

# Understanding *advocacy*





**Advocacy Toolkit:  
Understanding advocacy**

by Graham Gordon

Editor: Rachel Blackman

Cover illustration: Adept Design

Design: Wingfinger

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If you wish to give feedback on this Toolkit or have suggestions for additional tools, please contact the Public Policy Team Administrator ([ppadministrator@tearfund.org](mailto:ppadministrator@tearfund.org)). Knowing how Tearfund's resources are used by Partners and other organisations helps us to improve the quality of future resources. The Public Policy Team may put updates and material which supplements this Toolkit on the Tearfund website ([www.tearfund.org](http://www.tearfund.org)) from time to time.

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Tearfund, 100 Church Road, Teddington, TW11 8QE, UK

Tel: +44 20 8977 9144

# Understanding advocacy

by Graham Gordon



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# Introduction

## What is an advocacy toolkit?

This *Advocacy Toolkit* consists of a series of 16 sections. The sections in Part A explore advocacy's links with development. Part B looks at the biblical basis for advocacy. The sections in Part C provide tools to show how to plan an advocacy intervention to address a particular problem.

### Why has it been written?

The Toolkit reflects Tearfund's latest thinking on advocacy, to help Tearfund partners and other organisations become more involved in advocacy work. The aim is to help them to see the relevance of advocacy for their work, and to equip them with skills and confidence for any subsequent advocacy involvement.

It builds on Tearfund's *Advocacy Study Pack* (June 1999), adding more experience from Tearfund, its partners and from advocacy training events. This Toolkit is now Tearfund's main advocacy training resource.

There are three main reasons for writing this Toolkit when advocacy resources already exist:

- This Toolkit includes a significant section on advocacy, the mission of the church and the example of Jesus. Few other resources look at the spiritual nature of development and advocacy.
- It is aimed at local communities as well as local churches and NGOs working with these communities. Many other resources are aimed at national or international NGOs and deal with advocacy at a much higher level. However, the principles and guidance given in the Toolkit can also be developed for national and international advocacy.
- There is a strong emphasis on the need to link advocacy with other development work, which is sometimes missing in other resources.

### How can the Toolkit be used?

The Toolkit is designed to be used by an organisation, a community or any group of people considering an advocacy intervention. The 16 sections are in a logical order for groups that are completely new to advocacy. Each section is self-contained so groups can use whichever sections are most appropriate to their current needs. However, it would be wise to cover everything in Parts A and B before tackling the advocacy planning in Part C. Each section contains 1–6 exercises. A section could take anything from 30 minutes to a whole day, depending on the detail required by the group. Parts A and B have been written as an interactive training manual. Part C is an advocacy guide to be worked through for real advocacy planning, although it does also have some optional training exercises.

No external facilitator is needed, but a facilitator from the group is required. The facilitator should take time to read the Toolkit thoroughly, understand the theory, and be confident with it. Groups may choose to use an external facilitator at certain key stages.

The Toolkit can be used as a five day intensive training workshop, with the aim of achieving a skeleton advocacy strategy at the end.

It can also be used as a series of shorter training sessions at key points, with time in between to carry out further work. Key points may include:

- at the start
- before Part B
- before Part C
- after the planning process
- twelve months after the start of any advocacy work

Alternatively, the Toolkit can be used in a study group meeting once a week or month for half a day or an evening, studying one section at a time.

The whole process of learning and putting into practice could take anything from three months to two years, depending on factors such as the type of problem, type of group, and previous experience.

**Layout** The sections are laid out in the following way:

**DESCRIPTION** What the section hopes to achieve.

**OBJECTIVES** What participants will learn if they go through the whole section.

**LINKS** with other sections in the Toolkit.

**EXERCISES** to help to achieve the learning objectives. The exercises include the key points that a facilitator should try to draw out during the exercise. Suggested methods that can be used for the exercises are listed.

**HANDOUTS** to give to participants to explain some of the theory further. It is important that the handouts are used after the participants have worked through exercises for themselves.

**EXTRA MATERIAL** which is not suitable for a handout, but will help the facilitator to plan the session better.

**CASE STUDIES** given throughout the Toolkit, but concentrated in certain sections. The main Tearfund partner case studies are in SECTIONS A2, A3, A5 and A6. The main biblical case studies are in SECTIONS B2 and B3.

**Important points to note**

Many Tearfund partners are already involved in advocacy activities, but may not call it advocacy or may be doing it in an unplanned way. The Toolkit aims to help them become more systematic and effective in their advocacy work.

The Toolkit offers Tearfund's perspective on issues such as development, power, theology and advocacy planning. Although these are carefully thought through and based on experience, it is vital for partners to come to their own understanding of the issues within their particular context.

Advocacy is not necessarily confrontational and a lot of effective advocacy is in fact collaborative.

Advocacy is an integral part of development work. The most effective advocacy is likely to flow from existing development project work.

Advocacy requires a particular way of thinking that always asks 'why?' until the root cause of the problem has been identified. It is needed because project work does not necessarily address the cause of the problem. However, advocacy should not replace other development work because it does not usually meet people's immediate needs. It also may not bring the community transformation that is at the heart of Christian development.

### **Basics of advocacy**

Advocacy is about influencing people, policies, structures and systems in order to bring about change. It is about influencing those in power to act in more equitable ways.

Advocacy can be done directly by those affected by injustice or on their behalf, or by a combination of both. Anyone can undertake advocacy work – it does not need to be left to professionals or experts.

Advocacy work includes many different activities such as lobbying, mobilisation, education, research, prayer and networking. It can be undertaken alone, with a group of people or as part of a network. It can be spontaneous or carefully planned, a one-off intervention or an ongoing process.

It is part of the mission of the church to undertake advocacy through speaking out against injustice, defending the cause of the poor, holding those in power to account, and empowering people to speak out for themselves. Its ultimate aim is in bringing and demonstrating the good news of the coming of the Kingdom of God.

### **Benefits of advocacy**

The aim of advocacy is often the same as for other development work: to alleviate poverty and suffering, fight oppression, challenge injustice or support long-term sustainable development. However, development work is often not enough, because it does not tackle the root or deeper causes of the problem. Advocacy is therefore needed as it:

- tackles root causes of poverty and injustice and brings long-term change
- sees people as agents of change in their own communities
- can help to generate more resources for other development work
- can change power structures and systems of injustice.

**Challenges of advocacy**

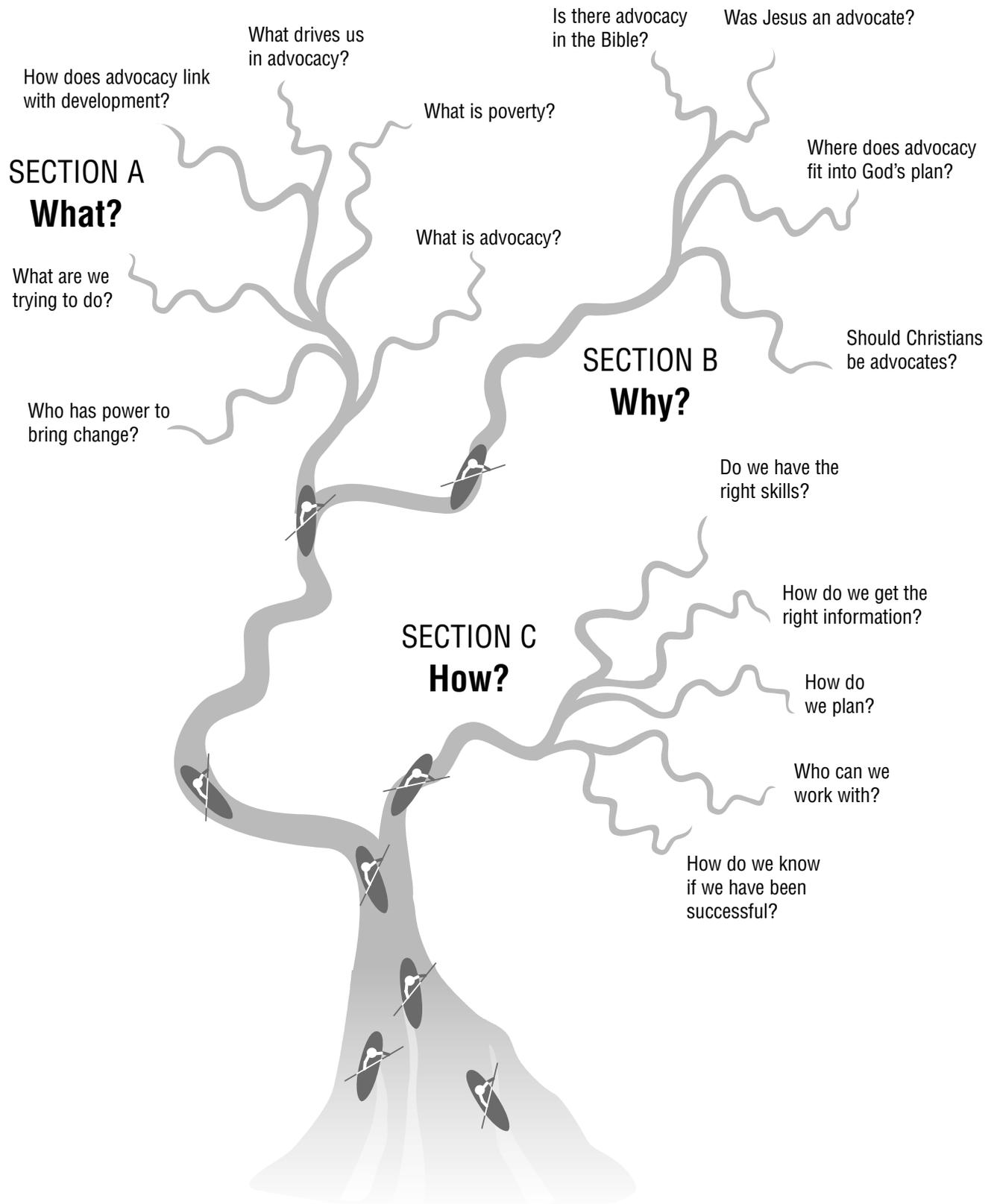
Advocacy brings challenges as well as benefits. These challenges need to be addressed carefully. They include:

- the temptation to corrupt or compromise due to involvement with power structures
- diversion of resources and energy from other development activities
- further disempowering groups by speaking for them, without consultation or agreement
- threat of loss of property, job, or personal safety.

If advocacy is done in a respectful way, serving others in humility and carefully thinking through all activities, most of the challenges can be overcome. Then the benefits will far outweigh any potential negative effects. However, it is still good to be aware of these challenges at the start, to be able to make a realistic assessment of what advocacy actions you might take.

## Main questions addressed in this Toolkit

The diagram of a river below shows the main questions addressed in this Toolkit.



## Explanation of exercise methods

Below is an explanation of the methods that are commonly used for the exercises in the Toolkit. Appropriate methods are listed at the start of each exercise.

**AGREE / DISAGREE** A statement is read out and people have to move to a place along a line to indicate how strongly they agree or disagree.

**BIBLE STUDIES OR CASE STUDIES** Examples from the Bible, experiences of participants or written stories are used to draw out key learning points.

**BUZZ GROUPS** Participants turn to the people next to them and discuss an issue quickly. A few participants then usually give a summary of their discussion to the whole group.

**DOTS** Small sticky dots are used by participants to vote for their preferred option. For example, cards with different definitions of advocacy written on them are placed on the wall. Participants stick the dots on the cards that they agree with or prefer. This method ensures that everyone participates and makes decisions themselves.

**DRAWING** Participants draw a picture or diagram to help them to express honestly what they are thinking and then to explain it to others.

**FLASH CARDS AND POST-IT NOTES** Flash cards are pieces of card, approximately 10x20cm. Post-it notes are smaller and have sticky gum on the back. Participants use them to quickly write down words or phrases, which are usually then stuck on the wall or placed on the floor for further discussion. This method ensures that everyone participates and helps people express their own reactions to issues.

**GALLERY WALK** Pieces of work are placed on the wall for all participants to see. Participants ask questions to those who wrote or drew them.

**GRADING** A selection of objects or documents are placed in order according to certain criteria, such as usefulness.

**PLENARY DISCUSSION** A discussion of the issues by the whole group.

**ROLE PLAY** Participants are given an exercise to do, in which they act out a role. After the role play it is important to discuss properly what was seen, both with the audience and those who took part in the role play. This helps participants to root theory in practice.

**SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION** Groups of up to eight participants spend time in a structured discussion and may present back to the plenary in a formal way.

# Glossary

This glossary explains the meaning of difficult words according to the way that they are used in this Toolkit.

<b>ad hoc</b>	in response to a particular situation
<b>bias</b>	having a view in favour or against
<b>brainstorm</b>	to state whatever immediately comes to mind about an issue
<b>clarify</b>	to explain something clearly or in more detail
<b>coalition</b>	a partnership between two or more groups
<b>coercion</b>	the use of force to make people do things they do not want to do
<b>collaborative</b>	working together to achieve something
<b>compromise</b>	to make an agreement where each side accepts less than they wanted
<b>confrontational</b>	an aggressive approach
<b>consistency</b>	keeping the same standards or repeating a task in the same way
<b>debrief</b>	to look back over a process when it has ended
<b>discredit</b>	to try to show where someone else's opinion or actions are wrong
<b>discriminate</b>	to treat one group worse than others
<b>divert</b>	to change the direction
<b>duplication</b>	when two people or organisations do exactly the same work
<b>empathise</b>	to understand someone else's feelings
<b>integral</b>	an important part of something
<b>integrated</b>	to be part of something
<b>integrity</b>	having high moral values or professional standards
<b>inter-personal</b>	relationships between people

<b>lobby</b>	to try to influence policy through direct contact with policy-makers
<b>mandate</b>	a command from an authority
<b>manifestation</b>	something that is shown as a result of an act
<b>matrix</b>	a table or grid
<b>nomadic</b>	moving from place to place as a way of life
<b>ostracise</b>	to exclude someone from a group or society
<b>participatory</b>	an activity in which many people take part
<b>petition</b>	written request signed by many people to demand something from an authority
<b>plenary</b>	the whole group
<b>prejudice</b>	having a negative attitude
<b>pygmy</b>	an ethnic group of people of unusually small size
<b>rebuked</b>	told someone off
<b>reconciliation</b>	repairing a broken relationship
<b>redemption</b>	forgiveness of sins by the death and rising from the dead of Jesus Christ
<b>redundant</b>	no longer needed
<b>reluctant</b>	being unwilling to do something
<b>slumlord</b>	an owner of housing in a slum
<b>solidarity</b>	acting together and supporting each other
<b>spontaneous</b>	doing something in an unplanned way
<b>stewardship</b>	having responsibility for something or someone
<b>subjective</b>	based on someone's opinion or feelings, rather than facts
<b>systematic</b>	carried out in an organised way
<b>template</b>	something that can be used as a guide and filled in with relevant information

# A

## Understanding advocacy and development

Part A puts advocacy in the context of development work. It looks at both personal and organisational motivations for advocacy and considers its advantages and disadvantages. The principles for good practice in advocacy are explored. Finally, there is a section that helps to develop an understanding of politics and where it takes place. The section looks at different types of power, how they operate and how they should be used well rather than abused.

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# Poverty and development

**Description** This section will give a general introduction to poverty and development. It is likely that all participants use these terms already, but they may interpret them in many different ways. This section aims to help participants come to a common understanding of poverty and what they are trying to do in the process of development.

**Learning objectives** By the end of the section, participants will:

- be aware of the different ways of understanding poverty
- gain their own understanding of poverty
- understand how Tearfund approaches development
- be able to clarify their own approach to development.

**Links** The understanding here forms the basis of many other sections. The main links are with SECTION A3 (Why advocacy?), SECTION A4 (Good practice in advocacy) and SECTION A5 (Understanding politics and power).

## EXERCISE 1 **What is poverty?**



**Aim** To explore the different dimensions of poverty.

**Methods** Small groups, plenary discussion, presentation, flash cards

**Handouts** Definitions of poverty  
The deprivation trap

Poverty has many different dimensions. It is vital to understand these dimensions before undertaking any type of development work, including advocacy work.

- Participants write their own definition of poverty on flash cards and stick them to the wall or place them on the floor. Put the cards into groups and lead a discussion, using the handouts to add anything that is missed out.
- Alternatively, present the quotes and definitions from the two handouts and lead participants through a discussion, helping them to challenge their own perceptions and to come to a common understanding of poverty.
- Another way to approach this exercise is to use photographs that represent different aspects of poverty. Participants write down what aspect of poverty they think is shown in each photograph on post-it notes. Discuss their thoughts and use the handouts to reinforce their understanding.

**Key points**

- Ensure that participants understand the different dimensions of poverty.
- If powerlessness is a problem, then empowerment is central to development.
- Exploitation is one of the causes of poverty. Tackling the causes of poverty, as well as the effects, is central to tackling poverty itself.

EXERCISE 2 **What is a Christian approach to development?**

**Aim** To explore a Christian approach to development.

**Methods** Small-group discussion, plenary discussion, presentation, flash cards, role play

**Handout** Tearfund's approach to development

The exercise asks: 'What are we trying to do when we work with people to escape poverty? What is a Christian approach to development (integral mission)?' The aim is to turn the negative aspects of poverty into positive aims of development.

- Ask participants to imagine the impact of each aspect of poverty identified in EXERCISE 1 on the person involved and how they might feel. Discuss what must be done in order to change the situation.
- As a group, agree the five most important features or characteristics of integral mission. Participants divide into small groups (2–4 people) and act out each of these features or characteristics as a role play to show what they mean in practice.

**Key points**

- To be effective, integral mission needs to deal with all aspects of poverty and to address the needs of the whole person (spiritual and social as well as economic).
- Restored relationships (with God, others and the environment) are at the centre of integral mission.
- Those involved in development work need to have a heart for the poor and to empathise with their situation.
- Sustainable development means tackling the causes of poverty and injustice. It should be owned and driven by the community. Advocacy work is therefore a part of integral mission.

HANDOUT **Definitions of poverty**

**'Poverty is powerlessness.** It is about people being unable to meet their basic human needs. Most often this is due to lack of opportunity in a society marked by oppression and injustice which has led to disempowerment. The poor and the non-poor are people created in the image of God, who are designed to grow into mature human beings able to meet their own socioeconomic, personal, social, cultural and spiritual needs. Poverty is powerlessness to fulfil that God-given role.'

Rene Padilla  
Kairos, Argentina

**'Poverty is experienced by people who are limited in choice.** Economic poverty is limited ability to meet basic needs. Spiritual poverty is limited knowledge of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ as the Redeemer of the world. Poverty dehumanises people, so that they believe that the problems that they face need to be solved by somebody else.'

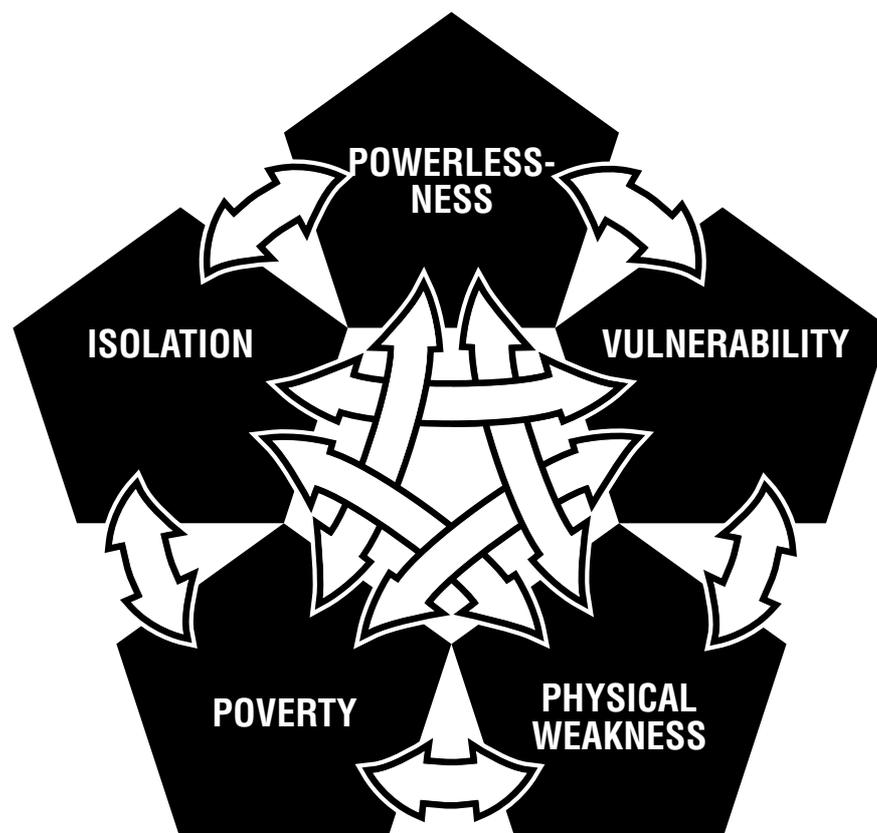
Francis Njoroge  
Independent Consultant, Kenya

**'Poverty is one of humanity's biggest problems.** It is often a result of social corruption, war, physical or economic disaster, or personal irresponsibility. Its underlying cause is sin, usually committed against those affected by it, and not by themselves. It is a painful, fearful, hopeless and vulnerable way of life due to exploitation, isolation, lack of choice and powerlessness.'

Saul Cruz-Ramos  
Armonía, Mexico

HANDOUT **The deprivation trap**

Robert Chambers (in his book *Rural Development: putting the last first*) outlines what he calls the 'deprivation trap', in which five 'clusters of disadvantage' interact with each other to trap people in a situation of disadvantage. One of the five clusters is poverty and it is used in the narrow sense of lack of assets. The others are powerlessness, physical weakness, isolation and vulnerability, which are the wider dimensions of poverty. The 'deprivation trap' was designed to represent the rural context, but many of the themes are relevant in any context.



**POVERTY: LACK OF ASSETS** Small house, little land, few or no livestock. All family members work unless they are too young, old or sick.

**PHYSICAL WEAKNESS** Adults unable to work due to illness or disability, or migration of active adults.

**ISOLATION** Household is remote or on the edge of a community, and may lack access to markets or information.

**VULNERABILITY** Household becomes poorer through having to deal with unforeseen circumstances such as crop failure, accident, sickness, funerals or flooding.

**POWERLESSNESS** Weak negotiating position with those in control, ignorant of the law, competing for employment.

## HANDOUT

**Tearfund's approach to development**

(Taken from Tearfund's Operating Principles)

**What is integral mission?**

- Tearfund believes that the causes of poverty and marginalisation are complex, but that they result from broken relationships. God made the world good, but human rebellion led to exclusion, mistrust, greed and injustice.
- The goal of integral mission is therefore restored relationships with the Creator, with others in the community and with the environment.
- Jesus Christ came to bring this restoration. Through his incarnation, death and resurrection, people are saved from God's condemnation, become part of God's new community and will one day experience the peace and justice of his rule.
- Tearfund's focus is with the economically poor and powerless, but our concern is to see restored relationships in all their fullness, not just economic well being.
- Our responsibility to God is expressed through our response to others.

**Priorities in integral mission**

**THE PRIORITY OF RELATIONSHIPS** A desire for good relationships is a goal for all our activities, because good relationships enable us to live interdependently in communities and in the world. Tearfund is therefore committed to working in partnership and co-operation with others.

**THE PRIORITY OF THE FUTURE** In the future God will establish a new heaven and a new earth. We serve him now in the light of this hope. We want rich and poor to have the hope of a home in this new creation where there is no more death, mourning, crying or pain and where God is present with his people. Reconciliation with God through submission to Jesus Christ is the greatest need of the poor, as with all people. Tearfund is therefore committed to the proclamation of the gospel.

**The context of integral mission**

**PRAYER** There is a spiritual reality to development that a secular world-view often ignores. We are engaged in a spiritual conflict and therefore prayer is essential for integral mission. The only way to keep going and see significant change is through the gracious power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

**CHURCH AND PARTNERSHIP** The church is central to God's saving purpose. It is the community in which God lives by his Spirit. Tearfund is committed to working in partnership with evangelical churches, enabling them to fulfil their ministry to the poor. Partnership expresses the solidarity of Christians reconciled through Christ and builds up local churches.

HANDOUT **Tearfund's approach to development** (continued)**Characteristics of integral mission**

- Compassion and respect for those in need, regardless of their religious beliefs.
- Justice – speaking up on behalf of the powerless and enabling them to speak up for themselves against injustice.
- Character – that the character of Christ should be evident in the way work is done – with righteousness and justice, mercy and peacemaking.
- Cultural sensitivity – recognising that the resources and knowledge of all cultures and communities are valuable.
- Cultural transformation – recognising that no culture is without fault and that gospel values challenge all cultures at some point.
- Mutual accountability, trust and transparency.
- Good leadership that puts others' needs first.
- Empowerment that enables people to make choices, to have a voice and become agents of change.
- Participation so that everyone in the community owns the projects carried out.
- Sustainability – a process of ongoing personal and community change that comes from within the community itself.
- Integration – helping communities to address their different needs through co-operation within the community and with other groups.

# Understanding advocacy

**Description** This section will give a general introduction to advocacy. It builds on the understanding of poverty and development and aims to place advocacy in the context of poverty alleviation and development work.

**Learning objectives** By the end of the section, participants will:

- be able to give a definition of advocacy and understand the basic components
- understand the different approaches to advocacy, and various situations in which advocacy can occur
- understand the potential roles of an advocate.

**Links** This section builds on the understanding gained in SECTION A1 (Understanding poverty and development). It also links with SECTION A3 (Why advocacy?), SECTION A5 (Understanding politics and power) and SECTION C3 (Planning), which develop the advocacy components in more detail.

## EXERCISE 3 **What is advocacy?**



**Aim** To come to an understanding of advocacy and its basic components.

**Methods** Flash cards, small-group discussion, case studies, plenary, role play

**Handouts** Three approaches to advocacy  
 Advocacy case studies of Tearfund partners  
 Advocacy definitions  
 What is involved in advocacy?

People will have different experiences of advocacy. Some reactions will be very positive, but other people may have had bad experiences and see advocacy as something to avoid. It is therefore a good idea to start the session by finding out people's understanding and reactions. This exercise is used to make some basic points and to correct common misunderstandings. There are many different ways to approach this. Three are offered below.

- Participants write on flash cards the words that come to mind when they hear the word 'advocacy'. Stick the cards on the wall or place them on the floor. Participants group the ideas in themes. Lead a discussion, using the handouts to add anything that is missed out.

- Alternatively, present the 'Advocacy definitions' handout and ask participants to draw out the key themes, issues or statements in each definition. Use this as a basis for coming to a common understanding of advocacy. Then present the 'Three approaches to advocacy' handout and ask participants to use the case studies to identify the different types of advocacy.
- Another way of doing this exercise is to ask participants to use the case studies and their own examples to prepare a role play that acts out each of these approaches to advocacy. Use this as a basis for discussion.

**Key points**

- There are three approaches to advocacy (advocacy **for**, **with** and **by** the poor or those affected by a situation). It is likely that most participants will initially focus on advocacy as 'doing something **for** someone else'.
- There are different objectives associated with each approach, such as trying to change policy, or to increase participation.
- The most sustainable advocacy is often done **by** those who are directly affected by a situation. Capacity building may be needed before this can happen. However, there may be situations when people cannot, or will not, do advocacy for themselves, such as due to fear.
- Many advocacy initiatives will use all three approaches at different times.
- Some participants may have objections to doing advocacy work. Most of these objections will be tackled in later sections of the Toolkit, but if they are raised earlier, write them onto a wall chart so that participants know that their objections are being taken seriously.

**EXERCISE 4 Where does advocacy take place?**

**Aim** To show that advocacy takes place all of the time in all situations.

**Methods** Small-group discussion, case study discussion

**Handouts** Levels of advocacy  
Advocacy case studies of Tearfund partners

Many participants are likely to see advocacy as a 'professional' activity that a few people can undertake, on behalf of the rest of the population. It may be seen as confrontational, or something done by politicians behind closed doors. This exercise will challenge people about their understanding of advocacy, and help them to understand that it takes place in different contexts, all of the time.

Using the case studies in the handout, ask the question: ‘Where does advocacy take place?’ and group the responses to show that it takes place at all levels of decision-making. Ask the participants why it is necessary for advocacy to take place at different levels.

- Key points**
- Advocacy takes place at all levels of decision-making.
  - Advocacy is needed at all levels because decisions at top levels affect those at lower levels. Actions at lower levels can determine policies at higher levels.
  - The church has a key role in speaking out for justice. It has the strategic advantage of local knowledge and relationships, as well as links to regional and national structures.

## EXERCISE 5 **Potential roles of an advocate**



**Aim** To show that those involved in advocacy can take on many different roles.

**Methods** Brainstorm, plenary discussion, case studies, small-group discussion, drawing

**Handout** Roles of an advocate

- Based on the understanding of the different types of advocacy, and where advocacy takes place, brainstorm (either in plenary or in buzz groups) the different roles of an advocate. Participants then discuss the characteristics of each role and relate this to examples from their own experience, or use the case studies to identify how the roles operate in practice.
- Alternatively, draw each of the ‘roles of an advocate’ diagrams from the handout onto a separate wall chart. Ask participants to describe what is happening in each picture and to write on the charts the characteristics of the role and relate it to some examples from their own experience. They can also add any roles that they think are missing.

HANDOUT **Three approaches to advocacy**

Table of advocacy approaches

APPROACH TO ADVOCACY	ADVOCACY <i>FOR</i> THOSE AFFECTED BY A SITUATION	ADVOCACY <i>WITH</i> THOSE AFFECTED BY A SITUATION	ADVOCACY <i>BY</i> THOSE AFFECTED BY A SITUATION
Advocacy work done by	Professionals, NGOs, church leaders	A mixture of professionals, NGOs and local community groups	Local community, workers
Main objectives for intervention	Change in law, policy or practice	Increased access to decision-making Change in law, policy or practice Build advocacy capacity of those affected by situation	Increase in awareness of advocacy possibilities and capacity to do advocacy
Characteristics	Issues often identified by outsiders Usually targeted at official decision-makers	Issues identified by community Shared planning, resources and action Outside organisers mobilise capacity	Issues identified by community Learning by involvement May have significant outside input at start
Advantages	Quick access to decision-makers Good access to information about wider context	Increase access of poor to decision-makers Advocacy skills and capacity developed	Empowering – poor see themselves as agents of change Sustainable Can correct power imbalance
Disadvantages	Could strengthen existing power structures May not increase the capacity of local groups to act	NGO often in control and sets agenda Slower due to need for agreement between all parties	Access to fewer resources and information Risk of revenge Policy change may take longer

It might be appropriate to use a mixture of the three approaches to advocacy at different times throughout the process. Development organisations that support the principles of participation and empowerment should aim to see the poor undertake advocacy themselves and become agents of change in their local area. However, due to risk or lack of skills and knowledge, advocacy for others may be the only option at the start.

HANDOUT **Advocacy case studies of Tearfund partners**

## Orphans in Rwanda

African Evangelistic Enterprise (AEE) works with orphans whose parents have died of AIDS and child-headed households in the Kibungo Region in the east of Rwanda. They have two associations that operate through a sewing workshop and a carpentry shop where children are trained and sell their goods. The Rwandan Revenue Authority (RRA) is responsible for collecting taxes and they asked the associations to pay (which they could not afford) or close down. AEE, as a partner of these associations, used its size and contacts to arrange a meeting with the Ministry of Social Affairs. At the meeting they explained that those working in the associations are either orphans or members of child-headed households and should therefore be treated in a more charitable way and exempted from paying taxes. The ministry agreed and said that all partners of AEE should be exempt due to the development work they are doing.

Applying for refugee  
status, Egypt

The Joint Relief Ministry (JRM) works in Cairo with displaced people from the Horn of Africa. It offers spiritual support, medical clinics, basic relief supplies, skills training and education. In 1998 there was an attempted suicide at All Saints Cathedral. This initiated a workshop in which the displaced community asked for further training to help them make applications and appeals to UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), which has responsibility for determining refugee status in Egypt. Although the community was receiving material and spiritual support from JRM already, they also needed to know how to represent their case to UNHCR in order to give them the best chance of being allowed to remain in Egypt or to settle permanently in another country.

JRM, other supporting institutions and members of the displaced community set up an advocacy organisation called Musa'adeen (Helpers). They developed a handbook to guide individuals when making an application to UNHCR. Members of the displaced community were trained so they could help others in the application process. The group worked closely with the UNHCR and made a video to help reduce fear and enable applicants to present their cases effectively.

However, some of those who were trained did it only to improve their own applications rather than to help others to write theirs. Others started charging fellow applicants for their help, which was forbidden by the organisation. Musa'adeen therefore started to ensure that their trained members operated from six designated centres and the centre leaders forwarded names of trained members to the UNHCR.

Lessons learned:

- Ongoing support of the trainers was required to give them the necessary skills and expertise to help others.
- Legal advice was needed to improve training and to get help with difficult cases.
- Good relationships with UNHCR were vital to ensure that the help given was useful and to improve the procedure that determined status.

HANDOUT **Advocacy case studies of Tearfund partners** (continued)Peace and Hope,  
Peru

In the 1980s harsh 'anti-terrorist' measures were introduced in Peru, which gave police the power to arrest people on suspicion of terrorism. Those convicted could be released or have their sentences reduced if they gave information that led to the arrest of others. Those arrested often gave false information, leading to many other wrongful arrests. As a minority group, Christians have often been targeted and arrested wrongfully.

Peace and Hope has advocated in a number of ways. First they campaigned to get innocent individuals freed from prison.

However, even when proved innocent, a pardon is not automatic. Therefore, together with other human rights organisations and the Catholic and evangelical churches, Peace and Hope has pressured the government to create an Ad-Hoc Commission. This Commission will recommend the pardon of those who have been unjustly imprisoned to the President, so that they can be freed. The advocacy work has involved writing letters, protest marches and interviews with the media. In one example, Tearfund supporters in the UK wrote to the Peruvian President and to the Embassy in the UK asking for innocent people to be freed.

When people are released, some still have a criminal record that prevents them from working. This is despite the fact that there is a law in place to cancel this criminal record. Peace and Hope are therefore also lobbying for all criminal records to be cancelled automatically on release.

Access to health and  
housing, India

Over three million people in Delhi live in slums. The government has been unable to provide services as the slums grow. ASHA works in 30 slums, carrying out community and health development work.

The slumlords make all the decisions about what happens in the slums. Often, the needs of the poorest people have been ignored. ASHA has built up a relationship with the slumlords and tried to show them that slum development should be encouraged. The Mahila Mandals (Women's Action Groups, which ASHA mobilised to address health issues in the slums) have also been active in confronting slumlords. The Mahila Mandals now represent their concerns to the local authorities. As a result, most groups now have access to water points, sanitation and health services.

ASHA also mobilised 475 families in 1989 to form a co-operative housing authority. ASHA represented the community to the Slum Wing of the Delhi Development Authority to arrange housing loans at low interest. As a result, the community now has houses, roads, drainage, clean water, electricity, healthcare, a school and a park. This initiative has become adopted as a model for the government's new housing policy.

HANDOUT **Advocacy case studies of Tearfund partners** (continued)

## Finding bread in Turkmenistan

The organisation Jahan currently works in a Tajik-Turkmen refugee settlement of 350 people. The village has a gas supply, but no running water, roads, school, and until recently, no electricity supply. The inhabitants of the village are amongst the poorest in Turkmenistan. The government does not recognise any local village leader, but has given the responsibility to oversee this community to the leader of an established Turkmen village 15km away.

Jahan is involved in building a school in the village. Jahan staff visit the community a number of times each week and are often approached by its inhabitants. On one occasion, a very poor single mother told the staff that since the President stopped free rations of flour, it had become extremely difficult to find bread for her children. Jahan's co-ordinator went to see one of the labour chiefs of the village to explain this situation. They, in turn, spoke with the village leader, who agreed to take a quota of the rice crop growing on the family's designated land on the commune farm, in exchange for a regular amount of flour. This solution used the resources the mother already had and enabled her to bake her own bread and feed her children.

## Stigmatisation through HIV / AIDS, Thailand

Almost 80% of the HIV infected women in the Siam Care project tried to get rid of their children's vaccination records because 'HIV positive' was stamped in big letters on the front page. This told anyone who saw the book that the mother was HIV positive. The mothers wanted their privacy respected and did not want health personnel to know about their HIV infection through reading their children's vaccination books. Unfortunately, when the books were destroyed, important vaccination, child development, and health records were lost.

In August 2000 Siam-Care, together with CAR (Centre for Aids Rights) organised a meeting with other NGOs working with HIV-infected women to find out whether the problem existed elsewhere. It did and the information was documented. Together the NGOs came up with a new design for vaccination books, which did not state whether the mother was HIV positive. Siam-Care and CAR then organised a seminar for representatives of the Ministry of Public Health and presented the problem and possible layouts for new vaccination books. The Ministry of Public Health appointed a committee (including NGOs) to look at a new vaccination book. In March 2001 a new vaccination book was produced, leaving out the mother's HIV status.

By uniting with other NGOs and preparing the case in depth, with well-researched and good information, real life stories and case studies, Siam Care was able to ensure that changes were made, even with a slow-working ministerial department.

HANDOUT **Advocacy case studies of Tearfund partners** (continued)

African Revival  
Ministries (ARM),  
Burundi – working  
with the Batwa

The Batwa are a group of pygmy people in Burundi. They used to be nomadic, until government policy meant that they had to settle in local communities with other ethnic groups. However, this has been difficult because they are discriminated against. All people in Burundi have the right to primary education, but some school teachers refuse to take Batwa children because they do not dress neatly and because classes are overcrowded. The Batwa people have no history of land ownership, and local authorities have been reluctant to provide land for them. This has meant that they cannot build houses or farm any land to provide food for themselves.

ARM has worked with the BATWA in many ways to address their problems:

- They have lobbied local authorities and schools to accept Batwa children. This has involved fighting for their right to education, as well as helping to provide uniforms and school equipment so that the Batwa children are not discriminated against when they are in school.
- ARM has also lobbied the local authorities to provide the Batwa with land. They started in Gitega province and in 2001 the local government agreed to provide a plot of land for each Batwa family. ARM is now planning to lobby the local authorities in Kayanza province.
- ARM has worked with churches to address their prejudices and encourage Christians to care for the Batwa in their community. Some churches are now helping them to build houses on the land they have been provided with.

This whole process has enabled the Batwa to have dignity within Burundi. They are now advocating for their own rights to equal treatment and equal access to services.

## HANDOUT **Advocacy definitions**

There are numerous definitions of advocacy. Below we offer Tearfund's definition as well as some other ones.

**'Seeking with, and on behalf of, the poor to address underlying causes of poverty, bring justice and support good development through influencing the policies and practices of the powerful.'**

**Tearfund views advocacy as part of its mission to bring good news to the poor, motivated by the compassion of Christ.'**

*Tearfund*

'The promotion of a specific message and / or course of action in order to influence or contribute to the development and implementation of public policies which will alleviate the causes and consequences of poverty.'

*Oxfam GB*



'The process of influencing key decision-makers and opinion-formers (individuals and organisations) for changes to policies and practices that will work in poor people's favour.'

*Action Aid*



'What the process involves is not defined, but it must include education of either the powerful or the powerless.'

*World Vision International*



HANDOUT **What is involved in advocacy?**

**Advocacy involves**

- **ASKING WHY?** until you get to the root of the problem
- **ENSURING POWER IS USED WELL**, enabling those without power to gain access to it, and helping those who feel powerless to see what power they already have
- **EDUCATION** of the powerless and the powerful
- **SEEKING JUSTICE** for those who are oppressed or treated unfairly
- **BRINGING CHANGE** for individuals, through changing their personal situation and through changing systems, structures and policies
- **BEING A VOICE** for the voiceless and enabling the voiceless to find their own voice.

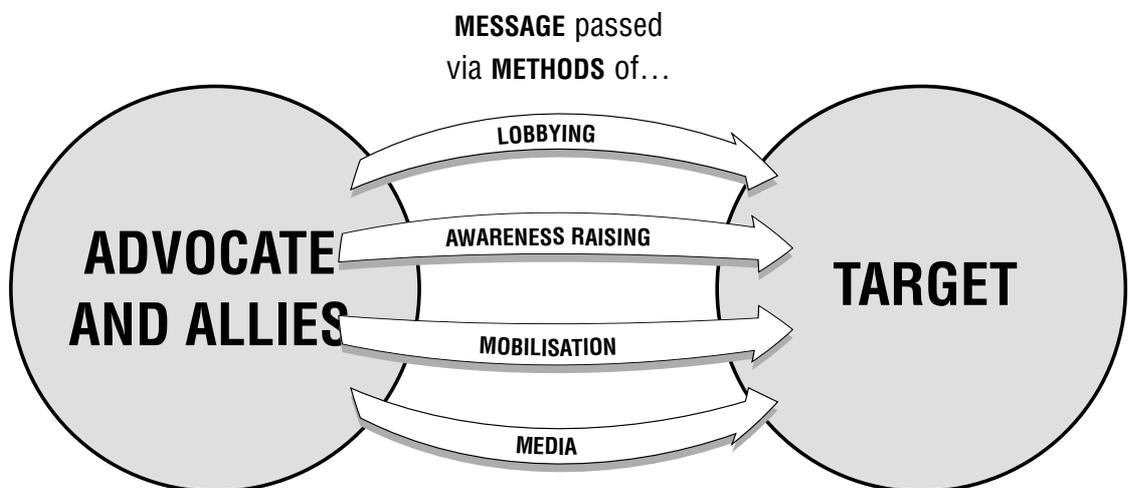
**Important activities in advocacy**

- **CAPACITY BUILDING** so that the poor will become agents of change themselves
- **NETWORKING** in order to pool resources
- **PRAYER**
- **GOOD RESEARCH** so that the problem and potential solutions can be clearly identified

Advocacy is about working on individual cases, such as campaigning to release those who have been wrongly imprisoned, and about campaigning on issues, such as access to water.

The advocacy objectives are based on good research. They should be presented as a clear message directed at those who have the power to bring about change (the targets) or those that can influence them. These advocacy activities are done by those working to bring about the change (the advocate and allies and those affected by a situation) and will be communicated through a variety of methods and activities.

This will all come together to form an advocacy strategy, the practical process of formulating and implementing of which is explained in Part C of this Toolkit.



The overall objective is to change the particular policies or practices of the target for the benefit of the poor.

HANDOUT **Levels of advocacy**

Advocacy takes place at many levels, wherever there is a relationship. It varies according to the problem and the types of groups involved. Examples of decisions made at different levels include:



Decisions made at one level affect people at another level. Therefore, advocacy is necessary at all levels for lasting change. For example, international debt means that national governments have little money to spend on healthcare and education. Therefore, the local authority cannot fulfil its role in delivering primary education for everyone. Advocacy work aimed at local authority level will not bring much change unless the issue of debt at international level is also addressed.

People in communities suffer the effects of decisions made at higher levels. However, people in communities can influence these decisions by voting and lobbying decision-makers at higher levels.

**The church is present at all levels, and is therefore in a strategic position to bring about change. It can connect those in communities to those in power.**

HANDOUT **Roles of an advocate**

An advocate will take different roles depending on the objectives. Some possible roles are shown below:

Possible advocate roles

ROLE	CHARACTERISTIC	
Represent	Speak <b>for</b> people	
Accompany	Speak <b>with</b> people	
Empower	Enable people to speak for themselves	
Mediate	Facilitate communication between people	
Model	Demonstrate the practice to people or policy makers	
Negotiate	Bargain for something	
Network	Build coalitions	

**Key**

advocate

targets / those in power

those affected by a situation

# Why advocacy?

**Description** This section will help participants explore what drives their advocacy work and understand why Tearfund is involved in it. It will also explore some of the benefits and potential drawbacks of an advocacy approach to development, and possible ways of addressing these.

**Learning objectives**

By the end of the section, participants will:

- be able to identify what motivates them in their own advocacy work
- understand why Tearfund is involved in advocacy work
- understand the overlap between advocacy and other development work
- understand the potential benefits and drawbacks of an advocacy approach to development.

**Links** This links with SECTION A1 (Poverty and development) and SECTION A2 (Understanding advocacy). It is also the basis for SECTION A4 (Good practice in advocacy) and is linked with SECTION C3.6 (Risk management).

## EXERCISE 6 **What drives you in advocacy work?**



**Aim** That participants will reflect on their own motivations in advocacy work.

**Methods** Flash cards, small-group work and feedback, buzz groups, ranking, agree / disagree

**Handout** Biblical values

This exercise is important because often people’s commitment to advocacy comes from their own personal beliefs. This exercise explores the personal beliefs that drive participants and helps them to see the link between advocacy and development.

Participants brainstorm in pairs or write directly on flash cards their response to the question ‘what drives you in advocacy work?’

- Group the answers and discuss the different motivations in plenary.
- Alternatively, collect the flash cards without discussion, read out the most common motivations and ask participants to move to either end of the room according to how strongly they agree or disagree with the motivation for themselves. This then leads on to a discussion.

**Key point** ■ If people are certain of their own motivations, they are more likely to persevere.

## EXERCISE 7 **Reasons for becoming involved in advocacy work**



**Aim** To explore the variety of reasons for becoming involved in advocacy work.

**Methods** Plenary discussion, small-group work, presentation

**Handouts** Why Tearfund is involved in advocacy work  
Biblical values

There are many reasons for becoming involved in advocacy work. In addition to personal motivations (EXERCISE 6), these may include:

- the vision, mission and values of the organisation for which a person works
- the values of the community to which a person belongs
- biblical values
- being directly affected by a situation
- desire for long-term change.

Participants summarise possible reasons or motivations that people might have for becoming involved in advocacy work. After discussing these reasons, present some of Tearfund's thinking in the handout.

Consider what value the church adds to any existing advocacy or other development work, and how this links with the overall mission of the church – see SECTION B2 (The mission of the church) and SECTION B3 (Jesus the advocate). This helps participants to place advocacy in their understanding of integral mission.

## EXERCISE 8 **Developing a vision for change**



**Aim** To develop a vision of a better society.

**Methods** Buzz groups, plenary discussion

Developing a vision at the start of any advocacy or development work is important, as it will help the advocate focus on a positive vision for change, not just problems or difficulties. This exercise encourages participants to think about their perfect world, whether this is a general vision for their country or a more specific one for their own local area. Vision provides an ultimate aim for what people are trying to do and helps to motivate them.

Ask participants some of the following questions so that they start thinking and express their dreams:

- What would your perfect world look like?
- What would you like your neighbourhood or community to look like in ten years time?

- What kind of world would you like your children to live in?

Ask participants to write down, draw or act out their vision.

## EXERCISE 9 **Links between advocacy and other development work**



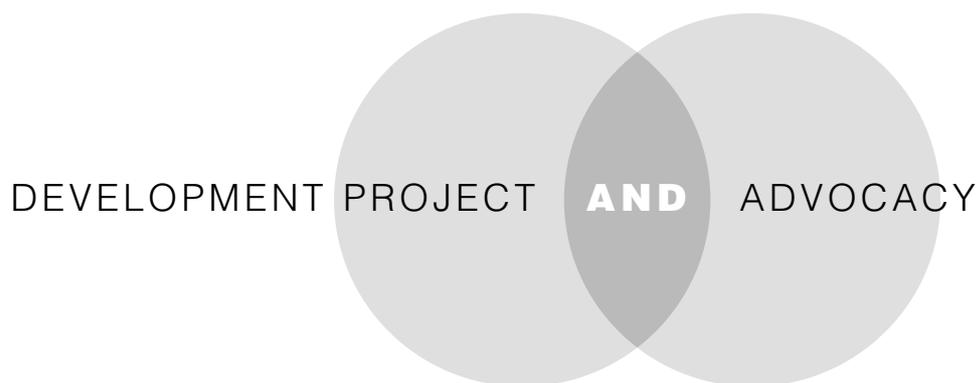
**Aim** To show strong links between advocacy and other development work.

**Methods** Flash cards, plenary discussion

**Handout** Why Tearfund is involved in advocacy work

It is important to make the necessary links between advocacy and other development work, so that advocacy is seen as integral to development work and not separated from it. The best advocacy work is motivated by the existing development concerns of a community.

Give everyone a flash card or post-it note and split the participants into two groups. Each person in one group writes down a reason for getting involved in a development project or programme with which they are all already familiar such as drilling wells or improving farming practices. Each person in the second group writes down a reason for involvement in advocacy work. Each set of reasons is then placed on two separate pieces of flip chart paper representing advocacy and development project 'circles'. Between these two pieces of paper is a blank piece of paper, which represents the overlap. Ask the participants to place any similar or related cards from the advocacy and development circles on the blank sheet of paper between the two. Do this until all connections are made.



- Key point** ■ There is not complete overlap between the two circles, but the ultimate aim of development projects and programmes, and advocacy work, is the same: to restore relationships with God, each other and the environment, and to tackle poverty and injustice.

## EXERCISE 10 **Benefits and drawbacks of an advocacy approach to development**



**Aim** To identify the benefits and drawbacks of an advocacy approach to development.

**Methods** Plenary discussion, presentation, buzz groups, small-group discussion, ranking

**Handout** Benefits and drawbacks of an advocacy approach to development

Split participants into two groups and ask one to brainstorm the benefits and the other to brainstorm the drawbacks of an advocacy approach to development. Write the benefits and drawbacks onto flash cards and ask participants to place them in order, from the most positive aspect of advocacy to the most negative. Discuss why the group has come to that conclusion and distribute the handout.

- Key points**
- Advocacy is one of a number of possible options to tackle poverty and injustice.
  - Advocacy is not always the best response.
  - Each case needs to be considered carefully according to the context.

## EXERCISE 11 **Ways to overcome concerns and risks in advocacy**



**Aim** To explore ways to overcome common concerns, threats and risks of advocacy.

**Methods** Buzz groups, small-group discussion, plenary discussion, presentation, role play

**Handout** Common concerns with advocacy work and how to overcome them

Split the group into pairs or small groups and give each group a flash card of one or more of the concerns, risks or drawbacks identified in the previous exercise or in the 'Common concerns with advocacy work and how to overcome them' handout. Each group discusses how these concerns, risks or drawbacks can be overcome and feeds back to the plenary for discussion.

Another approach is for the participants to prepare a short drama based on the case studies in the handout to illustrate how the concern was overcome.

HANDOUT **Why Tearfund is involved in advocacy work**

Refer to Tearfund's definition of advocacy given in the handout in SECTION A2.

**Main reasons  
for involvement  
in advocacy  
work**

**BEING MOTIVATED BY THE COMPASSION OF CHRIST** Christ is our motivation and our strength in all that we do. He has compassion for those in need, those suffering injustice, oppression or poverty. Our compassion is based on the love and the mercy that Christ has shown us.

**FULFILLING THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH TO BRING GOOD NEWS** God uses the church to help extend his Kingdom. This includes preaching, prayer, caring for those in need, defending the cause of others, speaking out against injustice, working for change and looking after God's creation. Advocacy is therefore part of the overall mission of the church. We are motivated to do this out of obedience to God, compassion, and in order to point people towards Jesus.

**VIEWING THE POOR AS AGENTS OF CHANGE** Part of the development process is helping the poor to see themselves as agents of change. Advocacy work can help to achieve this, so that poor people are more in control of their lives and better able to participate in decision-making that affects the future of their community and wider area.

**ADDRESSING ROOT CAUSES OF POVERTY AND INJUSTICE AND PROVIDING LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS** Development work should deal with the root causes of poverty as well as tackling the symptoms, so that development will be sustainable. Advocacy tackles the root causes by asking what policies, practices or other factors are leading to poverty and injustice and challenging these.

**SHARING GOOD DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE** A key part of advocacy work is showing what works in practice and persuading others to do the same. For Christians, this is part of what it means to be a light to the world, demonstrating God's Kingdom. Building on good development practice and promoting positive change is central to advocacy work. Advocacy work is not only about preventing negative change.

**LEVERAGING GREATER CHANGE** Advocacy work can generate or attract resources and actions that would not be available in individual development projects. As a result, advocacy work can have a significant multiplier effect on development work that is already happening.

HANDOUT **Biblical values**

- Key points**
- Biblical values are constant but they only become our values when we live by them.
  - Because we each prioritise values differently, we should be careful to understand how and why others have prioritised values in their approach to advocacy.

Some biblical values which link with advocacy work are:

**COMPASSION**

For the vulnerable, marginalised and oppressed. The Israelites were told not to ‘take advantage of a widow or an orphan’ (Exodus 22:22) and to look after the poor (Leviticus 23:22). The psalmist speaks of God as being ‘gracious and compassionate’ (86:15) and ‘slow to anger and rich in love’.

**SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE**

Many of the laws in Leviticus were written to promote justice, such as using fair measurements for trade (19:36), not charging interest (25:36), fair distribution of land (25:8-54) and paying fair wages to labourers (Malachi 3:5).

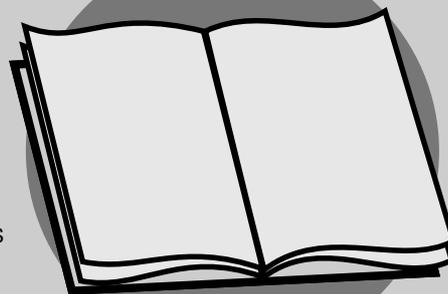
**LOVE AND ACTIVE RESPONSIBILITY TO OTHERS**

Jesus placed love at the heart of all commandments (Matthew 22:37-40).

**EQUALITY OF ALL HUMAN BEINGS BEFORE GOD**

This includes equality regardless of age, gender, race, or intelligence and recognises human beings as made in the image of God (Genesis 1-2).

**WISE STEWARDSHIP OF RESOURCES** which means treating the environment with respect, taking proper care of all animals, fish and birds, and using the earth’s natural resources to the benefit of all people, not just a few (Genesis 1-2).



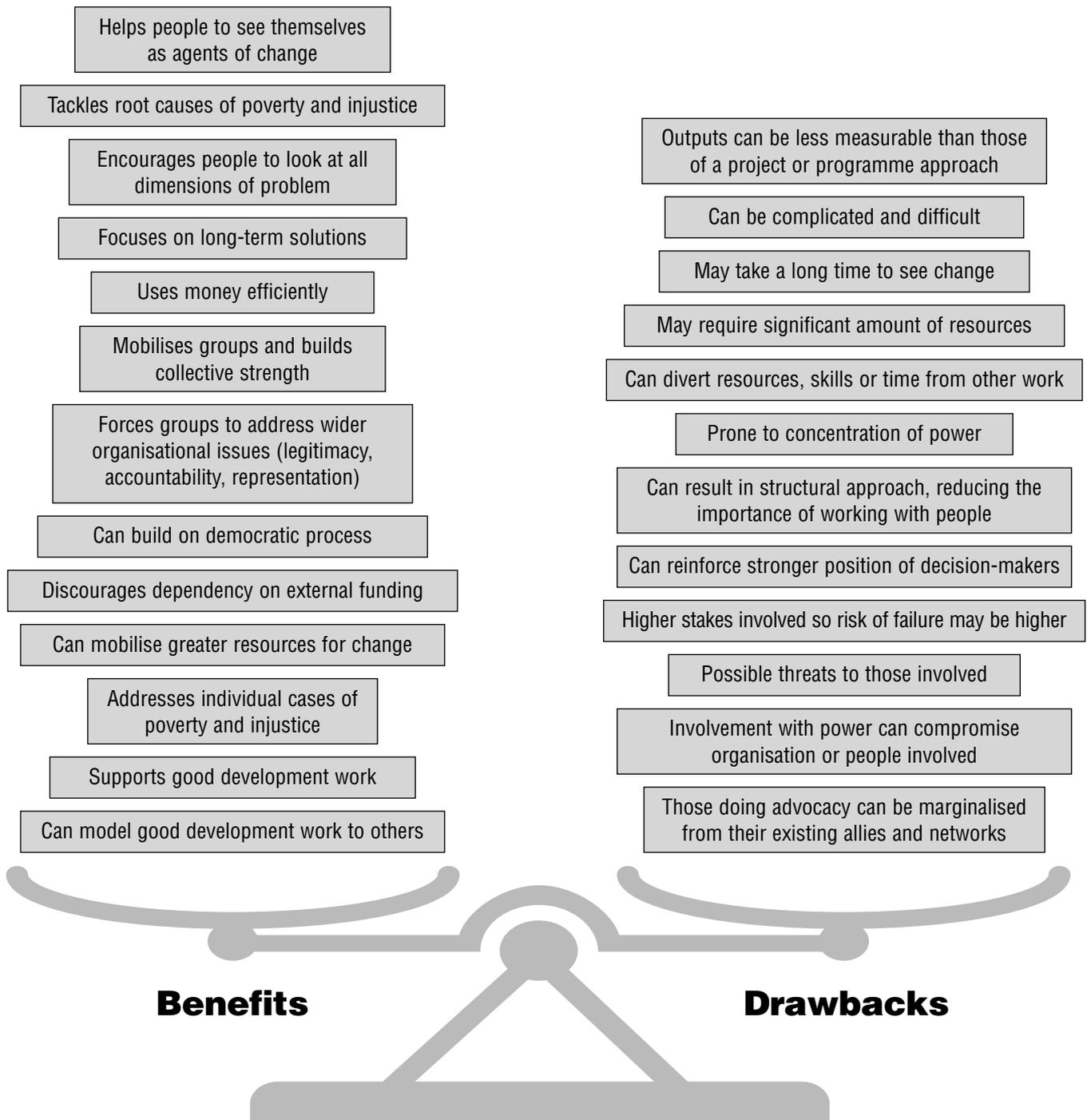
**PARTICIPATION** and responsibility of people in determining their own lives and the lives of those in the community and nations.

**RECONCILIATION AND PEACE WITHIN COMMUNITIES**

God intends that all people should live at peace with each other and reconciliation is at the heart of his plan (Matthew 5:9). We need to promote peaceful and supportive relationships within communities, and to seek reconciliation in all situations.

## HANDOUT **Benefits and drawbacks of an advocacy approach to development**

Advocacy work might not always be the best approach to development. The table below looks at the advantages and disadvantages of an advocacy approach to development. Some of these advantages and disadvantages also apply to a project or programme approach to development.



HANDOUT

## Common concerns with advocacy work and how to overcome them

Many organisations have concerns about becoming involved in advocacy. Some common concerns are listed below, with advice on how to overcome them.

**‘Speaking out will threaten ourselves or those for whom we speak’**

- In extreme circumstances, buildings could be closed down, property confiscated, or people could lose their jobs, end up in prison or be physically threatened as a result of taking part in advocacy work, particularly in countries where law enforcement is weak.
- If there is a potential risk, advocates and those affected by a situation should be aware of the risk before any action is taken.
- Use organisations outside the country, or undertake advocacy as part of a coalition in order to keep a low profile.
- Cultivate strong relationships with some people in power, who can act as bridges to others or help you if you get into difficulty.

Churches, Sudan

The Sudan Council of Churches (SCC in the north) and the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC in the south) represent the majority of Christian denominations in Sudan. They have information and advocacy departments and collect information on issues such as food shortages, fighting, human rights abuses, the peace process and movement of refugees. They use this information to alert the world media, the Sudanese government and the international community about their situation. They also pass the information on to a network of development and human rights agencies in Europe and North America that will lobby and campaign on their behalf, especially when it is difficult for the churches to speak directly in Sudan.

**‘We will be ostracised if we speak out’**

- Some advocacy work can involve a risk to those involved, in terms of being ostracised from the community, losing friends and, in extreme cases, losing a job.
- Be aware of these risks.
- Minimise the risk through respecting those with power and influence, and giving them clear explanations about what is being done.

**‘We do not know enough about the situation’**

- Contact other organisations and networks to see which have any information and are already involved in advocacy work on the issue. You may find that collectively you have all the information and contacts needed.

HANDOUT

**Common concerns with advocacy work** (continued)

**‘Advocacy is confrontational’**

- This is not necessarily the case. Governments and authorities are often aware that there is a problem and will welcome suggestions as to how it can be solved.

Innerchange House of Hope, Cambodia

In Cambodia thousands of girls under 18 are drawn into prostitution and live and operate from brothels. The Cambodian law says that girls who want to leave brothels should be released, but many girls are unaware of this law, brothel owners do not publicise it and many of the law enforcers are unsure of the law’s detail.

The first task was to make the law more understandable and more available. A member of the Innerchange staff, who had experience with civil servants and who was older and respected in the community, summarised the current law and asked the Governor to sign a document endorsing it. He did so and the one page summary was given to police and brothel owners to ensure that girls under 18 years could be released from brothels.

The key issue was to make information accessible to the key policy implementors, and to give them the tools and confidence to implement a law that already exists.

**‘Romans 13 says submit to authority, so advocacy work which challenges authority goes against biblical teaching’**

- The assumption in Paul’s writing about authority is that those in power are God’s servants. This appears just after Romans 12, when Paul is instructing the Christians not to repay evil with evil, but to overcome evil with good. He instructs them to leave room for God’s wrath, some of which will be administered through his servants who are in authority on earth. However, what happens if those in authority are not governing according to God’s laws? We cannot just sit back and watch a government abuse its power and role as a servant of God. It is our role, both as citizens and as Christians, to hold the governments to account, so that they fulfil the role that God has appointed them to do.

Evangelical Fellowship of Cambodia (EFC)

The government of Cambodia is concerned about the issue of pornography. The church and many other groups agree with the government’s stance and want to show that they support it. This not only gives the government confidence to act in a stronger way, but encourages churches to co-operate and have detailed discussions about how to achieve this joint aim.

The Youth Commission, a working group of the EFC, made up of Cambodian pastors, Christian professionals and Christian youth, are encouraging the churches to organise a March Against Pornography. Women’s groups from churches in the city of Phnom Penh and beyond, will be invited to the march to protest against the rapid increase in explicit videos and magazines. Many talks are planned in churches before the march. The march includes the Evangelical Fellowship of Cambodia Youth Commission, the Women’s Commissions and the public.

**HANDOUT Common concerns with advocacy work** (continued)

**‘We are too small and can make no difference’**

- Use the information, contacts and networks you already have and form alliances.
- Talk to as many other organisations as possible to find out whether they are acting on the issue or know of others that are.

Cigarette advertising, Sri Lanka

Tearfund partner organisation, Navajeevana, is a group of people who live together in Christian communities, supporting each other as they seek freedom from drug addiction. They wanted to respond to a major cigarette advertising campaign that was targeting the ports of Galle and Colombo. An international tobacco company was using a yacht as their main promotional strategy as well as distributing branded promotional materials. Schools were invited to take their children on the yacht and Navajeevana felt this was a case of exploitation that promoted a glamorous image of smoking. Navajeevana visited schools and encouraged them to cancel any proposed visits to the yacht in order to benefit and protect the children. Navajeevana decorated a bus to make it look like a yacht and drove it round the local area, performing street drama and mocking the cigarette company’s advertising slogans. When the yacht eventually arrived, there was little interest in the advertising campaign. Local people also became more aware of the risks associated with smoking.

**‘Advocacy can raise unrealistic expectations about how fast change can come’**

- Ensure that the community participates in identifying the problems, proposing solutions and assessing what chance they have of influencing change.
- Establish a realistic advocacy strategy that takes account of the resources available, the skills of the community, the accessibility of the targets and likelihood of change.

**‘Advocacy will divert resources away from other work’**

- If possible, advocacy work should come out of existing development activities.

**‘Advocacy work can compromise people in the organisation and the organisation as a whole’**

- A danger in advocacy work is that an organisation or community becomes too close to those in power and compromises its message, forgets the people it is representing or fails to represent them accurately. Promote participatory policy-making to ensure that policy is made by a group of people.
- Ensure that prayer underpins all actions, and there is clear understanding of any biblical mandate for action.
- Avoid condemnation in advocacy activities.
- Ensure that those affected by a situation represent themselves.
- Ensure that different people have contact with decision-makers so that all contacts and influence are not focused on one person (usually the Director!).
- Have a clear internal system of accountability.

# Good practice in advocacy

**Description** This section will help participants link their understanding of good practice in existing development work with good practice in advocacy work. It should help people avoid the temptation of rushing in and doing advocacy work for others. It focuses on principles of representation and participation, accountability and legitimacy, which ensure that advocacy work is done with others or that they are enabled to do it for themselves.

**Learning objectives** By the end of the section, participants will be able to understand key issues involved in:

- participation
- representation
- accountability
- legitimacy

and consider ways to address these issues in their organisation.

**Links** This links with SECTION A1 (Poverty and development), SECTION A2 (Understanding advocacy) and SECTION A3 (Why advocacy?). It is also linked with SECTION C3.2 (Objectives), SECTION C3.4 (Stakeholders) and SECTION C4.2 (Networking).

## EXERCISE 12 Participation



**Aim** To explore the benefits and drawbacks of participation in advocacy work by those who are directly affected by a situation.

**Methods** Role play, plenary discussion

**Handouts** Participation and representation  
Accountability

This exercise will reinforce the importance of advocacy **by** or **with** the poor, rather than **for** the poor.

Role play

Divide people into two groups with a maximum of eight in each group. Remaining participants act as observers. Identify a leader in each group and set each group a simple practical task.

- **Leader 1** is to play the role of a controlling leader who must only allow his / her own decisions to be implemented. The leader does not tolerate others in the group trying to take over or ignore them. Even if they are unsure of the way forward they need to be firm and confident.
- **Leader 2** is much more democratic. The leader asks people for their opinions and encourages all group members to participate. The leader does not impose his / her own answer and does not mind if people do not reach a solution.

**Group discussion**

- What did the observers see?
- How did the participants in each group feel?
- How did the leaders in each group feel?
- Can the participants give examples of where they have seen this type of behaviour?
- What are the results of the different types of leadership?

Discuss the benefits and disadvantages of participatory advocacy and how the participants can ensure effective participation in their own work.

## EXERCISE 13 Representation



**Aim** To draw out principles of good representation.

**Methods** Role play, guided questioning, plenary discussion, presentation

**Handouts** Participation and representation  
Accountability

Role play

A worker is sacked from her job over a misunderstanding – she took some shoes home that she thought were being thrown out, and was accused of stealing. She goes home and tells her mother.

- **Situation 1** The mother is outraged as the daughter starts to explain the situation. She does not wait for the whole story but storms out of the house, goes straight to the shopkeeper and demands her daughter be given her job back.
- **Situation 2** The mother is upset for the daughter and asks her to tell her the full story. The mother then asks the daughter what she wants to do. They agree to go together to see the shopkeeper to explain the full story, in order to try to get her job back.

**Group  
discussion**

- What happened? What did you observe?
- How was each person represented? What was good and bad about this?
- Ask each person in the role play to talk about how they felt.
- From the case studies and from other experience, what can we conclude about principles of good representation in advocacy work?

**EXERCISE 14 Accountability**

**Aim** To help people see why, to whom and how we should be accountable.

**Methods** Buzz groups, flash cards, plenary discussion

**Handouts** Participation and representation  
Accountability

Participants work in pairs to define 'accountability' and share the definition with the rest of the group. Write the common themes on a flip chart and ask why is it important to be accountable in advocacy work and to whom advocates should be accountable. Brainstorm methods of accountability within organisations, such as clear job descriptions and regular monitoring and evaluation. Participants suggest ways to improve the accountability within their organisations.

**EXERCISE 15 Legitimacy**

**Aim** To understand our foundations of legitimacy.

**Methods** Plenary discussion, buzz groups, small groups, presentation

**Handout** Legitimacy

We often assume that we have legitimacy, so it is useful to understand on what basis we assume our legitimacy, and to whom we need to prove it.

Work in pairs to define 'legitimacy'. Discuss the common themes in plenary. Split participants into two groups. The first group represents those doing advocacy work for someone else. The second group represents those doing advocacy work for themselves. Ask what groups or stakeholders the two groups of participants need legitimacy from and the basis of their legitimacy.

## HANDOUT **Participation and representation**

In SECTION A2 the three approaches to advocacy show that advocacy can be done **for** those affected, **with** those affected and **by** those affected by a situation. Each one of these may be valid in certain situations, but to achieve long-term sustainability it is vital that, whenever possible, advocacy is done **by** those who are affected by a situation. Even if advocacy is being done for others at the start, it is vital that those being ‘represented’ should be included in all stages of the advocacy process, such as defining the problem, proposing the solution and determining the strategy.

### Participation

#### Advantages

- Solutions are likely to work better
- Solutions are more likely to be accepted by the community
- The capacity of community is built in the process
- It challenges the imbalance of power
- The community is less dependent on outside help
- It ensures greater accountability

#### Disadvantages

- It takes longer
- It uses more resources
- The community is more vulnerable to risks

### Representation

If you are representing others, for whatever reason, there are some basic questions to ask:

- Have they asked you (directly or indirectly) to advocate for them?
- Have they given input to the position you are advocating and do they have ongoing input?
- Are they happy with the actions you are proposing?
- Are they adequately aware of the risks involved?
- Are they informed of progress?
- Are they building their capacity to advocate for themselves?

HANDOUT **Accountability**

Accountability considers how decisions are made, and to whom people are answerable for the decisions and actions they take. It occurs wherever there is a relationship, such as:

- in the local community
- between staff and co-workers
- between organisations
- between funders and beneficiaries.

The benefits of accountability include:

- ownership and participation of all involved in an advocacy initiative
- use of the skills of different people, which increases the likelihood of success
- increased sustainability of advocacy work
- increased legitimacy with policy makers
- prevention of people being marginalised in decision-making.

There are several key applications of accountability for an organisation, including:

- clear job descriptions and roles and a clear process for deciding policy
- identifying someone to whom everyone in the organisation is accountable
- ways for all stakeholders to comment on the organisation's operations and performance
- monitoring, reporting and evaluation of activities
- documentation of mission, vision, values and strategy.

## HANDOUT **Legitimacy**

Advocacy work depends on a long-term commitment to people and issues. This long-term commitment and partnership is a key basis for legitimacy. If you have legitimacy, people are more likely to listen to what you say.

The basis of legitimacy will differ according to the particular stakeholder to whom you are speaking. Some of the main relationships are shown below.

Some of the main legitimacy relationships

STAKEHOLDERS FROM WHOM SEEKING LEGITIMACY	BASIS OF LEGITIMACY (ADVOCACY FOR OR WITH THOSE AFFECTED BY A SITUATION)	BASIS OF LEGITIMACY (ADVOCACY BY THOSE AFFECTED BY A SITUATION)
Those directly affected by situation	Shared values and beliefs Participation by communities in identifying problems and solutions, and developing and implementing strategy Access and accurate representation of concerns to decision-makers Long-term relationship	Collective decision-making in community or group Realistic proposals Clear analysis of situation Ongoing support for those who are affected by situation Respect for variety of opinions
Policy-maker (eg: government, business)	Membership, income, etc of organisation Organisation's links (funders, supporters, networks, other policy-makers) Expertise Access to grass roots groups	Directly affected by situation Accurate information Relevant solutions Unity of opinion in analysis and proposing solutions
Coalition partner	Shared aims and values Skills and expertise Access to decision-makers Size and resources available	Directly affected by situation Shared aims and values Skills and expertise

# Understanding politics and power

**Description** This section will help participants to understand the meanings of politics and power. It considers who has power in a given situation. An understanding of how and where decisions are made is vital in order to influence and bring change.

**Learning objectives**

By the end of the section, participants will:

- be able to define politics
- understand power and its different dimensions, and link this with advocacy
- understand uses and abuses of power
- know who has power in their particular situation.

**Links** This links closely with SECTION A2 (Understanding advocacy). It also links with SECTION A3 (Why advocacy?) and SECTION B4 (Options for involvement).

## EXERCISE 16 **Understanding politics**



**Aim** To understand what politics is and where it takes place.

**Methods** Flash cards, small groups, plenary discussion

When the word ‘politics’ is mentioned it will usually produce a wide variety of animated reactions. Some people will say that it should not be touched. Others will embrace it. This exercise helps people come to a common understanding of politics, and to see the variety of contexts in which it operates, and therefore the necessity of involvement in it.

Participants brainstorm, in pairs, the first things that come into their mind when they think about politics. They write these on flash cards. Lead a discussion based on the answers given. Then split participants into three groups. Give each group a definition of politics as shown below and ask them to answer the question ‘Who is involved in politics?’ based on the definition they have been given. Discuss this in plenary and then lead a discussion on why Christians should be involved in politics.

As this issue is controversial, it may be necessary to summarise the discussion and ensure everyone is happy before moving on.

**Definitions of politics**

- Politics (with a capital ‘P’): The governing of a state or country
- politics: the interaction of all forms of power
- politics: ‘the art of living together in a community’ (John Stott)

**Key points**

- Politics is the exercise of power and the interaction of people with power.
- The narrow definition of Politics (with a capital ‘P’) refers to the governing of a state or country and is limited to professional politicians.
- The broad definition of politics (with a small ‘p’) considers the interaction of all forms of power, which happens wherever there is a relationship. Everyone is therefore political and has the potential to influence what happens in their lives, their communities and their countries.
- Christians need to use politics to bring about change in society and be faithful to God’s calling.

EXERCISE 17 **Understanding power**



**Aim** To understand power and the different forms it takes.

**Methods** Role play, flash cards, small-group discussion, plenary discussion, presentation

**Handouts** The three faces or dimensions of power  
Case studies on power  
Types of power  
Abuse of power

Before the role play, ask participants if they have ever experienced abuse of power.

**Role play**

Pairs of participants act out a brief role play to show different types of people interacting with each other, and the power dynamics involved in the relationships. Possible roles to take would be:

- **Husband and wife** The wife wants to undertake some training but her husband is not keen. He controls the money and he also threatens her with violence.
- **Street seller and policeman** The policeman is trying to move the street seller away from selling goods outside an expensive hotel due to complaints by the manager, but the street seller refuses, knowing that he is legally allowed to be there.
- **Executive and secretary** The executive keeps the secretary waiting outside his office, asks to be called ‘sir’, asks her to stay late, etc.
- **Judge and defendant** The defendant is innocent of charges of theft, but the judge asks for a bribe to let him go, which the defendant is unwilling to pay.

After the role play, ask participants: ‘What types of power are shown in these role plays? Are there any other types of power?’ Write a list and then present the handouts ‘Types of power’ and ‘The three faces or dimensions of power’.

Present the case studies in the handout and ask participants to identify the dimensions and types of power displayed in each one.

**Key points**

- Power is the ability to get something done, even if you may be prevented from doing so by your circumstances.
- Power determines who makes decisions and what decisions are made.
- Power has three faces – open, closed and invisible (see handout), which roughly correspond to the three types of advocacy (**for**, **with** and **by** the poor or those affected by a situation).
- It is important to engage with all three faces of power, and not just the open face (advocacy **for** others).
- Everyone has power, but the three main types we often see are those displayed by public figures making decisions: economic power, authority and power of force, and these are often abused.
- There are many other, often hidden, forms of power, including information or expertise, organisation or connections, and having a legitimate voice. In this sense, everyone has power. Collectively we have more power than we do as individuals.
- Powerlessness may occur because people are in a position where they cannot use their power, or where others do not recognise the power they have.
- Advocacy is about using power and influence to persuade others, who usually have greater power and influence in terms of money, force and authority, to do what you want them to do. It involves understanding and making the most of the power you already have and using your power in a legitimate way (see SECTION A4).

Advocacy and power

Advocacy involves:

- holding people to account for their use of power
- trying to change the use of power
- gaining access to power for those who are excluded
- helping people to see what forms of power they have (the first step to empowerment).

## EXERCISE 18 **Understanding your own power and influence**



**Aim** For participants to understand their own sources of power and opportunities for influence.

**Methods** Worksheet, group work, plenary discussion

**Handouts** Types of power  
Abuse of power

Using the handout, participants identify the different forms of power that they, their communities or their organisations have, and consider how they can use this to influence others.

This exercise is done in small groups in two parts:

- An assessment of the power each person or organisation thinks they possess, grading each type of power from 1 to 5 (where 5 is a lot of power).
- An assessment of the influence they think they are given by decision-makers, on account of their power, grading each type of power from 1 to 5 according to the perception of a specific decision-maker, such as a local authority or government department.

### **Key points**

- Understanding our own sources of power is a vital step towards empowerment.
- Power should be used with integrity. We need to understand our identity, which ultimately comes from being children of God who have been set free to serve (John 8:36), and our power comes from God.
- Our influence depends partly on the power we have and partly on the perception by the decision-makers of the power we have. Much advocacy work is wasted because we do not recognise the influence that those in power allow us to have.
- There may be situations where we do not have much power over decision-makers but we have power to influence other people or organisations who, in turn, can influence those in power.

## EXERCISE 19 **Mapping power relations**



**Aim** To map the political landscape (location and distribution of power) within a country.

Handout Types of power

To be able to tackle any of the dimensions of power, it is necessary to understand who holds the power in your situation, both formally (who officially has the power) and informally (who actually has the power). A lot of time may be wasted if you focus on someone with official power if someone else is making all the decisions behind the scenes.

One method of mapping power relations in your local area or country is to ask participants to select the main groups. It is best to limit these groups to around 12 so that the exercise does not become too complicated. These could be:

- international business
- teachers / health workers
- overseas governments
- churches and other faiths
- communities
- political parties
- NGOs
- media
- police / military
- trade unions
- government
- local business.

Participants cut out a circle of paper for each of the groups with the size of the circle relating to their perceived level of influence. Arrange them according to their relationships with each other. If possible, participants should first identify the types of power and influence each group has, and then how participants may be in a position to influence them, either directly or through others.

HANDOUT

## The three faces or dimensions of power

	OPEN FACE	CLOSED FACE	INVISIBLE FACE
<b>Power operates through</b>	Open political system Clear process of decision-making	A more closed political system where certain groups are excluded or discriminated against	Preventing conflict arising through secrecy and information control  Blaming others to legitimise inequality
<b>Powerlessness is due to</b>	Lack of resources to compete effectively  Non-participation due to choice	Barriers such as gender or race keeping certain groups away  Disorganisation  Lack of information	Lack of awareness of issues  Belief that poverty is one's own fault and that nothing can be done
<b>The aim of advocacy is</b>	Correct use of power  Accountability for use of power	Access to power  Change of power relations	Awareness of own power and ability to use it  Awareness of issue and causes
<b>Advocacy type</b>	<b>For, with or by</b> the people	<b>With or by</b> the people	<b>By</b> the people
<b>Characteristics of advocacy include</b>	Issue-based lobbying  Led by professionals  Play by the rules of the game  Going for winnable issues	Issues identified by community  Powerful grass roots organisations that challenge structures  Outside organisers building local capacity	Grass roots leadership  Education to develop political awareness, confidence and understanding  Learning by involvement
<b>Dangers and limitations</b>	May not build participation, organisation or awareness at grass roots  Does not challenge unjust systems and structures	Does not challenge the imbalance of power for the most marginalised  Relies on outside organiser  Little increase in awareness of broader power system	May fail to engage community in formal political change process  May overlook importance of organising selves  May fail to use links to other groups

An advocacy campaign can engage with all three dimensions of power. However, many advocacy campaigns assume that all power is open and visible. They aim just for policy change, speaking for those affected by a situation, and therefore fail to address issues of powerlessness and marginalisation.

**HANDOUT Case studies on power**

Forestry Law Reform, Honduras – **closed face of power**

The Association for a More Just Society (ASJ) is a social justice organisation working in Honduras. In 1999, the president of Honduras presented a proposal for reform of forestry legislation that would have allowed large sections of national forest to be sold to logging companies who could choose whether or not to reforest the land. The importance of Honduras’ national forests to poor farmers and indigenous groups living in these areas was ignored. Seeing the potentially devastating consequences, ASJ joined with representatives from various sectors (indigenous groups, co-operatives, an evangelical network, agricultural ecologists and farmers’ groups) to form an alliance called the Honduran Agroforestry Alliance (AHA) to try to amend the proposed legislation.

AHA hired consultants to analyse the proposal and present reasonable counterproposals to the government. They initiated a media campaign to educate the public about the problem and to pressure the government into negotiating. The media campaign included press conferences, forums on television and radio, press reports, and a web page with detailed analysis and reports.

The government agreed that no reform of the forestry legislation would be brought to Congress until it had been approved by a committee consisting of representatives from AHA, as well as the government and logging companies. For 18 months AHA was involved in negotiations within this committee and continued to use consultants to educate the public, the media and committee members about the counterproposals. Not only were all the proposals of AHA accepted, but marginal groups such as poor farmers, co-operatives and indigenous groups have been able to participate for the first time in the making of a law that affects them directly.

CORD Rwanda and UNICEF – **open face of power**

UNICEF devised a national programme for water development in Rwanda. It looked at the country’s water problems from a national perspective and gave a standard solution for every local area. Tearfund’s partner, CORD, was given a quota of materials and money by UNICEF in 1998 to protect 40 springs in the area it worked in.

However, the majority of the springs in that area were technically very difficult to protect. The government had encouraged people to move from the valley where the springs were situated to the hilltops. CORD did not want to carry out the UNICEF plan because they had found other springs to the west that would be easier to protect and provide cleaner water more easily. CORD wanted to convince UNICEF that it would be unwise and impractical to carry out its proposed solution, and that CORD should use the money and materials to protect springs elsewhere.

At first CORD visited UNICEF’s offices for meetings, made telephone calls and wrote letters. This did not work, so CORD changed its advocacy methods. CORD invited UNICEF representatives to visit the site of UNICEF’s proposed spring protection in the valley. They walked from the hilltops, where people were living, down to the valley where the springs were situated and then back up the hill again. This was the route the women would have to walk to obtain water from the protected springs. As they walked back up the hill there was a change of heart as UNICEF officials realised that their solution was impractical. By 1999, UNICEF agreed that CORD could use the materials to protect the springs in the other area instead.

HANDOUT **Case studies on power** (continued)

Pumwani, Kenya – **hidden face of power**

St John's Community Centre is a Christian Community Service Organisation working with the slum dwellers of Pumwani. One of its objectives is to work with the community to empower them with information on human rights issues, to enable them to take action against cases of Human Rights violations.

For a long time the community has been prone to police harassment and brutality. They had no confidence in the law enforcers, or confidence in themselves to be able to act. In 2000, Pumwani Arts Academy, a group involved in educating the community on issues of human rights, started to work with St John's Community Centre to address the issue of police harassment.

They informed the local police that they were going to have shows and invited them to attend. The performances involved a play and dances to inform the community about their rights and to encourage them to rise up against any form of police harassment. The audience was given an opportunity to ask questions about the issue. St John's liaised with an organisation dealing with human rights and democracy, which responded to questions and issues raised.

Unknown to the group, plain-clothed policemen watched the plays and reported what was going on to their seniors. The police brutality and harassment decreased drastically and the community is now safer.

Initially, many people were afraid that the play would make the relationship between the police and the community worse. However, due to the transparent way in which it was done, and the involvement of the whole community, relationships have improved. The community also discovered the potential of the individual and collective resources that it possesses, that had not yet been used.

HANDOUT **Types of power**

	<b>CHARACTERISTICS</b>	<b>EXAMPLES</b>
<b>Economic</b>	Money or assets	People buy or stop buying from a particular shop or company Donor threatens to reduce a grant Offer a bribe to get a favour
<b>Authority</b>	Official position to make decisions	A judge sentences a thief to pay a fine A local politician decides whether a school will be built A pastor evicts someone from the congregation
<b>Coercion / force</b>	Fear if you do not respond	The army threatens to burn down a village Gangs intimidate and hurt people during elections
<b>Privilege / connections</b>	Who you know	Persuade the government to give cheap land to your family Become a bishop because you know the archbishop
<b>Legitimacy</b>	Recognised as a valid voice by others	Elected representative of trade union Recognised elder of community
<b>Organisation / networking</b>	Organised to play to strengths	Community is mobilised to advocate for change Links with other organisations
<b>Institutional / reputation</b>	People respect or fear the institution	Organisation is respected, eg: church Organisation is feared, eg: government Person is a popular public figure
<b>Information / knowledge</b>	Understanding, information and expertise	Trained professional, eg: doctor Good research and understanding of problem and realistic proposals for solution New ideas that others have not thought of
<b>Spiritual / identity</b>	Relationship with God	Understanding of who you are before God Guidance from God Understanding of God's heart and desire for justice
<b>Culture / tradition</b>	Belief system and behaviour	Tradition against challenging authority Belief in fate and that one deserves one's lot in life Strong commitment to family and community
<b>Service / compassion</b>	Desire to help others	Motivated by interests of others not selfish gain Commitment to empowering others to speak for themselves Values that others respect, agree with or want
<b>Resource</b>	Having something that someone wants	Provide access to communities Provide access to churches in a particular area

Based on the different forms of power you have, you can persuade or influence those who are in a position to make the decisions to act in a more equitable way.

HANDOUT **Abuse of power**

- Many of the problems we try to address in advocacy work have arisen through abuse of power, such as bribery in local government or the use of force to remove people from their land.
- When trying to address problems it is vital that we do not abuse power ourselves. We are called to be servant leaders.
- If we want to undertake advocacy with integrity, types of power such as force and bribery should not be seen as an option.
- It is important not to seek power or influence for their own sake, but rather to transform power relations so that they are more just and fair and meet people’s needs.

**Dangers to avoid**

**EMPTY PROMISES** If you promise to do something, you need to ensure that you complete it. If not, people will lose their trust in you, and you are less likely to be listened to in the future.

**ABUSE OF PRIVILEGE** Avoiding democratic and official processes to get what you want may give you an immediate result, but risks reinforcing any imbalance of power. Also avoid seeking special privileges for the church, as you could be accused of abusing power.

**USE OF FORCE** should never be used to get what you want, as you are simply copying the abuses of the oppressors.

**FALSE CLAIMS OF LEGITIMACY AND REPRESENTATION** If you have access to decision-makers based on legitimacy, you should ensure that you really represent those you claim to represent.

**POOR RESEARCH AND MISINTERPRETATION OF DATA** You need to make sure you accurately represent your own facts and those of any opposing views, so that you maintain integrity and have good solutions. Good research is the basis of all advocacy.

**BRIBERY** should never be considered. It goes against principles of good development including accountability, openness and transparency. It may also mean that bad decisions are made because most people are excluded from decision-making.

# In-depth case study

## Campaigning against the Patuca Dam

This case study can be used with many of the exercises, particularly in SECTIONS A2, A3 and A5. Some questions for reflection are:

- What approaches to advocacy are used (**by, with** or **for** those affected by a situation)? Why do you think they are used? Do you agree with the approach?
- What faces of power are evident (open, closed, hidden)?
- What types of power do the different stakeholders have and what is their legitimacy based on?
- What could be done in the future to minimise risk?
- What would you do in MOPAWI's situation to ensure that the dam is not built in the future?

### Land rights in Honduras

MOPAWI is a Tearfund partner based in La Mosquitia region of Honduras, Central America. In this region is a large area of pristine rain forest, much of which is protected. MOPAWI works for the sustainable development of the indigenous people in the region. When MOPAWI started work there they discovered that the indigenous people believed that the land they lived on was theirs, when in fact it was classed as national land. This meant that nobody had secure tenure and that anyone could 'peacefully' settle on the land and, after some years, claim it as their own. Therefore one of the first actions that MOPAWI was involved in was to create awareness of the issue of land tenure and help people to organise themselves at community level to be granted land rights. The indigenous population has been negotiating with the government for nearly ten years.



Rainforest in La Mosquitia region.

Photo: Mike Webb, Tearfund

### Patuca Dam project

Honduras cannot supply enough electricity to serve the current needs of its population and, since the 1960s, the government has been collecting detailed data from the Patuca River (in La Mosquitia) to consider whether it would be a suitable source for hydroelectric power. There was already a dam in operation in a different part of the country but, during a very long dry season in 1994, it had to dramatically decrease its production of electricity and introduce rationing. Since then, Honduras has needed to buy electricity

from neighbouring countries and the government has been under pressure from these countries and from its own industry to develop its own secure source of electricity.

In 1996 the government contracted two North American companies to build a dam on the Patuca River, and granted them concessions to sell electricity back to them for the following 40 years. The government had, in effect, provided natural resource rights to foreign companies, while ten years of ‘negotiations’ with the indigenous population had produced no results.

The companies hired an agency from Costa Rica to undertake an environmental impact assessment to consider the likely effects of the proposed dam on the environment and the people there. This took six weeks to complete and there were fears that it was rushed through so that the dam could start as quickly as possible.

**MOPAWI’s concerns**

MOPAWI was concerned that this dam would have devastating consequences on La Mosquitia:

- The dam would prevent the river from flooding, and so prevent the land becoming fertilised, resulting in reduced food production.
- The Patuca River is the main form of transportation in the region and the dam would lower the water levels and make it more difficult for boats to pass up and down the river.
- A new road was planned which would have opened it up for migration of people into the region, threatening the land rights of the indigenous population, putting pressure on an already fragile ecosystem and increasing logging.
- The electricity was for the main industrial cities and La Mosquitia would have been the last place in the country to receive a constant supply.

The Patuca River provides the main form of transportation for the region.

Photo: Mike Webb, Tearfund



Photo: Mike Webb, Tearfund

There was also evidence from a geologist that, with the high annual rainfall and a fragile ecosystem that is prone to erosion, the dam would be blocked after only a few years. The result would therefore have been environmental destruction with no ongoing supply of electricity to show for it.

**Advocacy action** **NETWORKING WITH ORGANISATIONS** The first step for MOPAWI was to form a coalition with other concerned groups, including environmental groups, indigenous people's groups and local government representatives. Since the population had previously been mobilised over the issue of land rights, the people were organised and accustomed to representing themselves at every level.

**WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY** At the same time MOPAWI became involved in awareness-raising activities. These included seminars with people in La Mosquitia, a weekly programme on the national radio with a phone-in discussion, and a press conference with the Honduran media.

**LOBBYING AT GOVERNMENT LEVEL** MOPAWI also met with the government and the companies involved in building the dam to discuss the issues and to represent their concerns. This was done in private meetings as well as a public forum in the capital city to which the government, companies, indigenous groups, environmental groups and the media were invited.

**LOBBYING THE FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS** MOPAWI contacted the World Bank and the Interamerican Development Bank to alert them about the social and environmental effects of building the Patuca Dam, which they were financing.

**WORKING AT INTERNATIONAL LEVEL** Early in 1997 MOPAWI contacted partner organisations in the UK, such as Tearfund, and in the US, such as the Native Lands Group and the International Rivers Network. MOPAWI asked them to put external pressure on the Honduran government and on the companies to halt the plans for the dam.

### Objectives of the campaign

The coalition demanded the following action be taken:

- An environmental impact assessment of at least 18 months so that the likely effects on the environment and animals during all seasons could be understood.
- Serious investigation into alternative possibilities for providing power in the region.
- Granting the Patuca Region the status of a protected area.
- Granting communal land rights to the indigenous population.

### What happened?

The proposed dam became a subject of national interest and the construction companies, concerned that it may not have been a good investment, were more eager to talk, even though they were still planning to go ahead with the construction.

The coalition did not merely complain about the proposed dam but they tried to find alternative solutions. They recognised the need for electricity and showed that a series of smaller dams could be built throughout the country to provide more electricity. They also

showed how through biomass, solar and wind energy, Honduras could produce enough electricity for the whole population.

The campaign did endanger those involved. Carlos Luna, the mayor of one of the municipalities in the Patuca Region, was murdered in his office. He was an enthusiastic supporter of the campaign to protect the Patuca National Park and it is thought his death is connected in some way to this.

In October 1998 Hurricane Mitch tore through Honduras, causing massive destruction to homes and the environment. For more than 150 kilometres along the Patuca River huge areas of the river bank and thousands of trees were completely washed away. An impact study showed that, even if the dam had withstood the force of the hurricane and resulting river flow, it would have received so much silt and debris that it would have been unusable.

**The situation now** In March 1999 the companies involved officially withdrew their involvement in the dam project. They said this was due to the level of local opposition. It must also partly be due to their realisation that the project was unworkable. However, the government still has plans to build the dam and is looking for other partners.

Apart from stopping the project for the moment, the campaign has enabled the people in La Mosquitia to be better organised, it has strengthened the environmental movement in Honduras as a whole and more people are supportive of protecting natural forests.

**The future** The coalition is ready to oppose future proposals to build the dam. MOPAWI is still working with the indigenous communities and the government for land rights to be granted to the indigenous communities. When this happens they will be in a much stronger position to prevent unwanted development and to control their own future. 'The indigenous groups in the region didn't really associate with the government before. Now they are talking to them at the highest level' (Osvaldo Munguia, Director, MOPAWI).

# B

## The biblical basis for advocacy

Part B starts with a debate on whether Christians should be involved in advocacy. It considers God working out his purpose for the world through the coming of his Kingdom, and the mission of the church within this. Advocacy is explored as part of this mission, along with objections that people may raise and challenges facing the church's involvement. The next section looks at Jesus' approach to power, and then the role of the government and the role of law. Part B ends by considering the options open to Christians to engage with power.

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# Should Christians be involved in advocacy work?

**Description** This section will help participants make connections between the role of Christians and advocacy.

**Learning objectives** By the end of the section, participants will:

- be aware of the reasons for and against Christian involvement in advocacy work
- be clearer about their own views about when advocacy is appropriate.

**Links** This theme will be covered in more detail in SECTION B2 (The mission of the church) and SECTION B3 (Jesus the advocate).

## EXERCISE 20 **Debate**



**Aim** To debate reasons for and against Christian involvement in advocacy work.

**Methods** Debate and discussion

**Handout** Reasons given against church involvement in advocacy work (SECTION B2)

This debate should occur before the other sections in Part B are studied so that participants use their own experiences and views, rather than simply repeating those they have just heard. People will approach this debate with many different experiences and perspectives. It is important that no experiences are ignored and that all sides of the argument are heard.

# B1

Should Christians be involved in advocacy?

## ADVOCACY TOOLKIT UNDERSTANDING ADVOCACY

### Key points

- The debate can either be broad, considering both involvement in advocacy work by the church as an institution and by individual Christians, or it can be narrowed down to one of these.
- Select two or three people to speak in support of involvement in advocacy work and two or three people to speak against it. It works better if the people selected really believe in what they are arguing for. Debaters need to put their side of the argument forward, and answer the arguments from the other side. Point out that debaters should respect each other at all times, and not accuse or judge each other. We need to listen carefully to fellow Christians who do not think advocacy is a good idea, and try to persuade them. How we do advocacy work is as important as the arguments we put forward.
- Leave some time at the end for questions or additional comments from the audience.
- It is important to have a chairperson and a timekeeper!
- An exercise for addressing the arguments that come out of the debate in more depth is suggested in SECTION B2 (EXERCISE 22).

# The mission of the church

**Description** This section looks at God’s purpose for his world and how it is worked out through the coming of the Kingdom of God. It considers the role of the church in God’s plan. It then helps participants to look at the church in their own context and consider the challenges they face, reasons for lack of involvement in advocacy work, and common objections to church involvement. It provides some examples of advocacy work and a foundation for understanding the biblical basis for involvement.

**Learning objectives**

By the end of the section, participants will:

- understand that advocacy is an integral part of the church’s mission
- understand God’s heart for justice
- be able to respond to objections to church involvement in advocacy work
- understand some of the challenges the church needs to face as it becomes more involved in advocacy work.

**Links**

This builds on the debate in SECTION B1 (Should Christians be involved in advocacy work?) and links with the other theology sections such as SECTION B3 (Jesus the advocate) and SECTION B4 (Options for involvement).

## EXERCISE 21 **The fullness of salvation and the mission of the church**



**Aim**

To understand the fullness of salvation as the coming of the Kingdom of God, and to understand the mission of the church.

**Methods**

Flash cards, small groups, presentation, Bible study, plenary discussion

**Handouts**

The fullness of salvation  
 God’s heart for justice  
 How the church functions on behalf of the poor

There are many ways of delivering this session:

- Brainstorm, onto flash cards or post-it notes, words that come to mind when hearing ‘salvation’, ‘Kingdom of God’ or ‘good news’ or when asked the question: ‘What is God’s purpose for his world?’ Participants feed this back to plenary for discussion.
- Another option is to use Isaiah 1, Luke 4:18-19 and Revelation 21 as a group Bible study to explore salvation and the Kingdom of God, using the handouts as a basis for discussion.
- A third option is to present the material in the handouts ‘The fullness of salvation’ and ‘God’s heart for justice’ and lead a discussion.

After doing any of the exercises above, brainstorm the role of the church in God’s plan to bring about his Kingdom. Participants write ideas on flash cards or post-it notes. Discuss where advocacy or working for justice comes into this role. Use the handouts on ‘God’s heart for justice’ and ‘How the church functions on behalf of the poor’ as a basis for discussion.

**Key points**

- Salvation enables people to become citizens of the Kingdom of God.
- Salvation is about ‘putting things right’ and restoring how God wants things to be: for us as individuals, as a community of believers and for the whole society.
- The fullness of salvation will only occur in the future, but the message of salvation is a present hope for all people.
- We are involved in advocacy work and working for justice out of obedience to God, compassion for others and as a way of pointing people towards Christ. A passion for involvement can only come through God’s Spirit.
- Compassion for the poor and a desire for justice are part of God’s character and plan, and are therefore important in the mission of the church.
- The church has the responsibility to fulfil its whole mission. Some parts of the church need to be involved in advocacy work. All need to be involved in prayer for God to intervene.

**EXERCISE 22**

**Objections to church involvement in advocacy work**



**Aim** To understand and answer objections to church involvement in advocacy work.

**Methods** Group brainstorm, flash cards, small groups, presentation, plenary discussion

**Handout** Reasons given against church involvement in advocacy work

If people are not convinced that advocacy is biblical or that it is important for the church, they are unlikely to become involved, even if they are shown many practical reasons for doing so. This exercise builds on the debate in SECTION B1 and starts to address some of

the main concerns participants may have about the church or Christians becoming involved in advocacy work.

Either list the main arguments given against church involvement in advocacy work from the debate in SECTION B1, or brainstorm these objections in plenary at the start of the session. Participants split into groups and each group discusses ways to answer two or three of the objections, using the Bible where relevant. Feed back for wider group discussion and use the handout to add anything that has not been covered.

It is important to give time at the end for participants to talk about their own experiences. They may have already heard many of these arguments in their work. It may also be good to have a time of prayer to support participants in what they are trying to do in their community or organisation.

EXERCISE 23 **Challenges facing church involvement in advocacy work**



**Aim** To understand and address the challenges facing church involvement in advocacy work.

**Methods** Small groups, presentation, case studies, plenary discussion

**Handouts** Reasons given against church involvement in advocacy work  
Issues for the church to address before advocacy involvement

This exercise puts the importance of church involvement in advocacy work in the specific contexts and experiences of participants. It places the advocacy activities of the church in the context of its overall mission.

Two or three participants present case studies on church involvement or lack of involvement in advocacy work. Discuss some of the challenges that the church faced in that particular context, and what they might have done differently if the issue arose again.

Participants split into groups and answer the following questions and feed back their answers to the plenary:

- What issues is the church or local community facing for which advocacy can be appropriate?
- What internal issues does your church need to address in order to become involved in advocacy work?
- What are the consequences if the church does not engage in advocacy work?

Develop key priorities for change as a group.

HANDOUT **The fullness of salvation**

Isaiah prophesies the coming of the Messiah to bring salvation. He is concerned about the salvation of nations (Israel first and then all nations) but knows that this salvation will come through one man. Isaiah chapter 1 shows that sin has social (v15-17), environmental (v19-20) and political (v23) consequences. The root of sin is a broken relationship with God (v2-4), which leads to broken relationships at all other levels. Salvation is ‘putting things right’ and reversing the effects of sin, bringing healing at all levels: individual, societal and political. Salvation is, therefore, the restoration of the earth and its people to the glory and joy that God intended from the beginning. The Bible contains a number of pictures of this glory that is to come (Isaiah 11:1-9; 25:1-8; Ezekiel 47:1-12; Revelation 21).

**The Kingdom of God**

The fullness of salvation is expressed as the good news of the coming of the Kingdom of God. This Kingdom is to be found wherever God reigns – in people’s hearts, relationships, systems and structures. It was prophesied in the Old Testament and brought about by Jesus.

- The Kingdom has come but we wait for its fulfilment (Mark 1:15).
- The Kingdom will put things right, bring redemption and reconciliation (Colossians 1:20, 2 Corinthians 5:19) and is good news to the poor (Luke 4:18-19).
- There will be opposition to the Kingdom because it is in conflict with the current world.

**The good news of the Kingdom**

In Luke’s Gospel, Jesus explains his mission by quoting from Isaiah 61: ‘The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour’ (Luke 4:18-19). This good news is the fullness of salvation and includes:

- reconciliation with God – the call to repent and believe is for individuals to come back to God and live in peace with him and each other
- freedom from oppression, which includes political as well as individual liberation (as in the Exodus from Egypt), because Jesus has brought all powers under his control
- personal and collective blessing from God
- good news for the poor – salvation is particularly good news for the poor because God values them as much as he values everyone else. This is different from the world’s attitude towards them, which often makes them feel like secondary citizens. The Kingdom of God turns the world’s values the right way round.

This focus of good news for the poor is at the heart of Tearfund’s mission.

HANDOUT **God's heart for justice**

As human beings we are made in God's image (Genesis 1:27). All human beings have equal value and should have equal respect. God loves all people and has a special concern for the poor, the marginalised and the oppressed, because they often experience suffering and injustice. His concern for the poor and oppressed, and his desire for justice are part of his character. This is shown throughout the Bible in his actions, laws and commands.

The most significant example of God working for justice is the liberation of his people from oppression in Egypt, as part of his plan to bring them to the promised land. This involved physical liberation from slavery, political liberation from an oppressive regime and spiritual liberation so that they could worship God freely. The Exodus shows us God's compassion and his desire for justice and freedom. Compassion and justice are often found together in God's actions and commands: *'The Lord said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land."*' (Exodus 3:7-8) The Exodus was a foretaste of the Kingdom of God that Jesus would bring.

God's commands and laws are a reflection of his character and a guide to how he wants us to live. There is a special concern for protecting those on the edge of society:

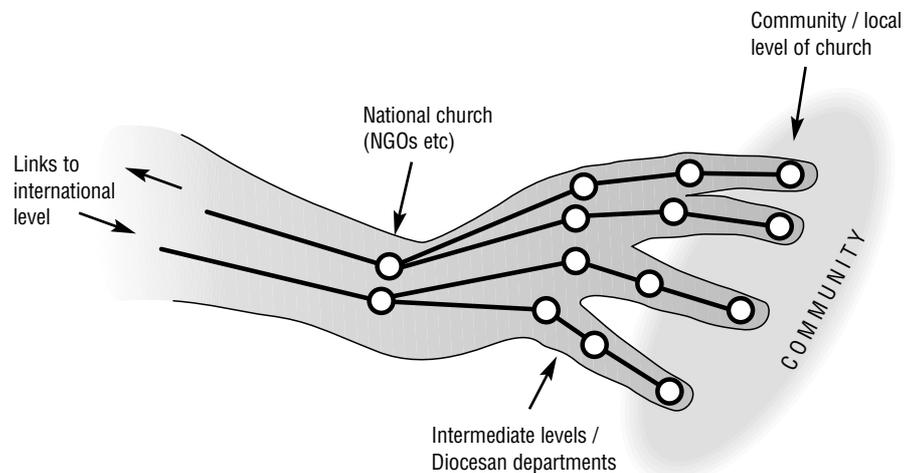
- In Deuteronomy, the Israelites are commanded to walk in the way of God. This includes recognising that he *'defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing'* (10:18).
- Isaiah speaks of true obedience to God: *'Is this not the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter – when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?'* (Isaiah 58:6-7).
- Other key Old Testament passages which show God's desire for justice and mercy for his people are Leviticus 25, Amos 5:11-15 and Micah 6:8.

Concern for the poor and justice are also found in the New Testament:

- Jesus shows this concern in his actions (see handout: Jesus the advocate).
- Jesus teaches that the most important commandment is to love God and love your neighbour. Loving God with all our heart means being changed to become more like him and to have his heart. Jesus uses the parable of the Good Samaritan to show what this love looks like in practice (Luke 10:25-37).
- The Pharisees are told off for neglecting justice: *'Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practised the latter without leaving the former undone'* (Luke 11:42).
- James teaches Christians to treat all people equally, in particular, not to insult the poor or ignore their needs (James 2:1-26).

HANDOUT **How the church functions on behalf of the poor**

Some expressions of ‘church’ involve a congregation or denomination. Others include Christian development organisations, while others focus simply on a group of Christians who have come together to make a difference. Others focus on Christians who are in positions of power. A strength of the church is that it operates at all different levels and can influence all levels of society. It is vital that each expression of the church is connected to the wider body of believers for support and accountability and that they work together to extend God’s Kingdom. The diagram of a hand below shows the levels at which the church operates and that the levels are interconnected. It is vital that the parts of the church further up the ‘knuckles’ are in contact with those at the ‘fingertips’, so that they keep a concern for the poor and marginalised.



Specific functions of the church

The church should carry out many activities in its role of bringing good news to all people. A few are listed below. If we neglect any of these activities, we are giving God fewer opportunities to use us to extend his Kingdom and to bring blessing.

The activities shown in **bold type** relate to advocacy:

- Worshipping God
- Discipleship
- Proclaiming the good news
- Caring for the needy and suffering
- Social involvement
- **Speaking out against idolatry and injustice**
- **Modelling an alternative society: how God intended it to be**
- **Confronting authority when it goes against what the Bible teaches**
- Stewardship of creation
- Fellowship and caring for each other
- **Prayer for God to intervene**
- **Bringing peace and reconciliation**
- **Seeking social and economic justice**

HANDOUT

## Reasons given against church involvement in advocacy work

Reasons against church involvement

REASON GIVEN	POSSIBLE RESPONSE
Romans 13 and 1 Peter 2:4 say that we are to obey the state, not challenge it.	These verses do say that we should obey the state, but only when it does not go against God's law. The state should uphold right, punish those who do wrong and promote human well-being. The church needs to hold the state accountable for fulfilling its God-given role.
Jesus says to love our enemies, turn the other cheek and that 'it is mine to avenge' (Matthew 5).	We are called to love our enemies. The focus of this teaching is not to seek revenge, but to leave that to God.
Jesus says that the 'poor will always be with you' (Mark 14:7).	He continues by saying: 'and you can help them any time you want.' These words are a command rather than an option. The focus of the passage is the anointing with perfume just days before his death and resurrection, showing that the woman had recognised the meaning of what was about to happen.
What really matters is that people are saved, so we need to concentrate on that. Advocacy work does not bring salvation.	Christians are called to seek justice (Micah 6:8), plead the cause of the poor (Proverbs 31:8-9), and stand in the gap for those who are suffering (Ezekiel 22:30).
Jesus did not engage in political activity.	Jesus did not join a political party but he challenged the authorities, eg: cleansing of the temple (John 2:12-16) and he spoke out against injustice and oppression (Luke 11:42). We need to seek a Godly response to issues, which might involve advocacy work.
Politics is a dirty game. You should not mix religion and politics.	It is true that power can corrupt, but by choosing not to be involved in politics, Christians leave it to others to make decisions that affect everyone's lives. We therefore fail to take our responsibility for stewardship seriously.
Christians have become involved in advocacy work in the past and disgraced the church.	The church has been discredited in the past by its involvement with power, but it has been discredited because of the way it was done, not because it was involved in the first place. We need to learn from the past.
There are two kingdoms – the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world – we live in one and not the other.	There are two kingdoms. Christians are citizens of heaven but we live in the world. We are called to be salt and light and to influence the world. We should not run away from our responsibility.

**HANDOUT** **Issues for the church to address before advocacy involvement**

There are several issues the church needs to address when considering entering into advocacy work. These are not linked with advocacy alone, but they are likely to become more important as the church becomes more involved in advocacy work. Consider what you are doing or could do in your church, organisation or community to address these issues.

**HISTORY** What is the history of advocacy involvement? What can be learnt from this?

**LEADERSHIP** Does the church model servant leadership? Who is able to participate in leadership? What accountability is there?

**TEACHING** What teaching is there on social ethics? What teaching on injustice? What teaching on wealth and poverty? How much learning is there on these issues?

**RESPONSIVENESS** How flexible is the church to respond to people in need?

**LEGITIMACY** What mandate does the church have to speak? Who participates in decision-making? How are decisions made?

**UNITY** Is the church united? Does it work with other churches or denominations?

**VALUES** What importance does the church place on inclusiveness, participation, accountability, service and compassion?

**POWER** How has the church associated with power in the past (missionaries, state, business) and what can be learned?

If the church does not engage in advocacy work

CONSEQUENCE	WHY
The church becomes irrelevant, which reduces its effectiveness in bringing good news to the poor.	The church does not tackle problems that people are facing. It allows structural problems, injustice and poverty to continue.
Judgement and discipline	The church has not been faithful to God's calling.
Sympathy with the oppressor	'For evil to prosper, all it takes is for good men to do nothing.' Edmund Burke
Unjust rulers prosper	The church fails to hold rulers to account in fulfilling their original purpose set by God, so injustice continues.
Compromised message	We say our lives have been changed by the gospel, but we do not take action.

# Jesus the advocate

**Description** This section looks at the attitude and actions of Jesus towards those who are oppressed and broken by sin, and to those who have power. It also considers how he uses his own power.

**Learning objectives** By the end of the section, participants will:

- understand Jesus' approach to those who are oppressed
- understand Jesus' approach to those with power
- understand how Jesus uses his own power
- be able to apply Jesus' example to their own work.

**Links** This links with other theology sections such as SECTION B2 (The mission of the church). It also links with SECTION A5 (Understanding politics and power).

## EXERCISE 24 **Jesus and power**



**Aim** To understand Jesus' approach to power.

**Methods** Small groups, presentation, Bible study, plenary discussion

**Handout** Jesus the advocate

**Extra material** Passages to study

If the participants have a reasonable knowledge of the Bible, divide them into groups and ask them the following questions:

- What were the characteristics of Jesus' approach to those who were oppressed, suffering or marginalised?
- What were the characteristics of Jesus' approach to those who had power?
- How did Jesus use his own power?
- What can we learn from his approach?

Alternatively, take a selection of passages, such as John 13:1-17, John 8:1-11 and Matthew 21:12-17, and lead a study, picking out the most relevant points. Follow this with a discussion about what we can learn from Jesus' example.

**Key point** Jesus' approach to power had the following characteristics:

- **SERVICE** Servant leadership
- **RESPECT** Responsible use of power without the use of force
- **EMPOWERING** Developing others to carry on the work
- **COURAGE** Speaking out for what is true, and challenging injustice
- **INTEGRITY** Modelling what he was advocating
- **MODEL CITIZEN** Observing the law unless it goes against God's law
- **MOTIVATED BY LOVE** Love for enemies and for those who are hated

HANDOUT **Jesus the advocate**

In 1 John 2:1 we are told that Jesus advocates on our behalf when we sin: ‘If anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defence – Jesus Christ the Righteous One.’ The examples below give some insight into Jesus’ character as an advocate.

**Jesus modelled servant leadership and was prepared to suffer for others**

When James and John asked Jesus if one could sit on the right and the other on the left in his Kingdom (Mark 10:37), Jesus replied: ‘For even the Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many’ (v45). He says that the path of his disciples is the same: ‘whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all’ (v42). He demonstrated his servant nature by washing his disciples’ feet, and challenging them to do the same (John 13:14-15).

**Jesus gave back dignity and value to those who were hated**

Jesus associated with those who were on the edge of society. He accepted the anointing by the ‘sinful woman’ (Luke 7:36-50) and rebuked his disciples when they stopped people bringing children to Jesus (Luke 18:16). He also healed the blind, the sick, the demon-possessed and other ‘outsiders’ such as the man who was chained outside the city and the woman who had been bleeding for 12 years (Mark 5:1-20, Mark 5:25-34).

**Jesus challenged corruption, hypocrisy and injustice amongst Jewish society**

When entering the temple in Jerusalem, he drove out the traders and moneylenders (Mark 11:15-17). He warned against the hypocrisy of the ruling Jewish powers: ‘Be on your guard against the yeast [teaching] of the Pharisees and Sadducees’ (Matthew 16:6). He criticised their ignorance of justice and mercy, their use of power for personal gain, and their leading people astray (Luke 11:37-53, Matthew 9:9-13, 12:1-14).

**Jesus taught love for enemies**

When Jesus was in Israel, the Jewish people hated the Romans. Some of the Zealots killed Roman soldiers, and nearly all people were expecting a Messiah to come and re-establish an earthly kingdom for the Jewish people. However, Jesus taught love for enemies instead of hate: ‘Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you’ (Matthew 5:44), and said ‘Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy’ (5:7). Another example of love and forgiveness was on the cross when Jesus cried out: ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing’ (Luke 23:34).

**Jesus obeyed the law of the land**

Jesus obeyed the law of the land where this did not go against God’s law. When questioned about taxes (Mark 12:13-17) he concluded by saying ‘Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.’ He encouraged Jews to obey the state. However, the main emphasis of this instruction was to ‘give to God what is God’s.’ This means that his followers must follow God’s will, upholding justice and righteousness for God’s glory.

**Jesus modelled how he wanted society to be and encouraged others to fulfil their responsibility**

Jesus loved God above everything and was obedient to his will (Luke 22:42, Hebrews 5:7-10), spending time in prayer (Mark 1:35). He loved his neighbour, which was shown in the way he treated outsiders (healing the woman who had been bleeding in Luke 8:40-48). He associated with sinners (Zacchaeus in Luke 19:1-10), treated women with dignity and respect (Martha and Mary in Luke 10:38-42) and loved his enemies (Luke 23:34). He also taught others to follow his example (Matthew 5-7, Luke 10:25-37).

## EXTRA MATERIAL

**Passages to study**

John 13:1-17  
Jesus washed his disciples' feet

Jesus had arrived in Jerusalem just before the Passover, and he knew that he was about to be killed. His acts and teaching had threatened the power of the Pharisees and Sadducees and they wanted to get rid of him so that their dominant position in Jewish society would remain. Jesus used the opportunity to wash his disciples' feet. Key points are that:

- unlike most of the Jewish leaders, Jesus was motivated by love, not power or position
- he explained his actions and used them to teach and challenge others
- he modelled a lesson in selfless service, showing his followers the path that they are called to take
- he identified with those with a low position in society.

John 8:1-11  
Jesus and the woman who was caught in adultery

The teachers of the law brought a woman to Jesus who had been caught committing adultery. The accusers wanted to humiliate the woman and to trap Jesus. They had arranged for the man, who also committed adultery, to escape. They brought the woman out in public, ready to be stoned. Key points are that:

- Jesus did not jump in, but remained calm and in control of himself
- he did not approve of sin
- although he did not defend the woman's actions, he was willing to stand up to the powerful
- he taught forgiveness, rather than condemnation
- he was motivated by love and desire for reconciliation.

Matthew 21:12-17  
Jesus cleared the temple

Just after Jesus entered Jerusalem he went to the temple area and started to turn over the tables of money changers and those selling doves. He also healed the blind and lame, and the children sang praises to him. However, he rebuked the crowd, including the chief priests and teachers of the law, for their lack of faith and for allowing the temple to be corrupted. Key points are that:

- Jesus attacked exploitation of the poor
- he had no formal authority in the temple, but people listened to him because of what he did
- he knew the time to act
- he explained his actions to those around
- he tackled the causes of poverty and suffering, through healing people and challenging the oppressors
- he was willing to challenge cultural customs when they were against God's will.

# Options for involvement

**Description** This section looks at ways in which the church can become involved in advocacy. It builds on an understanding of the role of the church by adding an understanding of government and the role of the law. It helps participants to see that different parts of the church approach advocacy in very different ways, and that the impact of the church in advocacy work is strongest when these different groups work together to complement each other.

**Learning objectives** By the end of the section, participants will:

- understand the role of the state and the role of law, and know how to influence the law
- be aware of the range of advocacy options available.

**Links** This links with SECTION A2 (Understanding advocacy), SECTION A3 (Why advocacy?), SECTION A5 (Understanding politics and power), SECTION B2 (The mission of the church), SECTION B3 (Jesus the advocate) and SECTION C4 (Action).

## EXERCISE 25 **The role of the law**



**Aim** To understand the difficulties in applying biblical values and laws to modern situations.

**Methods** Case study, group work, plenary discussion, presentation

**Handouts** Biblical values (SECTION A3)  
Government and law

This exercise is best done using a case study of someone trying to influence the passage of a proposed change to the law, or trying to bring about a change in law themselves. Using case studies on controversial topics such as teaching religion in schools, treatment of single mothers, or status of AIDS sufferers, will help to bring out the key points. The case study should be short and include the problem being addressed, the existing law and the proposed new law. A case study from South Africa is given below.

Case study:  
Abortion,  
South Africa

Section 9 of the South African Constitution on non-discrimination has been used by women to argue for greater freedom to have abortions. New proposed legislation makes abortion more available legally by suggesting that it should be available on demand for any pregnancy up to 12 weeks. The Evangelical Alliance of South Africa (TEASA) was against the new law, so they started a campaign to prevent the proposed legislation being passed in Parliament.

They lobbied Parliament through an e-mail petition and raised awareness of the issue in churches. They also opened shelters for women who wanted to take their pregnancy to full term and then offer the baby for adoption. The church was unsuccessful in preventing the legislation but continues to try to change it by lobbying parliament.

Split the participants into groups and ask them the following questions:

- What is the role of the law in this particular case?
- What biblical values guide this proposal?
- What would you do if you were in TEASA's situation?

Use the handouts and consider a study of Romans 13 to deepen understanding of the issues.

**Key points**

- The law has a limited role because it cannot change people's hearts.
- There are different ways of interacting with the law.
- We need to be clear about what our values are before trying to change laws.

**EXERCISE 26**

**Understanding power from a biblical perspective**



**Aim**

To understand power from a biblical perspective in order to choose appropriate advocacy options.

**Methods**

Small-group discussion, plenary, presentation

Split participants into small groups and ask them to answer the question 'What does the Bible say about power?' by looking at the following Bible passages: Colossians 1:16, Luke 11:20, Mark 3:23-27, Colossians 2:15, Ephesians 6:12. Then lead a plenary discussion about powers that exist in the world today.

- Key points**
- Powers are part of God’s creation (Colossians 1:16).
  - The visible faces of power in the world now include the state, business, international institutions, the media, culture and tradition, military, false religions and demonic attack. These can be misused because of the sinful nature of human beings.
  - We are also fighting against the evil forces in the world (Ephesians 6:12).
  - However, Jesus has the supreme authority and final victory over all of these powers (Luke 11:20, Mark 3:23-7) through his death on the cross (Colossians 2:15). We need to keep our eyes firmly fixed on Jesus if we are not to be overwhelmed by the rulers of this world.

**EXERCISE 27 Advocacy options open to Christians**



**Aim** To consider advocacy options.

**Methods** Flash cards, plenary

Ask what options are open to Christians for engaging with power. It is useful to use examples from participants’ experiences. Take time here to build up a substantial list of options, as a way of encouraging participants that there is a lot they can do, and that they might be doing it anyway.

Some options open to Christians

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| ■ prayer                          | ■ participating in systems and structures           |
| ■ raising awareness               | ■ bringing things out into the open / exposing evil |
| ■ non-violent direct action       | ■ building others’ confidence and identity          |
| ■ modelling a different lifestyle | ■ mobilising capacity of the whole church           |
| ■ negotiating peace               | ■ networking with other groups                      |
| ■ standing for election           | ■ speaking out prophetically                        |
| ■ research                        | ■ showing solidarity                                |

- Key points**
- There are many options open for advocacy work.
  - Different parts of the church will work in different ways.
  - Different options are appropriate for different situations.
  - Those working under oppressive regimes can be encouraged that they can be involved in some activities, even if others are not possible.

HANDOUT **Government and law****The role of government**

Government is good and part of God's plan. God created heaven and earth and appointed human beings as stewards (Genesis 1:28). However, creation, human beings and government are now affected by sin. Although government still has a role, it is limited.

Romans 13:1-7 and 1 Peter 2:13-17 explain that the role of government is to:

- commend what is right (Romans 13:3, 1 Peter 2:14)
- punish those who do wrong (Romans 13:3-4, 1 Peter 2:14)
- promote human well-being (Romans 13:4).

However, in practice the role of government is limited:

**MANDATE** A government cannot ensure that people truly worship God, or bring about righteousness. It can pass and enforce laws and regulations but it cannot change people.

**ESSENCE** Although government is good, it is also open to corruption (Revelation 13:1-18). There is a need to have structures in place to guard against this. The church needs to hold it accountable.

**The role of law**

Any consideration of the role of government has to be closely linked with the role of the law, because this is the main means by which a government will use its authority. We need to start by looking at the main purposes of laws in the Bible, which are to:

- reveal God's character and show us how we should live in a right relationship with him
- protect the vulnerable and ensure social justice
- maintain peace and social order
- highlight evil and punish wrongdoing.

However, although law can limit evil, it cannot change people's hearts, such as get rid of lust and jealousy.

It is also difficult sometimes to apply some biblical laws to modern situations. Problems include the following:

**THE FOCUS ON GOD'S PEOPLE** The ethical and political laws in the Bible were given to people that had been redeemed by God from slavery in Egypt. While the laws are principles of justice that are relevant to all, it is difficult for people who do not know about God's salvation to appreciate them.

**DIFFERENT TYPES OF LAW** There are different types of law in the Old Testament, only some of which still apply today. The principles behind the ethical (including social and economic) laws still apply because God does not change his character, although the application may change. However, Jesus has fulfilled the requirements of the ritual or sacrificial law, making it redundant.

HANDOUT **Government and law** (continued)

**Principles for interpretation of the Bible**

Having outlined some of the problems, it is necessary to develop some principles for interpretation:

- **SOURCE OF TRUTH** The Bible is God’s authoritative and trustworthy word containing relevant truth (2 Timothy 3:15-17), but does not provide every answer for every situation.
- **BIBLE AS A STORY** The Bible is a story where God reveals his character and his will for the world. We need to look at the whole story to see God’s plan for the whole of history.
- **LAW DOES NOT BRING RIGHTEOUSNESS** (Romans 3:28, 31).
- **JESUS IS CENTRAL** To understand how we apply Old Testament law to current situations, we need to look at Jesus’ approach. Whatever he shows as continuing from the Old Testament is clearly relevant for the church and the world today. We can therefore have confidence to apply those principles to our lives and society.

Other points to note

- Challenging the law is only one option to bring about change that God wants. Changing the law should be seen as only part of a response to an issue. Other options should also be considered, such as caring for people and prayer.
- Many societies consist of people with different world-views. Christians may be in a minority, so cannot expect everyone to accept the truth of the Bible and therefore their argument. The challenge is to show that laws based on Christian principles are the best for everyone, and to present advocacy proposals using language that everyone understands.
- Christians should not try to change laws to give Christians an advantage. They should aim for equal treatment of all people, including religious freedom for all people.

## Notes



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by Graham Gordon

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