



BENEFICIARY VOICE IN CAMPAIGNING

A RESOURCE JOINTLY PRODUCED
BY BOND AND NCVO

BENEFICIARY VOICE IN CAMPAIGNING

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YOU MIGHT CALL IT INFLUENCING, VOICE, ADVOCACY OR CAMPAIGNING, BUT ALL THESE ACTIVITIES ARE ABOUT CREATING CHANGE

WHAT IS CAMPAIGNING?

You might call it influencing, voice, advocacy or campaigning, but all these activities are about creating change. At NCVO we use the word campaigning and define this as the mobilising of forces by organisations or individuals to influence others in order to effect an identified and desired social, economic, environmental or political change.

Whatever you call it and whether you are trying to save a local community centre from closing or lobbying government, campaigning is about creating a change. The impact is the real change created by a campaign – the difference it makes to people's lives.

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INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS BENEFICIARY VOICE?

In this publication we use the term ‘beneficiary voice’ in campaigns to mean the extent to which beneficiaries are:

- involved in campaign decision making, and/or
- directly represented or visible in campaign activities.

‘Beneficiaries’ are people directly affected by an issue who stand to benefit from the outcome of the campaign. They may include people affected by poverty, HIV and AIDS, particular policies or programmes, disability, discrimination, social or environmental injustice, or other issues.

In this publication we use the term ‘beneficiary organisation’ to mean organisations run by and for beneficiaries, whether membership, community or user organisations.

We use the term ‘voluntary’ organisation to mean voluntary and community organisations that campaign ‘with’ or ‘for’ beneficiaries, or support them in other ways.

By ‘campaign’ we mean organised action to achieve a desired social, economic, environmental or political change, often involving tackling underlying power relations.

MEMBER OF BOND QUALITY GROUP

THE QUALITY OF AN NGO’S WORK IS PRIMARILY DETERMINED BY THE QUALITY OF ITS RELATIONSHIPS WITH ITS INTENDED BENEFICIARIES

WHY BENEFICIARY VOICE IS IMPORTANT

There are a number of powerful reasons why a strong beneficiary voice can be important:

- It can strengthen campaign effectiveness by
 - increasing the campaign’s legitimacy and moral case
 - increasing the campaign’s credibility with decision makers
 - increasing or changing decision makers’ understanding of an issue
 - motivating campaigners and supporters.
- It helps ensure accountability to beneficiaries and therefore that change is relevant and sustainable – research on effective campaigns has shown how ‘long term grassroots involvement is essential to ensure real change of any type even after initial policy changes have been achieved’ (Chapman & Fisher, The Thoughtful Activist).
- It can empower beneficiaries to become active agents of change by helping strengthen status, boost self esteem, and improve self efficacy.
- It can strengthen participatory democracy by strengthening and widening the range of voices that are heard.
- The ‘right to be heard’ is a basic human right for everyone – there is an obligation on us all to promote beneficiary voice.
- It can provide opportunities for voluntary organisations to plan for the eventual devolvement of campaigns to beneficiaries.
- It can help voluntary organisations respond to the increasing external demands for them to be accountable to their constituencies because of their growing involvement in public service delivery and participatory democracy.

Sources:
Adapted by the editor from Jim Coe and Tess Kingham, *Tips on Good Practice in Campaigning*, 2007, NCVO
www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/goodpractice/campaigning

Source: Tim Gee Bond, *Beneficiary Voice Peer Exchange*, 2009

ROLE IN THEATRE	ROLE IN CAMPAIGN / INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING
Playwright – behind the scenes	Beneficiaries define what is to be campaigned on i.e. campaign selection.
Director – behind the scenes	Beneficiaries plan how the campaign should be implemented.
Actors – visibility on stage	Beneficiaries are actively and visibly involved in implementing the campaign.
Audience response – in the auditorium	Beneficiaries are largely not involved in designing, managing, or delivering the campaign, but it is designed in their interest and they have the power to hold the campaign to account.

WHAT OTHER WORDS CAN BE USED?

Many people object to the term ‘beneficiary voice’ because it can imply that beneficiaries are passive subjects, rather than active agents, of change. There are a number of possible alternative terms (see Annex 1). However, few are applicable in all contexts and all have pros and cons. While recognising its shortcomings this publication uses the term ‘beneficiary voice’ because it is short and simple.

WHAT KIND OF BENEFICIARY VOICE?

This publication uses the metaphor of roles in the theatre to distinguish between different kinds – or levels of – beneficiary voice in campaign decision. Different kinds, or levels, of beneficiary involvement can co-exist in the same organisation, for example in some particular campaigns beneficiary voice may be high, while in others it is low.

MEMBER OF BOND SOUTHERN ADVOCACY QUALITY GROUP

WE SHOULD BE WORKING TOWARDS BEING FACILITATORS OF THE VOICES OF AFFECTED PEOPLE

BEHIND THE SCENES

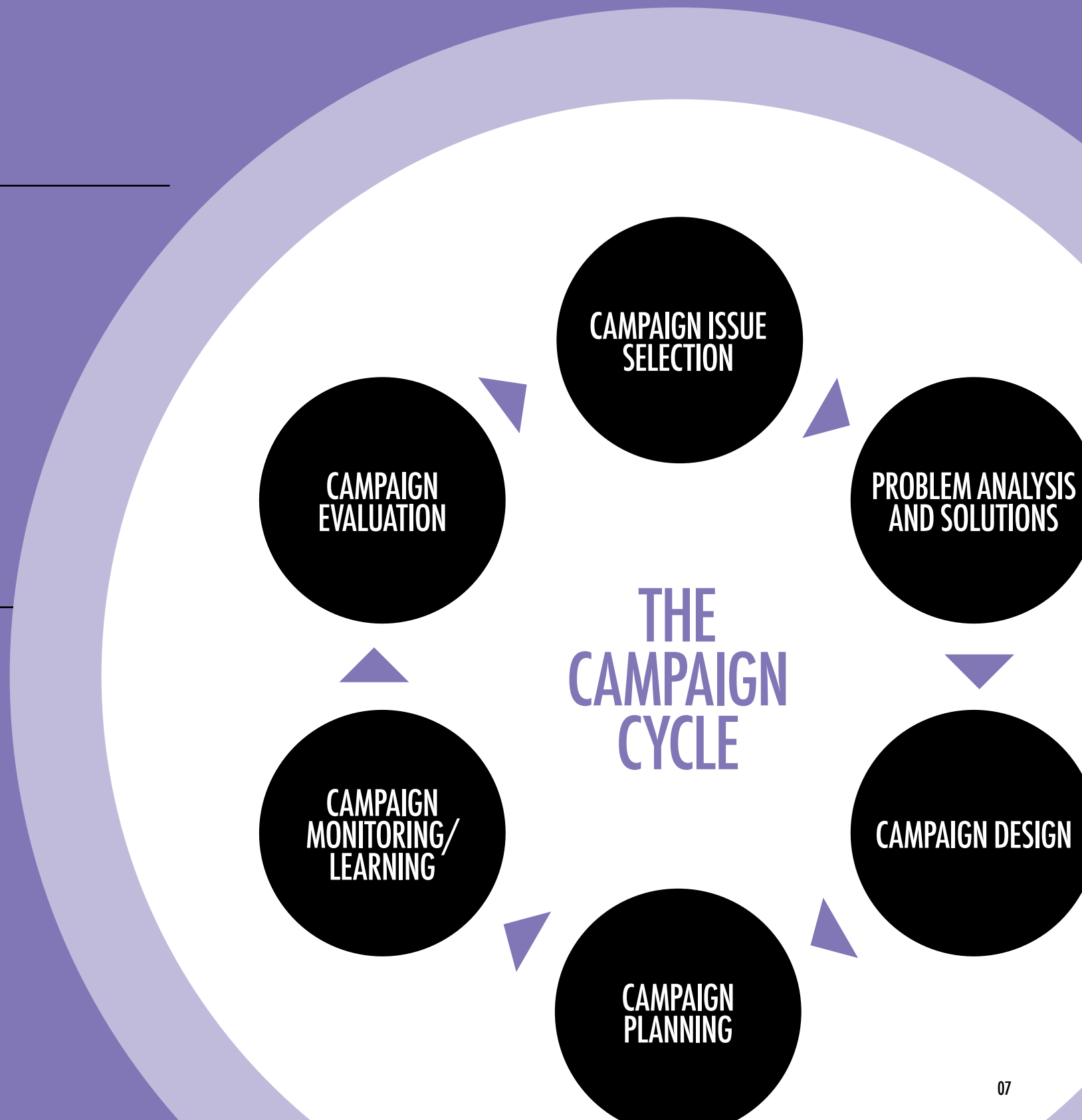
BENEFICIARY VOICE 'BEHIND THE SCENES'

By beneficiary voice 'behind the scenes' we mean the extent to which beneficiaries are involved in decision making about campaigns.

In assessing the extent of their involvement in decision making it is useful to distinguish between whether beneficiaries:

- have formal powers to make decisions
- have delegated authority to make decisions
- are consulted about decisions
- are informed about decisions.

It is also useful to distinguish whether beneficiaries are involved in decision making in some, or all stages, of the campaign cycle. See the cycle diagram on the opposite page.



DEMOCRATIC DECISION MAKING

Democratic decision making is when beneficiaries have decision making power over all stages of the campaign cycle. This is possible when campaigns are run 'by' beneficiaries organisations themselves, whether informal community or grassroots organisations, or more formal membership or user organisations.

In principle democratic decision making is the ideal form of beneficiary voice. At its best it enables high levels of beneficiary ownership, empowerment and motivation, as well as ensuring the legitimacy and relevance of campaigns.

However, democratic decision making by beneficiaries is not always possible or effective. Beneficiaries that are geographically dispersed, vulnerable or politically at risk may find it difficult or impossible to organise. Some groups of beneficiaries (e.g. the world's poor) cannot in their entirety participate in a single democratic campaign. Marginalised or minority groups may not have access to decision makers, or the financial resources needed to run effective campaigns. In practice democratic decision making can sometimes be time consuming and cumbersome, result in lowest common denominator decisions, or be dominated by cliques or interest groups. But these problems can be avoided if decision making is well managed and there is a genuine participatory culture.

RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION CASE STUDY CAMPAIGNING
EFFECTIVENESS, NCVO "COUNT ME IN" RESOURCE
WWW.NCVO-VOL.ORG.UK/COUNT-ME-IN/RAMBLERSASSOCIATION

**THE BACKING OF 139,000 MEMBERS
GIVES HUGE LEGITIMACY TO CAMPAIGN
DEMANDS AND ALSO MORAL SUPPORT
TO CAMPAIGNERS WHEN THEY LOBBY
AND TAKE CAMPAIGN ACTIONS**

CASE STUDY: THE RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION

The Ramblers Association is an example of a highly participative membership organisation that runs its own campaigns. It is Britain's largest walking association with nearly 140,000 members. It is directed and controlled by its membership which has the power to elect the Board and approve policy including the selection and prioritisation of the organisation's campaigns and scrutiny of their progress.

The General Council is the highest decision making body of the organisation. Each year around 300 delegates, selected by their area, attend and vote on the programme of the Association for the forthcoming year. This meeting is the culmination of a lengthy and highly participative process. In the run up to General Council all Ramblers' local groups from 53 regions will have their Annual General Meeting where any individual member can propose motions to be sent to General Council for membership-wide discussion and agreement or rejection.

The motions that are passed become policy or the campaign aim and are carried out by staff who have to report on action to the General Council the following year. The democratic nature of campaign selection does create a large workload for the staff but they strongly believe its benefits outweigh the costs.

OTHER EXAMPLES

Democratic decision making models are widely used by other membership organisations. Examples include the London Cycling Campaign and the Muslim Council of Britain. In the NUS, only those who self-define as black, LGBT, disabled or women, have a voice in influencing campaigns for those groups.

On the global level campaigners can form international democratic campaigning structures such as those formed by the International Trades Union Congress and the Global Call to Action against Poverty. Northern NGOs often form their policy and priorities based on the decisions of democratic organisations in the South.

**THE RAMBLERS
ASSOCIATION
IS AN EXAMPLE
OF A HIGHLY
PARTICIPATIVE
MEMBERSHIP
ORGANISATION
THAT RUNS
ITS OWN
CAMPAIGNS**

Source: Adapted from Campaigning
Effectiveness, NCVO "Count Me In"
resource www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/countmein

CASE STUDY: UNEARTH JUSTICE

CONSULTATION WITH BENEFICIARIES

Consultation with beneficiaries' is a model used by voluntary groups which campaign 'on behalf of' or 'for' beneficiaries.

In these cases the voluntary organisation retains the final say over the campaign but consults with beneficiaries to get their input.

Campaigns run by voluntary organisations 'for' beneficiaries can be helpful when beneficiaries are not able to organise and campaign 'by' themselves. They can also be helpful when beneficiary organisations have been delegitimised or marginalised by decision makers, or lack the resources and skills necessary to run an effective campaign.

In such cases it is vital that voluntary organisations consult with beneficiaries to help ensure that the campaign has legitimacy and that change is relevant and sustainable to their needs. However, consultation can be tricky to get right, and time consuming (see Overcoming difficulties section). Yet if you get it wrong beneficiaries may feel disappointed and further disempowered.

CLARE LYONS, CAFOD

THE PARTNERS WERE POSITIVE ABOUT THE CONSULTATION AND SAW IT AS A VALUABLE OPPORTUNITY TO LOBBY CAFOD, AND AN ADVOCACY SUCCESS THAT WE SUBSEQUENTLY DECIDED TO FOCUS ON EXTRACTIVES

'Unearth Justice' is a campaign run by CAFOD on the extractives industry. Mining is often a cause of conflict, environmental destruction and toxic pollution.

The campaign calls on governments and mining companies to end this injustice, and give poor communities a greater say in whether mining is allowed, how it operates, and who benefits.

A three year planning process preceded the launch. This included a consultation of overseas and UK staff and partners. After consideration of responses by UK staff, economic justice was recommended to the board as the theme of the CAFOD campaign, with a focus on mining.

When the campaign was launched in 2006, the partners had a very strong presence, with case studies from Honduras and the DRC. There was a speaker tour and partners were present at the launch. This was followed in 2008 by a photo exhibition. In addition to mass actions targeting jewellers, CAFOD has privately engaged with three individual mining companies.

CAFOD invested in campaigns resource people to be the link between CAFOD and partners, visiting communities and getting feedback.

The partners were very positive about the campaign, and asked for a greater say in the planning phase as well. However, beneficiary involvement in the campaign also generated some tensions. Those partners against mining per se saw CAFOD as being too mild in their commitment to 'constructive engagement'.

Source: Presentation by Clare Lyons (CAFOD) to Beneficiary Voice Peer Exchange, 2009)

CASE STUDY: TRADING VISIONS

INVOLVEMENT ON THE GOVERNING BODY

In this model beneficiary representatives form part of the governing structures of a voluntary organisation alongside other stakeholders. This provides them with oversight and scrutiny, but not overall control of campaign activities.

This approach can be a simple way for voluntary organisations to promote the voice of beneficiaries. It is particularly useful if beneficiaries do not have the desire, time or expertise to have full control over decision making. The model works best when beneficiaries have a meaningful stake on the governing body and are accountable to their constituents.

Potential challenges include preventing beneficiary voices being diluted or drowned out by other governing body members, the difficulty of selecting beneficiaries without raising expectations among all groups, and the logistics and costs of getting people to meetings.

Trading Visions is an educational charity owned by Divine Chocolate Company. It aims to alleviate the poverty of small-scale producers in the South by amplifying their voices in the supply chain, and connecting them with consumers so that they themselves can challenge and change consumer behaviour and industry practice.

Kuapo Kokoo, a democratically run Ghanaian farmers cooperative, owns 45% of the shares in Divine, and two of its members are directors on the company's board. One out of four board meetings every year is held in Ghana.

This structure means that the farmers have a meaningful input into decisions about how Divine's chocolate is produced and sold, as well as over the activities of Trading Visions. As shareholders, they also receive a share of the profits from the sale of Divine products.

OTHER EXAMPLES

Many domestic voluntary organisations also have beneficiary representatives on their board – for example, half of the board of the Council of Management at the mental health charity Mind must have direct experience of mental distress.

Source: Tom Allen, Trading Visions Coordinator, presentation to Beneficiary Voice Peer Exchange, 2009)

ONE OUT OF FOUR BOARD MEETINGS EVERY YEAR IS HELD IN GHANA

SUPPORTING AUTONOMOUS CAMPAIGNS GROUP

Voluntary organisations can play an important role in supporting beneficiaries to form their own organisations and/or design and implement their own campaigns.

This can be a powerful way of empowering beneficiaries to become active agents of change and realise their right to be heard.

Beneficiary groups may require considerable support in the early days. This may include funding, capacity building, political intelligence, or access to decision makers. Providing opportunities for beneficiary groups to learn from the best practice of other groups can be a particularly effective form of support.

If you go down this route you need to accept that beneficiaries may challenge your policies and practice.

GRAHAM BENNETT,
ONE WORLD ACTION

**WE DON'T WANT TO EXTRACT
THE PARTNER'S VOICE AND
REGURGITATE IT WHEN IT SUITS
US. WE WANT TO EMPOWER
THE PEOPLE WE WORK WITH**

CASE STUDY: LEONARD CHESHIRE DISABILITY

Leonard Cheshire Disability (LCD) has invested heavily in creating Campaign Action Groups (CAGs). These are not 'Leonard Cheshire Disability' groups, but independent groups of disabled people who set their own agendas and methods of working. LCD acts as a facilitator and support to these independent groups.

The groups have had some positive successes. For example, one group succeeded in getting a McDonalds restaurant to fit a new accessible toilet, a table designed for wheelchair users and all staff to receive disabled equality training.

This approach is potentially embarrassing to LCD – itself a major provider of services to disabled people and sometimes funded by Local Authorities.

However, LCD is clear that the Groups should not be prevented from criticising any target that they identify, and that funds and support should be distributed equally to them even if they wish to target aspects of LCD service provision.

In order to enshrine this right and also prevent any conflicts of interest, formal agreements are set up between the Campaign Action Groups and LCD, which enshrine the groups' independence (within the confines of charity law).

OTHER EXAMPLES

One World Action's 'More Women More Power' campaign supports women's groups from around the world to come together to form international campaigns. Street Child World Cup works with Street Children to identify issues, and help them to deal with them.

Source: Adapted from Campaigning Effectiveness, NCVO "Count Me In" resource
www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/count-me-in/campaignactiongroups

**ONE GROUP
SUCCEEDED
IN GETTING
A MCDONALDS
RESTAURANT
TO FIT A NEW
ACCESSIBLE
TOILET AND
A TABLE
DESIGNED FOR
WHEELCHAIR
USERS**

ON THE STAGE

BENEFICIARY VOICE 'ON THE STAGE'

Beneficiary Voice or visibility is the extent to which beneficiaries are directly represented in campaign activities – whether lobby meetings, media work, public hearings, speaker tours or public mobilisations. We look at several possible approaches through this section.

DIRECT ADVOCACY

Direct advocacy is when beneficiaries are directly and visibly involved in campaign activities aimed at decision makers. Face to face lobbying, for example, can be a very powerful way of influencing decision makers' views on an issue. It can also increase campaign effectiveness and be highly motivating to both beneficiaries and campaign supporters alike.

Involving beneficiaries in this way can also be time consuming and resource intensive. You need to take time to consult and build trust with beneficiaries. You may also need to provide beneficiaries with training, support networks, financial and logistical support, and where appropriate psychological support. Ultimately you need to accept that beneficiaries may present views to decision makers that differ, or even conflict, with the views of your organisation

DIPLOMAT QUOTED IN INDEPENDENT
EVALUATION OF THE BAN ADVOCATES INITIATIVE

THE BAN ADVOCATES WERE EXPERTS IN THE HUMAN EFFECTS OF CLUSTER MUNITIONS. THEY BROUGHT SPECIFIC EXPERIENCE WHICH HELPED ELABORATION OF VICTIM ASSISTANCE CLAUSE. I LEARNT A LOT FROM THEM AS THEY COULD TELL ME HOW THINGS WORK ON THE GROUND AND THEY RAISED SEVERAL THINGS I HADN'T THOUGHT OF

CASE STUDY: BAN ADVOCATES

The 'Ban Advocates Initiative' is a powerful and effective example of an advocacy initiative which gave beneficiaries a direct, active and highly visible voice in campaign activities.

Handicap International helped facilitate a group of people from around the world who had been affected by cluster bombs to participate in the international negotiations on cluster munitions. They were directly involved in planning and implementing advocacy activities including presentations at international conferences, meeting diplomats and media work.

An independent evaluation showed that the Ban Advocates helped increase the legitimacy and moral case for an international ban on cluster munitions, and influenced the views and, in some cases, positions of diplomats. As one respondent said "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 Ban Advocates brought their humanity to the fore – and were very powerful in doing so."

Because of their direct knowledge of the issue the Ban Advocates helped strengthen the text of the convention, particularly on victim assistance. Their involvement also helped secure high-profile media coverage for the campaign.

OTHER EXAMPLES

Development organisations often involve beneficiaries directly in advocacy. ActionAid for example brought South African fruit farmer Gertruida Baartman to Tesco's Annual Meeting in the UK where she spoke out about the pay and conditions of those who produce Tesco food.

Sources: Adapted from the Presentation to Beneficiary Voice Peer Exchange by Stan Brabant and Stephanie Castanie Handicap International, and Independent Evaluation of the Ban Advocate Initiative, Ruth Mayne, forthcoming

SPEAKER TOURS

Speaker tours are a form of direct advocacy in which one or more beneficiaries travel around a country to speak at meetings with decision makers and/or members of the public. It is an approach often used by international campaigns to inform and motivate supporters and local groups in the UK.

Politicians and the public often respond best to real people so speaker tours can have a powerful and motivating impact on campaign audiences. They can also be rewarding for the beneficiaries involved.

Speaker tours run the risk of tokenism or unduly raise beneficiaries' expectations. However this can be avoided if beneficiaries are also actively involved in other aspects of the campaign. Speaker tours can also be resource and time intensive to organise and require careful logistical planning including providing interpreters where needed.

EXAMPLES

People and Planet, Jubilee Debt Campaign, Fairtrade Foundation, Oxfam, STOP AIDS Campaign, and others, have all used this model successfully to give voice and a platform for people to share experiences and raise awareness.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public hearings are another way for beneficiaries to present their own experiences and views directly to campaign audiences. They typically involve a public meeting at which decision makers and/or the public are invited to hear testimonies, and recommendations, from a range of beneficiaries.

If well organised public hearings can form a useful part of a campaign strategy by helping influence decision makers and motivate campaign supporters. They can also attract media attention if you invite local musicians, dancers, poets, drama groups, celebrities etc. A potential risk is that public hearings may raise beneficiaries' expectations so be clear about the likely outcomes at the outset and hold a debriefing with beneficiaries after the hearing. If the issue is contentious public exposure may inadvertently put beneficiaries at risk, so you need to jointly assess and plan for any potential risks beforehand.

JENNY DAWKINS, STREET CHILD WORLD CUP

IN MY EXPERIENCE THERE IS NOTHING MORE POWERFUL THAN MEETING WITH SOMEONE DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY SOMETHING. ENABLING COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SOMEONE IN THE UK THAT WANTS TO MAKE CHANGE HAPPEN AND SOMEONE ABROAD TRYING TO MAKE CHANGE HAPPEN IS DEEPLY INSPIRING

CASE STUDY: OXFAM'S CLIMATE CHANGE HEARINGS

In 2009, Oxfam held climate hearings all over the world to enable the voices of people affected by climate change to be heard by decision makers and delegates.

Around 1.5 million people from 36 countries eventually took part in local and national hearings on boats in Bangladesh, running races in Ethiopia and on mountains high in the Peruvian Andes.

In the UK local hearings were organised by Oxfam offices in the months leading up to Copenhagen. Activists were encouraged to get involved and where possible organise their own events. The UK Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, Ed Miliband, attended the hearing in Doncaster.

A global hearing subsequently took place at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) conference in Copenhagen Denmark. A powerful panel of advocates was assembled with negotiators, government ministers and other delegates invited to attend. Materials from the local and national hearings were presented.

OTHER EXAMPLES

In recent years this model has been taken up by a range of campaigning groups.

One example is the Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP) which uses 'Poverty Hearings' to put the voices of beneficiaries centre stage.

Church Action on poverty has organised over 100 "Poverty Hearings". Read more about this on their website:

www.church-poverty.org.uk/getinvolved/poverty-hearings

CASE STUDY: WITNESS

NEW MEDIA

This model involves using new media tools – such as Facebook, Twitter, podcasts, blogs – that allow beneficiaries to speak directly to campaign audiences in their own voices.

New media provides a powerful and cheap way for beneficiaries to speak directly to campaign audiences if they cannot be physically present for geographical or logistical reasons, for example in global campaigning. A big advantage is that it allows beneficiaries to have control over how their story is presented.

A potential downside is that not all beneficiaries or audiences have access to the internet. Beneficiaries may also need training to be able to use the technology. Also, if beneficiaries do not have final editorial control over the content they may be inadvertently misrepresented.

PARTICIPANT IN BOND SOUTHERN
ADVOCACY GROUP

**THE SPREAD OF NEW MEDIA
TECHNOLOGY MEANS THAT
BRINGING VOICES FROM THE
GLOBAL SOUTH TO DECISION
MAKERS IN THE NORTH
SHOULD BE EASIER THAN
AT ANY POINT IN HISTORY**

The Human Rights group WITNESS provides training, support and equipment to local groups to use video as an advocacy tool in their human rights advocacy campaigns. WITNESS helps promote the videos with international media outlets, government officials, policymakers, activists, and the general public.

OTHER EXAMPLES

In the run up to crucial climate change talks in Copenhagen CAFOD recorded and released a series of videos where the human impacts of a changing climate were shown first hand, and Southern activists called on activists in the UK to join them in taking action. These were emailed to supporters.

Trading Visions uses the internet to link up school classrooms in Ghana with school classrooms in the UK so that people can talk to each other and ask questions. This means there are fewer problems with power imbalances than in one-way communications.

USING IMAGES

This approach involves the use of images – such as documentary photos or video diaries – to tell beneficiaries' stories. The images may be produced by beneficiaries themselves, or by others.

Sometimes it is not possible for beneficiaries to tell their stories face to face. They may find it too painful, or may not feel confident of speaking in front of groups or decision makers. So in this situation, pictures can be a very effective means of communication.

Images can sometimes affect people emotionally in a way that words cannot, cross language barriers, and they can potentially reach wider audiences than would be possible from face to face meetings. Where beneficiaries are involved in producing the images of themselves it can be empowering.

However, if beneficiaries do not produce the image themselves or lack control over their use, they may be inadvertently put at risk or misrepresented. It is therefore important to ensure that beneficiaries either have control over the images, or have given their informed consent for their use. Photo Voice has guidance on working with vulnerable groups on their website.

[www.photovoice.org/html/
whoarewe/pvethicalpractice.pdf](http://www.photovoice.org/html/whoarewe/pvethicalpractice.pdf)

MATT DAW, PHOTOVOICE

**WE ARE VERY DESENSITISED
TO SANITISED CHARITY
ADVERTS. THIS APPROACH
IS FAR MORE AFFECTING**

CASE STUDY: PHOTOVOICE

PhotoVoice is an award-winning international charity which seeks to empower disadvantaged groups by providing them with photographic training with which they can express themselves, advocate and generate an income. They work with refugees, street children, orphans, people affected by HIV/AIDS and special needs groups.

Their training workshops allow people who are traditionally the subjects of photography to become its creator – and hence gain control over how they are perceived by the rest of the world. In the Bethnal Green area of London, for example, there was a postcard campaign by street working women that showed that they were not ‘street trash’.

The training also helps participants gain confidence in their own voices – and speak out about their challenges, concerns, hopes and fears – while simultaneously learning a new skill which can enhance their lives.

Project participants are given copyright control of any images they produce, and all photos have a brief outlining the conditions of use.

OTHER EXAMPLES

In some cases it is unsafe to show any images of beneficiaries at all. For example, as part of its child trafficking campaign, UNICEF partnered with Amnesty and Anti-Slavery International to produce a photo exhibition in St Paul’s Cathedral to mark the official end of the legal slave trade. They worked with Poppy Project – that has a safe house – and showed photos of things that represented trafficked children, their families and their experiences, rather than taking pictures of the children themselves. (Source: Contribution by Laura Keely, UNICEF, to Beneficiary Voice Peer Exchange, 2009)

Source: Presentation Matt Daw
[PhotoVoice] to Beneficiary Voice
Peer Exchange, 2009

RE-TELLING BENEFICIARIES’ STORIES

Re-telling stories is when a voluntary organisation features interviews, quotes or case studies of beneficiaries in their publications, speeches and/or media work. In these cases the beneficiaries’ stories are represented indirectly, or mediated, by the voluntary organisation.

Re-telling stories may be helpful when beneficiaries cannot tell their stories face to face to audiences. It can also enable voluntary organisations to communicate with wider audiences.

A potential drawback of using this model is that campaign audiences can come to feel over saturated with ‘stories’, distrust the integrity of the stories or even feel manipulated. Another risk is that voluntary organisations may inadvertently distort the views of the beneficiary to support their campaign messages, or put vulnerable beneficiaries at risk. This can be avoided by voluntary organisations obtaining beneficiaries’ informed consent to use their stories, abiding by agreed principles on anonymity or confidentiality, and checking materials with beneficiaries.

WHEN I AM TOLD STORIES I REACT EMOTIONALLY AND THIS IS REFLECTED WHEN THE STORY IS RETOLD

PARTICIPANT IN PEER
EXCHANGE, 2008

CASE STUDY: EVERYCHILD

International Development charity EveryChild has collaborated with a theatre company who will perform testimonies gathered from children. Eventually it is hoped that these will be translated back so that children can perform to one another. This is seen as a method of empowerment which will catalyse some into country advocacy.

OTHER EXAMPLES

Many voluntary organisations re-tell stories. The World Development Movement, for example, often features interviews, quotes and articles by activists living in the Global South, in their publications. At public meetings, Tourism Concern makes a conscious effort to use the words of partner campaign groups in affected countries.

THIS IS SEEN AS A METHOD OF EMPOWERMENT WHICH WILL CATALYSE SOME INTO COUNTRY ADVOCACY

IN THE AUDITORIUM

DUE ACCOUNT [NEEDS TO BE] TAKEN OF THE NEEDS, CAPACITIES AND ACTUAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE INTENDED BENEFICIARIES. THEY ARE, AFTER ALL, THE 'PRINCIPALS' FOR WHOM HUMANITARIAN ACTION IS DESIGNED TO SERVE

BENEFICIARY VOICE 'IN THE AUDITORIUM'

By beneficiary voice 'in the auditorium' we mean the ability of beneficiaries to hold voluntary organisations to account about campaigns that affect them by providing feedback or complaints.

Accountability mechanisms are particularly important if beneficiaries are not directly involved in designing, managing, or delivering the campaign.

However, it is important to ensure that the important benefits of greater accountability do not outweigh the costs of implementation

ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS

Oxfam GB believes that in order to achieve its organisational mission and to ensure that its work has the greatest impact it needs to be accountable to its key stakeholders. These include the individuals and communities with whom it works; partners and allies; donors and supporters; staff and the wider public; and regulatory bodies in the UK and in countries where it operates.

Each year it produces an accountability report to show how it has been accountable to its multiple stakeholders through its campaigning, development and humanitarian work. In each of these areas it is working towards:

- Improved transparency and information sharing including publishing evaluations
- Increasing stakeholder participation in decision making
- Participatory monitoring and evaluation to allow stakeholders to provide regular feedback about the relevance, effectiveness, and impact of campaigns
- A complaints mechanism.

*See Oxfam Accountability Report, 2008-09
www.oxfam.org.uk/resources*

OTHER EXAMPLES

The Humanitarian Accountability Project (HAP) has developed accountability principles which are transferable to campaigning organisations. These include early consultation with intended beneficiaries; publishing beneficiary entitlement criteria; and learning and continuous improvement. HAP recommends an optimal rather than a maximal effort, where the resources devoted to accountability and quality management can be justified in terms of humanitarian impact.

One World Trust is a good source of advice for voluntary organisations on accountability mechanisms and complaints mechanism.

Sources: Adapted from Humanitarian Accountability Partnership – and from One World Trust's Complaints mechanism

CONTACTING BENEFICIARIES

This table looks at some of the ways that different organisations use to find beneficiaries

METHOD	WHO USES IT?
Existing programmes	CAFOD
Recruit and interview the same way as you would for a job	Ban Advocates
Your members are your beneficiaries	Ramblers Association, trade unions
Grassroots in-country advocacy organisations	Tourism Concern
Welcome applications on your website	WITNESS
Help organise previously unorganised beneficiaries into groups	Leonard Cheshire Disability

OVERCOMING DIFFICULTIES

Involving and representing beneficiaries in campaigns can raise many challenges. In the table below we provide a summary of some of the issues raised in this publication, as well as some ideas of how to respond.

KIND OF PROBLEM THAT COULD BE FACED	POSSIBLE RESPONSES
MANAGING BENEFICIARY INVOLVEMENT	
It can be difficult balancing and prioritising the interests of beneficiaries with those of other staff and stakeholders such as donors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain and sell the benefits of beneficiary voice in campaigns to other stakeholders (as above). • Set up advisory panels or assemblies of beneficiaries. • Introduce participatory monitoring and learning systems to demonstrate the value of beneficiary feedback. • Advise fundraisers and campaigners that they need the informed consent of 'beneficiaries' to use their stories.
There may be power imbalances and/or conflicts within or between beneficiary groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring issues and debates into the open. • Inspire groups with a sense of shared solidarity.

Sources: Beneficiary Voice Beneficiary Voice Peer Exchanges, 2009 and 2010

KIND OF PROBLEM THAT COULD BE FACED	POSSIBLE RESPONSES
MANAGING BENEFICIARY INVOLVEMENT CONTINUED	
There is a lot of problems with working with vulnerable groups which can put them at risk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an analysis of the costs/risks and benefits involving beneficiaries actively in your campaign. • Develop a plan to manage risks. See 'Safeguarding Children and Young People, Amnesty International www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/POL41/001/2008/en • Develop a clear policy for working with vulnerable groups. See Photo Voice's guidance on working with vulnerable groups www.photovoice.org/html/whoarewe/pvethicalpractice.pdf • Ensure informed consent for use of images. See Amnesty International publication 'Sharing your Stories'.
Involving beneficiaries may raise expectations that can't be met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be honest and clear with beneficiaries about the level of involvement you are seeking from the outset. • Draw up a memorandum of understanding with beneficiaries. • Hold regular debriefs with beneficiaries involved in campaigns e.g. after speaker tours or public hearings.
GETTING INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR BENEFICIARY VOICE IN CAMPAIGNS	
The organisation may be reluctant to involve beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain and 'sell' the benefits of beneficiary voice to managers and staff e.g. by explaining how it can increase campaign effectiveness. • Invite managers and staff to meet with beneficiaries.
IDENTIFYING BENEFICIARIES	
Beneficiaries may not feel able to be involved	<p>Set aside time and resources to consult with beneficiaries to find out why they do not feel able to get involved, and tailor your response accordingly. An appropriate response may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness raising and capacity building. • Addressing socio-economic constraints – such as lack of time, health, education – that prevent people from participating. • Making sure adequate support is available including psychological support if appropriate. • Facilitating separate spaces for beneficiaries to share experiences and support each other. • Acknowledging that responses other than campaigning may be more appropriate, or simply that beneficiaries may have other more immediately pressing problems.
Beneficiary groups may be dominated by 'usual suspects'; not every voice is heard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively seek to understand the power relations and diversity of opinion within the communities with whom you work e.g. through participatory research. • Help empower less powerful and confident voices through awareness raising and capacity building. • Provide capacity building in participatory leadership and consultation techniques to beneficiary groups. • Share best practice from other groups.

OVERCOMING DIFFICULTIES

CONTINUED

KIND OF PROBLEM THAT COULD BE FACED	POSSIBLE RESPONSES
MANAGING BENEFICIARY INVOLVEMENT	
Meaningful beneficiary involvement is time consuming, costly and can result in cumbersome decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure an institutional commitment, budget and resources from your organisation. Agree clear roles, responsibilities, procedures for decision making and communication channels. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of beneficiary involvement to prevent diminishing returns setting in.
The complexity of global decision making processes and relationships, and differences in language and culture, can make it very difficult to manage a campaign with effective beneficiary voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop clear roles, responsibilities, decision making procedures and communication channels. Develop memorandum of understanding which outlines the expectations on each other.
Beneficiaries may not be able to attend meetings because of logistical or legal reasons or illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you have the resources invest in good teleconference facilities. Work with people who have been in this situation in the past. Work with friends or relations of people who have been in the position of your beneficiaries. If you cannot link up by phone, be consciously aware of who is not at the table, for example by leaving a chair free and explaining the reasons why they could not attend in person.
BENEFICIARY VISIBILITY/'ON THE STAGE'	
Direct representation of beneficiaries in campaign activities may create conflicting messages and be exploited by opponents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beneficiary voice means accepting that your power may be challenged. Monitor and assess the effects of beneficiary involvement on campaign audiences.
Beneficiaries may be financially disadvantaged by their involvement in campaign activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that beneficiaries are never financially disadvantaged by being involved. Make sure that at the very least, costs are covered. Try and ensure that participants benefit beyond the campaign e.g. by increased confidence, skills or networks or access to jobs.

ANNEX 1: WHAT OTHER TERMS CAN WE USE?

TERM	WHO USES IT?	ADVANTAGES	DRAWBACKS
Intended beneficiary	Donor organisations, e.g. Diana Princess of Wales Memorial Trust	Focuses attention on people the campaign is supposed to help. Useful when applying for grants and as a catch all.	Can be perceived as paternalistic and passive presenting beneficiaries as passive objects rather than active subjects of change.
Rights holder	Human rights organisations, e.g. Amnesty International	Emphasises the human rights that everybody has and empowers the rights holder.	Can be perceived as technical, and rarely used outside of human rights work.
Affected community, affected people, affected party, people affected by a condition or circumstance, e.g. breast cancer	Humanitarian relief organisations, e.g. World Vision; Health organisations, e.g. Breast Cancer Care	Value neutral	Somewhat cumbersome and passive. Works better in the context of people or communities being actively harmed.
Stakeholder	Voluntary organisations and donors	Value neutral	A broad term that may refer to range of different actors, not just. beneficiaries.
Partner	International development organisations, e.g. CAFOD, Fairtrade Foundation	Implies an equal and active relationship.	A broad term that often refers to local voluntary organisations, not just beneficiaries.
Participant	Participative organisations, e.g. PhotoVoice	Explicitly requires the full participation of those we are seeking to help.	The term 'participant' may refer to other actors as well as campaign 'beneficiaries'. Not all beneficiaries may feel able to participate.
Occupation, e.g. teacher, farmer, advocate, activist, priest, trade unionist	Organisations based on principles of solidarity, e.g. TUC	Active rather than passive.	Can not be used as a catch-all term.

WHAT NEXT?

Find out more about this project

www.bond.org.uk/campaigningeffectiveness

Count Me In – involving beneficiaries and users in campaigning, Campaigning Effectiveness, NCVO

Resources to support and inspire you in involving those you represent and placing them at the heart of your campaigning work

www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/countmein

Participation, NCVO Strategy and Impact team

General resources on how to involve people with your work

www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/strategy-impact/learn/participation

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