates: visible, hidden and invisible power; personal, private public; local, national, international; closed, invited or claimed political spaces
- be strategic about your use, combination and sequencing of power sources and mechanisms as far as possible ensure your approach is underpinned by ethical values
- manage the conflicts and criticisms resulting from your use of power.

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How social change happens

It is vital that voluntary organisations understand how social and political change happens, what the barriers to change are and how best to overcome them. This understanding will shape your choice of objectives, strategies and tactics.

Here, we provide a broad overview of some of the key ways change can happen, to help inform your thinking about strategy and tactics in ways that complement more practical advocacy guides.

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The extent of change

Change occurs at different degrees:[1]

INCREMENTAL CHANGE

Change in the way an issue is viewed or understood

Change to a particular policy or how it is being implemented. A change in policy direction, for example by arguing that government gives increased priority to tackling child poverty across all its departments

A change of worldview as argued by Climate Camp protestors who promote a vision of a different society

A change to the system (or even the regime) through revolutionary force or non-violent direct action and civil disobedience, as deployed by Ghandi's independence movement

RADICAL CHANGE

Implications for voluntary organisations

Some voluntary organisations are focused on achieving incremental change and some seek more radical change. This choice may be influenced by both ideological and strategic considerations. There are pros and cons to each.

● **See Incremental or radical change table**

In practice, the best approach depends on context but the choice does not have to be either/or.

If your focus is on incremental change, you should still be aware that – under certain conditions – unpredictable and sometimes radical change can occur. So you should be ready to capitalise on opportunities for more profound change if they arise. To support this, it is important that you find the space to step back and look beyond your role in seeking incremental reforms, towards developing an approach that appropriately addresses the root causes of the challenges you face.

If your focus is on radical change, you should not lose sight of the fact that small advances can still be important. Voluntary organisations are often at their best when they have a transformative view of change that goes beyond simply promoting single issues but at the same time are pragmatic and realistic about what is actually achievable. A broader perspective can help you choose the right priorities and the right battles.

Focusing on single issues or the specific concerns of disadvantaged individuals or groups can bring significant change with real practical benefits to people's lives. It can set important precedents for more fundamental change. However, lasting change could be possible if the Voluntary Sector exploited its powerful but often untapped potential to work collectively with other progressive forces on some of the fundamental – and cross-cutting – problems facing society.

Inequality, for example, underpins many of the social problems of concern to the voluntary sector – including life expectancy, obesity, teenage pregnancy, crime, HIV/Aids and depression.[3]

Similarly, climate change is not just an environmental issue. It affects people's lives in multiple ways, through the demands it creates on public spending, implications for housing policy and international migration patterns, for example. And climate change will disproportionately affect those who are already marginalised through current and future impacts on food and energy security. Therefore, a concerted, sector-wide campaign for a Fair Green Deal – improving income distribution and developing a low carbon economy – could have much more impact than numerous single issue campaigns.

Timescales of change

Change can sometimes come about rapidly but typically, issues are generally resolved only in the long term, and even then there is often constant risk of a positive situation being reversed. For example, faced with local opposition, supermarkets will often repeatedly re-submit applications until they succeed.

	Incremental change	Radical change
Advantages	• pragmatically focusing on realistic goals is generally the best way to achieve real concrete change for people • small feasible changes can have a multiplier effect by creating a precedent for future change • winnable goals can create a positive dynamic that gathers momentum.	• radical change can transform people's lives in a way that incremental change may not • addressing multiple issues, rather than focusing on only one, can be the best route to meaningful change • radical visions can inspire, motivate and empower.
Disadvantages	• may obscure underlying problems (e.g. arguing for more resources may not address the market structures and power relations that help perpetuate inequality) • focusing on a single issue or a small aspect of one issue, may be at the expense of seeing how issues fit together in a wider picture • progress on your issue may come at the expense of another that may be equally valid.	• setting goals which are too radical – and unachievable – can be disempowering and breed cynicism • radical change is more speculative – there is more room for unintended consequences • in practice, the results of change may fall short of expectations.[2]

Table 4: Incremental or radical change

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Timescales of
change continued

Implications for voluntary organisations

Some recent campaigns have been very effective in generating a sense of urgency linked to a fixed deadline (as with MakePovertyHistory and the Gleneagles G8 meeting for example). However, short-term bursts of pressure are unlikely in themselves to have lasting results. So it makes sense to plan such activities not as isolated influencing initiatives, but as elements of a much longer-term strategy.

It is also important that you try and build in some 'quick wins' to keep those who are pushing for change motivated and involved. Merton Parents for Better Food in School sought some early advances and were able to celebrate the fact powdered mash potato would longer be included in the new interim menus and that some schools would start using plates instead of prison-style trays. At the same time, they still recognised that this was just the beginning of a long road of change.

Sometimes even apparent defeat can help create more favourable conditions. Direct action by roads protestors – at Twyford Down and Newbury – in the nineties was not immediately successful and in fact no road was stopped once construction had begun.[4] But cumulatively these protests helped undermine the road-building programme and contributed to an eventual change of policy direction by government.

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The dynamics
of change

The notion that change happens in a linear and incremental way, through a chain of causally related events, is central to much Western thinking.

When planning voluntary organisations often draw on such linear models of change. The impact chain is a key model for thinking about social change. It highlights the sequence of any change process, helping you to think through how your activities will lead to meaningful change:

The impact chain

INPUTS (resources)	ACTIVITIES (what gets done)	OUTPUTS (what is generated by your activity)	OUTCOMES (changes resulting from the outputs)	IMPACT (changes in people's lives)
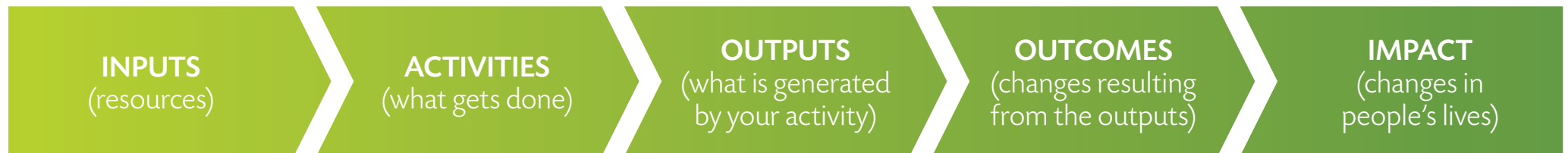
These kinds of linear models are most applicable when the route that you intend to follow is unlikely to change significantly. In more uncertain circumstances, such models and tools can still be a useful starting point, but when using them you need to recognise their limitations and think about adopting flexible approaches and being open to things changing.

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The dynamics of change continued

In stable conditions, change may indeed occur through gradual incremental change but in other circumstances it may be more rapid and radical. This is because in any system – physical, social or political[5] – with many interacting elements, change can be unpredictable, even highly volatile. Even minor changes to an initial state can reverberate through the system: a small fluctuation can send events off in a completely different, and unexpected, direction.[6] The results of one single event influences many future events, which then in turn generate their own set of influences.[7] This phenomenon is often referred to as the 'butterfly effect'.[8]

In January 1999, for example, shoppers were happily buying Genetically Modified tomato puree. However, when a group of scientists issued a statement in support of a colleague who had been fired after publishing research questioning the safety of GM foods, it lead to questions in Parliament and helped trigger a frenzy in the mass media resulting in GM foods being labelled 'Frankenfood'. Soon after, supermarkets quickly distanced themselves from the technology, removing GM from their shelves and supply chains.

This is just one example of how, from a simple beginning, events can generate their own momentum, leading to the situation spiralling out of its previous state of control.

Equally, so-called 'moral panics' are a classic example of how events can reinforce one another, driving further change. Issues can one day be advancing along stable and seemingly predictable lines and the next turn into headline news and become a fast moving political issue. Refugees and asylum seekers (amongst others) have been identified as objects of modern 'moral panic'.[9]

Moral Panics

Moral panics occur when:

1 a particular issue is recognised as being a concern
2 the issue is dramatised (in the media and elsewhere);
3 as a result of greater coverage, people's awareness of the issue increases
4 concern grows, often exacerbated by exaggerated reporting.

The media often plays a key role in this, especially given its tendency to: [10]
• shift attention quickly from issue to issue
• focus on only one dimension of a policy, often in a very one-sided way
• be particularly interested in conflict and risk
• focus on events that somehow symbolise wider understanding of a particular situation.

In combating this dynamic, how the issue is framed in the media and public debate is key. Framing can influence how people react to a particular issue or regard a particular group, which, in turn affects how the issue evolves.

Responding rapidly and early can help break the cycle before it gets going.

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The dynamics of change continued

Political and social environments are not in a constant state of flux. In contrast to times of rapid change where events propel the situation onwards, there are times when the set of factors driving the system in a particular direction is cancelled out by another set of factors driving it in an opposing direction. In those conditions, the system regulates itself and stays in check.

For example, a group of policy-makers may maintain a public display of unity, even where there is internal disagreement. In this way, stability is maintained because concerns do not become visible to the outside. In terms of its future significance, the effects of the disagreement have been cancelled out by the reaction and management of it.

The evidence is that public policy making generally goes through long periods of stability, with occasional bursts of change.[11] During normal times, pressures for change are controlled and diminished, with dominant political institutions acting to maintain stability. However, shifting political alignments, splits among elites and pressure for change from outside groups can create opportunities for rapid movement. In response, an issue is then dealt with, often creating a new equilibrium that holds until the next crisis.

Ideas can shift in the same way. One influential theory is that certain views tend to dominate for a long period, and then are relatively quickly superseded in occasional 'paradigm shifts' during which a completely new way of seeing the world replaces a previously accepted worldview.[12] These new worldviews tend to emerge in response to problems with the currently accepted view become increasingly apparent. Existing evidence is reinterpreted alongside new evidence emerging and a viable alternative develops which then becomes widely accepted.[13]

Sudden change can come about when growing resentment or anger about an existing state of affairs sparks off an apparently spontaneous social uprising. If they take off, cascades of protest can have extraordinary results, leading to revolutionary change, as when small demonstrations in Leipzig in Germany spiralled and spread, leading quickly to the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 for example.[14]

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The dynamics of change continued

Implications for voluntary organisations

Make sure you have good intelligence

Although appearing radical and apparently abrupt, fundamental shifts in ideas often occur over a period of time rather than in an instant – as a problem becomes increasingly obvious, difficult to ignore and momentum for change builds up.[15] If change seems unexpected and sudden, it could simply mean you missed the signs that it was coming.

The conditions for the current financial crisis were laid down long before it erupted, but people were not looking nor did they want to see it. This is just one example of how attempts at forecasting routinely fail to anticipate key turning points.[16]

You need to be alert to early signs that dominant ideas are being challenged or that political and social forces are in flux and be ready to offer new ideas and ways of thinking when the moment arises. The current way of seeing things tends not to be rejected until there is a viable alternative.[17] The existence of a problem is not enough – you must have a solution. The environment movement has been active in proposing solutions to the current financial crisis that will also green the economy. Proposals for low carbon growth strategies are already beginning to influence government policy.

In highly complex situations, where there is high rate of change, it can be difficult to know what information is actually needed.[18] One way to deal with this is to be open to look for information that you may not have anticipated would be important.

Be adaptable and open to change

For anyone operating in a context that is liable to change in possibly rapid and radical ways there is no such thing as a best strategy, only one that best fits a particular set of circumstances at a particular time. If you hold on to one particular way of doing things – as political, social and economic environments change, you may get left behind.[19]

An unexpected external event or the results of an election can completely alter the landscape for your issue for example.

Therefore, it is important to maintain the capacity to innovate. Even if the current context appears stable, it may not remain so. Having the capacity to adapt means having the right learning and knowledge management systems and cultures in place to encourage this.

As part of this, you need to be prepared to question and challenge assumptions about how to operate effectively. If you look for evidence that confirms a particular viewpoint, then you will probably find it.[20] So you need to be open to alternative interpretations. Disagreements about how to interpret information can be very fruitful too if handled constructively. So it is important you find the time to involve the right people in the right ways in assessing the information you have, and developing appropriate responses.

Adopt a more fluid approach to planning

There is a vital distinction between
- something that is complicated but predictable as long as you understand all the parts and
- complex change, which is by its very nature unpredictable.[21]

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The dynamics of change continued

You may find that an apparently significant intervention may have no effect at all. Yet small changes may have huge and unexpected effects. In this context, it becomes highly difficult to try and predict what will happen next.[22] Therefore, the key challenge is to navigate this uncertainty and this means approaching planning differently by:

- Setting out broad parameters: establish the direction of change and set boundaries. Be prepared to adapt when opportunities emerge – this may mean allocating your resources to achieve your strategic goals, but not seeking to micro manage exactly how they should be used and leaving some resources unallocated to respond to new opportunities [23]
- Delegating more of the planning to the people at the frontline so that decisions are based on a good understanding of what is actually going on [24]
- Learning by doing: developing agile and flexible forms of tracking your progress and the situation around you and adopting a 'democratically experimental' approach [25]
- Collaborating, because each actor can generally understand and influence only part of the whole picture.

- Drawing on multiple views: by looking at things from a range of different angles. For example, by drawing on others' experiences and perspectives even when you do not necessarily agree with them
- Using this information from multiple sources to establish a bird's eye view of overall patterns of change and the new possibilities for influence created by them [26]
- Ensuring that information is coming in regularly and at a fast rate.[27] In uncertain conditions, time delays and lack of information lead people to give too much weight to the information that they do have available to them [28]
- Cultivating the skills and space to interpret information and judge whether you are on track or not, on a regular basis.

- It is important to make this assessment regularly as a single snapshot may give a misleading picture, given that you are part of an ever-changing and possibly highly volatile process.[29]

Others go further, suggesting that the right plan is to have no plan. You should admit that you do not know the answers and develop your approach through trial and error, trusting home-grown solutions that are adapted to local circumstances.[30] Engaging in planning activity may still have a value, not because it is helpful to have an action plan in place but because it is a good way for people to develop problem-solving skills and be better equipped to react to future uncertainty.[31] As Louis Pasteur put it, *"Chance favours the prepared mind"*.

Understand and exploit the dynamics of change

With the frenetic news agenda, with multiple and sometimes rapidly shifting targets, and with greater emphasis on individual rather than collective action,[32] any one organisation's ability to direct change is diminished. Achieving change may involve setting in motion forces that you cannot then lead, or even know where they will head.[33] Following this spirit, for example, the Climate Camps offer training in non-violent direct action, to help seed new and self-organising activist groups.

The dynamics of change continued

Because of the speed that information can spread through a network – even between members who are only distantly connected – once an idea or a product gets going, it can gather overwhelming momentum.[34] But often an idea or innovation receives little or no attention and so fails to take off.[35] And whether something takes off or not is not simply due to its inherent qualities.[36]

One influential view is that ideas spread because they are taken up by people who (a) are well connected to others (b) have access to information and (c) are persuasive communicators.[37]

For example, in making links with BME and faith groups the Akashi project deliberately sought to identify and engage with such key people within the different communities, as a good route to reach others.

● **More on Akashi Project**

However, this is only part of the picture.[38] New ideas may also falter if members of a network are too well connected. This is because in a well connected network, people have many sources of information and advice to draw on, so they rely less on any one individual influence.

In a well connected network, it is not necessarily the most highly connected people who determine whether ideas spread, it is the people who are most willing – and need less influencing – to pick up on a new trend. Such people have been called the 'early adopters' because they are most receptive to innovations.[39] They help generate a climate of acceptance and an appetite for change so that others then follow in their path.

In the campaign to make Modbury plastic-bag-free:
- a small group of early supporters within the trading community was recruited, mainly those with whom the promoter of the campaign had existing personal contacts.
- encouraged by this early wave of support, the majority of traders then bought in persuaded through a mix of moral support and community spirit, once their practical concerns were overcome finally, the momentum became unstoppable: *'when you have nearly all the traders onboard … nobody wants to be left out.'* [40]

● **More on Modbury plastic bag free**

Therefore, in certain circumstances, identifying and working with the people who are particularly well connected will be key to helping you spread your message. Where existing levels of contact between members of a network or group are higher, however, the best approach is likely to involve targeting and trying to influence those who are most open to new ideas. In this case, you will probably need to build support from amongst a wide group of people in order to make progress.

Drivers of and obstacles to change

Political theory	How change comes about/change drivers	Strategy to secure change
Liberal left	*Institutions*, particularly the state, shape society in response to pressures from public opinion and competing interest groups and new ideas	Persuading and pressuring the state and other powerful institutions to promote progressive change
Marxist	Class struggle generated by socio-economic *structures* i.e. between those who own the means of production and those who don't	Taking over state power through organised collective action
Liberal right	Free, rational and self-interested *individuals* create wealth, new ideas and technologies, which are spread through market forces	Freeing individuals by deregulating the state and liberalising markets

Table 6: Political perspectives on how change happens

To make change happen, you need to be able to identify the most important change drivers and obstacles that you are facing. Thinking about how these different factors play out in your context will help you develop a hypothesis of how change happens and shape your strategy.

Some of our major political theories are based on an analysis of the key factors that drive (and block) change. (see Political perspectives on how change happens table on this page)

The fact that these different theories emphasise different combinations of change factors shows how different interpretations of the same context are possible.

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Drivers of and obstacles
to change continued

Implications for voluntary organisations

Your overall political perspective may influence your approach to change but there are a large number of actors or other factors that may drive (or block) change and adhering to one view or another may blind you to them. The opportunity for change is also often context specific. To underpin your change strategy you need to have a clear assessment of the factors that are most significant in your particular context.

In thinking about change drivers and obstacles, you need to consider:
- which factors/actors are most important in your particular context
- which factors/actors drive or block change and how
- which factors/actors offer a good opportunity or route to challenge the status quo
- who has the power to make change and how they can best be influenced
- which factors you and your allies can or cannot influence.

Having identified the various factors and actors promoting and resisting changes and their relative strength, you can seek to change the situation by:
- increasing the forces pushing for change and/or
- seeking to reduce the forces of resistance.

Gains made in boosting the forces for change may be only temporary if you don't challenge the underlying power dynamics. Tackling the forces of resistance is likely to result in more permanent change as any new settlement is less likely to face later challenge.[41]

But any new 'equilibrium' reached is only likely to be a temporary settlement which then may be questioned or attacked. As with other tools and approaches, this analysis of how the factors play out needs to be carried out regularly to capture the changing context.

Change drivers also affect your organisation's effectiveness at both strategic and operational levels. These factors are something for you to consider as you develop a broad organisational strategy and when you consider how best to advance a specific issue.

Next we look at some of the main change factors and actors: Individuals, ideas, institutions and interest groups, underlying structures, culture and technology.

Individuals

For centuries, the prevailing view has been that individuals make history – either for good or bad. Although power is no longer so concentrated among monarchs or military leaders, charismatic individuals such as Nelson Mandela can play a vital role in driving change [42] – or blocking it.[43] Formal decision makers such as politicians and civil servants or local councillors can also make change happen, as can hidden decision makers operating behind the scenes.

Drivers of and obstacles
to change continued

Campaign for the Ghurkhas' right to settle in the UK

Harnessing charismatic leadership can be a powerful way for voluntary organisations to drive change. Actress Joanna Lumley whose father fought with the Gurkhas was a very effective figurehead for the campaign to ensure the right of the Gurhkas' to settle in the UK. It won government backing after years of struggle. Articulate and passionate, Lumley gave the campaign impetus and profile. However, individuals rarely operate alone. This campaign's success was also down to the efforts of a dedicated legal team (the Campaign went to the High Court to fight its case) and well-organised support from both the Gurkha Justice Campaign and the Gurkha Welfare Society. Gurkha Justice founder Peter Carroll used his contacts within the Liberal Democrat Party to excellent effect as the final Commons defeat for the government was on a Liberal Democrat motion.

Celebrities may bring with them high media profile, and if they are committed, astute and well informed they can have a huge positive influence. But they cannot always substitute for good leadership and are not always accountable to constituents.

Ideas

Great ideas have also seemingly shaped history. Ideas can inspire, persuade and mobilise support. But they can also play a hugely destructive role.

At a deep level, ideas resonate when they are in tune with wider cultural values. At a more immediate level, how ideas are presented – or framed – affects how they are received.

So it's important that you try and frame an issue in a way that best advances your interests, by: [44]

- explaining why a given state is neither natural nor accidental
- identifying those responsible for the problem
- showing the concern to be important, urgent and compelling
- offering clear and credible solutions [45]
- drawing on powerful underlying ideas that are embraced by, and have helped shape, society.

One of the reasons behind the success of the campaign to ban landmines, for example, was the campaigners ability to move the issue on from arcane debates about landmines' contribution to military security to focus on their humanitarian consequences. [46]

Ideas are shaped by society as well as shaping society, and ultimately whether ideas take hold depends on a range of factors including the relative power of those who promote and oppose them. [47] Ideas alone are rarely sufficient to win change, and often need to be backed up by pressure, especially when the issue is contentious or vested interests need to be overcome. The fact that all the major political parties in the UK are currently committed to increasing aid to developing countries, for example, is testimony to the moral force of the idea that poverty in a world of plenty is unacceptable. But it is also the result of decades of campaigning, in the face of political opposition.

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Drivers of and obstacles to change continued

Institutions and interest groups

Institutions play a major role in driving or blocking progressive change through the rules and policies they set, the services they provide and in the ways they promote particular values and cultural norms. They also have their own interests that they may seek to protect. As well as public authorities other key institutions with the ability to drive or block change include business, media, trade unions, faith and voluntary organisations among others.

● **See Government: In whose interest?**

For Citizens UK (formerly the Citizens Organising Foundation), power can be a positive and effective force when used in association with other progressive institutions. For this reason, it seeks to forge partnerships with organisations that it sees as the building blocks of civil society – faith, education, labour and ethnic organisations. These organisations that are visibly functioning effectively (as shown by the number and activism of their volunteers for example) and respected by the community, and so are in a good position to represent and uphold community interests. Faith groups are often a key place where power lies within BME communities for example. Citizens UK then mobilises partner institutions in support of common goals.

Each institution will have its own culture, bureaucracies and interests (electoral or financial). You must find the people within them who are sympathetic to your goals and in a good position to support you.

Individuals, ideas, institutions: How the factors interlink

Individuals, ideas and institutions can inter-relate and combine to generate (or prevent) change. One example of this was the campaign to make Modbury in South Devon plastic-bag-free:[48]

Individual

Rebecca Hosking – who drove the campaign – had particular qualities that made it successful. Passionate about the issue, and effective in communicating her passion, she knew how to get things done and put the effort in to make it happen (research, persuasion, logistical sourcing, etc.). It helped too that, being local and well connected, she was trusted by the traders, and so well-placed to persuade them to take part.

Idea

There were two sides to the idea that made it so compelling. The problem was a stark one: a plastic bag – used for a few minutes – takes hundreds of years to degrade, and in the UK we are using billions of them a year. Underpinning the idea therefore was a strong moral argument (plastic pollution is causing huge environmental damage) as well as a sound practical case (there are alternatives to every function a plastic bag fulfils).

Institutions

The fact that the institutional context was relatively favourable also helped. It helped that the shops in Modbury were mainly independent, with a fairly closely knit trader community, meaning that (a) it was easier to bring them together (b) those that weren't initially keen were brought along by the rest and (c) the retailers were able make decisions about participation more quickly than the chain stores. The fact that the supermarket in Modbury is the Coop was perhaps a touch of fortune too as the Coop was very supportive, possibly more so than other major supermarkets would have been. Even in this supportive environment, to accommodate how the different shops operated, a lot of time still needed to be spent devising solutions tailored to the specific needs of individual retailers.

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Drivers of and obstacles to change continued

Underlying structures

Society's underlying structural features – the embedded mechanisms and traditions of a society that help shape how people behave within it – can also drive or block change.[49]

Different economic systems, for example, create wealth for different groups in different ways. The fact that there are high levels of inequality in Britain today, for instance, both creates and constrains possibilities for change. It can motivate groups to challenge injustice. At the same time lack of basic socio-economic rights – such as poverty, poor education or health – can constrain people from taking social action or lead to rivalry and conflict between groups.[50]

The structures of society set the parameters within which change is possible. People make history, but not in the circumstances of their own choosing.[51] So it's important to understand, and if necessary address, the structural factors that constrain people from being able to shape their lives and influence political processes. For some voluntary organisations, this could mean challenging, rather than merely accepting, prevailing assumptions about the way things are.

● **See Invisible power**

Culture

A society's culture – its patterns of shared values and assumptions – can also have a major influence on prospects for change. Cultures are deeply rooted and are notoriously difficult to change.[52] Cultural assumptions establish the parameters within which we operate while cultural values can be a powerful mobilising force for good. However, the culture in which one lives can also pose obstacles to change.[53]

Different strategies are needed depending on how your issues fit with cultural values:[54]

Your issue is aligned with cultural values
In the UK, organisations supporting animals, hospices or children for example will generally be received positively. In this context, your messages are more likely to be accepted, with relatively little resistance. So persuasion may be enough. To support your case, it can be helpful to mobilise wider public support, or at least demonstrate evidence of it.

Your issue faces fluctuating or unpredictable levels of public support
Organisations supporting groups who have been subject to prejudice but are now more widely accepted, those representing LGBT constituencies for example, tend to face fluctuating or unpredictable levels of public support. While discrimination against minority groups is now less acceptable, it still persists, although generally less openly. And such groups can lose public sympathy as they gain power.[55]

So you need to be shrewd in your influencing strategies, drawing on public support selectively, and being prepared for possible media or public backlash. Avoiding more public campaigning, for example, Stonewall has been effective in influencing equality legislation through focused and intense lobbying, bolstered by the backing of the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights and the Trade Unions.[56]

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Drivers of and obstacles to change continued

A different, though equally astute, response has been developed in the 'A Day in Hand' campaign, which promotes same sex hand holding as a route towards a 'silent revolution'. This is a simple act but one that can be both personally empowering – it is about being true to yourself and to those you love – and also one that carries wider social significance, a way that gently challenges and encourage other people to recognise and accept the reality of LGBT lives, on the basis that *'if you want to live in a world where you can hold your partner's hand walking down the street, hold your partner's hand walking down the street'.*[57]

Your issue is met by indifference
If you are faced with indifference, you may need to make your issue more visible by identifying and challenging the power dynamics that are keeping your issue off the agenda. It is also sometimes possible to find ways of making your issue more attractive to policy makers by attaching your issue to a problem that people are concerned about

● **See Policy windows**

The interests of pedestrians have long been somewhat marginal [58] for example, but more recently Living Streets has effectively linked the need for attractive and safe streets to higher priority concerns: environment, health and obesity, and social cohesion.

Your issue is out of tune with cultural trends or popular values
This category includes organisations working with groups such as refugees and asylum seekers, drug addicts and prisoners. These groups are both negatively regarded and have little power.[59] Such groups tend to be marginalised from decision making processes, making it harder for their influence to be asserted. And few speak on their behalf, with policy makers reluctant to be seen providing 'good things to bad people'.[60]

In these difficult circumstances, possible responses should take into account that:

- **Professional authority can sometimes help improve the image of a particular group**
Voluntary organisations and others who provide services and support to disadvantaged groups may be (though are not always) regarded relatively positively and so can sometimes usefully intervene in debates. Professional groups, such as doctors or lawyers, may be trusted and listened to in a way that the affected groups themselves may not be, for example.

- **Presenting the problem differently can move the debate along**
One way to advance the interests of a poorly-regarded group is to reposition people's perceptions of them, for example by changing perceptions of drug addicts from deviant to dependent, from 'bad' to 'ill'. Barnardo's campaign to identify the children of prisoners as victims themselves is one example of this. This message is central to the call for local authorities and health boards to give disadvantaged children in this position greater attention and support.[61]

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Drivers of and obstacles to change continued

- **Invoking human rights can help emphasise people's entitlements**
Instead of calling for change on the basis of need or as victims, people can claim their rights in law. Human rights are universal – they apply equally to everyone, including the most marginalised. A mother considered 'unfit' to bring up her children, for example, because she was living in temporary accommodation (after leaving an abusive partner) successfully fought social services' decision to take her children into care by drawing on human rights legislation. She argued that she was better placed than the council to uphold the children's right to respect for private and family life as well as their right to education.[62]

- **Legal action provides a possible route to helping marginalised groups achieve their rights**
The judiciary may be more open than governments and parliaments to upholding the rights of people who are generally not sympathetically viewed. The Child Poverty Action Group, for example, recently won a legal bid to stop the government retrieving overpaid benefits, after 65,000 benefit claimants were told they could face legal action if they did not make repayments. Judges ruled that the government could recover overpayments only if they resulted from misrepresentation or fraud.[50] Taking legal action is confrontational so can damage relationships, but its advantage is that it can change people's situations much more quickly and definitely than simply arguing that something is lawful but wrong.

- **In the longer term, cultural norms can shift**
Advances achieved through the civil rights and the women's movements, for example, demonstrate this. And in the UK in recent decades, opinion on the acceptability of dog-fouling, smoking on public transport and other public spaces, and drink-driving has shifted fundamentally. Voluntary organisations can help shape values as well as operating within them by:
- communicating clear messages consistently and persistently
- segmenting audiences
- building broad alliances for change
- working to empower those who are currently marginalised and excluded.

Drivers of and obstacles
to change continued

Technology

The flint axe, agriculture, the printing press, steam power and new medical inventions have all led to huge social upheavals and change. And such as the growth of new communication technologies, internet and email, have greatly strengthened civil society's capacity to network, by allowing groups to:

- agree positions and coordinate actions in more agile ways
- link up across distant geographical spaces, enabling greater collaboration between organisations operating at local, national and international levels.

These trends have in turn given voluntary organisations a strategic advantage over governments and companies, which are often less able to exploit communication technologies. Web-based campaigns such as avaaz.org and moveon.org have helped spearhead internet campaigns.

Both the speed of information flows and people's ability to access information is increasing. This was demonstrated when oil trading company Trafigura hit the headlines for suppressing information. The company took out an injunction to prevent The Guardian newspaper from reporting on a parliamentary question about its dumping of hazardous chemical waste off the West African coast. The story then spread like wildfire through social networking website Twitter, by which time lawyers could do little but retract the injunction, allowing the Guardian to publish the article which revealed that thousands of people had suffered burns, diarrhoea and breathing difficulties because of the illegal dumping.[63]

For years, Greenpeace has made a priority of filming their direct actions and making footage quickly available, as a way of exerting influence over the news agenda to the media. These kinds of approaches are increasingly available to smaller organisations as technologies advance and costs reduce. Collective web platforms are becoming increasingly important as a way of collectively tackling common problems. 2 Degrees, for example, is a platform that links businesses to promote collective problem solving on environmental problems.

However, technological innovation can be a two-edged sword. Less resourced groups are often excluded from access to new technologies, and their benefits. Therefore, it is important that voluntary organisations:

- Ensure that you do not perpetuate inequalities through your own work. This can be particularly important in the case of new technologies as any groups do not have access to them
- Support practical efforts to help communities and local groups gain access to appropriate technologies: Oxfam, for example, has established Just Energy, a social enterprise working with low-income communities to help them access grants, loans or capital to install small-scale renewable technologies. This helps tackle climate change while generating vital income for the community
- Influence policy makers to provide public funding for research in areas which of public benefit but where market incentives are weak, and ensure that the cost of technologies, and hence the intellectual property rules, do not restrict people's access to knowledge goods (such as medicines, books, software).

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Impact

Clearly any voluntary organisation's ultimate goal is to achieve positive change in people's lives. Changes in institutional policies and practice, for example, are means to that end, not ends in themselves.

Your focus always needs to be on impact – 'significant or lasting changes in people's lives, brought about by a given action, or series of actions'.[64] This means identifying clearly how you anticipate that your activities will lead to impact and making sure you put measures in place to assess the impact you are having.

Summary of implications

There are pros and cons of taking an incremental or radical approach of change. Voluntary organisations are often at their best when they have a transformative view of change that goes beyond simply promoting single issues but at the same time are pragmatic and realistic about what is actually achievable.

Quick wins are important. But issues are generally resolved only in the long term, and even then there is often constant risk of a positive situation being reversed.

Change can be unpredictable, even highly volatile. Events can generate their own momentum, leading to a situation spiralling out of its previous state of control. Public policy making generally goes through long periods of stability, with occasional bursts of change. And ideas can shift in the same way. In response you should :
- make sure you have good and regular intelligence
- be adaptable and open to change
- adopt a more fluid approach to planning
- be ready to exploit the dynamics of change when opportunities arise.

A number of factors help drive or act as obstacles to change. Key are: individuals, institutions, ideas, underlying structures and cultures and technological innovations. These factors play out differently in different circumstances so you should identify which factors are most important in your particular context and what challenges and opportunities this presents to achieving change. It is unlikely you will be able focus on all the change drivers and obstacles at play, so to achieve change you will need to work in alliance with others.

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Routes to change

Voluntary organisations are increasingly recognising advocacy and campaigning as a key means of achieving change.

As well as providing programmes and delivering services, voluntary organisations can secure change by:

• influencing the policy and practice of key institutions
• changing people's behaviour
• strengthening the ability of civil society groups to make their voices heard, as well as the voices of those they represent
• making authorities more responsive to peoples' needs and demands and making decision making processes more inclusive.

It is likely that your organisation will need to make progress in more than one of these areas in order to create sustainable change. For example, influencing policy and supporting and mobilising communities are often mutually reinforcing.

To ensure that policy change addresses real needs and is sustained you often need to build strong community voices that can help shape policy and effectively hold the authorities to account.

Similarly behaviour and policy change often interrelate, with one or the other being more important according to how an issue is progressing. For example, drink driving was initially tackled through public policy when the breath test was introduced in 1967. Simply passing a law is not enough, as there have been additional series of high-profile anti-drink-drive campaigns designed to influence behaviour ever since.

Campaigners have also sought to extend legislative powers by reducing the legal limit or introducing random breath testing. This is an example where neither efforts to promote certain behaviours, nor policy enforcement, is likely to be sufficient on its own.

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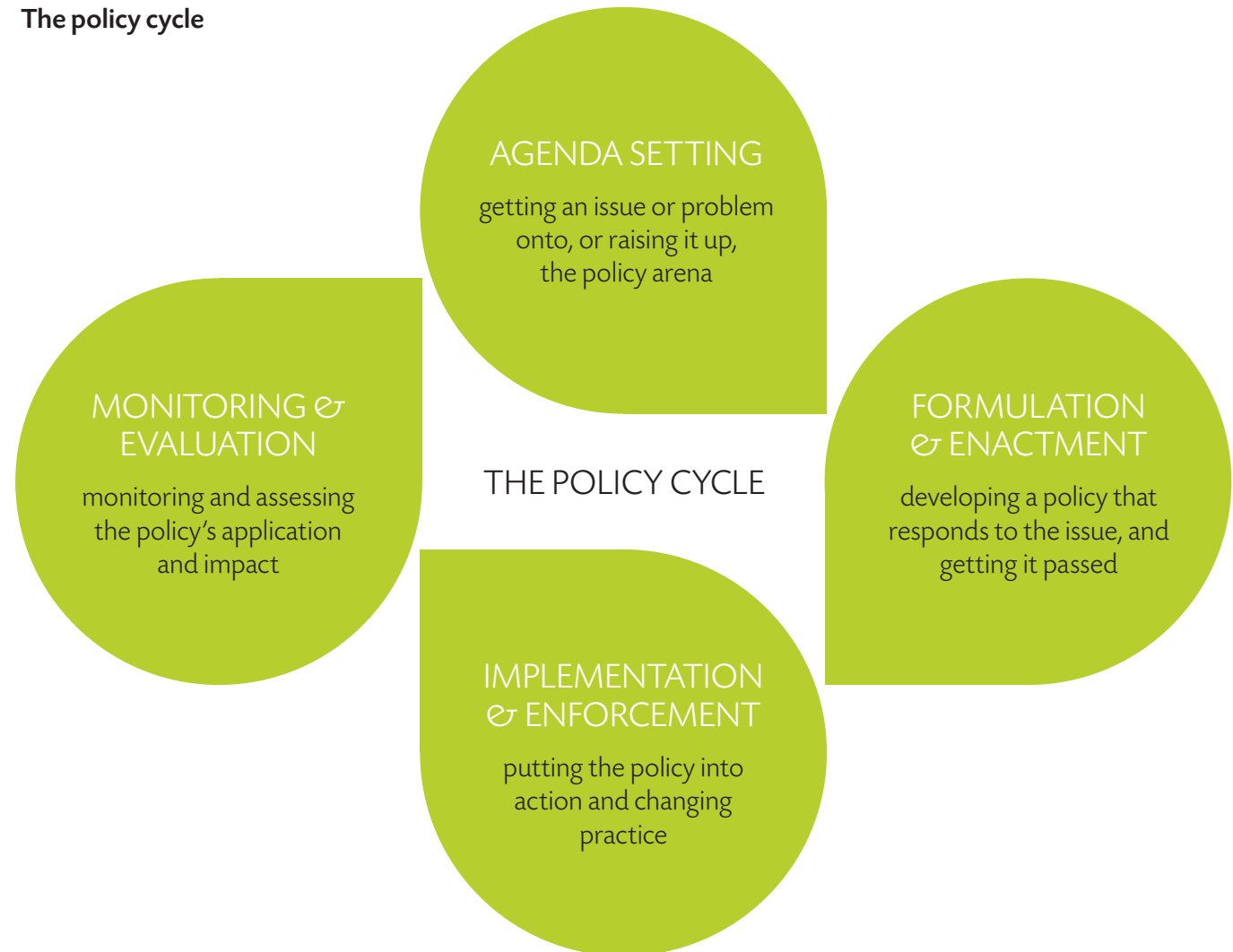
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Policy change

An overview of policy processes

In a simple model of the policy process, change comes about when policy makers:

1 recognise and define the issue to be dealt with
2 identify possible approaches to deal with the issue
3 weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative
4 choose the best option after evaluating the evidence
5 implement the policy
6 evaluate the outcome.

This is an idealised view of the process. The policy process is not generally so straightforward and tends to involve a range of pragmatic considerations and imperfect approaches. For example, those developing policy will generally have an incomplete knowledge of the alternatives and their likely consequences.

Such a model also fails to take into account that different vested interests influence how issues make it onto the agenda, what alternatives are identified, how selection is made and how those choices are implemented.[1]

The policy cycle

THE POLICY CYCLE

AGENDA SETTING

getting an issue or problem onto, or raising it up, the policy arena

FORMULATION & ENACTMENT

developing a policy that responds to the issue, and getting it passed

IMPLEMENTATION & ENFORCEMENT

putting the policy into action and changing practice

MONITORING & EVALUATION

monitoring and assessing the policy's application and impact

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Stage	At this stage you may need to focus on...
Agenda setting	• building coalitions of support for your positions • contributing to the debate and providing ideas • considering how and why issues are being kept off the agenda and challenging these dynamics if necessary • overall, balancing pressure and persuasion to bring the importance of the issue to the attention of key decision makers.
Formulation and enactment	• lobbying and making detailed policy contributions • providing credible supporting evidence • building consensus • persuading others to support your positions, bringing additional pressure at key moments, to overcome blockages and resistance • considering whether some are excluded from the negotiating table and challenging these dynamics if necessary.
Implementation and enforcement	• supporting sympathetic legislators and monitoring their progress • complementing policy makers' capacity, especially by drawing on practical experiences
Monitoring and evaluation	• work with affected groups to monitor the effects of new policy on people's lives, • evaluate and make clear and communicable recommendations that help set the agenda for a further round of policy change.

Table 8: Stages in the policy cycle

Depending on the forces at play, policy change may happen gradually, or suddenly, suffer reversals, and too often does not happen at all. To achieve change you may need to use a combination of approaches including persuasion (eg research, evidence, careful framing, dialogue, offering practical solutions) and pressure (high profile media, public mobilisations etc). However, although criticised for being simplistic,[2] thinking of policy making as a cycle is one useful starting point to help navigate through the processes involved:[3]

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Policy change
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Setting the agenda

Ultimately, issues get onto the agenda when they are seen as a 'problem' that policy makers feel they must do something about.[5]

It is important to think about how and when to get an issue on the agenda. Policy making is more than just a question of who wins existing debates. You shouldn't just take at face value the fact that something is or isn't regarded as an important issue, or accept that certain groups are excluded from positions of influence, or don't have the ability to get their voices and their issues heard.

● **See Hidden power**

One effective way of getting your issue recognised is by linking your proposed solutions to a real problem of concern to policy makers. A certain situation can be seen either as a private misfortune (and so not demanding a response) or as a social problem needing to be resolved.[6] For example, the ban on smoking in public places came about partly as a result of the issue no longer being presented as an individual behaviour issue but instead as an issue about passive smoking, and so a social problem.[7]

However, it is important to note that solving a problem is not the only reason for politicians to act, as they may want to make their mark or expand their turf.[8] Therefore, understanding different interests and how to frame the issue so it appeals to them is also vital.

● **See Government: In whose interest?**

The dynamics of policy agenda setting are unpredictable. The different elements at play whether problems, policy solutions, the numerous interest groups in the political process and changing political opportunities each have a life of their own:[9]

1 Within the **policy stream**, researchers and advocates mobilise and argue for or against change. For example, Jamie Oliver orchestrated the very effective Feed Me Better campaign with support from the Soil Association and the Child Poverty Action Group amongst others, drawing on quality research, including the nutritional standards developed by the Caroline Walker Trust

2 Within the **problem stream**, information reaches decision makers about the problems emerging and the areas which need attention. If you can link your solution to problem that is seen as a political priority then you are more likely to make progress. Feed Me Better linked the campaign's call for healthier school dinners to a set of issues that were of priority concern to the government, including childhood obesity, educational standards and child poverty.

3 The **political stream** is influenced by ideological battles, shifts of power and changes of personnel amongst political classes (through reshuffles or elections). The Feed Me Better campaign exploited the fact that the government was keen to be seen as being responsive to the issues, especially given its high profile and the proximity to a general election.[10]

'Policy windows' can sometimes be anticipated (e.g. they may link to budget cycles) or they may appear unexpectedly (e.g. because an issue gets picked up in the media and becomes a big story). However, they tend to last a short time before issues fade, if they are considered to have been addressed or because a new issue comes to dominate the agenda.

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Policy change
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Implications for voluntary organisations

Voluntary organisations have been criticised for focusing too much on influencing policy agendas and the policy making process and too little to the vital stage of implementation.[16] There are many examples of apparent victory turning into possible defeat at the point when policy is implemented. Therefore, it is vital to plan ahead, think beyond policy and plan what you will do if you get the policy change you want.[17] If you do not protect any advances made and see them through, who will?

As Merton Parents for Better School Food found early on in their campaign, agreements about changes to menus did not necessarily translate onto the plate: *'past experience has told us that what's printed on a menu can differ considerably from what is actually delivered locally'.* [18]

So you must be vigilant and ensure that the situation on the ground is monitored. You can do this in different ways.

If you have a say in shaping the policy, you could seek to:
• ensure the policy includes a built-in mechanism for assessing and reporting against progress
• incorporate an agreement to allow for independent monitoring: i.e. retailers who have joined the Ethical Trade Initiative have committed to being open to independent inspections.[19]

Alternatively, you could:
• commit to monitoring implementation yourself (as the League Against Cruel Sports and others have been doing with the fox hunting ban).
• involve community groups in monitoring and publishing results

One overarching way to help ensure that policy gains are sustained and translated into real benefits is to focus on ensuring that voluntary organisations – and the communities they work with and represent – have a strong voice in decision making and that authorities are responsive to this.

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Policy change
continued

Formulating policy

Change can often begin through forging agreement on principles. For voluntary organisations, debate at this stage can have a strong moral angle but often, making the moral case is often not enough. In the formulation stage targets are often more interested in – and persuaded by – answers to questions about whether a particular approach will work, how much it will cost and what the political risks are. At the stage these more practical details matter and the scope for change once policy is being formulated has fairly defined limits.[11]

Implications for voluntary organisations

Again, power dynamics may exclude some, whilst recognising the input of others, so you need to consider who is at the negotiating table and who is absent.

For those who are well placed to influence the shape of policy, you may need to make the argument both that your goal is technically feasible and that it is based on sound fundamental values.[12]

So you need to operate to a strong set of principles but also be on top of the detail. Early in their campaign, Merton Parents for Better Food in School agreed a set of principles with the Council including a commitment to work jointly to secure improvement based on the common belief "that balanced food is vital to children and that as part of our work to fulfil the five outcomes of Every Child Matters we are seeking to improve the quality of food". This set the parameters for a host of detailed negotiations around improving school kitchens, menus and agreeing the details of the new schools catering contract. This was a painstaking process: *"We had a detailed discussion about the new menus in primary school and we are conducting a line by line analysis of the new recipes".*[13]

At the policy formulating stage, if your organisation does not keep on top of the detail and reach the right people at the right times, it can mean that you are outmanoeuvred by better-resourced opponents. One tactic that your opponents may use is to concede areas of principle, only to weigh in heavily when the detail of text is being discussed. These groups tend to rely on informal and discrete in-house lobbying behind the scenes. As former Foreign Secretary Robin Cook put it, commenting on the power of the defence industry,[14] *"the chairman of British Aerospace appeared to have the key to the garden door to No 10".*

So you need to have the political intelligence, human resources and expertise to counter these arguments at the level of detail. But you should not neglect the possible continuing need to simplify the issue in ways that emphasise the underlying principles and mobilise wider support. The Gurkhas' case, for example, was powerfully summarised in the argument that people who are prepared to die for a country should be able to live in it.

● **More on Campaign for the Ghurkhas'**
   right to settle in the UK

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Policy change continued

Evidence, public opinion and interest groups

Authorities are interested in what works and hence in evidence-based policy making.[20] But even where policy makers are interested in evidence, there remain hurdles to watch out for.

Public authorities often pay insufficient attention to evidence when developing policy. To give just one example, a recent Select Committee review of the overall performance of the Department for Communities and Local Government highlights and reiterates "the weakness identified by successive reviews in the Department's willingness and ability to base its policies consistently on the evidence, rather than preconceptions".[21]

Researchers and policy makers tend to operate according to different values and reward systems and use different language.[22] One symptom of this is that whilst policy makers say they want rigorous research methodology, they generally prefer simple messages and clear recommendations.[23] This desire for simplicity can of course conflict with the complexity of different local contexts.[24]

In any case, evidence is only one part of the mix of influences that policy makers take into account. For example, existing evidence gives little reason for thinking that putting more police on the beat is effective in reducing crime, but public opinion favours this approach and so politicians tend to view it as a good use of public money. This has been cited as an example of how 'democratic will' is as important as evidence in policy making, something it would be perverse of policy-makers to ignore.[25]

Interest groups can also influence policy, even halting progress down an already identified route. The fuel protests in 2000 came just after the government produced its Ten Year Transport plan. Lorry drivers' protests and the public support they received led the government to abolish the fuel duty escalator: 'at a stroke, this change destroyed such coherence as transport and environment policy had had'.[26] Key to this policy change was the view in government that the protesters were in tune with wider opinion.

One analysis is that public opinion is especially important in getting an issue onto the policy agenda – interest groups enter the picture once it is there.[27] However, you may also need to be organised to get your issue on the public agenda in the first place. And public public opinion may also play a continuing key role even after an issue is on the agenda. A study of the progress of the Immigration Act 2006, for example, identified that the UK government conceded very little during the Bill's passage, despite an impressive coalition calling for various changes, including amongst others the CBI and University Vice-Chancellors. The reason for the government maintaining its stance seems to have been its view on what was acceptable to voters: as the Minister at the time was quoted as saying: 'for every one of you there are ten of them [Daily Mail readers]'.[28]

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Policy change
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Implications for voluntary organisations

It is vital to think beyond evidence and build coalitions of support amongst interested groups, ensuring that you understand public opinion and have considered whether you are in a position to influence it.

In particular, linking the two elements – public opinion and interest groups – can close off avenues for opposition. The Turner Commission's work on pensions reform was able to overcome some scepticism within government because of the consensus reached through both public and stakeholder consultations. In particular, the Commission gathered both expert and wider public support around a core set of principles by framing the debate as a set of straightforward and necessary choices. The subsequent Pensions Act reflected the Commission's key findings.[29]

However, while there are clearly limits on the influence of research and evidence, it is an important part of the mix. Evidence is generally more effective if:[30]

- your research defines a problem and clarifies appropriate courses of action to remedy it (i.e. attaches a solution to a problem)
- you present the research, using a variety of methods and vehicles and adapting it to different audiences' needs

- you focus on the process as well as the product, involving key stakeholders in your research in order to ensure relevance and get consensus for change
- you use available channels to promote your findings, including (as appropriate) academic routes, using the media and promoting public debate through insider influencing and community activism
- you pay attention to timing and react to others' agendas and timescales for decision making
- you show what actually works, if need be by testing ideas to demonstrate their effectiveness.

It is also important that you raise questions about what constitutes evidence. Authorities generally see policy making as something done by experts who are seen as best able to process information and present options for action.[31] Networks of professionals with a recognised expertise operate on this basis and play a dominant role in some policy making excluding some others from participation.[32]

One response is to operate according to these terms of engagement For example, the campaign against the expansion of Lydd airport in Kent demonstrated strong local opposition but also commissioned specialist advisors to comment on technical issues such as flight paths and nuclear safety (given the proximity to Dungeness power station) on the basis that expert findings are not easy to dismiss.[33]

Another approach is to persuade the target institution itself to commission rigorous and independent research. Merton Parents convinced the Council to contract Roehampton University to produce research that would inform the school meal improvement action plan. In this situation, you must be involved in setting the terms of reference and ensure that the researchers are genuinely independent.

Additionally, it is key that 'expert' evidence should be used together with evidence from communities and not as a way to make this less relevant.[34] Providing alternative sources of information is a key influencing strategy for voluntary organisations[35] so you need to make the case that people's experiences and people's testimony are a valuable form of 'expertise' in themselves.

How you make use of your evidence will be different according to the policy context:[36]

- **See Use of evidence in different policy contexts table**

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Policy context	Opportunities and risks	Action
There is clear demand amongst policy makers for evidence to support action	Opportunities for influence are high	• establish that evidence is credible • anticipate issues so that advice can be ready at short notice • think through policy implications of research findings communicate evidence clearly
Policy makers are interested in research evidence but show no leadership on the issue	Potential for influence can be high	• think about issues beyond the research itself. exercise leadership in designing implementation how will it be used? Where will decisions need to be made, by whom? What policy and regulatory changes might be implied and what effect can these have in other quarters? • focus on their communication with decision makers. • engage with affected communities that they are able to assert influence on decision makers.
Policy makers are interested in research evidence, but have a capacity shortfall	Risks of short-term failure are considerable	• present realistic solutions to create momentum • be creative and realistic about cost implications • secure other sources of funds for pilot implementation • consider ways of raising the issue up the agenda, perhaps by mobilising public opinion and/or interest groups
A new or emerging issue generates interest from researchers, but policymakers show little interest	Risks of failure are high	• invest great effort in moving the issue up the agenda, perhaps by mobilising public opinion and/or interest groups • work with communities that can help to promote the evidence and its merits to decision makers • promote its relevance to policy • be ready with helpful implementation advice

Table 9: Use of evidence in different policy contexts

Behaviour

People often assume that influencing opinion or attitudes is the best way to influence behaviour. However, these relationships are not straightforward. The links are hazy and indirect.

Voluntary organisations often operate as if there is a relatively straightforward set of relationships at play, along the lines that message increases people's knowledge which results in them changing their attitudes and behaviour.

However, things often do not flow so simply. For example, if you hope to change attitudes or behaviours simply by disseminating information, you will most likely be disappointed. This model ignores many of the barriers to action that you are likely to face so it is vital that you are clear about you are trying to achieve and the dynamics involved. (see Information, attitudes and behaviours table on this page)

Our focus below is on behaviour change. But the same communication principles apply when seeking to influence attitudes. It is about getting your message across in way that resonates with the intended audience.

Links between information and attitudes	Information on its own is unlikely to change attitudes. When presented with information that brings into question existing attitudes, people may revisit those attitudes and so are more likely to either: • stop thinking about the subject, especially if something seems too big to understand, let alone respond to • distort or disbelieve the information presented, denying its meaning or implications.[37] e.g. smokers are inclined to feel that early death is something that happens to others, not them or that they are not at risk because they will soon be quitting in any case.[38]
Links between attitudes and behaviours	People do not consistently behave in line with their belief systems: general attitudes help predict behaviours but at a more specific level, the links are less clear. In fact, people may often resolve a discrepancy between attitudes and behaviour by adapting attitudes to their behaviour rather than changing behaviour.[39] Behaviour change can influence attitudes, rather than the other way round. People may get used to a way of behaving and change attitudes accordingly thus further embedding the behaviour change. Therefore, the most effective way to bring change might be to tackle behaviour directly, by making desired behaviours easier or cheaper to follow and/or making undesired behaviours more difficult, or even illegal.[40] Legislation introducing compulsory wearing of seat belts came in advance of, but then helped lead to public support for the idea.

Table 10: Information, attitudes and behaviours

Behaviour
continued

Influencing behaviour

There are two broad approaches to influencing behaviour: [41]

- behaviour change models, based on marketing & communications
- models based on awareness raising participation and action.

The different starting points could be summarised as follows: [42] (see Approaches to influencing behaviour table on this page)

More top-down social marketing approaches and more participatory popular education approaches may both be useful, depending on what you are trying to achieve and what is feasible given your time and resources. A community-based approach may be particularly appropriate where the issue is a difficult one and there is resistance to change. The approaches can of course be used in tandem and ideally messages at one level should be reinforced at the other. Personal relations can be critical for generating empathy and encouraging new ways to see an issue.[43]

Model	Behaviour change	Participatory
Main approaches	Social marketing	Popular education
Sees problem as	Limits on people's access to and ability to interpret and apply information	Inequities within social and political structures, internalised oppression, 'false consciousness', negative beliefs
Emphasis is on	Changing behaviour through persuasion	Empowering people through reflecting and acting on problems and their possible solutions
Basic approach	Hierarchical: sender transmits to receiver	Active participation of affected groups: communication as dialogue
Outcomes sought	End result is key, participatory approaches may help you reach it	Process is itself important: participation is both a means to an end and an end in itself

Table 11: Approaches to influencing behaviour

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Behaviour
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Adopting a genuinely participatory approach means engaging in a meaningful two-way conversation.[44] This entails risk, to the extent that it involves you giving away control of the agenda. People will come up with responses you may not expect and may not fit with your own ideas of what the priorities are. By listening, you allow people to determine their own destiny. Responses that are developed through meaningful participatory processes are more likely to be genuine representations of people's concerns and will have the support and buy-in from a broad alliance.

This is the philosophy underpinning Citizens UK's response to the financial crisis which involved extensive consultation, hearing evidence of its effects on individuals, households and neighbourhoods. One issue that was repeatedly highlighted in discussions was that high-interest loans were trapping people in debt. This has led to Citizens UK, in alliance with over 150 civil society organisations, to call for anti-usury laws (including a 20% cap on the cost of lending and a statutory code for lenders) alongside other measures – such as an expansion of micro-credit schemes – to address some of the most damaging effects of the economic crisis on vulnerable communities.

The key factors that influence people's behaviour include:

Habit: People's mental ability to process information is limited. Rational decision making involves committing levels of mental effort that people may not always have available. And so people fall back on acting according to habit.[45]

Personal capability: How people behave doesn't simply reflect their strength of feeling on a particular issue. You might expect that levels of action rise with levels of concern about an issue such as climate change, for example, but research shows that the majority fall into a category of high levels of concern/low levels of action.[46] It is important that people are able do something about an issue and believe in that ability. The fact that someone fails to act does not mean that they are not concerned.[47] They are more likely to act when (a) it is clear to them that it is their responsibility to act, rather than thinking they can leave it to others, (b) they believe their action will make a difference[48] and (c) the means to action is there as well as the call to action.

Behaviour
continued

Perceptions of costs and benefits: It is much more difficult to motivate people to take action where they do not personally benefit.[49] And arguing for people to adopt behaviours that many would rather avoid is especially challenging. Difficulties can be exacerbated by the fact that people generally have a low tolerance for change [50] and so may be unwilling to take action unless the incentives to change are significant.[51]

Social contexts: Most people are highly influenced by the behaviour of others.[52] Simply communicating that other people are behaving in certain ways (even without supporting arguments) can be persuasive.[53] And people often act according to how they anticipate others will act. This explains how small demonstrations can gradually grow and lead to a cascade of protest.[54] It also explains why community initiatives to change attitudes and behaviours can be so effective. Similarly, people may choose not to act because they are aware that others disapprove of the action, even though they may be personally enthusiastic about it.[55] This will depend on whose approval they see as important.

Messenger: The attractiveness of the messenger is another important factor influencing behaviour change. The idea to get Nancy Reagan to be the spokesperson for an anti-drugs campaign ('Just Say No') was famously ill thought out, for example, as she was possibly the last person that young people in the US at the time would want to listen to.[56]

Message: The message must attract attention and be memorable. But at the same time you should be careful about overstating your case or underplaying actual problems being faced. Getting the message right is often about getting the detail right,[57] both about the messages you use and how you present them.

Underlying issues: Some concerns – for example about refugees, asylum and immigration or youth crime – may reflect and be a touchstone for wider concerns around identity, the effects of globalisation, and other social insecurities.[58] If you try and tackle a specific issue, without taking into account wider anxieties that lead people to have a particular view of that issue, your communications may have a somewhat limited effect.

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Behaviour
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Implications for voluntary organisations

It's important to give practical support, help and empower people set their own achievable goals. Making change easier encourages people to adopt new behaviours, as with the plan for auto-enrolment into pensions (versus people having to make the conscious decision to enrol). Surveys on climate change show that many people are concerned and motivated about climate change but also frustrated as they don't know what action to take. [59] One of the objectives of Low Carbon West Oxford is to provide people with the means to action alongside the call to action.

It also helps to promote behaviours in ways that highlight the costs of the current situation, and enable people to see the benefits, and possibility, of change. [60] (see Key elements in your communications table on this page)

Change is more likely to come about if people	So in the way you communicate you should
are dissatisfied with the present situation	make sure there is enough evidence to undermine the status quo
have a vision of what is possible	link the evidence to a vision (or the other way round)
recognise the practical steps towards achieving this vision	outline a route map that helps overcome anxieties about the possibility of change
believe that there is possible advantage in making the change	clearly argue why the change is better than the current situation (or doing nothing)
are clear what they are being asked to do differently, and how they will do it	make sure the change is easy understand/apply
feel that the change is something they are comfortable with personally	show how adopting the behaviour is compatible with people's values, habits, experience and needs

Table 12: Key elements in your communications

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Behaviour
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Key messages in the US presidential election

Those behind Barack Obama's election campaign showed an awareness of the importance of the wider social context, and also the need for people to feel that they were able to act, and that it would be meaningful to do so. The campaign rested on three key messages:

- Social proof – one powerful way to influence people is to demonstrate that everyone else, especially everyone like them, is doing the thing you are asking them to do. Whenever possible, Barack Obama's campaign found a way to mention how many people supported him.
- Creating community – people's commitment to a cause is stronger when they feel part of a community – to help engender this, the Obama campaign created its own social networking site and helped bring local people together.
- Enabling people to act – messages highlighted the campaign's successes, showing how people's actions played a role in this. Offering choice also helped convey the sense to supporters that they were in control of what they did.

It's important that you are both consistent and persistent. For example, one of the critique of pro-asylum and refugee campaigns is that activists tend to use a variety of different arguments including humanitarian ('refugees need our protection and support'), economic ('refugees are well-qualified individuals with valuable skills') and cultural ones ('refugees enrich our culture'). However, because the messages are so scattered they lose their potential cumulative impact and therefore, the arguments do not successfully reinforce each other. For example, the humanitarian argument, emphasising that help from us is needed, tends to contradict the economic argument, with its stress on refugees' skills and their value in the job market. [63]

It's important too to address wider social behaviours in order to make it easier for individuals to make changes. Communities can play a key role in encouraging others to make change. [64] A recent review of communities taking action on climate change for example showed that:

- community groups do not have to tread as carefully as governments in promoting behaviour change;
- the focus on taking and reviewing action together meant that the community became part of the solution rather than just expecting change from individuals acting alone;
- communities are well placed to address multiple forms of carbon production (from reducing energy use in buildings, to transport, to waste etc.)

Interviews with participants in one low carbon community indicated that – as well as wanting to contribute to reducing climate change – people got involved to be part of a community initiative. The interviews also showed that local people were more likely to trust information from the project than from other sources, perhaps precisely because it was local.

Behaviour
continued

Audiences

Communicating effectively involves:
- identifying and targeting key audiences and
- tailoring your messages appropriately.

Approaches should be based on a sound understanding of the key factors influencing people's behaviour and how best to address these.

You need to carefully identify – and then seek to communicate to – specific audiences rather than aimlessly communicating to 'the general public'. Undifferentiated messages are likely to resonate only with some who hear them and undifferentiated targeting means that you may not be reaching those people, and certainly not cost-effectively.

The opposite approach – falling back on preaching to the converted – can also be ineffective. A review of one year's Refugee Week, for example, found that over 40% of event attendee respondents actually worked in the refugee sector. [65]

One simple approach segments the public by their (stated) willingness and (stated) ability to reduce car use. [66] In this case, in thinking about who to target and what messages would work with which groups, it may be that for example:
- those who are 'willing and able' need only encouragement, whereas
- those who are 'willing but unable' need extra support, such as improved public transport or enhanced walking environments
- those who are unwilling (whether able or not) are perhaps not the best audience to target with messages aimed at reducing car use at this stage.

Strengthening civil society groups and organisations

A strong civil society is a vital element of a healthy democracy, but is also vital in securing sustainable change.

Strengthening civil society involves developing the ability of organisations, groups and individuals to maximise their sources of power and using these in the most effective and ethical way to achieve social change. This can be crucial in ensuring that otherwise marginalised voices are better heard in, and integrated within, decision making processes.

This is about enhancing individuals' and organisational skills and knowledge and ways of working. Questions about the organisation's relations with others and the context in which it is operating are also a critical part of the mix.

There are different approaches to building organisations' and groups' capacity:[67]

Approach	Involves	
Blueprint	Assessing an organisation/group against some kind of pre-identified checklist and then develop a response that addresses highlighted weaknesses.	These kinds of approaches are not generally well suited to more complex social change contexts [68] but tend to be common, not least because they are easiest to design, implement and manage.
Structured	Basing the approach on a pre-determined framework, but customising it to the organisation/group's particular context – this introduces a greater element of flexibility in design, implementation and evaluation.	These approaches seek to reflect existing internal practices and perspectives. But there remains a risk that the framework is used mechanically, [69] ending up with a blueprint approach by default.
Holistic	Focusing as much on processes as on structures or outcomes. The trick is to pinpoint the patterns of working within an group or organisation that are most relevant to overall effectiveness. These may not be the most obvious ones, so would be missed in less organic approaches. [70]	In this way of thinking, what's important is the ability of the group or organisation to learn and solve problems and so improve its collective ability to assess and react to future needs. [71]

Table 13: Approaches to building capacity

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Level	Key areas to consider
Individuals' capacities	• do key individuals have the right practical, partnership and interpersonal skills? • do key individuals have the skills and knowledge both to engage with decision makers and work with and represent communities?
Organisation/group capacity [74]	• do you understand the power that you have as an organisation for example your group power, authority, legitimacy and reputation? • do you have good quality research/evidence, a sound policy analysis and strong communications capabilities? • do you have good contacts with and access to decision makers? • do you understand formal policy processes and how to influence them as well as the power dynamics and the politics around the issues of concern to you? • can you draw on active support of key constituencies when needed? • how well does your organisation fit its advocacy and influencing within an overall set of priorities? is advocacy work sufficiently-resourced, well-coordinated, and recognised as a distinctive discipline in planning and reporting? [75] • are systems and processes in place to gather intelligence, assess progress and adapt as required? • do you have clear goals, and strategies focused on achieving them? • do you have secure and adequate resources and sound resource management? • are effective management and governance structures in place?
Joint working amongst organisations and groups [76]	• how good is the quality of information sharing? • how well are strategies aligned? • how well is action coordinated? • are your objectives compatible? • are there strong levels of mutual accountability?
Organisation's ability to engage and work with community	• do you have good contacts and links with community members? • what accountability systems are in place? • how effective is your organisation in helping communities amplify their own voices?
Communities' ability to influence decision making	• do communities & marginalised groups have the belief that they can change things, as well as the skills and knowledge needed to do so effectively?
Responsiveness of targets to influence	• are public authorities and other institutional targets able and willing to engage meaningfully with community groups and their representatives?

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Strengthening civil society groups and organisations continued

Implications for voluntary organisations

When devising your approach, remember that:
- capacity building works best when the approach is based on a good quality diagnosis [72]
- ideally the organisation or group being supported should take a leading role in the process, by defining their own priorities for example.[73]

It is important that you consider capacity at (a) individual (b) organisational/group and (c) external levels. Across these levels, there are a range of areas a particular organisation or group might want to consider in developing the ability to achieve change. Not all these areas will necessarily be relevant, and some relevant areas will be missing. You can use the suggestions below as a starting point – but not a checklist – to ensure you are on the right path.

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Decision making forums and opportunities for influence

To achieve change you may also need to ensure that decision makers are more responsive to participation from organisations representing affected communities and the groups themselves.

In the last decade, government has put much greater emphasis on greater public participation and new forms of democratic practice in decision making at local and neighbourhood levels. Many opportunities have opened up for local communities and voluntary groups to participate.

Access to these kinds of invited forums can be welcome and an important precondition for influence but access does not in itself equal influence. In some cases, partnership bodies may themselves have insufficient power so decisions taken there may not actually have a great deal of influence. Even where the body itself is influential, your ability to influence decisions and particularly to set the agenda may be limited.[77]

Nature of the forum or opportunity [81]	Description
Closed	Decisions are taken by authorities behind closed doors, with little or no involvement from others
Invited	Authorities invite others to participate in decision making
Claimed or Created	Political openings are claimed from authorities by less powerful actors, or are created by them, enhancing prospects for them to negotiate their own agendas

Table 15: Types of political space

Decision making forums and opportunities for influence continued

Implications for voluntary organisations

In principle, participating in decision making can help you tackle power at different levels:

⬤ **See Visible power**

- visible: groups and community members become part of local power structures and so may be in a position contribute to decisions that lead directly to action
- hidden: community and other groups may be able to influence agendas, introducing viewpoints that might otherwise not be raised
- invisible: allow community members to challenge and change the worldviews of the public authorities involved.[78]

Public authorities have different and sometimes contradictory objectives when engaging with voluntary organisations. While in some cases they may be genuinely keen to encourage participation to make sure decisions meet public needs, at times they may be more interested in simply selling their decisions, or they may even be consulting simply to fulfil statutory requirements.[79]

Therefore, it is important to judge each case on its merits. One way to think about the opportunities for influence and how and when to engage, is to consider the options available to you:[80]

In deciding whether to engage in invited forums, you should consider:[82]
- how much power the institution or department inviting you to participate actually holds
- their motives in seeking your engagement
- their level of commitment to the process, which may vary even amongst different staff and departments in the same institution
- whether the terms of engagement limit who gets to sit at the table and what they get to discuss.
- whether there exists a clear set of supporting procedures, outlining purpose, expectations and parameters of influence.

You can challenge the 'rules of engagement', as well as wider institutional cultures, where you think these things are preventing you and others from participating meaningfully. Sometimes if the conditions are not right it can be counter-productive to try to engage with decision making processes that are effectively closed, as this can lead to frustration and loss of energies. The 'enabling conditions' need to be in place and if necessary fought for first.

One risk is that opportunities for engagement appear to be open but are actually closed. The High Court judged the recent Energy Review consultation, for example, to be "seriously flawed", following a challenge by Greenpeace and other organisations. Critics saw the review in fact as a means to attempt to justify a decision that had already been made, to invest in nuclear power.[83]

Even where forums you are invited to are actually open, participating in them may restrict your ability to call for alternative approaches.[84] In engaging, you may find yourself inevitably following government agendas rather than having the ability to develop and argue for your own and there is a risk that important issues are neglected as a result.

Resource implications can be considerable because of the time commitments involved, to the extent that the demands of engaging effectively with decision makers can make it difficult to maintain accountability to the communities and groups you are working with and supporting.[85] Staking out your own areas in which to operate tends to take more resources but it gives you stronger negotiating positions, if successful.[86]

Decision making forums and opportunities for influence continued

Strengthening voices

One effective way to exert influence can be by creating a forum for deliberation and then inviting decision makers to participate within it. For example, the purpose of the 'New Voice in London' initiative by Praxis was to amplify the voices of newcomers to London, particularly those who are most vulnerable and marginalised. Through the project, members of diverse new and often hidden communities first came together to share and reflect on their experiences and prioritise issues of concern. The second stage of the initiative involved bringing these participating members from the hidden communities together with group of policy and decision makers, allowing for direct and equitable dialogue between people making decisions and those affected by them. Dialogue took place through an action learning workshop with a range of themes covered and learning and actions identified.

The effectiveness of this approach will depend on the power of your organisation, how it and your issue is seen by decision makers and whether you have links with, or can identify, those within target institutions who are interested in hearing the views of affected groups and are prepared to engage in this way.

Initially operating outside of existing structures is likely to be the most viable approach if you are seeking radical change.

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Capacity and opportunity to influence

high capacity to influence		
low opportunity to influence	groups are well organised but banging on a closed door	groups are influential and powerful
	groups are powerless, with no openings	climate may be favourable but groups need more organisation
	high opportunity to influence	
low capacity to influence		

Table 16: Plotting your capacity for, and the prospects of, influence

Questions about civil society's capacity to influence are linked to issues about the prospects for influence and the forums and opportunities that are open to you.

Over time, a cycle of isolation can develop. Communities that are disadvantaged by decisions made become further alienated from decision making processes. The natural response may be to disengage, but isolation and power do not go together.

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Capacity and opportunity
to influence continued

Strengthening voices through partnership

The Somali Integration Society's aim is to get people's voices heard and ensure that the Somali community is consulted and involved in decisions affecting their lives. One key route to securing this is to work in partnership with public authorities to identify and pursue joint ends. This involves forging new relationships and can be a slow process, involving seemingly endless meetings: the Somali Integration Society seeks to work with the local council, police, fire services, media, job centres and schools for example. At the same time, the Somali Integration Society promotes the benefits of engaging with multi-agency partners to local Somali communities and this goes hand in hand with developing the skills within the community to be able to engage in constructive dialogue with decision makers. Equipped with relevant skills, communities are much better placed to make a meaningful contribution to key debates and decisions.

You should think about both sides of the equation when considering if there are blockages to your effectiveness and where they lie:[87]

- where there is low capacity/low opportunity, blockages are both internal and external, so both need to be addressed
- where there is high capacity/low opportunity, key blockages to address are external
- where there is low capacity/high opportunity, key blockages to address are internal

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Summary of implications

As well as providing programmes and delivering services, voluntary organisations can secure change by influencing:
- the policy and practice of key institutions
- how people behave
- the ability of civil society groups to make their voices heard, as well as the voices of those they represent
- how responsive the authorities are to peoples' needs and demands

To influence policy making, you need good quality evidence but this is only one part of the mix of influences that policy makers take into account. Issues get onto the agenda when public opinion and interest groups put them, or when they are seen as a 'problem' that policy makers feel they must do something about. You therefore need to understand different Ideologies, interests and how to frame your issue so it appeals to them

To ensure policy change you also need to influence policy formulation and that policies are actually implemented:
- in influencing how policy is formulated, you need to operate to a strong set of principles but also be on top of the practical details
- you may also have a role to play in ensuring that the situation on the ground is monitored

Seeking to influence people's opinions or attitudes may not be the best way to influence their behaviour. Other factors that you need to consider, and address, include habit, capability, perceptions of costs and benefits, social contexts, message and messenger. You need to carefully identify – and then seek to communicate to – specific audiences and be consistent and persistent in your approach.

Strengthening civil society involves helping organisations, groups and individuals to maximise their sources of power and using these sources in the most effective way to achieve social change. This can be crucial in ensuring that otherwise marginalised voices are better heard in, and integrated within, decision making processes, and that any change reflects their priorities and needs.

To achieve change you may also need to ensure that decision makers are more responsive to organisations representing affected communities, and the groups themselves. In deciding when to engage, you should consider carefully the prospects for genuine influence. One effective way to exert influence can be by creating your own forum and then inviting decision makers to participate within it.

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Sector and government

Historically, national governments have been a prime target for voluntary groups seeking to achieve social change.[1] However, the power and role of government has been changing in recent years.[2] In particular, debates about the extent to which the free market policies of the 1980s and the accelerated rate of globalisation have acted to:

- shift power away from national governments towards the multilateral institutions, private sector, local government, and communities
- shift the role of the state at national and local level from an 'implementer' towards a 'coordinator' of public services which are now delivered by a range of government and non-government bodies, including voluntary organisations
- weaken representative forms of democracy and accountability (where elected representatives take decisions on behalf of the public).

While these trends may not have reduced the potential power of national government, they have changed its role, creating new challenges for the voluntary sector. This chapter looks at how voluntary organisations can best respond – whether conducting advocacy, providing services or working with community groups and other progressive forces – to achieve their aims.

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Governments: Evolving power and role

In recent years, many commentators have argued that a combination of globalisation and free market policies contributed to the erosion of national government power vis a vis numerous other actors.[3]

This view has been challenged by those who argue that national governments still have considerable power over political, economic and social choices.[4] They point out that governments still retain the power to make laws, regulations, raise and spend taxes as well as set standards. They also argue that although governments have delegated many of their powers to other bodies, they can still reclaim them. For example, governments can still decide to regulate or nationalise companies or bring delegated bodies back under their control.

Others argue that while globalisation and free market policies have not reduced the power of the state they have changed its role. Whereas in the post war period governments made and executed decisions directly, now they have to steer complex networks of independent or semi-independent actors to get the job done. This is sometimes known as 'delegated' or 'networked' governance.[5]

In Britain, evidence suggests that while the national government retains its potential power (as evidenced by the recent nationalisation of banks), its role has changed in recent decades. Decision making is more complex and policy autonomy and flexibility has been reduced in some areas:

- One recent estimate suggests there may be up to 1000 quangos (quasi autonomous non-government organisations) to which government functions have been delegated [6]
- The UK government has entered into hundreds of Private Finance Initiative projects and Public Private Partnerships, often involving legally binding long-term agreements between government and the private sector that limit the policy flexibility of future governments [7]

- Powers have been devolved to the Scottish Parliament, the Welsh Assembly Government and the Northern Ireland Assembly and to regional and local authorities (although national government still sets policy, standards and funding) as well to some extent to local councils and communities. Internationally, the UK government along with other governments has devolved power to the EU, World Trade Organisation and a number of international regulatory standard-setting bodies all of which influence national legislation. In some areas, the lack of international regulation or minimum standards means that multinational companies and financial markets effectively hold power. For example, investment funds and multinational companies can threaten to relocate elsewhere if they dislike aspects of government regulation or the current tax regime.

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Governments: Evolving Power and role continued

Implications for voluntary organisations

The increasing complexity of decision means that a much greater number and range of semi-public bodies and private actors are likely to have influence over an issue than previously. This makes conducting a sound power analysis even more important. In order to trace all the different actors involved it may be useful to focus the power analysis initially on a particular decision making forum, rather than an individual institution.

Which?'s campaign on advertising of kids food

This campaign sought to stop TV advertising of foods high in fat, sugar and salt before 9pm and those targeted to children under the age of 16. Which? identified the following range of organisations involved in the issue:

- The UK Government: Gordon Brown, the Department for Children, Families & Schools, the Department of Culture, Media & Sport, and the Department of Health
- The Food Standards Agency: an independent government department established to protect the public's health and consumer interests in relation to food
- OFCOM: regulator for the UK communications industries, with responsibilities ranging from television to radio, telecommunications and wireless communications services
- The Committee of Advertising Practice: includes representatives of broadcasters, advertisers, agencies, direct marketer and interactive marketers
- Department of Health's Food and Drink Advertising and Promotion Forum: consisting of individuals from government, industry and voluntary organisations
- The top 12 food companies
- Committees of the European Commission
- EU member governments.

Given the large number of possible target institutions it becomes even more crucial to prioritise them according to how much influence they have over the issue, and whether they are supportive, opposed or neutral. You may, for example, find that a particular industry lobby is exerting powerful influence behind the scenes and therefore targeting a public campaign on them may be sufficient to bring change.

This increased complexity also makes it even more important for voluntary organisations to work in alliance with different groups as it is unlikely that any one organisation will have the capacity to target all actors.

The growth in the number of decision making arenas can sometimes be exploited to your advantage. If you are opposed by one target, it is sometimes possible to draw on the support of another who may also have some jurisdiction over your issue. Queen's Market in Newham is a focal point for the multi-ethnic community and a place where affordable, fresh food is available. A gentrification scheme initiated by the local council was opposed by Friends of Queen's Market, a local community group, which, after receiving legal advice from Friends of the Earth's Rights & Justice Centre, was able to delay progress of the scheme by forcing the Newham Council to undertake an equality impact assessment to the appropriate standard.

Governments: Evolving Power and role continued

During the period when the scheme was held up, the local group was able to recruit the interest and support of the Mayor of London. When the Council was finally able to make the decision to proceed, the Mayor used his planning powers to overturn it.

You will also need to pay more attention to international influences on decision making. Most British citizens still broadly look to elected MPs and local councilors to influence policy.[8] However, even seemingly local issues, such as local health services are increasingly likely to be shaped and influenced by policies and standards made at international level. According to one estimate 85% of Britain's domestic legislation emanates from the EU.[9] Our domestic policies are also conditioned and shaped by our membership of Inter Governmental Organisations such as the World Trade Organisation, various United Nations bodies, the International Monetary Fund and World Bank as well as hundreds of international standard setting bodies.

Joining forces with voluntary groups from other countries on common issues can therefore be crucial to achieving change. In order to influence the EU on the advertising of children's food, Which? worked in coalition with the European Consumers Association (BEUC) and Consumers International, whose members targeted different EU governments in their own countries. However, in practice too few UK voluntary organizations recognize or address international issues in their campaigning or service delivery.[10]

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Government:
In whose interest?

Despite the growing complexity of decision making the government still retains potential power in many areas, and plays a central role in steering decision making. It is therefore likely to remain a central target for those seeking change.[11] Your strategy towards engaging with and influencing local and national government will depend in part on an analysis of whose interests are being represented and their motivations. There are a number of different perspectives which we describe in turn below:

Governments are impartial and responsive

In this view governments are believed to arbitrate neutrally between competing interest groups[12] or between different cultural or moral values, in the wider public interest.[13] Power is seen as being widely dispersed throughout society so no one group dominates over time.[14]

However, this viewpoint is widely questioned because it ignores the inequality in resources between different interest groups, hidden and invisible power dynamics and socio-economic constraints that can prevent people from fully participating in political life.

Governments represent elite interests

This view holds that governments represent and promote the interests of elite groups who share common economic interests, similar backgrounds and/or shared values. The extent of their power and influence depends in part on whether they form a cohesive group or consist of fragmented or competing groups. Their influence may be visible, hidden or invisible.

In support of this view, one bleak analysis of the UK argues that centres of power have become more concentrated, centralised and divorced from the people[50]

- The House of Commons has become less powerful and its members have become more professional and socially homogeneous, forming a 'political class' of insular, full-time politicians
- The Prime Minister is increasingly powerful, while the Cabinet is divorced from both public and Parliament, and often bypassed by the Prime Minister
- Grass roots organisation, Trade Unions and other groups have reduced influence over political parties
- The news media and private companies are increasingly influential, yet lack any accountability.
- Individuals from Oxbridge and public schools are represented disproportionately within these centres of power

Attention has recently focused on the influence that 'elite policy networks' exert over public policy. These consist of experts from government, various economic interest groups and/or professional groups. Their influence may stem from their specialist knowledge and privileged access to information and decision makers.

The influence of these groups has been criticised as members of the public, and their elected representatives, are often largely excluded from the decisions they make and because the technocratic language in which they couch policy debates masks potentially contentious political choices.[15]

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Government:
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Governments are self-interested

In this view politicians and officials seek to protect and advance their own agendas – whether political or institutional. Due to their power, they can impose their preferences on society even when these conflict with the public interest.[16] For example, government actors may:

- pursue and protect their own self interests whether relating to individual career incentives, salaries or expenses or 'turf wars' over who controls policy and budgets [17]
- seek to maximise their budgets to enhance their salary, power, patronage and public reputation[18]
- act according to short-term electoral interests and fail to take difficult decisions that are in the long-term public interest, i.e. on pensions or climate change.[19]

Although these views offer important insights into government behaviour, they have been criticised for underplaying the way that that strong public service norms – or values – can motivate and influence the behaviour of politicians and officials. These norms require that politicians and officials consider the public interest and avoid using their positions to further their own agendas.

Governments are resistant to change

In this view governments, like other large institutions, resist change because:

- systems encourage people to focus on performing existing tasks efficiently, rather than thinking about doing things differently[20]
- cultures entrench assumptions and get reinforced, creating a structural stability that is difficult to shift[21]
- existing interests, obligations and relationships may combine to prevent change from occurring[22]
- facing complex problems, people seek shortcuts
- opportunities for learning are often limited (i.e. because previous policies are not evaluated or through traditions of secrecy).[23]

However, different organisations have different cultures and whilst bigger organisations may tend to develop bureaucratic ways of working, some organisations may be more nimble and responsive.

Government:
In whose interest?
continued

Implications for voluntary organisations

In practice governments are not monolithic and are likely to reflect different aspects of all these perspectives. There are also likely to be shifting alliances within them. It is therefore important that you conduct a power analysis which takes into account different perspectives outlined previously.

The implication of the impartial view is that you can influence public authorities if you maximise your own sources of power and influence, and build alliances with other interest groups. However, this view represents a fairly simplistic and idealised notion of power and change.

Drawing on the other perspectives i.e. that governments are either dominated by elites, self interested and/or resistant to change, you should also consider the following;

- it is unlikely you will achieve change by focussing your lobbying efforts solely on 'visible' formal decision makers. You will need to know who influences the decision makers and may need to target the hidden elites or interest groups which operate behind the scenes and hold sway over them.

● See Invisible power

- in particular you will need to identify and understand the elite policy networks that influence decision making – who they are and how they operate. As well as ensuring you have the expertise to influence decisions, you also need to persuade or pressure these networks to be more open and representative.
- you need to understand and adapt your proposals to the different interests, institutional cultures, values, and incentive systems that influence civil servants, special advisers, permanent secretaries and MPs
- you may need to use legal mechanisms to hold public authorities to account such as the Freedom of Information Act. When the local Council decided to save money by closing the Livesey Museum for Children in South East London, The Friends of the Livesey Museum began a campaign to overturn the decision. Through the Freedom of Information Act, they found that local Victorian and industrialist Sir George Livesey had given the building to the people of Peckham. This meant that the Council did not own the building but held it in trust and were not permitted to dispose of it. As a result, discussions are now underway to determine how the building can be used in ways that reflect the original deeds.

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Government: Changing forms of accountability

'The world is run by the people who turn up' (attributed to engineering expert Robert B Johnson).

There have been changes in recent years in governments' accountability to citizens which have important implications for voluntary organisations.

In representative democracies, elected representatives (and officials) are seen as being entitled to act on behalf of the people to the extent that their actions promote the public interest. Checks and controls help the system stay in balance and prevent the abuse of power by either the government or the public. Pressure groups also play a crucial role in holding those in power to account.

However, in recent years, there have been concerns that representative forms of democracy are being weakened. While elected politicians remain formally responsible for delegated bodies, in practice they have diminished control over them. This loss of accountability is in turn being seen as contributing to a 'democratic malaise'.[24] Other possible contributory factors include the lack of a culture of active citizenship, wearing down of trust by media and increasing inequality. Others have argued that people are alienated by an elitist and archaic political system.

There are clear signs of public disenchantment with formal political processes. There is a longstanding decline in election turnouts,[25] a fall in party membership [26] and people identifying less with the main political parties [27] as increasing numbers see them as 'much the same'.[28] There is a strong sense amongst the voting public that politicians and political institutions are disconnected from them.[29]

One way the government has attempted to counteract the erosion of representative forms of accountability is by developing new direct forms of public participation in decision making on government policy and services. In recent years it has introduced:

- The Local Government Act 2000 which requires Local Authorities to develop and deliver a Sustainable Community Strategy in partnership with the community. This provides the framework for seeking government funding and the starting point for the preparation of the Local Development Framework. Local Authorities are also required to cooperate with their Local Strategic Partnerships – which include public sector organisations, businesses, the voluntary sector and other relevant partners – in the drawing up of a Local Area Agreement which sets out local priorities.

- The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 which gives communities a voice in health and social care, introducing a 'duty to involve' which means that Local authorities have a duty to inform, consult and involve local people in running services.

- The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 which extends the 'duty to involve' to police, local arts, sports, culture and environmental bodies. It puts a duty on local authorities to promote democratic understanding and respond to petitions and gives citizens greater power to hold local authorities to account, influence local services and get directly involved in managing and shaping how local services are delivered. The Act continues the government's programme of housing reform, giving tenants greater say over the decisions that affect their lives through the National Tenant Voice.

These initiatives have in turn prompted government and service providers to create a range of participatory initiatives that voluntary organisations and communities are encouraged to engage with. These may involve inviting members of the public or voluntary groups on to committees or boards, holding open meetings or conducting user surveys and web-based consultations to solicit input into policy.[30]

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Government: Changing forms of accountability continued

Such initiatives can offer important new opportunities for communities and organisations to participate in, and influence decision-making. Research into community involvement in Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) found that communities felt the links created with service providers were valuable and facilitated mutual understanding, joint working and greater mutual respect.[31]

One potentially promising initiative is the recent Sustainable Communities Act which places a duty on council and government not just to 'inform, consult and involve' but also to 'reach agreement' with citizens on proposals to promote sustainability. This means that local and national government has to address and respond to issues placed on the agenda by local groups.

Using the Sustainable Communities Act

Low Carbon West Oxford is a community-led initiative that aims to cut its community CO_2 emissions by generating community owned renewable energy and cutting household CO_2 emissions. One of its local members had heard of the Sustainable Communities Act and raised it with the group. The group felt it may offer an opportunity to get the local Council and National Government to address some of the barriers they were facing at local and national level. Some of the members met, brainstormed and then submitted a list of policy recommendations to the local council.

The legal duties prescribed by the Act meant that the proposals had to be circulated to the whole council who then had to decide which proposals they agree or disagreed with or fell outside the terms of the act. The Act concerns transfer of power or budgets between different levels of government.

The council welcomed and agreed many of the proposals and the agreed priorities were sent to the Local Government Association (LGA) selector panel.

The LGA then selected and amalgamated proposals from different councils across the country, including several of LCWO's proposals, to forward to the government.

A similar duty then rests with the Secretary of State to reach agreement with the LGA on these proposals.

However, there are a number of barriers to effective participation in these kinds of initiatives by public authorities:
- user surveys and consultations often focus on individuals who may not be well informed about the issue or had the opportunity to discuss it and identify common priorities with others in the community
- national standards, targets and lack of finance can limit local authorities' ability to address issues of concern and respond to local evidence and circumstance [32]
- the number and complexity of these local processes and the speed at which they are introduced has proved confusing for many[33]
- top-down initiatives, however well intentioned, may not motivate people to respond
- where people and groups do engage, they find that they have to influence a web of services and partnerships and then navigate the complications of the relationship between central and local government

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Government: Changing forms of accountability continued

- those who try to engage often find themselves:
  - responding to predetermined issues and agendas set by powerful institutions
  - marginalised by the 'professional' and 'expert' representatives of powerful agencies within the partnership
  - alienated by meetings that they may find long, boring and confusing
  - intimidated by unintelligible jargon and formal procedures.

There are also concerns about whether those who get involved in these participatory initiatives are adequately representative. Research into community involvement shows that although 82% say they support more community involvement, only 26% want to be personally involved and in practice only 2% actually are.[34] As one member of the public put it, *'It's the same people over and over again that are involved. Normal people don't have the time'.* [35]

Only a minority of Local Strategic Partnerships monitor the representation of women and BME groups within partnership structures and in selecting community representatives, and it is often the 'usual suspects' or the most pushy that are chosen.[36]

There is evidence too that those people taking part in non-electoral politics are disproportionately better educated[37] high-earning and in professional and managerial jobs.[38] This suggests that participative forms of democracy may be associated with a gradual shift in power (further) towards better-educated groups. Disengagement is especially marked among young people and black and minority ethnic groups.[39]

Socio-economic inequalities related with low incomes, lack of education or skills and poor health, and discrimination can be major barriers to participation and need to be addressed if participatory forms of democracy are to work.

However, despite the challenges of engaging more people in formal political processes, there is evidence that there are quite high, and increasing levels of participation in community and voluntary activity. Over a third of a million people serve as school governors, almost 20,000 volunteers work in the NHS and a similar number volunteer for Oxfam.[40]

Evidence suggests that people engage in community because they:

- respond to their own practical needs[41]
- provide and a safe and supportive environment
- feel a sense of ownership and belonging
- take part in an informal and less alienating political process
- enable people to support neighbours and strengthen community.

Community-based activities are extremely valuable in and of themselves, but they also provide the building blocks for people to engage in political processes. The links and networks that are formed enable local people to reach common understandings and positions regarding priorities and needs. They also allow them to hold their representatives to account more effectively if and when they engage in political processes[42] and the 'group power' provides them with greater legitimacy and influence when engaging with public authorities and other bodies.

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Government: Changing forms of accountability continued

Implications for voluntary organisations

Voluntary organisations can play an important role to play in empowering marginalised communities and groups to take advantage of the new participatory forums.

For example, Praxis – an organisation supporting refugees and vulnerable migrants in East London – was successful in encouraging Tower Hamlets Council to establish a New Communities and Refugee Forum to help draw currently excluded groups into the policy-making processes. This forum ran a session on homelessness and new communities, bringing in a number of homeless agencies and statutory bodies whose approaches are not currently well designed to meet the specific needs of new communities. The forum jointly developed an agenda for action that is now being taken forward to the Homelessness Partnership Board.

However, the growing number of participatory initiatives means that you need to be strategic about how and when to participate in them. Engaging in invited forums and consultations can take up a huge amount of time and effort and may divert resources away from your own priorities.

● **See Routes to change**

It may be more strategic to campaign to get other more fundamental issues on the agenda or invest time and resources in helping strengthen communities and marginalised groups to articulate and campaign to get their own issues on the public and policy agenda. This may initially involve supporting communities and groups to self-organise or run practical projects as a stepping stone to future possible social action political engagement.

When groups do decide to engage in a particular forum it may be necessary to challenge and shape existing cultures and rules of engagement in order to make engagement in political processes meaningful, inclusive, simple, fun and less alienating to people

It is also important that groups have the skills to understand decision making processes, engage effectively and be accountable to constituencies.

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Voluntary sector: Representation and accountability

The new forms of participatory democracy have put new demands on voluntary organisations to be more representative and accountable, particularly those that claim to advocate for and represent affected communities.

At their best, voluntary organisations have a vital role to play in amplifying and representing the views of citizens and communities by:
- encouraging wider and more active participation in decision making
- helping form bonds and bridges between different groups in society
- holding decision makers to account and acting as a check on power
- supporting good quality policy making
- representing, supporting and strengthening the views and voices of disadvantaged and traditionally under-represented groups and communities.[43]

However, many lack formal mechanisms to consult with their constituents. Unlike elected councillors and MPs, their constituents or 'beneficiaries' cannot signal their satisfaction or dissatisfaction through voting and marginalised groups may lack the confidence, resources and power to express their views.

It can also be very difficult for voluntary organisations to genuinely reflect and represent fragmented and diverse communities.[44] For example, members of the Somali Integration Society point out that they would never say, 'the Somali community thinks ...' because the community is hugely diverse, encompassing people who have lived in the UK for generations and newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers fleeing the civil war and struggling to establish their status. However, one thing these groups tend to have in common is that they are socially excluded and economically deprived and feel powerless and disengaged from the political process.

However, it is possible to reach and engage diverse audiences. The Akashi Project (an initiative of Cambridge Carbon Footprint which works to tackle climate change) reached beyond the usual communities engaging on climate issues to make connections with BME and faith groups. Groups have responded in a number of ways from holding clothes swapping parties to hiring an allotment, to lobbying all the Prospective Parliamentary Candidates in the 2010 general election. Key to the success of this project in engaging with diverse communities has been the underlying commitment to:
- be open and willing to learn from others,
- investing in long term equitable and trusting relations between the organisation and the community
- adopting diverse and culturally appropriate forms of engaging people
- rooting discussion in questions of justice and sustainability rather than merely engaging in technical discussions.

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Voluntary sector: Representation and accountability continued

Implications for voluntary organisations

Your role in representing affected groups and communities, as well as the sustainability and relevance of the positions you promote, may be called into question if you do not genuinely reflect the priorities and interests of those on whose behalf you act. In addition, the targets you seek to influence or criticise may well challenge your legitimacy and accountability by cross checking findings or going directly to the communities that you are claiming to represent.

Therefore, it is vital to ensure that you consult with and are accountable to those whom you claim to represent. One useful starting point for advocacy initiatives is to consider whether you are working 'for' 'with' or 'by' people directly affected by an issue:[45]

● **See Approaches to advocacy table**

If yours is an organisation working and advocating *for* or *with* people, it is vital that you have very strong mechanisms in place to involve and be accountable to them. This means establishing robust and transparent systems and procedures for:
- learning and evaluation
- participatory consultation
- complaint, response and redress mechanisms [46]
- transparent reporting on outcomes and impact.

For example, The Somali Integration Society uses interviews, questionnaires, focus groups and other forms of information gathering – with partner organisations and service users – to identify issues and trends and inform future strategising.

It is important to involve constituents in your decision making so that advocacy – or service delivery – is relevant and meaningful to the people you want to help. In doing this, you should consider:[50??]
- the depth of their participation: this can range from telling people what is going to be done, through to involving them in project implementation, involving them in project design through to delegating control to them
- the breadth of their participation: this can involve engaging with a small group of people through to every social group within the community.

In practice, it can be difficult to ensure deep and wide participation.[47] It requires an holistic approach and a strong commitment to be community-facing. Praxis works with new communities who are at the sharp end of the failures of the system, including those who have no formal status. It seeks to ensure broad and meaningful participation based on the principle that, ultimately, if you provide the right services and support, people will engage. This can be achieved through:

- reviewing casework: reflecting on which issues are important and what responses are effective
- offering support to people at the point of crisis: i.e. through medical services for undocumented migrants and through a supermarket voucher exchange scheme for asylum seekers. Therefore, when people encounter the organisation, they see it as being on their side
- ensuring staff and volunteers have a good range of understandings of different communities and an ability to speak community languages
- providing a free space for communities to self-organise.

These elements taken together create a situation where new community groups can feel they belong and have a sense of ownership of the organisation and its goals.

You should also base your approach on good partnership principles and agreements to help ensure that your alliances are equitable and that you are not drowning out the voices of smaller ones or displacing them in decision-making processes.[48]

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Voluntary sector: Representation and accountability continued

Finally, it is important to note that questions of accountability and representation apply to organisations' ways of working and internal power relations just as much as they do to the power relations operating within the sector and between the sector and the state. However democratic they might wish to be, all organisations – including voluntary organisations – have a tendency to concentrate power in a narrow group.[49] Therefore, you must recognise and be vigilant to internal power dynamics among staff and volunteers. This means paying attention to whose voices dominated within the organisation and being ready to challenge and tackle cultures and ways of working that prevent others from having their voices heard internally.

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Approach to advocacy	For those affected by an issue	With those affected by an issue	By those affected by an issue
Advocacy undertaken by	voluntary organisations and other representatives	voluntary organisations working in alliance with local people, community groups and/or members	local people and community groups; democratic and user-led organisations; may or may not be supported & funded by voluntary organisations and others
Advantages	• ability to act more quickly, including through • good access to information about wider contexts	• increases access of marginalised groups to decision makers • may develop advocacy skills and capacity	• empowering – marginalised groups see themselves as agents of change • sustainable • can help correct power imbalances
Disadvantages	• could simply strengthen existing power structures • may not increase the capacity of local groups to act, so change may not be sustainable	• voluntary organisation is often in control and sets agenda • slower due to need for agreement between all parties	• access to fewer resources and information • risk of backlash • policy change may take longer

Table 17: Approaches to advocacy

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The voluntary sector: Service delivery

Voluntary organisations are increasingly being sub-contracted by the state to deliver services. Sixty per cent of medium sized charities are now being contracted to provide services that would have traditionally been offered by the state [Carnegie Futures]. 40% of the employment training that the Department for Work and Pensions commissions is delivered by the Voluntary Sector.[50]

This trend, which is likely to continue and increase, raises questions about how a sub-contracting service delivery role best fits with voluntary organisations' efforts to promote broader transformational change.

Voluntary organisations can successfully deliver services on the behalf of government and may be well placed to do so. They tend to have a greater capacity and/or willingness than governments to take risks and try new approaches. Therefore, they can play a useful role in piloting experimental methods, testing, modelling and advocating practical solutions to policy problems.[51]

However, there is concern that the sector could lose its sense of mission by measuring success with reference to the number of government contracts it wins, and how well it meets externally defined contractual obligations, rather than championing local priorities, strengthening communities or promoting transformational change.[52] A related concern is that over reliance on government contracts may also make the sector more vulnerable to cuts in funding, particularly if public spending priorities change.

Evidence suggests that the rise in sub-contracting has also contributed to the Sector becoming increasingly polarised.[53] Certain standards have to be met to secure statutory contracts in the first place and larger organisations are better placed to meet them. As a result, smaller grassroots organisations are being left behind.[54]

The voluntary sector:
Service delivery continued

Implications for voluntary organisations

Voluntary organisations need to consider carefully how providing services fits with their wider strategic approach.

Delivering programmes and advocating on behalf of the people you work with can fit together if you use evidence from your programme work to inform your advocacy and retain your independence.

For Praxis, advice and support services are about creating a pathway for people, not just about one-off problem solving. They link directly to and inform Praxis' advocacy priorities. For example, when supporting homeless women with children who have no access to public funds, Praxis refers them to the Council's Homelessness Services. The Unit presents only two options: either (a) taking the child into care or (b) financially supporting a return to their country of origin. At this point, Praxis helps identify alternatives and provides legal support to advocate for them, invoking the state's statutory duties to provide care and their obligations under the Human Rights Act.

As a result of these experiences, Praxis now seeks to bring influence to bear on the service, to offer a broader range of options to clients at the initial referral stage (rather than requiring a legal battle to reach this position each time).

However, you are over-reliant on funds from a government authority that is also a potential (advocacy) target, it may limit your ability to promote change. For example, an organisation that wins a private contract to run prisons is less likely to criticise the government for jailing too many people if their business model depends on a steady stream of customers coming through its doors.[55]

The Compact between the voluntary sector and government sets out guidance for how both parties should work together and is designed to help voluntary organisations preserve their independence when in a funding relationship.[56] Many local authorities have also signed up to local Compacts. An independent commission monitors implementation and support is available when the code is breached[57] but there is a still a danger that you will feel constricted in what you can say and do. It is also important that you are *seen* to be independent in order for your influence to be credible.

Combining sub-contracting and campaigning

Leonard Cheshire Disability (LCD) is a provider of services and has a significant number of local authority contact which has developed a simple and effective way of combining sub-contracting and campaigning.

To help challenge the barriers faced by people with disabilities and ensure that disabled people's voices are heard, it has set up a number of local Campaign Action Groups. These are not 'Leonard Cheshire Disability' groups but independent groups of disabled people that identify their own agendas, priorities, targets and methods of working.

The Campaign Action Groups can apply for funding from LCD for such things as producing materials or travel to meetings. LCD gives the Groups support and advice as well as helping them to share experiences and gain motivation from being part of a wider movement.

Campaign Action Group members decide what to campaign on and as LCD itself is a major provider of services to disabled people, the possibility exists that the Campaign Action Groups might choose to criticise LCD or the local authorities for some aspect of their provision or policies for disabled people.

The voluntary sector: Service delivery continued

This could be potentially embarrassing to LCD and threaten its funding sources but the logic of having set up the Groups is that they should not be prevented from criticising any target that they identify and that funds and support be distributed equally to them if they wished to target aspects of LCD service provision.

In order to enshrine this right and prevent any conflicts of interest, formal agreements are set up between the Campaign Action Groups and LCD. Terms of Reference stipulate that the Groups must not break the law and have to abide by charity law but recognise the groups' independence and right to decide for themselves.

Read more on Campaign Action Groups
www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/count-me-in/ campaignactiongroups

In designing your overall approach, you also need to look at the bigger picture, in particular whose interests are ultimately being served by your activities and how well they are being served. In particular:

- would a concerted sector wide campaign to reform and overhaul public services, provide a better quality service to people, than the delivery of public services by a range of sub contracted voluntary and private sector partners?
- could you have a wider and more positive impact by joining forces to advocate for better public services rather than merely filling existing gaps in services?
- will focussing on service delivery diminish your ability to ensure meaningful beneficiary participation in your programmes, promote meaningful community development or campaign for change?
- could you be more responsive to the needs of communities and marginalised groups by funding them and supporting them to voice their own priorities vis a vis Government services instead of (or alongside) taking up governments contracts?
- will offering competitive rates to win government tenders put downward pressure on wages (contributing to poverty growing inequality)?

You need to maintain control over your strategic choices through a continuous process of monitoring and evaluation. As part of this you should:

- ensure decisions are underpinned by a clear sense of your organisational objectives and values
- develop a sound understanding of the nature of the evolving relationship between the sector and government
- maintain a diversity of funding wherever possible to ensure you are not overly reliant on a single source of income.[58]

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The voluntary sector: Insider and outsider approaches

Voluntary organisations use a range of different approaches to achieve change. One useful way of thinking about the different approaches is by distinguishing between insider and outsider approaches to government and other decision makers.[59]

Insider approach: persuading decision makers to take action on an issue typically through evidence, lobby and dialogue. The effectiveness of this approach depends on the ability to build long-term relationships and develop tactical alliances with progressive individuals/departments within the target institution.

Outsider approach: pressuring decision makers to take action. This typically involves high profile media and some form of public mobilisation or direct action. Outsiders are more explicitly and publicly critical of targets, forcefully trying to raise the stakes so that targets find that they must act on an issue to diffuse opposition.

Approach	When to utilise	Risks
Insider approaches	• if you have something to offer – such as expertise, practical experience of a problem, or support from key groups – that is valued by decision makers • if the issue is less contentious and opposition limited you should only engage if you are confident there is a common desire to achieve change, and overlapping objectives and strategy between your organisation and the target	• can be time consuming and divert you from other priorities without necessarily having real influence • can lead to cooption and loss of independence
Outsider approaches	• if the issue is contentious or being kept off the agenda • if there is entrenched opposition you need to be prepared to antagonise your target. Being clear and transparent about your approach can help minimise tensions	• targets may be less inclined to listen to you and may try and discredit you • opportunities to use this approach may be constrained if you are over reliant on your target for funding

Table 18: Insider and outsider approaches

The voluntary sector: Insider and outsider approaches continued

Implications for voluntary organisations

Under the right conditions insider strategies which build tactical alliances with progressive individuals or groupings within governments can play a critical role in achieving change.[60] The success of the international campaigns on land mines and cluster munitions is testimony to this.

For the Somali Integration Society, understanding the aims and objectives of potential partner organisations and then finding where they overlap with the Somali Integration Society's own goals is key. The police and education services legally have to provide for all citizens, so the Somali Integration Society provides a means for them to link to the Somali community as part of this. The organisation can help partner agencies and at the same time represent and advance the interests of the Somali communities.

However, having access to and good relationships with decision makers does not necessarily mean you have influence. There is an ever-present risk that you may end up being co-opted by becoming too close to decision makers, that it becomes increasingly difficult for you to criticise them. Therefore, it is helpful to deploy or at least be in a position to threaten the use of outsider approaches or pressure.

It is likely that you will need to position yourself differently according to the issue and how it is evolving. You may also need to shift the balance of your strategies when and if targets change their positions on an issue or if the targets themselves change, for example, after an election.

Adjusting insider and outsider approaches to changing political circumstances

Voluntary organisations need to reassess the best way to make change happen, and adjust their approach to insider and outsider strategies, as political, social and economic contexts change.

When a new government is elected or political priorities shift, the temptation may be to adapt your approach to fit with the new policy directions, for fear of losing political access, or funding. However, it is important that an organisation's response to change – including for example to a new government – should be dictated by its mission and purpose, rather than shorter-term interests. Trustees can play a crucial role at this point because of their strategic overview and separation from special interests within the organisation.

You may need to shift from an insider role to being more vocally critical when policy – and the associated funding environment – becomes less supportive. Conversely, voluntary organisations which are used to being oppositional may need to be prepared to enter into dialogue and form tactical alliances, with progressive elements within government where there are prospects of making progress.

Switching between insider and outsider approaches can create tensions with decision makers and make it more challenging to sustain long-term relationships with them. However, balancing criticism with praise when due, proposing positive and credible solutions and having a balanced and reasonable tone can help ensure that you maintain constructive relations with decision makers.

It can also be effective to coordinate your strategies with other organisations, as change is often brought about by the combined efforts of organisations engaging in a range of insider and outsider strategies.

Voluntary sector: Joint working and competition

As noted previously, joint working is becoming more important because of the increased complexity of policymaking. Now more than ever, you need to work with others to help you navigate the large number of structures, partnerships and levels of decision-making.

Working together can greatly increase your power and level of influence as well as strengthen the Voluntary Sector's voice. For example, it can strengthen your expertise by marrying one organisation's technical expertise on an issue with another's access to people's testimony. Also, by increasing your number of supporters and alliances you can increase your overall legitimacy.

There are many positive examples of joint working between voluntary organisations but the potential power of civil society extends way beyond the voluntary organisations themselves. There are 11 million members of cooperatives, housing associations representing 5.3 million people, 193 trade unions in the UK and thousands of faith groups and informal community groups.[61]

Building broad-based coalitions with others beyond the sector could increase your power further. It can also enable groups working on different issues or from different sectors to learn from each other and discuss and agree common positions, which in turn can strengthen their negotiating stance with decision makers.

For example, campaigning in alliance with trade unions is important as they have been shown to be key to promoting equality in wealthy countries[62] yet have been seriously weakened in recent decades in Britain due to a combination of changing demographics and government policy.

The Living Wage Campaign spearheaded by the TUC and London Citizens, has succeeded in channelling an estimated £24 million into the pockets of low paid workers by getting employers to pay an hourly rate above the minimum wage. Ealing Voluntary Forum is challenging voluntary organisations in the borough to pay a living wage.

Roger Mckenzie, West Midlands Regional Secretary for UNISON
"Unions need to understand that we are much more powerful if we are part of a wider definition of the working class i.e. that we are workers inside and outside the workplace. We are trying to change the focus of workers to go beyond the workplace and also see their role as social justice organisations and community organisations. This doesn't diminish the importance of their role as a workplace-based organisation but strengthens partnerships with other organisations. This means that when we are talking to the government we need to go with other organisations that share our members' concerns – for example the Citizens Advice Bureau says that, before the recession, working hours was one of the biggest issues facing its clients. This is an issue shared with us."
Interview with *Roger McKenzie, Regional Secretary, UNISON, OBE*

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Voluntary sector: Joint working and competition continued

While there are many good examples of joint working it also poses several challenges. If not carefully managed decision making may be more cumbersome, bureaucratic or conflictual with decisions based on the lowest common denominator.

There is also evidence of increasing competition amongst voluntary organisations, not just in competing for contracts and funding but also in advocacy. Some organisations are reluctant to collaborate because of perceived detrimental affects on their public and media profile.[63]

The underlying reason for this is that for voluntary organisations, unlike private ones, it is not generally the 'customers' of their services who are the ones that guarantee the organisation's continued existence.[64] Survival requires that you are responsive to those who financially support you and to the wider funding environment.

The desire amongst organisations to move on to new issues can sometimes be driven by what is of interest to funders. This creates difficulties when the funding cycle is out of sync with the problem. Issues may be no longer 'fundable' even though they have not been resolved. This can be a problem in particular for grassroots organisations, which may be more closely attuned to people's actual priorities as well as for groups who are more ideologically orientated.[65]

In some cases too, an organisation's relations with the community it seeks to represent may even be undercut by its relations with its wider supporters. For some organisations, their supporters' primary role is to provide the funds so that the organisation can be active on their behalf so the need to attract and retain support becomes critical to continued survival. Reflecting wider political trends, voluntary organisations' supporters tend to be disproportionately well educated, affluent and in professional or managerial occupations. The need to appeal to such groups may affect whose interests these organisations end up representing.[66]

There is nothing wrong with linking marketing and advocacy goals but there are risks that if priorities are not clear and if leadership is weak, voluntary organisations can get trapped into a high profile[67] strategy, seeking to make 'noise' about an issue simply in order to maintain their public profile. High profile activity is what gets noticed by supporters and other funders. It is this that helps ensures survival. Whether or not this high profile activity is effective may not be so important.

Implications for voluntary organisations

While alliance building is important, it is also becoming increasingly difficult due to the competition for resources and a trend towards focusing on internal goals (linked to increasing 'brand awareness') that may not necessarily complement your overall campaigning goals.

In your own campaigning and advocacy, it's important that you understand that there are potential conflicts between marketing and advocacy goals and make sure your resources are appropriately focused on achieving meaningful change.

In working with others, establishing a common purpose is a key starting point for effective alliances and partnership. It is important to find the time and space to promote dialogue and trust with your allies.[68]

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Voluntary sector: Role

The key drivers explored here, taken together have led to the blurring of the public, private and voluntary sectors.[69] Notably that:

- voluntary organisations' growing service delivery role is leading the voluntary sector to be more like an arm of the public sector
- some voluntary organisations are increasingly drawing on and importing practice from the private sector (e.g. applying concepts of marketing and branding).

There is widespread concern that the distinctiveness of the voluntary sector is being diluted.[70] For some, this is based on a narrow vision of 'professionalism' and a false understanding of what effectiveness means.[71] Others have questioned whether professional campaigning sufficiently challenges existing power dynamics.[72] Due to the bureaucratic and funding pressures on them, organisations may end up being less interested in the kind of transformational change that truly challenges the status quo.

Professional lobbying and campaigning activity may help achieve certain policy changes but organisations that take this path risk being divorced from any sense of belonging to a movement. This risk increases as the gap between the bigger organisations and their beneficiaries increases.[73]

Principles of markets, competition and internal efficiency have their place but evidence suggests that importing business management approaches from other sectors can indeed create problems,[74] not least because they may fail to give due importance to what is ultimately most important: securing meaningful social change.

Voluntary organisations are at their best when they act according to fundamental values and stay linked to, and focused on the interests of the communities they are representing and working with the idea that "the world needs more civil society influence on business, not the other way around".[75]

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Summary of implications

New models of delegated and participatory governance have thrown up new challenges for the sector:

- it is likely that a much greater number and range of semi-public and private bodies will influence decision making on any particular issue, so conducting a sound power analysis, prioritising your targets and working jointly with others becomes even more crucial
- as much decision making is influenced by elite policy networks of experts you need to invest in your own expertise and seek to make these networks more open and inclusive.
- it is likely that you will need to adopt a combination of insider and outsider strategies vis a vis targets according to the issue and how it is evolving, and be prepared to shift the balance of your strategies in response to changing political circumstances
- you will also need to understand and frame your proposals to the different interests, institutional cultures, values, and incentive systems that influence civil servants, special advisers, permanent secretaries and MPs

- you need to be strategic about how and when to engage in the new participatory forums – it may be more strategic to campaign to get other fundamental issues on the agenda, or invest time and resources in helping strengthen communities and marginalised groups to articulate and campaign to get their own issues on the public and policy agenda.
- where you or communities do engage in invited participatory forums you need to ensure you have the skills to engage effectively, shape the terms of engagement and be accountable to your constituents
- you need to ensure that sub-contracting does not draw you away from your overall mission or role in championing local priorities, strengthening communities or promoting transformational change
- although working in partnership is increasingly important it is also increasingly difficult due to competition in the sector – you should try and ensure that your approach to partnership is focused on achieving meaningful change rather than just marketing goals.
- Finally it is important that voluntary organisations stay focussed on their fundamental mission and values.

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Power and change – A checklist

This checklist is a guide for you to adapt to your own circumstances. It will help you identify the various forces promoting and resisting change on a selected issue, assess their relative importance, and develop an appropriate strategic response. It can also be used review your progress in achieving change.

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Step 1: Analysing the drivers of and obstacles to change

The following table can help you identify which factors and actors are driving or blocking change, their relative importance, and hence your possible responses – or routes to change . In broad terms you can change the current situation by strengthening the forces pushing for change and/or neutralising or reducing the forces of resistance.

Analysing the drivers of and obstacles to change

Change factors/actors	Factors to consider	Possible routes to change
Ideas	• is your issue on or off the public & policy agenda? • are your messages about the issue framed to best advances, your goals? • are your goals and messages in line with, or against, the conventional understanding of the issue? • is there sound evidence & arguments in favour of your issue?	• floating new ideas or reframing an issue • conducting new, or drawing on existing, research, evidence & argument to support your case including testimonies • drawing on influential individuals & institutions to legitimise your cause
Individuals	• who are the key decision makers & opinion formers that affect your issue (visible and hidden) • which of these key individuals are for, against or undecided about your cause? • which of these key individuals are most accessible and susceptible to influence? (often the undecided) • who/what influences them? • are there individuals that personify the problem/solution who you can engage with	• supporting & empowering the voices of individuals directly affected by the issue • harnessing influential individuals to your cause • influencing or neutralizing powerful individuals against your goals

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Institutions and interest groups	• which key institutions and groups have decision making power over the policies & practices that need to change (visible and hidden?) • which of these are for, against or undecided about your cause? • which are the most influential and accessible? (often the undecided) • who/what motivates them e.g. what interest groups, institutional interests, incentive structures • what power & influence do you and your allies have to influence the issue? • are there changing political opportunities that you can take advantage of?	• changing the policies and practices of key institutions & interest groups (visible and hidden) including expert policy networks • strengthening your own, and civil society's power/capacity to bring change including by building broad based alliances • engaging in invited forums where meaningful, and seeking to create your own where not • being ready to capitalise on changing political opportunities
Structural factors	• what are the costs/benefits of the changes you seek? • are there structural factors motivating people to promote change e.g. economic inequality, discrimination or other injustices? • are there structural constraints preventing people from taking action e.g. lack of skills, education, low self esteem, poor health etc?	• altering the cost/benefit equation – or the perception of it, for example by highlighting the costs of maintaining the current situation • inspiring & linking up with allies to campaign on the structural constraints to change • addressing structural barriers to people's participation, e.g. through capacity building, mentoring or providing advice and services
Cultural factors	• how are prevailing cultural attitudes, values and behaviours driving or blocking change on your issue? • are there vested interests stand to lose from the changes you seek? • are interest groups manipulating cultural values for their own ends?	• changing the attitudes & behaviours of key individuals and/or publics e.g. through awareness raising & capacity building • reframing the issue in ways that are favourable to your goals • drawing on respected messengers to support your case
Technologies	• are there technological innovations or constraints on your issue? • are their market opportunities and constraints	• promoting innovation & dissemination of and access to new technologies or products that help your cause

Analysing the drivers of and obstacles to change continued

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Step 2: Devising and implementing your change strategy

You can use your analysis from Step 1 to help you identify and define the strategic parameters of your approach in the following areas

a Scale of Change
To what extent will you seek incremental or transformative change?

b Prioritising the routes to change
- how important are the different change factor/ actors in achieving your goals? is there one that paralyses progress on all the rest? Can one act as a catalyst for change elsewhere?
- does your mandate, distinctive competence, resources allow you to act on all these levels? If not can you work with others to achieve your objectives?
- what is the best mix and balance between the different possible key routes to change.

c Deciding your targets, positioning and mix of influencing approaches
- Which priority target individuals and institutions will you seek to influence? Which key influencers? Visible and hidden? (You will need to conduct an in-depth power analysis for the priority institutions).
- How can you best maximize your and your allies' sources of power?
- What mix, timing and sequencing of persuasion and pressure will you use to influence targets and win change?

As well as being informed by your understanding of a particular issue, your positioning will also be determined by your understanding of the nature of the relationship between the sector and government, and whether you are seeking to promote incremental or transformative change.

d Implementing your approach and tracking and assessing your progress
In developing, implementing and assessing strategy:

- ensure that your analysis results in action
- tailor your planning processes to the context – where the situation is likely to be relatively stable and predictable, detailed planning may represent a good use of your time, but if change is likely to be more volatile a more fluid relationship between plans and actions is likely to be more effective
- ensure you are alert and prepared to respond to opportunities for transformative change if and when they arise
- establish a framework for tracking, assessing and interpreting progress
- regularly repeat the analysis in order to identify whether problems, political opportunities or targets have changed.

Sources: As well as drawing on the analysis in this publication, this checklist draws on Oxfam GB's internal power analysis, Is Your Campaign Making a Difference, NCVO, and The Good Campaign Guide, NCVO

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1 Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett (2009): The Spirit Level. Allen Lane

2 e.g. (1) David Beetham, Andrew Blick, Helen Margetts and Stuart Weir (2008): Power and Participation in Modern Britain: Democratic Audit for Carnegie Trust UK (2) Carnegie UK Trust (2008): Power Moves: Exploring Power and Influence in the UK. Carnegie Trust UK; (3) Power Commissioners (2006) Power to the People: The Report of Power: an Independent Inquiry into Britain's Democracy. Rowntrees

3 Stephen Lukes (2005): Power A Radical View. 2nd Edition. Palgrave; p16 quoting Robert Dahl

4 This simplified categorization of alternative forms of power is adapted from (1) Jo Rowland (1997): Questioning Empowerment. Oxfam, p12 and (2) Valerie Miller, Lisa Veneklasen, Molly Reilly and Cindy Clark (2006): Making Change Happen 3: Concepts for Revisioning Power for Justice, Equality and Peace, Just Associates.

5 See for example Talcott Parsons in Mark Haugaard (2002): Power: A Reader. Manchester University Press, p 67

6 There is no consensus about how best to categorise different understandings of power. Here we have simplified and merged some different political and theoretical perspectives. They are highly summarised for the sake of brevity so do not represent exact representations of individual authors

7 Essentially the Realist and Marxist views

8 Essentially the liberal and pluralist views

9 See Talcott Parsons, Barry Barnes, Arendt. Power may be created and exercised through, for example, shared values and culture; laws, norms and social controls; shared goals (mediated through the state and other institutions); and economic structures

10 Weber argued that legitimate authority is derived from the legal system; tradition/culture; or charismatic leadership. Also see Jurgen Habermas (1975): Legitimation Crisis. Beacon Press

11 Michel Foucault (1979)

12 Michel Foucault (1979): The History of Sexuality Vol 1. Allen Lane; p93

13 See Clarissa Hayward

14 The term Network Society was coined by Jan van Dijk in his Dutch book De Netwerkmaatschappij (1991) (The Network Society) and by Manuel Castells in 'The Network Society' the first part of his trilogy The Information Age (1996) For Castells, networks have become the basic units of modern society. Van Dijk does not go that far; for him these units still are individuals, groups, organizations and communities, though they may increasingly be linked by networks

15 There is no consensus on different ways to categorise mechanisms or sources of power. This categorisation reflects our interpretation based on theoretical literature and practical experience

16 The phrase soft power was coined by Joseph Nye of Harvard University in a 1990 book, Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power. He further developed the concept in his 2004 book, Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics. It is normally applied to international relations.

17 http://www.plasticbagfree.com/howto.php

18 John Braithwaite and Peter Drahos (2000): Global Business Regulation. Cambridge University Press

19 Braithwaite and Drahos (2000)

20 Lukes (2005), See also Gramsci (1926–37)

21 Direct action may not necessarily be illegal if actions are deemed to be in the public interest as in the recent court rulings on Greenpeace's direct action at the Kingsnorth coal-fired power station.

22 Martin Luther King, Jr (1964): Why We Can't Wait. Signet; p79].

23 King (1964) p39

24 King, (1964) p37

25 King (1964) p121

26 King (1964) p26

27 King (1964) p64

28 This section draws on various sources, including those looking at source of powers from a policy perspective [(1) John Kingdon (2003): Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies, 2nd Edition. Longman, (2) Paul Sabatier [ed] (2007): Theories of the Policy Process, 2nd Edition. Westview Press]; looking at the role of pressure groups [(3) Bill Coxall (2001): Pressure Groups in British Politics. Longman, (4) Wyn Grant (2000): Pressure Groups and British Politics. MacMillan, (5) Watts, Duncan (2007): Pressure Groups. Edinburgh University Press]; and more specifically in relation to advocacy and campaigning [(6) Jenny Chapman and Thomas Fisher (1999): The Thoughtful Activist: A Toolkit for Enhancing NGO Campaigning and Advocacy, new economics foundation, (7) Lisa Veneklasen with Valerie Miller (2002): A New Weave of Power, People and Politics: The Action Guide for Advocacy and Citizen Participation, World Neighbors, Oklahoma City (8) David Cohen et al (2001): Advocacy for Social Justice: A Global Action and Reflection Guide, Oxfam America and Advocacy Institute, Kumarian Press Inc. (9) Mark Lattimer (2000): The Campaigning Handbook. Directory of Social Change and (10) Amy Pollard. and John Court (2005): How Civil Society Organisations Use Evidence to Influence Policy Processes: A Literature Review. Working Paper 249. Overseas Development Institute].

29 Beetham et al (2008)

30 Beetham et al (2008) p 48

31 Jane Foot (2009) Citizens Involvement in Local Governance, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, p 11

32 Stanley Milgram (1974): Obedience to authority: An Experimental View

33 e.g. Charity Commission (2008): Study into Public Trust and Confidence in Charities. A research study by Ipsos MORI for the Charity Commission. The survey showed that charities are believed to be effective in bringing about social change, are ethical and honest, and spend money wisely and effectively

34 Pollard and Court (2005)

35 Ruth Mayne (2009): External Evaluation of the Ban Advocates Initiative.

36 This phenomenon – called the 'Matthew effect' ["unto everyone that hath shall be given"] – has been tracked, for example, in analysis showing that academic papers receive further citations proportionate to the number they already have, e.g. Duncan Watts: (2004): Six Degrees: The Science of a Connected Age. Vintage; p108

37 Talcott Parsons in Haugaard (2002)

38 Saul Alinksy (1989): Rules for Radicals: A Pragmatic Primer for Realistic Radicals. Vintage Books: Random House; this is Alinsky's first rule of power tactics, p127

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[39] Rowland (1997)

[40] Beetham et al (2008) p39

[41] Making Change Happen: Power. Concepts for Revisioning Power for Justice, Equality and Peace, Miller V, Veneklasen L, Reilly M, Clark C, Just Associates, 2000

[42] Adapted from NCVO's Count Me In project at http://www.ncvovol.org.uk/campaigningeffectiveness/projects/index.asp?id=10370

[43] Rowlands (1997) p16

[44] Stephen Lukes identified the 3 dimensions of power. Based on this, Lisa Veneklasen and Valerie Miller (2002) presented power as having visible, hidden and invisible faces, p47–50

[45] John Braithwaite (2004): Methods of Power for Development: Weapons of the Weak: Weapons of the Strong. Michigan Journal of Law

[46] Braithwaite and Drahos (2000)

[47] Braithwaite and Drahos (2000)

[48] known as 'anticipated reactions' e.g. John Scott (2002): Power. Polity; p4

[49] Alinsky (1989), Rule 9; p129

[50] Braithwaite (2004)

[51] Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz, The Two Faces of Power, In Haugaard (2002).

[52] Beetham et al (2008) p50 and 51

[53] Adapted from Haugaard (2002), p28 and Miller et al (2006)

[54] Beetham et al (2008) p29

[55] see for example Parsons, Barnes, Arendt

[56] see for example Lukes, Gramsci, Foucault

[57] Adapted from Rowland (1997) p11; Miller et al (2006) ; Lukes (2005).

[58] Frances Stewart (2009): A global view of Horizontal Inequalities: Inequalities Experienced by Muslims Worldwide. Microcon Research Working Paper 13.

[59] Anthony Giddens, quoted in Scott (2002), p9

[60] Adapted from Miller et al (2006) and Oxfam's "We Can" Campaign Against Violence Against Women)

[61] Although there was some actions to address visible power, the campaign focussed mainly on addressing hidden and invisible power

[62] John Gaventa (2006): Finding the Spaces for Change: A Power Analysis, IDS Bulletin, Volume 37, Number 6, IDS

[63] Oxfam GB Power Analysis, Internal

[64] Beetham et al (2008) p16

[65] Mayne (2009)

[66] Adapted from Braithwaite (2004)

[67] e.g. see (1) SustainAbility; (2) Lisa Jordan and Peter van Tuijl [eds] (2006): NGO Accountability: Politics, Principles and Innovations. Earthscan, e.g. p200; (3) Ben Cairns, with Jane Harris, Mike Aiken and Romayne Hutchison (2009): Beyond One Voice: the challenge and complexity of representation for local government and the third sector. IVAR/IdeA

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1 Loosely adapted from Peter Hall (1990): Policy Paradigms, Social Learning, and the State: The Case of Economic Policy-Making in Britain. Center of European Studies, Harvard University.

2 e.g. Gerard Winstanley, reviewing the failures of radicalism in the revolutionary period: "King Charles hath conquered you ... though you seemingly have cut off his head" [quoted in Christopher Hill, (1991) The World Turned Upside Down. Penguin; p34].

3 Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett (2009): The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better. Allen Lane

4 Wyn Grant (2000), Pressure Groups and British Politics, MacMillan; p145

5 e.g. see explorations of the wider application of complexity theory, to social contexts [e.g. Philip Ball (2004): Critical Mass: How One Thing Leads to Another. Arrow Books and Steven Johnson (2001): Emergence. Penguin Books]; organisations [e.g. Robert Axelrod and Michael Cohen (2000): Harnessing Complexity. Basic Books; pp32-61 and Gareth Morgan (1998): Images of Organization: The Executive Edition. Sage Publications; Chapter 8]; and more specifically for organisations involved in promoting social change [e.g. Ben Ramalingam et al (2008): Exploring the science of complexity: Ideas and implications for development and humanitarian efforts. Working Paper 285. ODI]

6 e.g. see Ilya Prigogine (1997): The End of Certainty. The Free Press; pp67-71

7 For a description of the dynamics of positive and negative feedback see e.g. Johnson (2001); pp 130-139

8 e.g. James Gleick (1987): Chaos. Abacus; p11-31

9 This analyis is from Stanley Cohen (2002): Folk Devils and Moral Panics, 3rd Edition, Routledge

10 Frank Baumgartner and Bryan Jones (1993): Agendas and Instability in American Politics. University of Chicago Press, p102-130

11 Baumgartner and Jones (1993). They imported the evolutionary notion of 'punctuated equilibrium' into political theory to explain how policy systems work.

12 Thomas Kuhn (1996): The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, 3rd Edition. University of Chicago Press – he cites a number of examples from the physical sciences, e.g. the Copernican theory (identifying that the earth goes round the sun) replacing the previous Ptolomaic viewpoint (which placed the earth at the centre of the universe) – e.g. pp68-9. An example from the social sciences would be how economic theories go in and out of fashion: in the 70s and 80s for example, the orthodox view was that you couldn't spend your way out of a recession. In the recent downturn, however, there was global consensus that this was exactly what you should do.

13 Strictly speaking, Kuhn was seeking to explain what went on in the natural sciences and to demarcate this from other fields – e.g. Kuhn (1996) p163, p209], but the analysis has resonated much more widely since.

14 e.g. Axelrod and Cohen (2000) pp 132-3

15 Kuhn (1996) e.g. p74

16 David Orrell (2007): The Future of Everything: The Science of Prediction. Thunder's Mouth Press; p243

17 Kuhn (1996); p77

18 See Mary Jo Hatch (1997): Organization Theory. Oxford University Press; pp 88-91

19 This analysis draws on Eric Beinhocker (2005): The Origin of Wealth. Random House, pp187-217 also Morgan (1998) Ch 3.

20 e.g. Karl Popper (1963): Conjectures and Refutations. Routledge and Kegan Paul; p33-41

21 e.g. Prigogine (1997), p132: "Probability is no longer a state of mind due to our ignorance, but the result of the laws of nature"

22 e.g. Orrell (2007) p110-115

23 e.g. Tom Peters (1988): Thriving on Chaos, MacMillan, London; Jake Chapman, 2004: System Failure: Why Governments Must Learn to Think Differently, 2nd Edition. Demos; and Beinhocker (2005) pp355-6

24 Peters (1988); also William Easterley (2006): The White Man's Burden. Oxford University Press

25 Braithwaite J, Methods of Power for Development:Weapons of the Weak:Weapons of the Strong, Michigan Journal of International Law,

26 Johnson (2001), pp75 and 78

27 Axelrod and Cohen (2000) p122-3

28 e.g. Beinhocker (2005) pp168-172;

29 e.g. Baungartner and Jones (1993), p42

30 Easterly (2006), pp5-6

31 see Duncan Watts (2004): Six Degrees: The Science of a Connected Age. Vintage; p287; also Beinhocker (2005), p338

32 e.g. Greg Power (2006) Democracy, Participation and Collective Action. Carnegie UK Trust; p15

33 see EP Thompson (1980): The Making of the English Working Classes. Penguin Books; p110

34 The path between unconnected members of a network is surprisingly short, due to the so-called 'small world' effect, as captured in the phrase 'six degrees of separation' – after an experiment apparently showing that six is the average number of steps between any two people in the world e.g. see Mark Newman, Albert-Laszlo Barabasi and Duncan Watts (2006): The Structure and Dynamics of Networks. Princeton University Press. e.g. pp15-17 and pp286-300

35 Watts (2004) e.g. pp204-7

36 Watts (2004) p244

37 Malcolm Gladwell (2000), The Tipping Point. Abacus; chapter 2

38 Watts (2004) pp235-244

39 This term is drawn from 'diffusion of innovation' theory which divides audiences according to how receptive they are to innovations (i.e. ideas and products): 'early adopters' help generate a climate of acceptance and an appetite for change, so that the 'early-' and 'late majority' then follow in their vanguard

40 http://www.plasticbagfree.com/howto.php

41 John Hayes, (2007): The Theory and Practice of Change Management, 2nd Edition. Palgrave MacMillan p80

42 e.g. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PbUtL_0vAJkandfeature=fvw

43 e.g. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rQ-M0KEFm9Iandfeature=related

43 e.g. see examples in Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink (1998): Activists Beyond Borders. Cornell University Press

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[44] Adapted from Tess Kingham and Jim Coe (2005): The Good Campaigns Guide. NCVO pp39-40

[45] Don Hubert (2000): The Landmine Ban: A Case Study in Humanitarian Advocacy. Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies; pp63-65

[46] For the mutuality of the relationship between actions and underlying structures, see Giddens and 'structuration'e.g. in Mark Haugaard [ed] (2002): Power: A Reader. Manchester University Press; chapter 8

[47] http://www.plasticbagfree.com/howto.php

[48] e.g. Marx argued that certain ideas dominated because they reflected the economic interests of the ruling classes. Sociologists, including Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons, have explored how social structures contribute to society's overall functioning.

[49] Frances Stewart and Arnim Langer (2007): Horizontal Inequalities: Explaining Persistence and Change CRISE Working Paper no 39

[50] Karl Marx, 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte

[51] Edgar Schein (2004): Organizational Culture and Leadership, 3rd Edition. Jossey-Bass; p29

[51] e.g. Gramsci argued that in Western Europe the coercive powers of the State were backed by cultural ('hegemonic') controls that helped maintain consent: Antonio Gramsci (1971): Selections from the Prison Notebooks. Lawrence and Wishart; pp206-7 and p261-4

[52] Wyn Grant (2000): Pressure Groups and British Politics. MacMillan; pp206-208 and Bill Coxall (2001): Pressure Groups in British Politics. Longman. pp156-158. Both quoting Richard Rose

[53] Coxall (2001) p156 cites 'gay rights' groups in this category; similarly e.g. Helen Ingram et al "Social Construction and Policy Design" in Paul Sabatier [ed] (2007): Theories of the Policy Process. 2nd Edition. Westview Press; identifies gay rights activists in the USA as a group 'in-transit' p104

[54] Rick Muir "Equal Before The Law? Church, state and equality legislation 2005-7" in Carnegie UK Trust (2008): Power Moves; also Alex Brazier et al (2008): Law in the Making: Influence and Change in the Legislative Process. Hansard Society; chapter 3

[55] http://www.adayinhand.com/news/aboutus

[56] Coxall (2001) and Grant (2000) both cite the Pedestrian Association as a classic example of an organisation advocating in the face of cultural indifference

[57] Ingram et al in Sabatier (2007), p108-11 – in contrast those who are negatively regarded but have relative power can more protect themselves against such negative feeling, as the benefits they gain are often hidden, and they can use their influence to divert attempted attacks on their advantages

[58] This analysis from Ingram et al in Sabatier (2007)

[59] See Barnardo's campaign report by Jane Glover (2009): Every Night You Cry: The Realities of Having a Parent in Prison.

[60] example from Lucy Matthews, et al (2008): The Human Rights Act – Changing Lives, 2nd Edition. British Institute of Human Rights

[61] http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/oct/13/how-trafigura-story-unfolded

[62] definition from Chris Roche (99): Impact Assessment for Development Agencies: Learning to Value Change. Oxfam; p21

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2 e.g.Paul Sabatier [ed] (2007): Theories of the Policy Process, 2nd Edition. Westview Press; p6-7

3 from Valerie Miller & Jane Covey (1997): Advocacy Sourcebook: Frameworks for Planning, Action & Reflection. Institute for Development Research; p47-9

4 drawing on Amy Pollard & Julius Court (2005): How Civil Society Organisations Use Evidence to Influence Policy Processes: A Literature Review. Working Paper 249. Overseas Development Institute; p12-22

5 John Kingdon (2003): Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies, 2nd Edition. Longman, esp Ch 5

6 Kingdon (2003), e.g. p109-115

7 e.g. Charles Salmon, LA Post & Robin Christensen (2003): Mobilizing Public Will for Social Change. Michigan State University; p13

8 Kingdon (2003), p114

9 Kingdon (2003), p88

10 this analysis draws on the 'Appetite for Change' chapter by Jennifer Rubin et al in the Carnegie UK Trust (2008): Power Moves: Exploring Power & Influence in the UK

11 e.g. see the study of a range of legislative processes by Alex Brazier et al (2008): Law in the Making: Influence & Change in the Legislative Process. Hansard Society

12 e.g. Kingdon (2003) p131–137

13 from Jackie's School Food Blog at http://www.mertonparents.co.uk/

14 in his memoirs, quoted in Brazier et al (2008) p42

15 e.g. Stephen Stradling et al "Car Use & Climate Change: Do We Practice What We Preach?" in Alison Park et all (2008): British Social Attitudes, 24th Edition, Sage Publications; p142

16 e.g. Cathrine Pitt, Carolin Loehr and Alankar Malviya (2005): Campaigns, Evidence & Policy Influence: Lessons from International NGOs. ODI; p21–22

17 e.g. this is the central message in Jonathan Ellis (2007): Campaigning for Success: How to Cope if you Achieve Your Campaign Goal. NCVO

18 http://www.mertonparents.co.uk/progress.html

19 this example from Rick Davies (2001) Evaluating the Effectiveness of DFID's Influence with Multilaterals: A Review of NGO Approaches To The Evaluation Of Advocacy Work. Cambridge, UK; p42

20 see NCVO's guide to influencing evidence based policy making: (2009): Building Your Evidence Base. NCVO

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22 Nathan Caplan's "two communities" model e.g. as cited in Stephanie Neilson (2001): "IDRC-Supported Research and its Influence on Public Policy Knowledge Utilization and Public Policy Processes: A Literature Review", Evaluation Unit, IDRC

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24 Emma Crewe & John Young (2002): Bridging Research and Policy: Context, Evidence and Links. Working Paper 173. Overseas Development Institute.

25 Geoff Mulgan (2003): Government, Knowledge and the Business of Policy-Making: Background Paper: Facing the Future Conference, Canberra, 23–24 April

26 Stephen Glaister's chapter "Transport" in Anthony Seldon [ed]: Blair's Britain 1997–2007.Cambridge University Press; p245

27 Kingdon (2003) p164

28 from Brazier et al (2008), p78–98

29 Stella Creasy et al (2007) Engage For Change: The Role of Public Engagement in Climate Change Policy. Sustainable Development Commission

30 this analysis is drawn in particular from (1) Ruth Sutton (1999): The Policy Process: An Overview. ODI (2) Julius Court & John Young (2003): Bridging Research and Policy: Insights from 50 Case Studies. Working Paper 213. ODI & (3) Andy Sumner et al (2009)

31 Creasy et al (2007), p37

32 so called 'epistemic communities' e.g. as described in Sutton (1999)

33 example quoted in Jim Coe & Tess Kingham (2007): Tips on Good Practice in Campaigning. NCVO'; p9

34 Pollard & Court (2005), p27

35 e.g. Margaret Keck & Kathryn Sikkink (1998): Activists Beyond Borders. Cornell University Press

36 Fred Carden (2009): Knowledge to Policy: Making the Most of Development Research. Sage Publications & International Development Research Centre; table 6.1

37 Stanely Cohen (2001): States of Denial, Polity Press; p266

38 David Halpern and Clive Bates with Greg Beales and Adam Heathfield (2004): Personal Responsibility and Changing Behaviour: the state of knowledge and its implications for public policy. Cabinet Office, p39

39 e.g. Halpern et al (2004), p19

40 e.g. see Jessica Prendergast et al (2008): Creatures of Habit? The Art of Behavioural Change. Social Market Foundation

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43 e.g. Miranda Lewis (2005): Asylum: Understanding Public Attitudes, ippr p17

44 the key principle is that the relationship is one of genuine equity, see Paulo Freire (1972): Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Penguin; "the teacher is taught in dialogue with the students who in turn being taught also teach" p36–7

45 e.g. Herbert Simon (1997) p99–101

46 see Alex MacGillivray, Paul Begley & Alejandro Litovsky – "Disempowered" – in Power Moves (2008), p63–64

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48 Cohen (2001), p16

49 e.g. Philip Kotler & Alan Andreasen (1996), Strategic Marketing for Non-Profit Organizations, 5th Edition. Prentice Hall; p398–399

50 e.g. John Hayes (2007): The Theory and Practice of Change Management, 2nd Edition. Palgrave MacMillan; p19-20

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52 e.g. see the Asch experiment, e.g. Duncan Watts (2004): Six Degrees: The Science of a Connected Age. Vintage; p221; also Robert Calidiani's 6 'weapons of influence' in (2000) Influence, Science and Practice. Allyn & Cacon.

53 Miranda Lewis (2007): States of Reason. ippr; p59

54 e.g. Robert Axelrod & Michael Cohen (2000): Harnessing Complexity. Basic Books; p133

55 Lewis (2007), p49

56 quoted in Kristen Wolf (2001) Now Hear This: The Nine Laws Of Successful Advocacy Communications, Fenton Communications

57 Malcolm Gladwell (2000): The Tipping Point, Abacus; e.g. p131

58 e.g. Heaven Crawley (2008): Understanding and Changing Public Attitudes: A review of existing evidence from public information and communication campaigns. Centre for Migration Policy Research, Swansea University; p6

59 Oxfordshire Attitudes to Climate Change Survey www.climateX.org

60 adapted from Hayes (2007), p278 & Edgar Schein (2004): Organizational Culture and Leadership, 3rd Edition. Jossey-Bass, p320; also incorporating 'diffusion of innovation' theory [developed by Emerett Rogers and described e.g. in Halpern et al (2004), pp29–30

61 Oxfordshire Attitudes to Climate Change Survey www.climateX.org

62 adapted from Hayes (2007), p278 & Edgar Schein (2004): Organizational Culture and Leadership, 3rd Edition. Jossey-Bass, p320; also incorporating 'diffusion of innovation' theory [developed by Emerett Rogers and described e.g. in Halpern et al (2004), p29-30

63 Jill Rutter, How can the pro-asylum lobby act strategically to better communicate its ideas? ippr

64 Research Summary – People-Powered Responses to Climate Change: Mapping community-led proposals to NESTA's Big Green Challenge, NESTA

65 quoted in Nissa Finney, N. & Esme Peach (2004): Attitudes Towards Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Other Immigrants: A Literature Review For The Commission for Racial Equality. Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees in the UK [ICAR]., p68

66 Stradling et al in Park et al (2008), p152-3

67 e.g. drawing on Heather Baser & Peter Morgan (2008): Capacity, Change and Performance. European Centre for Development Policy Management, p77-79

68 e.g. Monica Blagescu & John Young (2006): Capacity Development for Policy Advocacy: Current thinking and approaches among agencies supporting Civil Society Organisations, ODI Working Paper #260

69 Baser & Morgan (2008), p96

70 Baser & Morgan, (2008),

71 Horton et al, (2003) p45; this has similarities with ideas on planning in complex environments

72 Chris Cornforth, Jill Mordaunt, Mike Aiken & Shirley Otto (2008): The Charities Aid Foundation Grant Programme: Learning from capacity building and lessons for other funders. Public Leadership and Social Enterprise Research Unit, Open University Business School; p13

73 e.g. Rick James (2001): Practical Guidelines for the Monitoring & Evaluation of Capacity-Building. Intrac; p11

74 these questions draw on a wide range of sources, notably (1) Mike Aitken, Ben Cairns & Romayne Hutchison (2008): Exploring the Advocacy Role of Community Anchor Organisations. IVAR; (2) Horton et al (2003) (3) Titus Alexander (2009): Campaigning is OK! NovasScarman ; (4) Julius Court, Enrique Mendizabal, David Osborne & John Young (2006): Policy Engagement: How Civil Society Can be More Effective. Overseas Development Institute (5) Gustaf Lofgren, Tris Lumley & Adam O'Boyle (2008): Critical Masses. New Philanthropy Capital & (6) Charles Lusthaus et al (2002): Organizational Assessment. International Development Research Centre/Inter-American Development Bank

75 see Aitken, Cairns & Hutchinson (2008) part 2, section 2

76 from Peter van Tuijl & Lisa Jordan (1999): Political Responsibility in Transnational NGO Advocacy. Bank Information Center

77 e.g. Dave Adamson and Richard Bromiley (2008): Community empowerment in practice: Lessons from Communities First. Joseph Rowntree Foundation

78 Adamson and Bromiley (2008)

79 Creasy et al (2007), p28-31

80 John Gaventa (2007): Participation & Citizenship: Exploring Power for Change. Institute of Development Studies; also see Just Associates (2006) Making Change Happen 3: Concepts for Revisioning Power for Justice, Equality and Peace.

81 this analysis is generally described in terms of the "democratic space" available to civil society organisations – this term captures the fact that the ways and means to advance your cause include more than just consideration of the forums available to you or not, you can stake out your own territory in which to operate too

82 drawn from (1) Just Associates (2002): Making Change Happen 1: Citizen Participation and Advocacy; (2) John Gaventa (2007) (3) Jane Foot (2009): Citizen Involvement in Local Governance. Joseph Rowntree Foundation & (4) Ben Cairns, with Jane Harris, Mike Aiken & Romayne Hutchison (2009): Beyond One Voice: the challenge and complexity of representation for local government and the third sector. IVAR/IdeA

83 see McGillivray et all in Power Moves (2008), p45-53

84 e.g. Esther Mebrahtu, Brian Pratt & Linda Lonnqvist (2007): Rethinking Monitoring & Evaluation. Intrac; p19-22

85 e.g. Margaret Mayo (2005): Global Citizens: Social Movements & the Challenge of Globalization. Zed Books; p94

86 Just Associates (2002)

87 adapted from Changes (2007): Dosti's Axis of Influence: Handbook. Voluntary and Community Sector Networks in Dudley Borough & Changes (2008): Empowering Agencies to Engage Communities. Community Development Exchange

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1 The state has widely been seen as the centre of political power due to (1) its legal sovereign status and monopoly of 'legitimate violence' (2) its far reaching effects on people lives through the provision of public goods, welfare, and regulating markets & (3) its accountability, albeit imperfectly, to citizens through a system of representative democracy

2 We use Government to mean any body at local national or international level that has the authority to make and enforce rules, laws and regulations. We use the term public authority to mean any government, or non government body delegated by the government, to carry out a public function. We use State to refer to the set of governing and other supportive institutions that have sovereignty over a defined territory and population, includes armed forces, civil service or state bureaucracy, courts and police

3 David Marsh et al Chapter 9 Globalisation and the State in Colin Hay, Michael Lister and David Marsh (2006): The State. Palgrave; outlining the views of Robert Reich and Kenichi Ohmae p172

4 David Marsh et al in Hay et al (2006), outlining the views of Hirst and Thompson, Rugman, Wade and Zysam p172

5 Matthew Flinders, Chapter 12 Public/Private: The Boundaries of the State, p224 in Hay, et al (2006)

6 Flinders, p 236, in Hay, et al (2006)

7 Matthew Flinders, p 236, in Hay et al (2006)

8 David Beetham, Andrew Blick, Helen Margetts & Stuart Weir (2008): Power & Participation in Modern Britain: Democratic Audit for Carnegie Trust UK p19

9 e.g. thorugh the European Environment Agency, European Medicines Agency, European Food Standard Agency, etc – Beetham et al (2008) p20

10 Beetham et al (2008) p20

11 see IDS Building Responsive States: Citizen Action and National Policy Change, In Focus policy Briefing Issue 05, October 2008

12 see David Truman, Robert Dahl, Charles Lindblom referenced in Erika Cudworth, Timothy Hall & John McGovern (2007): The Modern State: Theories & Ideologies. Edinburgh University Press, p39-47

13 see Rawls and Lymlicka referenced in Cudworth et al (2007) p40

14 e.g. Andrew Heywood (2004): Political Theory: An Introduction, 3rd Edition. Palgrave MacMillan; p79

15 e.g. Ruth Sutton (1999): The Policy Process: An Overview. ODI

16 Theda Skocpol referenced by Vivien Schmidt in Chapter 5 Institutionalism, in Hay et al (2006)

17 e.g. Jake Chapman (2004): System Failure: Why Governments Must Learn to Think Differently, 2nd Edition. Demos

18 Fredrick von Hayek, referred to by Vivien Schmidt in Hay et al (2006)

19 Fredrick von Hayek, referred to by Vivien Schmidt in Hay et al (2006)

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22 eg; Heywood p231]]

23 Chapman (2004)

24 Power Commissioners (2006): Power to the People: The Report of Power: An Independent Inquiry into Britain's Democracy (2006). The Power Inquiry; p12

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26 e.g. Power Inquiry (2006) p47

27 John Curtice & Stephen Fisher (2003): The Power to Persuade: A tale of Two Prime Ministers in Alison Park et al (2003): British Social Attitudes, the 20th Report. Sage Publications; p239

28 Power Inquiry (2006) p48

29 e.g. Power Inquiry (2006), p29

30 Beetham et al (2008), p52;

31 Jane Foot (2009) Citizen Involvement in local governance, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, p6

32 Foot (2009) p5

33 Foot (2009)

34 quoted in Power (2006)

35 quoted in Bobby Duffy, Jessica Vince & Leon Page (2008): Searching for the Impact of Empowerment. Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute, p28

36 Elin Gudnadottir with Caroline Gaunt & Toby Blume (2009): Leading Lights: Research into the role of Councillors and Third Sector Representatives in Community Leadership. Urban Forum

37 John Curtice & Ben Seyd: Is There a Crisis of Political Participation? in Alison Park et al (2003); p94

38 Beetham et al (2008), p52-3

39 Andrea Cornwall (2008): Democratising Engagement: what the UK can learn from international experience. Demos.

40 ESCR Seminar Series

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44 John Gaventa (2004): Representation, Community Leadership and Participation: Citizen Involvement in Neighbourhood Renewal and Local Governance. Neighborhood Renewal Unit, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

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46 Monica Blagescu, Lucy de Las Casas L & Robert Lloyd (2005): Pathways to Accountability: The Global Accountability Project Framework. One World Trust.

47 Cornwall (2008) p26

48 Marilyn Taylor & Diane Warburton (2003): Legitimacy and the Role of UK Third Sector Organizations in the Policy Process. International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations. Vol. 14, No. 3

49 Robert Michels' 'iron lawy of oligarchy' e.g. as referenced in Heywood (2004) pp230-1

50 Stephen Bubb, Chief Executive of ACEVO, The Guardian, June 09

51 e.g. Julius Court, Enrique Mendizabal, David Osborne & John Young (2006): Policy Engagement: How Civil Society Can be More Effective. Overseas Development Institute.

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[54] Ben Cairns (2009): The Independence of the voluntary sector from government in England in Smerdon [ed]: The First Principle of Voluntary Action. The Baring Foundation;

[55] Nick Cohen, How the Government buys the silence of charities; The Observer, November 2009

[56] http://www.thecompact.org.uk

[57] http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/compactadvocacy

[58] Cairns in Smerdon (2009); p43-44

[59] Grant (2000) pp18-37

[60] John Gaventa (2008): Building Responsive States: Citizen Action and National Policy Change, IDS iIn Focus briefing 5. Institute of Development Studies

[61] UK Civil Society Almanac

[62] Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett (2009): The Spirit Level. Allen Lane

[63] e.g. SustainAbility: The 21st Century NGO: In the Market for Change

[64] Chris Roche: Organizational Assessment & Institutional Footprints in Alan Thomas & Giles Mohan (2007): Research Skills for Policy & Development; p294

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[71] Michael Edwards (2008): Just Another Emperor? The Myths and Realities of Philanthrocapital. Demos & the Young Foundation, p44-7

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