

The Thoughtful Activist

*A Toolkit for enhancing NGO Campaigning and Advocacy*

by

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## Introduction

This document is a guide to help you think through your campaigning; it sets out frameworks and tools developed by NEF for use in understanding NGO campaigning and advocacy work. They are not meant to be fixed tools, but guides to help innovative thinking towards better understanding of how campaigns work and how you can make your work more effective.

### **This document is for:**

- people involved in existing campaigns reflect more rigorously and carefully on their work with an aim to becoming more effective
- people wanting to start a campaign gain a better understanding of the complexities with an aim of influencing the strategies they choose to adopt.

It is not a guide on the legal and technical issues surrounding campaigning. It does not tell you how to persuade your board that this is something your organisation should be doing or how to develop a strategic plan (though it does cover some important components of this).

These frameworks and tools were developed during the course of a research project undertaken by NEF during 1997-8, funded by ESCOR of DfID. This research was based on two casestudies of NGO campaigns: the promotion of breastfeeding in Ghana, and work on child labour in the carpet industry in India; further details can be found in the appendix. The frameworks and tools presented in this paper proved useful for the researchers and campaigners in understanding and providing a basis for discussion of the campaigns featured in the casestudies. They have also been used in training NGOs for advocacy.

### **The frameworks and tools are split into three sections:**

1. Getting started
2. Understanding the nature of campaigns
3. Assessing your organisation's role in a campaign

## What is a campaign?

NGO campaigns seek to bring about positive change in policies and people's lives. However the nature of a campaign is not straightforward. A campaign may have been running for many years and have an unclear starting point, having grown out of work on other issues, other campaigns, people's personal commitment and experience, disasters and opportunities. They may transmute to focus on other issues, lead into new campaigns on related issues, alter their demands, grow, narrow or widen at different times.

Campaigns operate at many different levels, and within those levels may be aimed at different actors. Work at different levels may be carried out independently by different actors, and in some cases clash. In other campaigns, and at other times, work at different levels comes together to produce an effect greater than the parts.

Campaigns have no constant institutional actors, but a continual flow in and out of active groups. Some organisations will resonate with the zeitgeist and take off and grow, later the same ones may decline or split, leading to a multiplicity of new actors with different approaches and ideas. Institutions which remain the same in name may change their nature or their approach; they may lose key actors who start new institutions.

At some times a few key individuals can make all the difference, at others the activism of many is called for. Thus individual motivation is a key driving force, but the motives are varied and may be confused. Some may make the issue their life's work or crusade out of strong moral conviction, others may be in it for a short period before moving on to another issue which appears more pressing. Campaigning organisations provide jobs and security for some, but rely also on much voluntary effort, and it can prove to be dangerous work. Many who are paid for their involvement could have more monetary reward elsewhere but can gain in other ways; there is an excitement in being part of a movement that is attacking the status quo, opportunities for travel, profile and status and hopefully a chance to make a real change. Some leaders become prominent national figures, gaining perhaps personal satisfaction, but also the opportunity for greater influence to achieve change for the better.

Most campaigns are based on an oral history which contains a range of multiple and conflicting perspectives. An effective campaign is based on stories and myths and the extent to which these are accepted by different parties. Heroes or heroines are created whose actions and exploits become mythologised and part of the motivating force drawing in new supporters.

Thus one of the essential characteristics of campaigns is their fluidity. This dynamism creates difficulties in assessing and managing them. They cannot be understood as a linear, mechanistic or logical sequence. Neither can they be grasped at one time in their entirety. Models can be made of different aspects; none giving a total or absolute picture. However a number of these models, looking at different aspects and how the different aspects fit together, does build understanding and provide different perspectives which together will enable you to better understand the complexity and fluidity of campaigns. The tools and frameworks in this publication are intended to be used in your own way to build up partial models and hence deepen understanding of campaigns.

### Key results of the research

The research identified a number of factors that contribute to the effectiveness of campaigns. Some of these are reflected in the frameworks presented in this paper:

- campaigns take a long time to achieve real change
- effective campaigns work on a variety of targets, at different levels, often requiring very different attitudes, strategies and skills;
- collaboration between different organisations can help in moving the campaign forward; the structures of collaboration can have implications as to the ways in which it is most effective;
- legitimacy can be established in a number of ways; some are more effective depending on the nature of the campaign; and
- a narrow focus can be extremely effective in getting an issue formulated and ensuring concrete progress and need not hinder the issue widening out at a later stage. There are particular times and levels at which a narrow focus can be effectively used, and other times at which the campaign needs to be broadened to tackle wider issues and causes.

Other aspects that are not reflected in this document are set out below.

It was found that individual champions are crucial to the process at both the national and grassroots level particularly in getting the issue on to the agenda. In the long run there is also a need to mobilise people into a movement around the campaign issue for greater impact at the national and grassroots level.

The casestudies also highlighted the important role of the state, law, international conventions and market regulations to protect the poor from exploitation. NGOs must recognise that they are only one set of players among many and at sometime it is crucial that the government and the law are involved.

The limited role that northern NGOs can play in bringing about real change in southern countries was also apparent. They can provide critical support, for example in giving southern counterparts international platforms, or in providing necessary funding. However they are not able to engage in mobilising movements and promoting civil society at the grassroots.

Next the research put campaigns in context, showing how they are very important, but alone are not enough to ensure implementation and change at the grassroots. Campaigning on an issue is not enough if effective tools for making a change are not promoted as well. In the past legislation or conventions were often seen as the end aim of such work. Now, other tools are also being developed including codes of conduct, labelling and social auditing. However, each tool may also become one of the arenas of the contest, with disagreements on which types should be used and how they should be administered.

Finally it showed how long term grassroots involvement is essential to ensure real change of any type even after policy changes have been achieved; it thus highlighted the essential links between policy and project work.

*Effective NGO Campaigning*, a full summary of the research findings, is available from NEF.

# 1 Getting started

This section is intended to help guide and structure your thinking on what issues your organisation should be campaigning about. It contains three parts:

- 1.1 **The Vision** - to help you identify the issue your organisation feels is most important
- 1.2 **The Context** - to help you understand the context in which you will be working
- 1.3 **The Issue** - to help you analyse the issue you have identified.

## 1.1 The Vision<sup>1</sup>

Most grassroots organisations and NGOs that are involved in, or considering getting involved in campaigning work do so because they are committed to changing some aspect of the current social, political or economic reality. Underlying these organisations are visions of how they would like the world to be, or what an ideal society could look like. This vision, whether explicit or implicit, helps guide and motivate the organisation. Clarifying an organisation's vision and mission sets the stage for effective campaigning work.

It is not essential to have an explicit vision. An organisation can be effective in the short term without knowing where it wants to be in the long term. But it will be more effective if it has in mind a vision of future success. Visions are also extremely powerful motivators.

For campaigning organisations visions need to encompass both society at large and the organisation; these two visions are very different. Where there is a particular wrong to be put right, the vision of success for the organisation will be its own dissolution. This is difficult to contemplate, but healthy if you can achieve it.

A vision is especially difficult to formulate in the early life of an organisation. If people have come together to tackle an urgent short-term need, they may at first have no agreement on the longer term. It may take several years for this to develop.

The criteria for an effective vision are that it should:

- provide a challenge for the whole organisation
- reflect the values and the mission statement
- be realistic, simple and clear
- be able to be translated into goals and strategies

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Hilary Barnard & Perry Walker (1994) *Strategies for Success: A Self-help guide to strategic planning for voluntary organisations* NCVO

### *Creating a vision*

- 1 Divide the planning team into groups of three to six people. Ask each group to develop an answer to the questions: 'What is your vision of what you want our organisation and the world we work in to look like in 5, 10 or 20 years' time? What are its key features?' Emphasise that you want an ideal view, which does not have to take account of the present. Provide flipchart paper and felt-tip pens, and encourage people to express themselves in whatever way seems appropriate. Allow 1-1½ hours for this part of the exercise.
- 2 Bring the team together and ask each group to present its vision to the others. Allow questions only for clarification
- 3 Ask everyone to identify and comment on similarities and differences between the various visions. Emphasise that there is no right or wrong answer.
- 4 Either produce a consolidated version as a group or designate one person to do this after the meeting
- 5 You may find it helpful to return to your small groups to identify the key obstacles to achieving the vision. List separately the obstacles inside and outside the organisation. The results can then be discussed in the later group.

## 1.2 The Context

It is helpful to discuss the context in which you work. All societies are very complex and any model can only be partial; still using a model as a basis for discussions can make them more fruitful.

Two models that can be used in conjunction with each other is to take a 'horizontal' view of the context and a 'vertical' one. The 'horizontal' model splits society up into different sectors and assesses the relative size, strength and power of each one and how they interact. The 'vertical' model looks at what is happening at different levels from the grassroots to the international level.

### Horizontal model: The Macro-Social Context<sup>2</sup>

Societies can be viewed as consisting of three interconnecting sectors: civil society, the state and the market. Many believe that when these sectors are relatively balanced, a healthy and vibrant society can flourish.

For any society these three sectors – civil society, state and market – may be represented by the circles (see diagram on facing page) with the relative size of the circles changing to indicate the approximate size and strength of each sector. The diagram represents a society where the relationships between sectors are in balance.<sup>3</sup> Each sector has institutions that carry out its particular functions. To be successful, organisations need to be concerned about influencing the decisions of the state and market as well as strengthening civil society and democratic culture.

### Vertical view:

A vertical model can be created by discussing what is happening, both positive and negative, at different levels that is pertinent to the issue you want to address. This should consider the grassroots, the regional level, the national level and the international level. It may be that nothing is happening at some of these levels; that in itself is worth discussing.

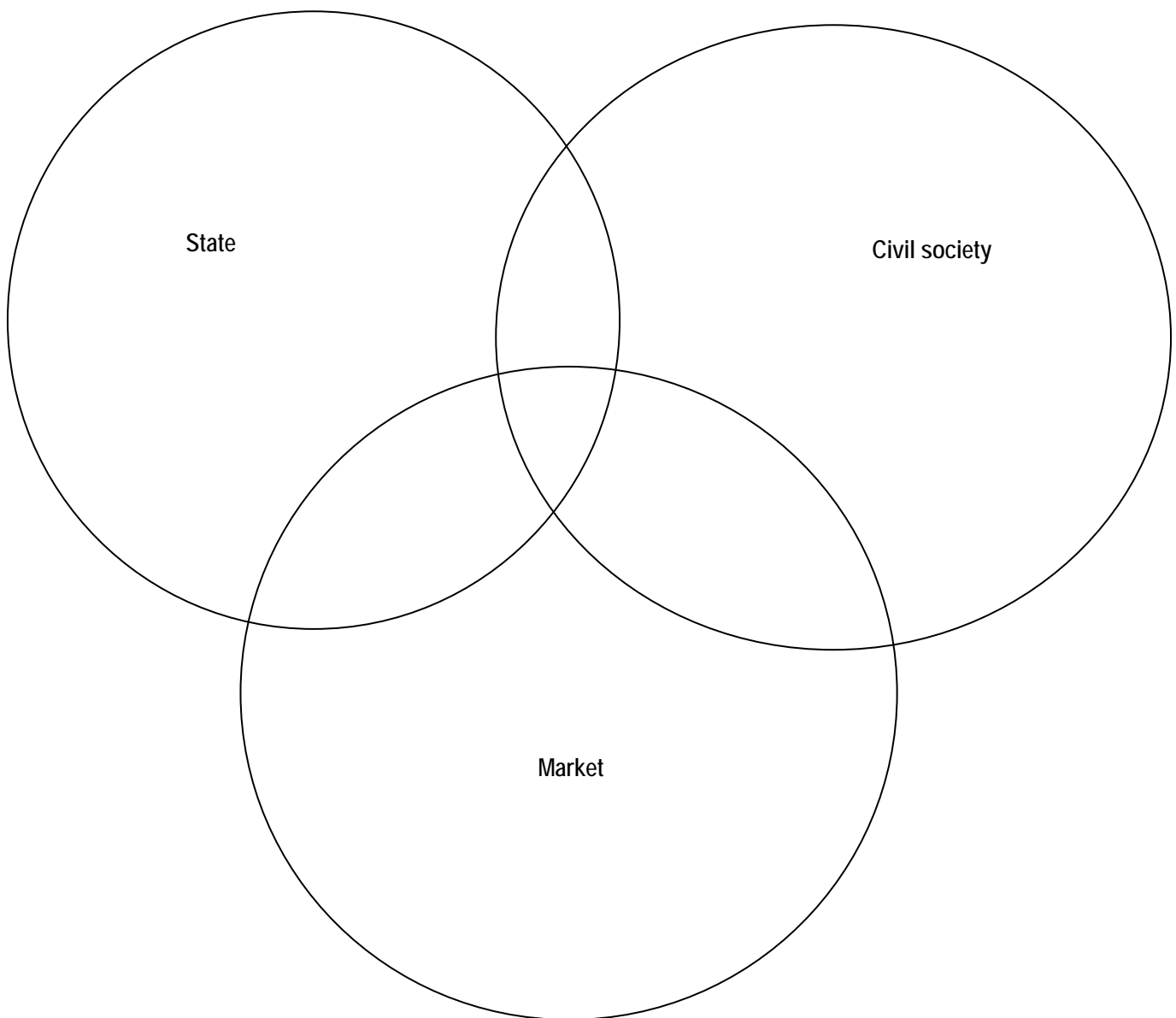
**Table 1: What is happening at different levels**

Level	Arenas	What is happening
International	international NGOs multilateral organisations national governments consuming public voting public industry	
National/ regional	national government regional government judiciary public opinion national NGOs industry	
Grassroots	communities grassroots NGOs families individuals	

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from IDR 1997 Advocacy Sourcebook: Frameworks for Planning, Action and Reflection

<sup>3</sup> Some suggest that to portray the forces in society fully the addition of a fourth sector and circle may be needed to represent family, culture and gender relationships.

Figure 1: The macro social context: civil society, the state and the market.



**To map your society:**

- Inside the circles list the institutions that may affect your campaign.
- Outside the circles list international forces that affect your society.

Both should be included in the discussion and analysis



### 1.3 The Issue<sup>4</sup>

In order to design effective campaigning strategies, it is important for you to identify the problem more clearly; one way to do this involves an examination of probable causes, impacts and solutions.

The following problem analysis framework provides a way for you to analyse and prioritise your concerns; it is intended as a way of structuring discussion of problems and their possible causes, consequences and solutions. Using the framework you can list several of the major problems that your organisation and members have identified and prioritised. You can brainstorm some of the consequences and principle causes of those problems. Then you can discuss ideas for solutions that could help address the causes and solve or lessen the problem.

It is important to remember that policy changes are not the only possible aim of campaigning work. Another important dimension is the emergence of civil society and the strengthening of grassroots groups to enable their voices to be heard in the future; you must decide whether this is an important aspect of the issue you wish to address, or whether policy changes are the most critical.

Table 2: Problem Analysis Framework

<b>Problems</b>	<b>Consequences</b> (who benefits, who loses)	<b>Causes</b>	<b>Solutions</b> (Change in policy, practice, behaviour or program)
1.			
2.			
3.			

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<sup>4</sup> Adapted from IDR 1997 Advocacy Sourcebook: Frameworks for Planning, Action and Reflection

## 2 Understanding the nature of campaigns

Campaigns are complex. The frameworks in this section allow you to better understand how they work. None of the frameworks provide a complete overview, but together they allow you to view the campaign from different perspectives. It contains five parts:

- 2.1 **The timeline** - to help you understand how campaigns develop over time
- 2.2 **Mapping** - to help you understand how campaigns may change
- 2.3 **Levels** - to help you analyse the importance of work at different levels
- 2.4 **Collaboration** - to help you understand the possible forms of collaboration in campaigns
- 2.5 **Legitimacy** - to help you think through how campaigns gain legitimacy

### 2.1 The timeline

Campaigns are not linear, do not have a defined beginning and end, and are happening at many levels simultaneously. Nevertheless a linear model of them can be useful in drawing out the different stages of their evolution.

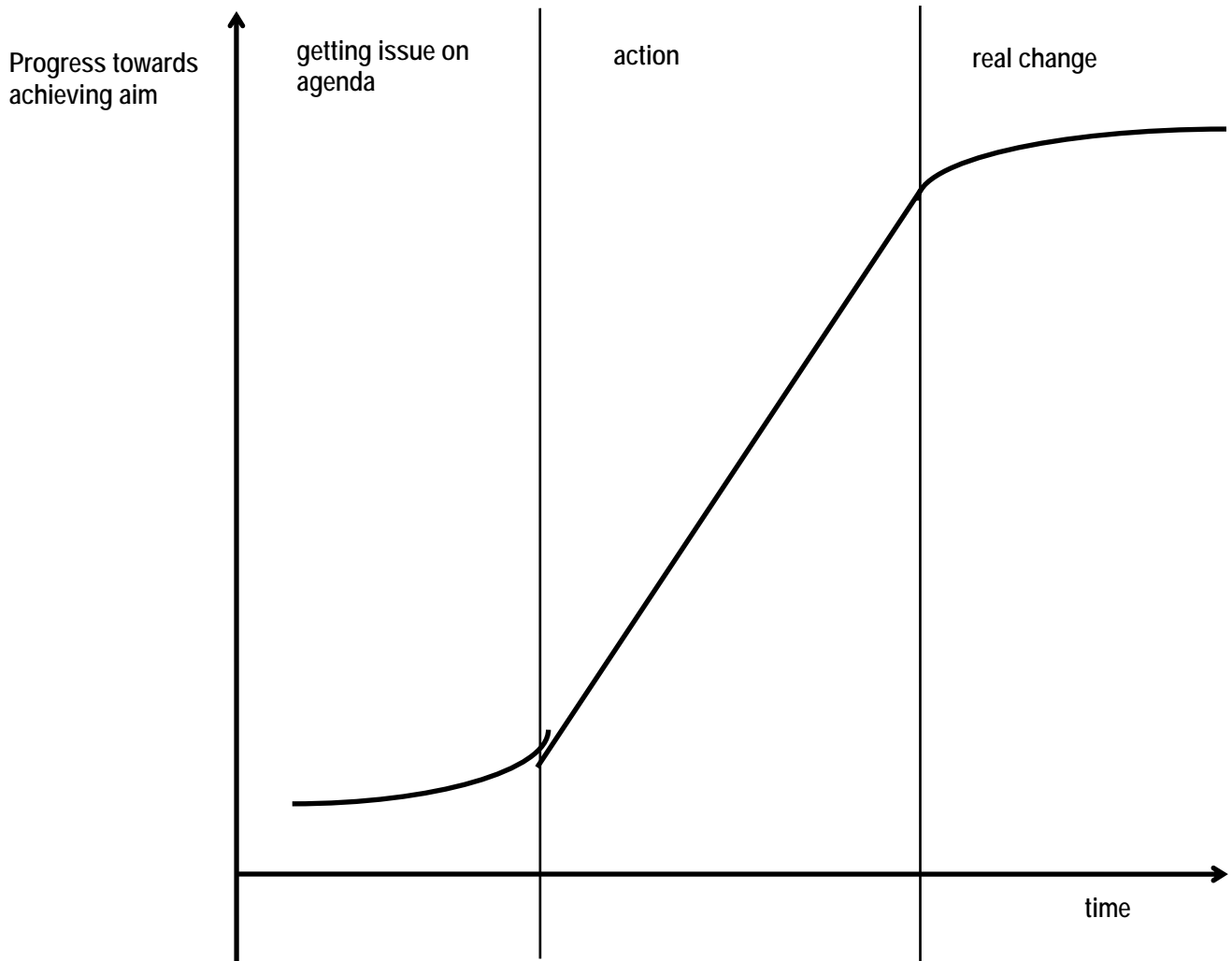
Here the campaign is conceptualised in the form of a timeline, with the line starting at the point where the issue begins to be defined and discussed and reaching a plateau at the time of real change in practice (see figure 2). This is a process, so each stage is unlikely to be completed before the next begins. As a result the role of NGOs is cumulative, with more possibilities and avenues opening up as the issue emerges, but few likely to be discarded. Likewise, while we have portrayed progress towards the goal as a smooth, upward path, real life is not so simple: progress will go faster at some times than others, and may stall or even reverse.

Part of the utility of this exercise is in focusing your attention on the long time scale needed to achieve real change. Understanding where the campaign is in terms of development of the issue can also help you in planning which types of action are most useful when and what sort of success is realistic in the short term.

The action phase can often be usefully split into a number of sections. This will depend on the campaign, but there might be two phases such as awareness raising in phase one, adding the use of tools such as labelling systems in phase two. In the promotion of breastfeeding in Ghana it fell into three phases: phase one focusing almost entirely on monitoring the marketing breastmilk substitutes and developing a Ghanaian Code, phase two adding the promotion of breastfeeding and phase three adding also grassroots support for lactating mothers.

While using this model you should remember that different levels will be at different stages. Real change may be happening at, for example, the international level long before it is seen on the ground. It is also important to understand the links between the different levels, and how progress at one level can speed up, or in some cases slow down, change at other levels. Thus the timeline is best used in conjunction with thinking about work at different levels (see section 2.3 below).

Figure 2: The policy timeline



<p>Stage of emergence of issue</p>	<p>getting issue on agenda - issue starting to be defined and emerge</p>	<p>action - issue is on agenda but no agreement exists. Activities might include a variety of campaigning methods</p>	<p>real change - new practice begins to be seen</p>
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## 2.2 Mapping

There is no fixed way of mapping a campaign, but it is useful to do so as campaigns are fluid. This section gives two examples of how a campaign on child labour was mapped.

You will need to create for yourself the best way of mapping the campaign you are engaged in.

### Example 1: Shifting focus

As described above campaigns change over time, shift their focus and the issues they are trying to address. A pictorial representation such as the one shown on the facing page can prove useful in capturing the flow and direction of the campaign and provide a basis for discussing what strategies and tools are useful when. For example a narrow focus is often a very good communication tool, especially at the international level, and can be extremely effective in getting an issue formulated and ensuring concrete progress. As can be seen from the diagram, such a focus need not hinder the issue widening out at a later stage. There are however potential dangers in the use of a narrow focus (see Table 3). As the campaign broadens more than campaigning and advocacy may be called for such as projects, programmes and organising work at the grassroots.

Questions for you to consider are:

- at what point of the campaign's life, and at what level, might a narrow focus be effectively used?
- what are the dangers in doing so?
- how can these dangers be counteracted? and
- at what point does the campaign need to broaden to tackle wider issues and causes?

**Table 3: Advantages and disadvantages of a focused approach**

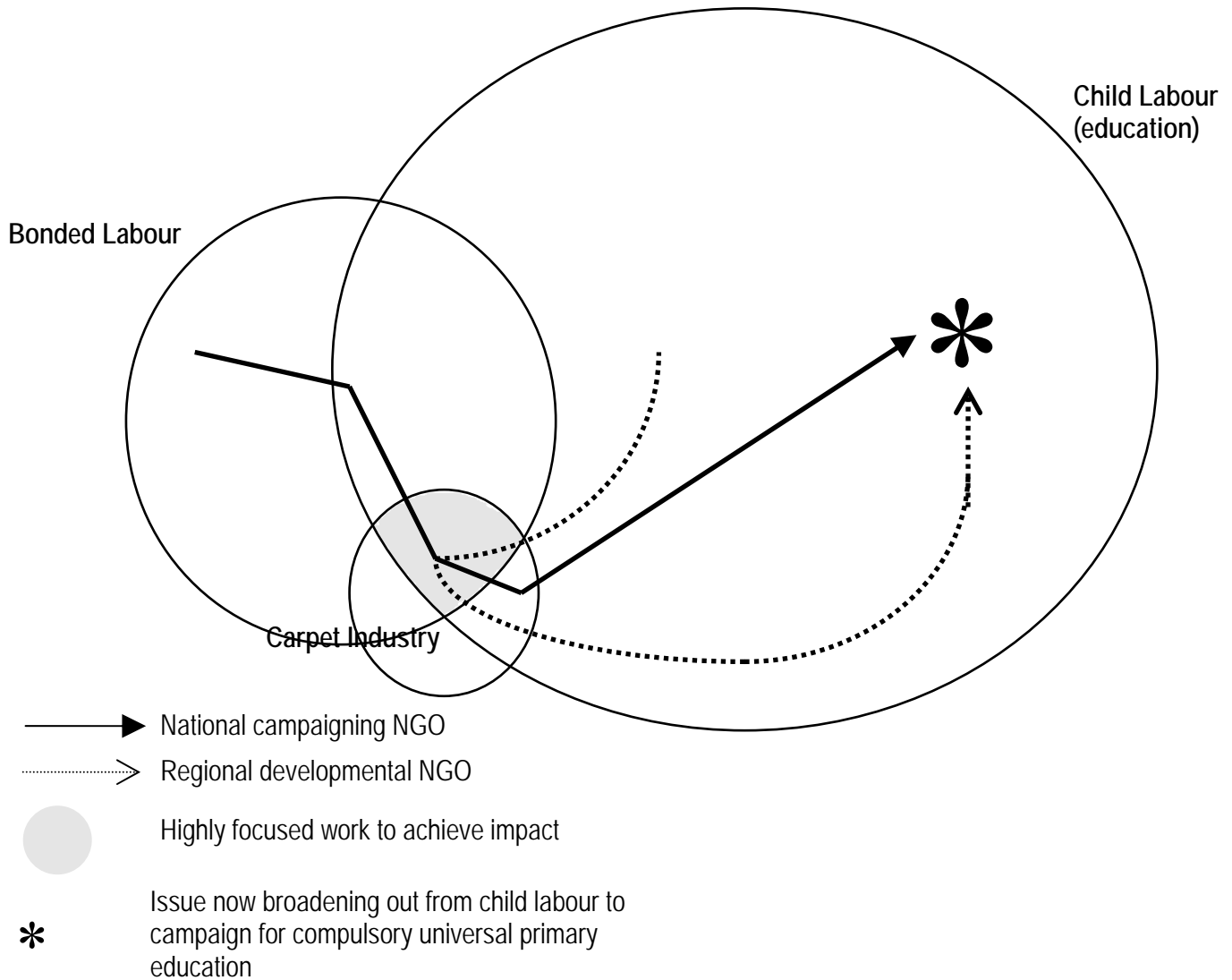
Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• moves national and international campaign forwards</li> <li>• works as a communication tool</li> <li>• makes people at a distance from situation feel they can do something</li> <li>• helps identify a target</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• can distract from wider problem, or deeper causes</li> <li>• can target response too narrowly</li> <li>• can make involvement of grassroots harder</li> <li>• can undermine civil society in nascent democracies</li> </ul>

### Example 2: Increasing Activity

You can obtain a more dynamic representation of the work needed by a multiplicity of actors and the links between them by a flow diagram. Given the complexity of campaigns, this is unavoidably complex as the example given overleaf shows; even so the example is not complete, and probably couldn't be. You can simplify it by putting action in different arenas (e.g. grassroots, NGOs, industry, public sector, overseas, media) on different sheets. If you do this on transparencies, you can then put two or more together to show how different levels affect each other. Some activities will appear on more than one sheet as they cross the boundaries

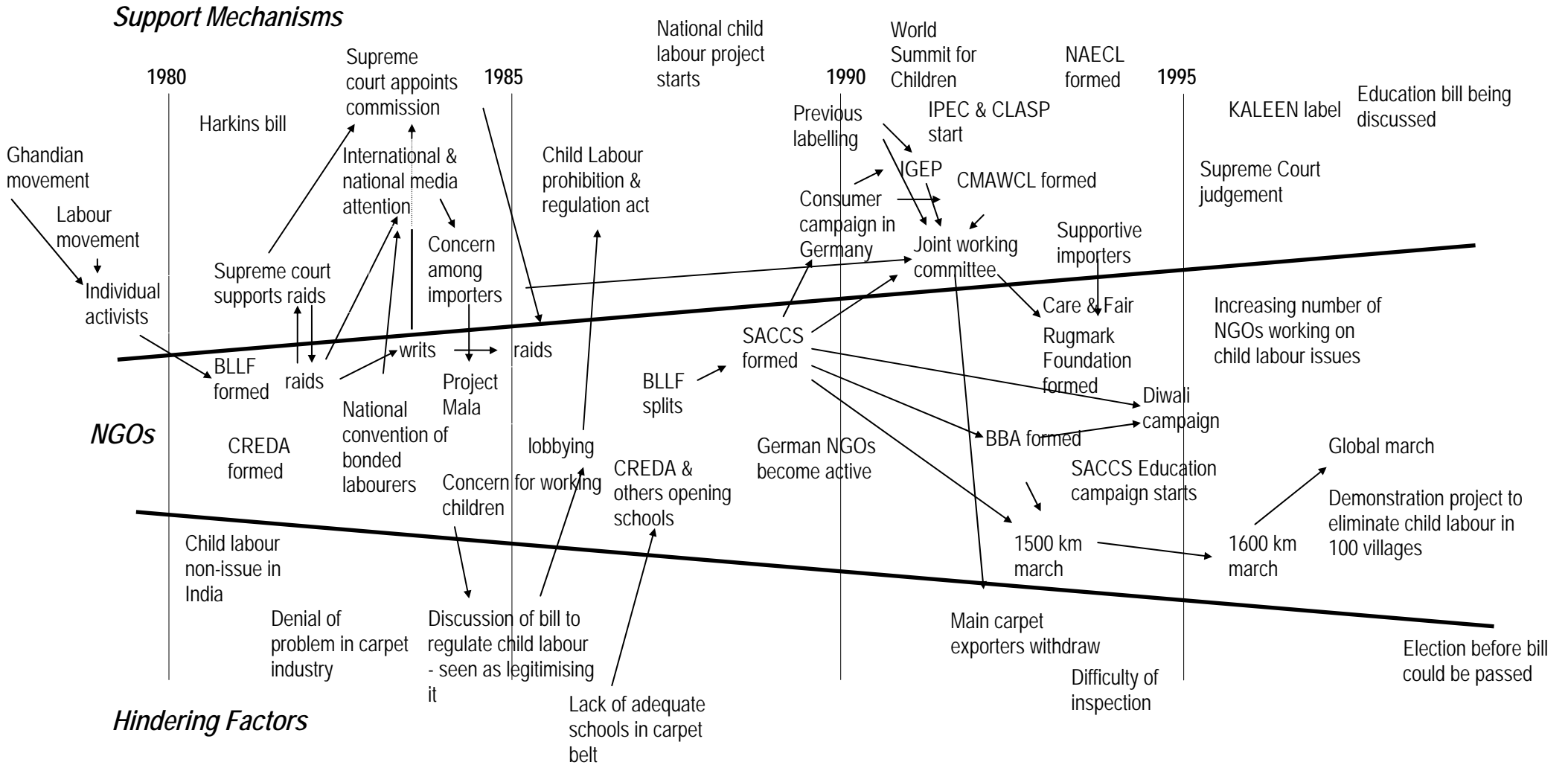
**Figure 3: Shifting focus of child labour campaign for two organisations in India**

The diagram shows how two organisations involved in the child labour campaign in India changed their focus during its course. Here the international campaign really took off when the local activists started to focus narrowly on bonded child labour in the carpet industry.



- Each circle represents each issue addressed or partly addressed by the campaign; the size of the circle representing the wide or narrow focus of the issue
- the overlapping of the issues is shown by the overlapping of the circles
- the lines show the path taken by the campaign

Figure 4: Diagram of Increasing activity on child labour in the carpet industry in India



## 2.3 The levels

As the previous exercise will highlight, to bring about the change that ultimately campaigns seek, targeting one group of actors alone, be it the private sector, or the government, is not enough. Instead work has to be conducted at many different levels (the international, the national, regional and local) and targeting a variety of groups (UN bodies, government, officials, industry, the press, consumers, the judiciary, market-traders, health-workers, parents, villagers, etc.) This in turn may lead to a broadening of the campaign (e.g. from child labour to education, from marketing of breastmilk substitutes to promotion of better health for babies.)

Working at all these levels is an immense challenge. Work may start in only a few of the arenas and expand as the timeline progresses; it is not necessary to work in all of the arenas at the same time. The challenge is to select the arenas which will be most effective in moving the timeline forward at different times, and to link up with appropriate organisations. What is happening at different levels at different times can be set out in a matrix. Again this is only a partial model of one aspect of a campaign; it can be useful to separate out the different levels at which work can be done, but it should not be forgotten that these are interlinked, and work at one level will affect work at other level.

There are a number of different ways of filling in the matrix shown in figure 5. In each case it is intended to be a tool for discussion for NGOs engaged in the campaign rather than a finished product. Using the matrix to discuss all of the following may be valuable:

- a) **What is happening/needs to happen?**
- b) **How can it happen? What are the levers of power and how can they be moved?**
- c) **Who can exert pressure on these levers of power?**

For example if doing a) you would fill in the following:

- What has already happened
- where the campaign is along the timeline in each arena (remember that not all arenas will be at the same stage of the timeline at the same time)
- What still needs to happen for real change in practice to take place (if it hasn't already)
- It can be helpful to rate each entry as essential, helpful, hindering or irrelevant
- links between entries can also be entered by using arrows.

b) and c) can be filled out in a similar way.

Some examples are given below, colour coded as above. These are not 'right', but just illustrate the type of information that you may wish to include.

With a larger number of people this can be done in small groups with each group thinking through a number of different arenas and putting up ideas on cards on a large matrix on the wall.

Examples of entries in the child labour or babymilk casestudies:

Arenas	Getting issue on agenda	Action	Real Change
Local people		How: influence parents, community councils, or micro-entrepreneurs	What: an increased number of mothers exclusively breastfeeding their babies
Business	How: small carpet exporters may see a business advantage in labelling		
Consumers	What: consumer campaign against carpets made with child labour		
International NGOs		Who: a pyramid alliance led by national NGO with charismatic figurehead	



Figure 5: What is happening/needs to happen at each level at each phase

Arenas	Getting issue on agenda	Action	Real Change
Local people			
Community based groups (CBOS)			
National NGOs			
Business			
Local government			
Central government			
Judiciary			
Public Opinion			
Academia & scientific community			
Consumers			
ImporterS			
International NGOs			
Trades Unions			
Multilateral Organisations eg UN, OECD, WTO			

## 2.4 Collaboration

No one organisation can effectively campaign at all the different levels, which often require very different attitudes, strategies and skills. To achieve this complex mix of work, different types of organisations are called for, ranging from more activist to more developmental.

Collaboration between different organisations is needed to help in moving the campaign forward. Even without formal collaboration, a variety of NGOs working with different strategies in different arenas is helpful; although this can also lead to conflicts. Collaboration is particularly difficult among NGOs pursuing very different campaigning styles and strategies; this lack of collaboration can actually undermine progress. As more players become involved, co-operation becomes a lot more complex.

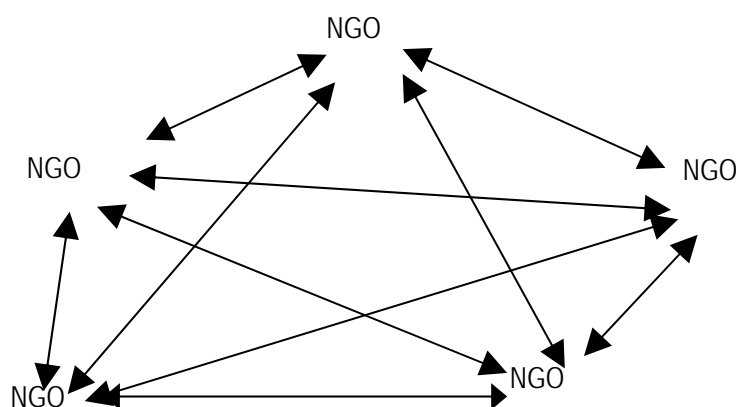
There are three different structures for organising collaboration, each having particular strengths: the pyramid, the web and the net. These are shown in the diagrams on the following pages.

**Table 4: Advantages and disadvantages of different structures of collaboration**

Structure	Advantages	Disadvantages
Pyramid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>dynamic</li> <li>quick to act</li> <li>can speak with authority of many member organisations</li> <li>can mobilise a lot of people</li> <li>helps to get access to top level of policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>members may feel loss of identity</li> <li>organisations agree on a joint message, some compromise may be necessary</li> <li>strengthening civil society at grassroots may not be given adequate attention</li> <li>danger of speaking 'for' clients rather than facilitating them to speak for themselves</li> </ul>
Wheel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>more independence at the grassroots</li> <li>good for information exchange and sorting</li> <li>centres of specialisation in large networks can aid in information sorting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>can be harder to show a united front or common identity</li> <li>process of change is slow</li> <li>campaign may miss opportunities for sudden changes in practice</li> </ul>
Net	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>good for information exchange</li> <li>least investment of time and money</li> <li>organisations retain their autonomy and control over their own message</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>slow to take action</li> <li>possibly would need to change into a wheel or pyramid before effective campaigning action could be taken</li> <li>weaker organisations unlikely to be heard</li> <li>grassroots organisations likely to be excluded</li> </ul>

**Figure 6: Net structure of collaboration**

No focal points; information flows to and from all organisations in roughly equal quantities.



**Figure 7: Pyramid structure of collaboration**  
Information flows up and down to a co-ordinating secretariat

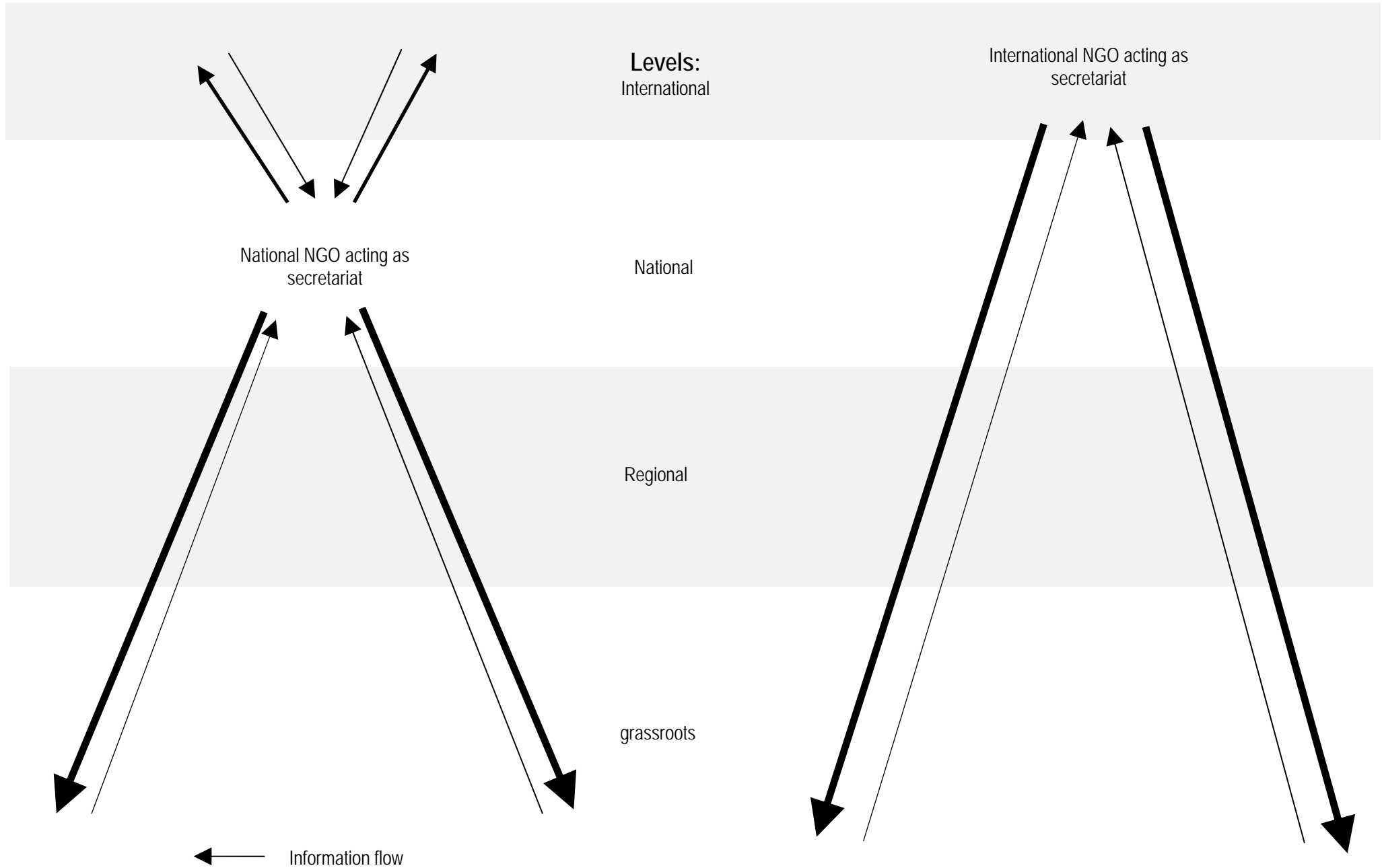
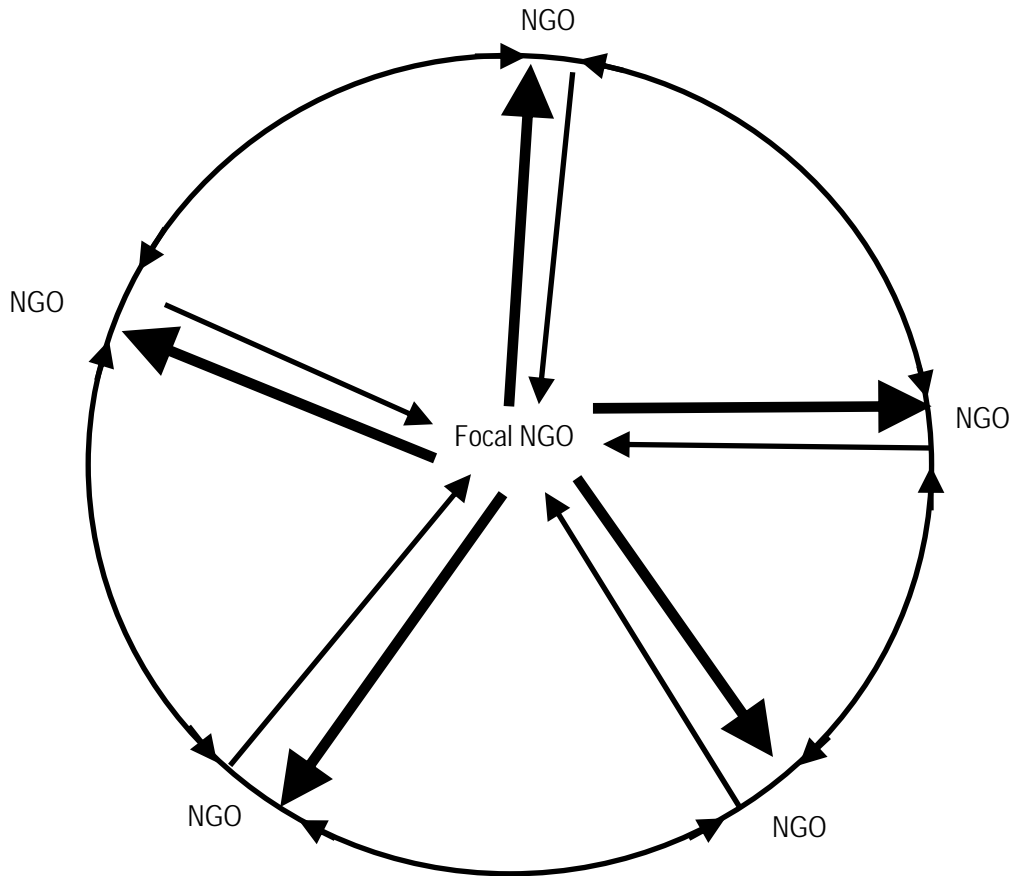


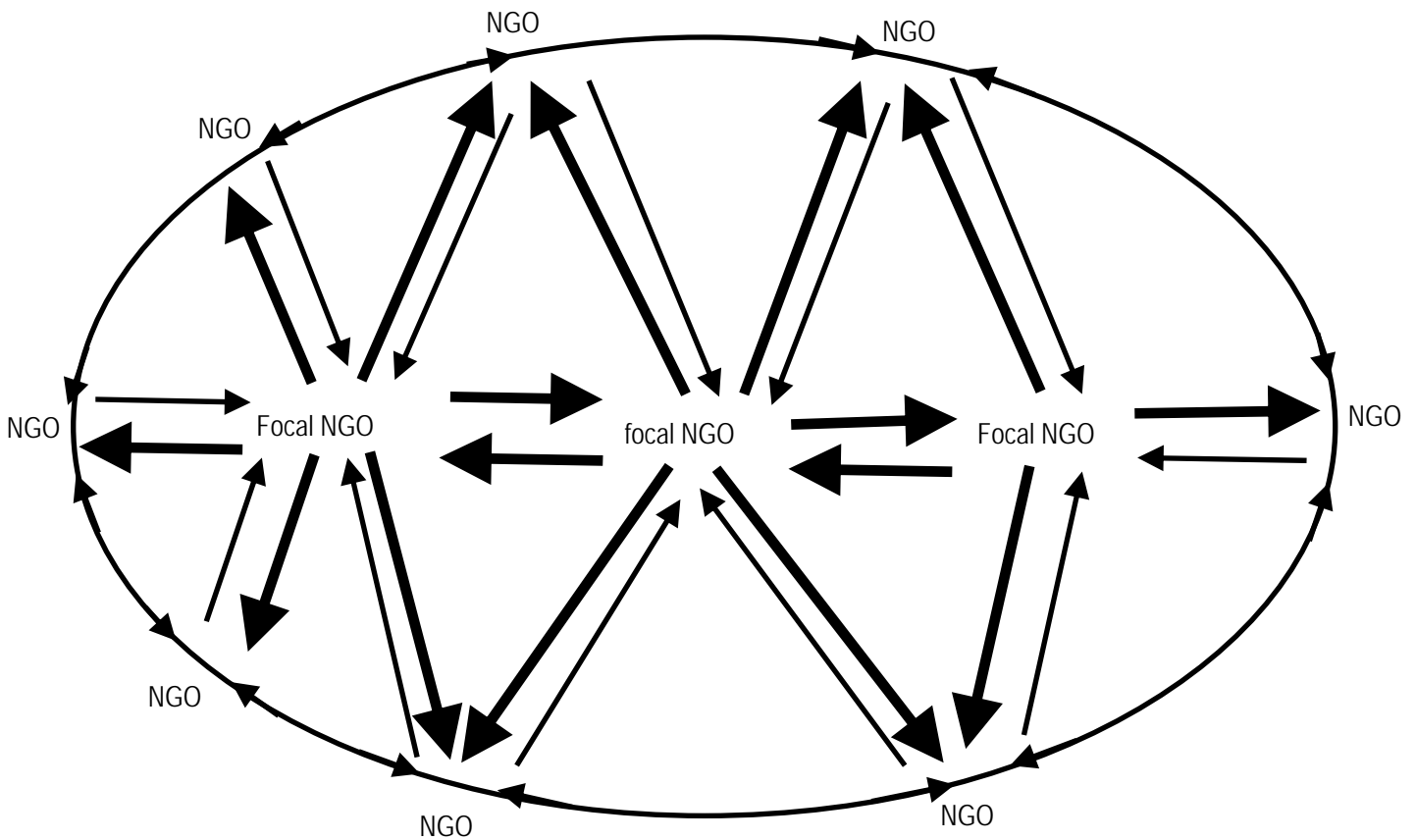
Figure 8: Wheel structure of collaboration with one focal point



**Wheel:**

Focal points exist with most information flowing in and out of them, but information also flows directly between members.

Figure 9: Wheel structure with a number of focal points



## 2.5 Legitimacy

All the actors in a campaign, both the NGOs and their targets, spend time and energy establishing and maintaining their own legitimacy and contesting that of their opponents. This is often essential for the NGOs, in terms of campaigning successfully and raising adequate resources. At the same time, the pressure on organisations to show results can lead them to downplay the role of other organisations. The desire of NGOs to establish their own legitimacy can thus create tensions in collaborating with other NGOs, especially if they are potential competitors for funds.

There are a number of different bases for NGO legitimacy in campaigning. These are explored further in Table 5.

**Table 5: Possible consequences of different bases for legitimacy  
see summary paper for update**

<b>Work legitimised by:</b>	<b>Possible consequences</b>
<b>Practice to policy</b> - seeking to influence policy by pointing to practical experience on the ground.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• complex message, difficult communication tool</li> <li>• less open to dispute</li> <li>• works well for grassroots NGOs</li> <li>• can be challenged if NGOs claim to speak for people they have not genuinely consulted</li> </ul>
<b>Value-based</b> - where NGOs promote a particular value which is widely recognised within society and/or enshrined in international law.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• extremely powerful when combined with pictures, stories, myths and when taps into innate values many of us feel</li> <li>• powerful when values are enshrined in international conventions etc.</li> <li>• in countries where values are not universally held can lead to accusations of selecting values to ensure funds from overseas, especially in professional rather than voluntary organisations</li> <li>• can be challenged for just talking not doing</li> <li>• can be accused of speaking 'for' beneficiaries rather than enabling them to express their own views</li> </ul>
<b>Knowledge and research</b> - acting as an expert on a particular issue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• works well when there is consensus on topic or you have credible allies</li> <li>• particularly useful and relevant for more technically based policy issues</li> <li>• can be open to challenge by views based on alternative research</li> <li>• open to question of who funds/sponsors research or organisation</li> </ul>
<b>Through grassroots and other civil society organisations</b> - adhering to and strengthening democratic principles and practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• works well at grassroots</li> <li>• necessary for civil society aims</li> <li>• long-term engagement required</li> <li>• may mean campaigning opportunities missed</li> <li>• weak impact at higher policy levels</li> </ul>
<b>Alliances and networks</b> - other members of network gain legitimacy from one of above.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• quickly spreads work to a wide audience</li> <li>• gives strength of numbers</li> <li>• disputes over who 'owns' work</li> <li>• successful alliances often require significant management inputs</li> </ul>

### 3 Assessing your organisation's role in a campaign

As can be seen from the preceding sections, no one organisation can hope to do everything in a campaign or work at all the necessary levels. Now you need to look inwards in your organisation to see where your strengths and weaknesses lie and what role you can most effectively play. This section is in three parts:

- 3.1 **Organisational issues** - covering levels, collaboration and legitimacy as they pertain to your organisation, along with some additional issues
- 3.2 **SWOT analysis** - assessing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for your organisation
- 3.3 **Indicators** - how can your organisation assess the success of its campaigning work?

#### 3.1 Organisational issues

Many competencies emerge as being necessary to carry out effective campaigning work. Some, such as working at different levels, collaboration and legitimacy, have already been explored.

##### Levels:

Your organisation cannot work at all the necessary levels in a campaign from the grassroots to the international. In parts 1.2 and 2.3 you looked at the situation at each level and what needs to be changed at each level. Now it is time to look at which level and arenas your organisation is able to operate at. You may be a northern based NGO that has potential to influence consumers and decision makers in the north and even events in the international arenas such as UN bodies or the World Bank. You may be a southern based NGO that has potential to influence your national government and local communities. You should discuss your most effective role within your organisation and with your partners.

##### Collaboration:

However the campaign must operate at many levels. With whom will you collaborate, and how? As a pyramid structure, a wheel or a net? (see section 2.4).

Additional questions you might use to stimulate discussion about the way your organisation collaborates and interacts with others include:<sup>5</sup>

- In what direction is most of the information flowing? Why?
- Who uses that information?
- Can the grassroots be kept better informed?
- Who makes what kinds of decisions in the collaboration?
- How transparent and open is that decision making process?
- To what extent are the grassroots involved in decisions that are made?
- How accountable is the secretariat (if there is one) to the other collaborating NGOs?

Mapping of your links with other organisations and discussion of the above questions can then be used to explore the constraints against effective collaboration and how they might be overcome. These may include:

- different philosophies
- different approaches
- competition over who gets the credit, profile and publicity
- competition over resources
- competition over legitimacy and credibility
- power relations
- strong but to some extent conflicting values

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<sup>5</sup> Adapted from IDR 1997 Advocacy Sourcebook: Frameworks for Planning, Action and Reflection

Amidst these differences, moreover, many NGOs are unable to see that approaches and styles very different from their own may be essential to move the campaign forward at the different levels explored in part 2.3, or that this work can be complementary to what they are doing.

### **Legitimacy:**

The campaign as a whole, or other partners in the campaign, may gain legitimacy in a variety of ways as described in part 2.5. It is time to look also at your organisation in detail and ask where you gain your legitimacy: practice-to-policy, value based, knowledge and research, through grassroots and other civil society organisations or through alliances and networks (see Table 5). Questions to help you think around this issue are listed below. Remember how your organisation is perceived by others is at least as important as how you perceive it; and your targets will undermine your legitimacy if they can.

- where does our organisation gain its legitimacy?
- what support do we have from grassroots activists?
- On whose behalf does our organisation speak?
- On what authority or basis does our organisation speak?
- Who grants the authority or right to speak?
- Which actors in the process accept our legitimacy?
- What basis of legitimacy do they accept?
- Which actors in the campaign question our legitimacy?
- Why do they question it?
- What is the reliability and accuracy of the information our group provides to the public?
- How are our organisation's leaders perceived by key powerholders and opinion leaders vis-à-vis their trustworthiness, knowledge and expertise?
- How can we increase our legitimacy?

### **Resources:**

You might also find it useful to discuss questions around resources:

- what are our current sources of finance?
- how will we raise finance in the future?
- will becoming involved in this campaign affect this? How?
- campaigning is staff intensive - do we have the staff time available to keep at it in the long run?
- do we have appropriate staff expertise? - this might include understanding of policy making processes, analytical capabilities, organisational and mobilisation skills, leadership, public speaking and media skills - the list goes on!

### 3.2 SWOT analysis

When undertaking advocacy work, it is helpful for you to have a solid sense of your organisation's strengths and weaknesses. This will assist you in planning effective strategies and assessing where you need support and how you can best present yourselves to the public at large.

SWOT analysis is an effective method to identify your strengths and weaknesses, and to examine the opportunities and threats you face. It can be particularly useful when dealing with complex situations in a limited amount of time; here you may wish to concentrate on those issues that have the most impact on the situation. The purpose of SWOT analysis is to isolate key issues and to facilitate a strategic approach.

Strengths are positive aspects internal to the organisation. Weaknesses are negative aspects internal to the organisation. Opportunities are positive aspects external to the organisation. Threats are negative aspects external to the organisation.

To carry out a SWOT analysis write down answers to the following questions:

**Table 6: SWOT Analysis**

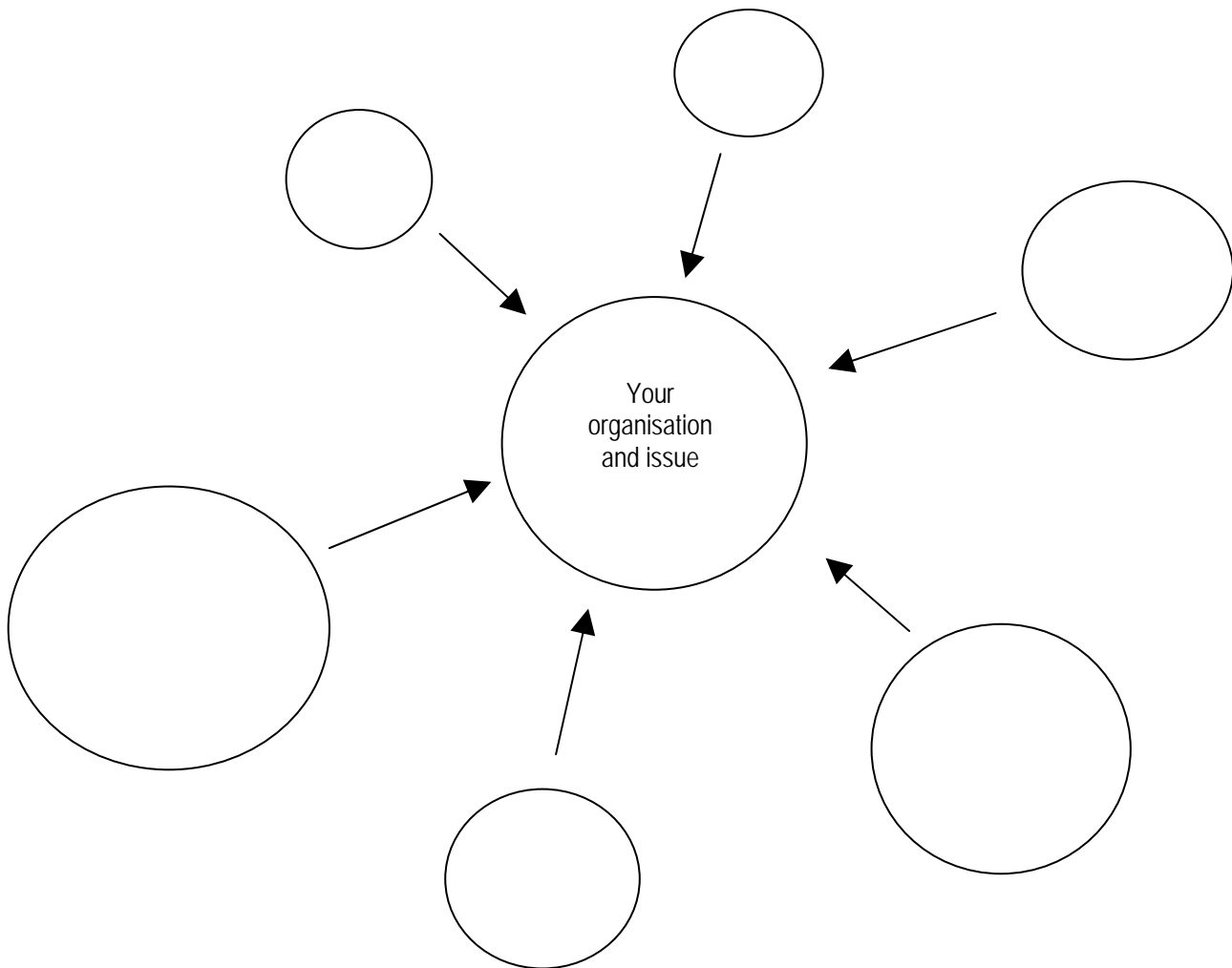
<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are your advantages?</li> <li>• What programs and activities does the organisation do best?</li> <li>• In what areas is it considered to excel by its staff and by outsiders?</li> <li>• What are the most important capacities and resources of its staff? Its leadership? Its alliances and partnerships with other key actors?</li> </ul> <p>Consider these both from your organisation's point of view and from the point of view of the organisations you deal with.</p>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What programs and activities does the organisation need to improve?</li> <li>• In what areas do staff and outsiders have concern about the organisation?</li> <li>• What are the most important missing capacities and resources of its staff? Its leadership? Its alliance and partnerships with other actors?</li> <li>• What is done badly?</li> <li>• What should be avoided?</li> </ul> <p>Again these should be considered both from your organisation's point of view and from the point of view of the organisations you deal with.</p>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where are opportunities facing you?</li> <li>• What are the interesting trends?</li> </ul> <p>Useful opportunities can come from such things as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International conferences or meetings</li> <li>• changes in government policy related to your subject</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What obstacles do you face?</li> <li>• What are your opponents doing?</li> <li>• How dependent is the work on key individuals?</li> </ul>

For each strength, rate how critical it is to accomplishing your organisation's campaigning effort. For each weakness, rate how critically it would hinder your campaign. Sometimes it is useful to also include an assumptions section. When you have finished, the opportunities section can be used to develop your action plans.

Another way to analyse these factors is to map them. In this case represent your organisation and the issue by a circle in the middle of the map; larger circles are then drawn to indicate the more important parties relevant to the problem, smaller circles to represent those of lesser importance or power. Each circle should include the name of the party and an 'O' or 'T' indicating whether it is considered an opportunity, threat or both;



Fig 9: Opportunities and threats map<sup>6</sup>



After the diagram is completed, other focus questions can deepen the analysis. These include:

- What does this map tell us about the most important opportunities and threats for our campaigning work?
- What are the relationships between the actors, and what implication do those relationships have for our work?
- How can we take advantage of the opportunities and diminish the threats?

### 3.3 Indicators

Indicators are tools to simplify, measure and communicate complex events or trends. They have to communicate effectively so they have to be both accurate, and interesting: to 'resonate', to strike a chord, make people pay attention, think debate and take action.

The best indicators have some or all of the following qualities:

- already or readily available
- measurable and meaningful
- resonant and easy to understand
- up-to-date and repeatable (to allow comparisons over time and place)
- cost effective

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<sup>6</sup> Adapted from IDR 1997 Advocacy Sourcebook: Frameworks for Planning, Action and Reflection

Campaigning NGOs can use a variety of indicators to assess the success of their work. Such indicators may involve statistical survey data (e.g., exclusive breastfeeding rates), simple quantitative measures (e.g., the number of activists or column inches in newspapers), significant events (e.g., a landmark judgement) or more qualitative measures (e.g., changes in political will or demands being made by communities). Most of these indicators are specific to individual campaigns. There are no common indicators across all campaigns, and even indicators that have been identified for specific campaigns may be limited for a number of reasons.

First the fluidity, complexity and dynamism of campaigns means that indicators may also need to change: an indicator that was relevant at the start of the campaign may lose that relevance as the campaign widens or changes its focus. This can be seen for example in judgements of the babymilk campaign as a failure based on an early target of getting Nestlé and other manufacturers to abide by the WHO code, while ignoring considerable other successes within many southern countries.

Next the relevant indicators may vary depending on the level or arena in which the campaign is operating, or even on the campaigning NGO, as different NGOs within the same campaign may adopt very different strategies. In addition the arena or level at which action is predominating may change through the course of the campaign.

This means that general indicators for abstract campaigns are too simplistic. You need to choose appropriate indicators with your collaborators, and review their relevance regularly. We recommend the frameworks in this report as a basis for ensuring that you have selected enough (but not too many) indicators to cover the key aspects of the campaign.

The many different actors involved in any campaign suggest that methodologies that involve stakeholder consultation (such as social auditing<sup>7</sup>) may also have much to offer, not only in assessing the effectiveness of a campaign, but also in developing greater collaboration and cohesion within it.

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<sup>7</sup> see Pearce, Raynard & Zadek 1996 Social Auditing for Small Organisations

## Afterword

The frameworks described above are tools designed to give insights into certain aspects of campaigns and are not fixed - you should be creative in experimenting with different ways of understanding the campaigns your organisation is involved in. It must be stressed again that campaigns are complex and fluid and by their very nature only certain aspects can be captured by such frameworks. There is value in trying to understand campaigns more clearly, but in attempting to do so the potential conflict between donor funding procedures and effectively supporting campaigns becomes very clear. Successful campaigns do not lend themselves easily to the project cycle, logical frameworks, goal setting or clear input and output indicators.

There is a tension between activism and analysis. Campaigns feed and grow on created myths; to attempt to unpack such myths can shake their foundations. Support from an outside organisation has to be done with care and understanding.

We hope that this publication will prove useful to you; feel free to adapt and alter the frameworks to fit your own situation. We would welcome any feedback on how useful you found this guide, which sections were most useful, which least, and any major gaps. You might also wish to look at the guides produced by the Institute of Development Research, the National Council for Voluntary Organisations and BOND. Details can be found below.

The New Economics Foundation is itself involved in a lot of campaigning of different kinds; and is using some of these frameworks and tools in that work. NEF was a prime mover in the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) and the Jubilee 2000 campaign: At the time of writing the ETI has just signed up its 13<sup>th</sup> major company as a member, and Jubilee 2000 has reached a critical point and is gaining substantial international attention from leaders. We hope these two initiatives lead to real change to help the world's poor. We hope also that your campaigns are equally successful.

For other publications on similar themes see:

Advocacy Sourcebook:  
Frameworks for Planning, Action  
and Reflection (1997) & Building  
Knowledge and Community for  
Advocacy (1999)  
Institute for Development  
Research, 44 Farnsworth Street,  
Boston, MA 02210-1211, USA  
tel: (617) 422-0422  
fax: (616) 482-0617idr@jsi.com

BOND is currently preparing  
introductory sheets to advocacy.  
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Fax: 0171 837 4220

The Good Campaigns Guide,  
Brian Lamb  
NCVO Publications  
Regents Wharf  
8 All Saints Street  
London N1 9RL

## Appendix

### The casestudies in the NGO Campaigning research

The New Economics Foundation conducted research based on two casestudies of NGO campaigns:

- the promotion of breastfeeding in Ghana
- work on child labour in the carpet industry in India

Research in Ghana was carried out in collaboration with the Ghanaian Infant Nutrition Action Network (GINAN), a Ghanaian organisation which is a member of both the Infant Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) and the World Alliance on Breastfeeding Action (WABA). In India it was carried out in collaboration with the South Asian Coalition on Child Servitude (SACCS) and the Centre for Rural Education and Development Action (CREDA). SACCS is a large activist organisation with headquarters in Delhi. It is a network of 470 NGOs in the region, the majority in India. CREDA is a small, but growing, social development NGO based in Mirzapur, in the centre of the carpet belt in Uttar Pradesh.

Both NGO campaigns have met with considerable success allowing the research to analyse the development of the campaigns from their early beginnings to significant change in practice. Since industry is becoming an increasingly important target of NGO campaigning and policy work, both campaigns were chosen to focus on corporate or industrial activity. Taken together the two casestudies covered influence on many different levels of the private sector: large transnational corporations, medium-size importers, nationally-owned exporters, and the micro-scale represented by individual loom-owners and market-women. These are all part of the chain of production and make the work indicative of a wide range of industrial activity. The casestudies also showed the influence NGOs may have in other arenas, for example on international bodies or on governments.

The babymilk campaign is a long established international campaign with significant direction given by northern NGOs campaigning against large northern corporations. Co-ordinated work on the issue of breastfeeding in Ghana began in 1987 with the formation of GINAN which pressed the government to take action. Work on the control of marketing of breastmilk substitutes progressed fairly quickly at first with a code committee functioning within a year and a Ghanaian code drafted by 1989, although the code is still waiting to become law due to bureaucratic delays. At the same time GINAN has been monitoring the marketing of breastmilk substitutes in Ghana using the international code as the benchmark.

The promotion of breastfeeding was given attention next: health workers were trained and Ghana became involved in the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative, started by UNICEF, and the celebration of World Breastfeeding Week, started by WABA. More recently work has gone into the support of lactating mothers with the training of grassroots breastfeeding advisors and the formation of mother support groups.

The casestudy showed clearly the catalytic effect that the NGO GINAN had in getting things moving in Ghana: it was necessary for a Ghanaian person and organisation to start to work on the issue before things began to happen, in spite of a long running international campaign. At the same time, collaboration between GINAN and international NGOs has been particularly important in the campaign in Ghana. Being a member of IBFAN and WABA has helped legitimise the work of GINAN as well as providing channels for sharing and disseminating the information needed. The work in Ghana has also benefited greatly from experience and knowledge gained in similar campaigns in other countries.

This campaign on child labour in the carpet industry in India was initiated by NGOs and activists within India and targets a local industry, although, because the industry is a major export one, northern NGOs, consumers and importers have played critical roles. The campaign used many different strategies. It started with raids to free bonded children, which still continue. A consumer campaign followed in Germany, one of two main destinations for Indian carpets. This sought to educate consumers about the plight of children used in the production of hand-knotted carpets. At the same time the Harkin Bill was pending in the US, threatening to legislate against the import of goods made with child labour. These two pressures prompted talk of a labelling system leading eventually to the Rugmark labelling scheme. This was followed soon after by various other (rival) labelling schemes. At the same time a variety of work has gone on at the grassroots including motivating parents to send children to school not work, and providing schools.

In this casestudy the NGOs have not had such a significant impact in introducing new laws or policies, although some such changes have occurred, but have had a great impact in influencing the implementation and interpretation of policies. They have worked with the judiciary and government officials to enforce existing laws, they have been able to threaten export markets sufficiently to bring about some changes within industry without actually implementing a boycott, they established

the labelling scheme (Rugmark) as a constructive outcome for the consumer campaign, and they have also had a significant impact at the grassroots and on the emergence of civil society, among parents, communities, activists and NGOs. Above all there is some evidence of a reduction in child labour in the specific industries and areas targeted, although most agree that there has not necessarily been a reduction in child labour overall. The campaign has also had significant impact on moving forward the debate on child labour as a whole. It has fed into work on carpet children in other countries and work on other industries in India, such as firecrackers and footballs. It has also fed into the Indian campaign for universal primary education.

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