



HUAIROU COMMISSION  
*Women, Homes & Community*

# THE LOCAL-TO-LOCAL DIALOGUE RESOURCE MANUAL

A GUIDE FOR GRASSROOTS WOMEN-LED ENGAGEMENT  
WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND DECISION MAKERS



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Local-to-Local (L2L) Dialogues are a series of locally-customized strategies that grassroots women's groups initiate to engage in ongoing dialogues with local leaders and government authorities. Women negotiate a range of development issues, priorities, plans, and programs in ways that enhance community participation and address women's priorities.

This manual is published as part of the Huairou Commission Governance Campaign with the support of Cordaid and the Dutch Foreign Ministry. It is part of a series of tools, publications, and resources the Huairou Commission has developed to promote horizontal learning among grassroots women's groups and to document and share their strategies and lessons with policy making and development institutions. For more information, please visit the Huairou Commission website, [www.huairou.org](http://www.huairou.org)

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# THE LOCAL-TO-LOCAL DIALOGUE RESOURCE MANUAL

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WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND DECISION MAKERS

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**HUAIROU COMMISSION**  
*Women, Homes & Community*

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## Preface

For decades, women marginalized from political processes have been organizing neighborhood groups, women's and children's centers, savings and credit groups, community banks, and agricultural cooperatives to ensure the everyday survival of their families and communities. When we document our own realities, build consensus, and form alliances, we build a power base to access resources and create solutions that we own and manage. Our engagement as grassroots women in local decision-making results in governance in which the state, civil society, and grassroots people work in partnership.

Through organizing, grassroots women have developed innovative solutions to issues such as safe drinking water, sanitation, housing, health, education, public safety, and improved livelihoods. For example, in the Mathare slums in Nairobi, Kenya, village residents who lived in informal settlements suffered from the AIDS pandemic, poor sanitation, criminal activities, and violence. With facilitation from GROOTS Kenya, grassroots women organized the community to prioritize their collective needs. For the first time, residents learned about their rights as citizens and formed working groups to come up with solutions in partnership with the city council and national agencies.

Sustained engagement with government authorities helps grassroots women become equal partners in planning, designing, implementing, and monitoring public programs. This is a reliable route to gender-equitable, pro-poor policies and investments. It turns the tide of development from outside-driven agendas toward the actual agendas of women and poor communities. When grassroots women's priorities are met, the needs of men, children, and the elderly are also addressed, thereby empowering the entire community.

The Local-to-Local (L2L) Dialogue was developed from the premise that women need to know what they want and what their priorities are before dialoguing with local government. It is a process that has been formalized into strategies that build grassroots women's capacity to collectively influence decision-making. L2L Dialogue combines women's concerns with social change and community mobilization.

L2L Dialogue fulfills the promise of women's empowerment as a change model. Grassroots women's work to map and analyze gender and power relationships becomes the foundation of their strategies for reconfiguring these relationships. L2L Dialogue actively addresses both strategic and practical concerns by confronting existing power structures at all levels.

L2L Dialogue's emphasis on local realities brings grassroots women's concerns to light. Their priorities are grounded in specific and concrete issues that affect their families, neighborhoods, and communities. It comes from practice that is varied, setting new terms of engagement between communities and government on grassroots women's terms. The dialogue process transforms our structural marginality in formal institutions and address subtle forms of sexual discrimination.

The Huairou Commission shares with all grassroots women a political vision and commitment to concrete, ongoing work to improve women’s access to resources and institutions, and to transform women’s and men’s consciousness. As we look back over the last few decades transitioning from *Women in Development* to *Gender and Development*, the notion of women as an oppressed group fell off of the agenda. While the socially constructed nature of gender and the need for men to examine their roles should be addressed, there is a sore need for languages and spaces that are explicitly focused on the empowerment of women, rather than gender alone.

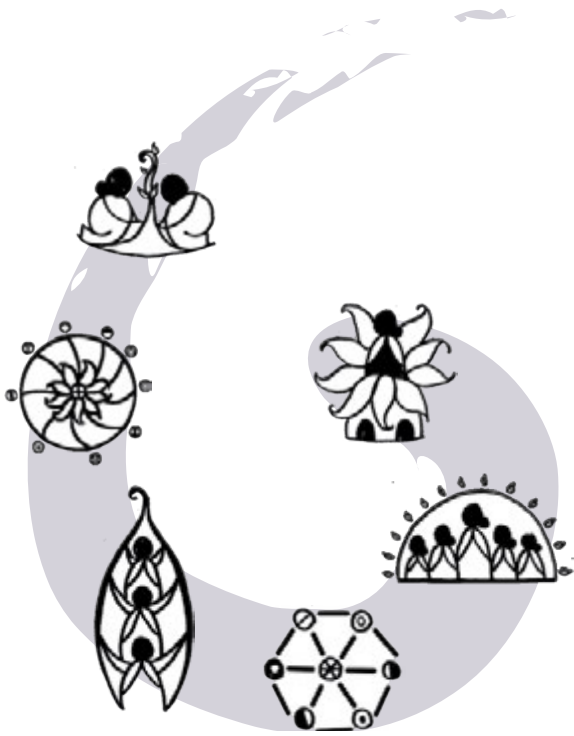
Recently, development agencies have been pressuring grassroots women’s groups to demonstrate “gender mainstreaming” and the inclusion of men. But women still require their own spaces to organize separately in order to redress sexual discrimination and social marginality. While it is legitimate for women and men to work together to achieve community empowerment and gender equality, grassroots women must be autonomous, self-determining subjects.

Grassroots women’s groups operate on different scales and have different capacities to set agendas and mobilize resources and constituencies. This variation, combined with local politics, means that L2L Dialogues are organized in very dynamic contexts. This manual cannot offer a one-time program, but rather a process of ongoing engagement. It offers an enlivened vision of change by grassroots women and shows how women everywhere can become transformative leaders. The manual presents concepts, overviews, examples, tools, and models organized under six headings in a sequence that puts women at the center:

1. Strengthening Women’s Leadership
2. Organizing at the Community Level
3. Mapping Local Needs, Resources, Allies, and Leaders
4. Preparing for the Local-to-Local Dialogue
5. Leading the Local-to-Local Dialogue
6. Developing and Implementing an Action Plan

This sequence follows principles developed by grassroots women who have advanced the L2L methodology for nearly a decade. Yet every grassroots women’s group will be at a different stage of its L2L strategy and each may draw on the tools in this manual to suit its own needs. Readers may use specific modules to strengthen their work and address specific challenges—from power dynamics to group leadership.

We hope that readers who find this book useful will join the Huairou Commission’s efforts to address the challenge of giving grassroots women everywhere a greater voice in decision-making.



## INTRODUCTION

Local-to-Local (L2L) Dialogues are a series of locally-customized strategies that grassroots women's groups initiate to engage in ongoing dialogues with local leaders and government authorities. Women negotiate a range of development issues, priorities, plans, and programs in ways that enhance community participation and address women's priorities.

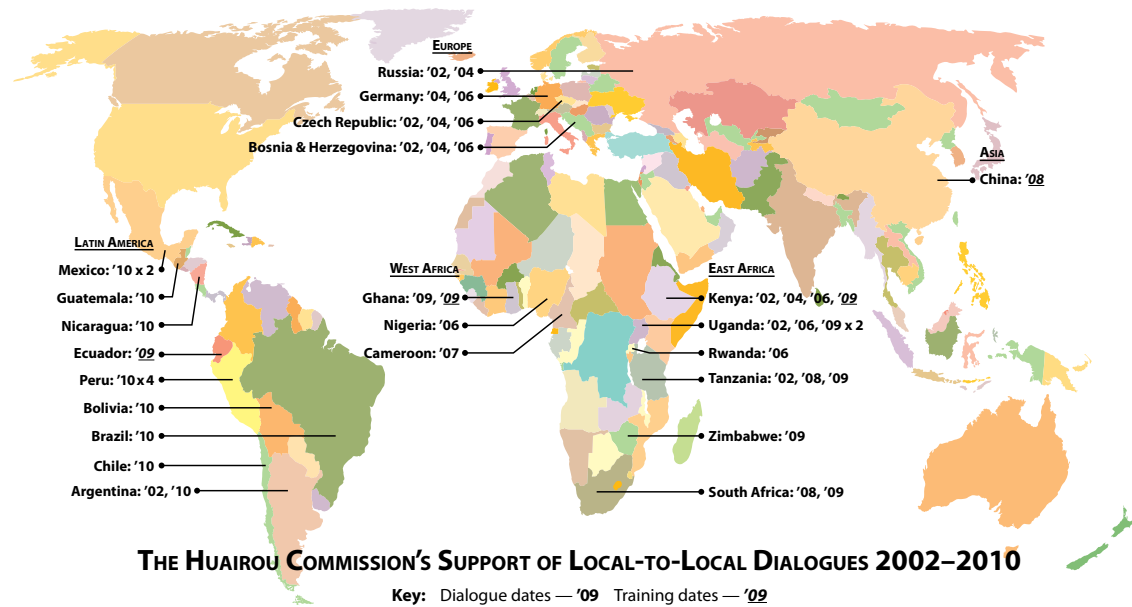
- [The History and Vision of Local-to-Local Dialogue](#)
- [Pilot Projects and Training Programs](#)
- [Key Principles](#)
- [Distinctive Practices](#)
- [A Long-term Process](#)
- [This Resource Manual and Ways to Use It](#)
  - [Language and Images for Local-to-Local Dialogues](#)
  - [Checklist: Where are we in the Local-to-Local Dialogue process?](#)

[Section title page content entries are clickable links.]

# The History and Vision of Local-to-Local Dialogues

Across the world, organized groups of poor women working in their communities—often cited in this text as grassroots women—are making vital contributions to the survival, well-being, and development of their families and communities. Yet their realities, perspectives, and concerns are often not included in development planning and decision-making processes.

In spite of these challenges, opportunities are emerging in many parts of the world as governments respond to the call for greater democratization and decentralization. Changes are occurring in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Europe that create opportunities for citizens such as grassroots women who have been historically excluded from decision-making. The people most affected by inadequate services and economic insecurity have new opportunities to actively participate in the decisions and resource allocations that affect their lives and communities, such as through participatory planning and budgeting mechanisms. However, creating sustainable communities with accountable, responsive government requires new partnerships among multiple actors and a redistribution of power and resources in the hands of the community.



The Local-to-Local (L2L) Dialogue concept emerged from discussions among accomplished community organizers and women's advocates: SPARC (Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres) and SSP (Swayam Shikshan Prayog) in South Asia, German Mother Centres, and Foundation for the Support of Women's Work in Turkey. As a model, AWAS (Asia Women and Shelter Networks) first tested L2L as a strategy with seed funding from UNDP's Urban Governance Initiative. UN Habitat, with support from USAID, then funded the Huairou Commission to support L2L pilots in six countries and to document resulting lessons. The Huairou Commission has continued to support the L2L process that has expanded to a global campaign practiced in over twenty countries.

Many strategies have been used by groups and communities in different parts of the world to have their voices heard by people in positions of power and authority. The L2L

Dialogue process has evolved from the community-level experience of grassroots and women's organizations that seek to empower women to develop their own voices and to expand opportunities for on-the-ground democratization and decentralization. The L2L Dialogue approaches that have emerged in this work are expressions of the ethos and principles of collaboration, harmony, and partnership promoted by the Huairou Commission. These approaches are all part of a vital strategy the Huairou Commission promotes throughout its international network.

The Huairou Commission is a coalition of women's organization networks working together strategically to advance the capacity of grassroots women to advocate for and create their own sustainable communities. L2L Dialogue is the Huairou Commission's tool for promoting bottom-up approaches to governance, decentralization that works for women, and allocation of public resources and services in response to community needs. It supports grassroots women taking their first steps toward effective and lasting engagement in the planning and decision making processes that affect their lives.

Change begins through dialogue and partnership where marginalized citizens move from being projects and recipients of government programs to partners and active citizens. Because adversarial relationships don't work and can't last, the Huairou Commission and its network members use the Local-to-Local Dialogue to help grassroots women take the lead in shaping consultative roles in local government planning and development.

The *Pampelika Mother Center in Březnice*, The Czech Republic, wanted to build a modern, safe children's playground in the community. Women organized a local dialogue with the hope of becoming a real partner in town planning. The Mayor and town representatives supported the community's interest in building the playground. A group of government representatives was established to work with the community and several political parties pledged their support. The Pampelika Mother Center is a member of the network of Czech Mother Centers.

The L2L dialogue process helps grassroots women and community members develop a fuller understanding of the forces that share their lives and their communities. Grassroots women can strengthen their leadership capacity, establish their public roles, and become more assertive about ensuring government accountability for the communities.

L2L Dialogue is a grassroots-driven process. It encourages local authorities, government officials, and other development partners to develop a peer-to-peer attitude with members of marginalized communities. This dialogue process helps decision-makers to listen to their constituents and to recognize that ultimately development solutions are possible and meaningful only with the full participation and agreement of those affected.

In previous L2L Dialogues held by Huairou Commission network members, grassroots women have demonstrated their capacity to organize around their own priorities, to negotiate with local authorities, and to improve their access and control over resources and services. For grassroots women, working for effective governance is about more than electoral politics. It is about changing relationships of power by identifying and implementing practical solutions to the everyday priorities of communities.

## PILOT PROJECTS

When the Huairou Commission was established in 1995, many members of its network observed that organizations, both inside and outside the network, had been steadily advancing grassroots women's agendas in institutional and policy arenas since the 1980s. The United Nations Development Program Urban Governance Initiative (UNDP-TUGI) was one of the first programs of its kind to provide seed funding to help women's civil society organizations initiate local dialogues among community groups and local authorities. Grantees were all members of the Asian Women and Shelter Network (AWAS) in India, Malaysia, the Philippines and Nepal.

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### **The six original Local-to-Local Dialogue pilots in 2002 funded by USAID and UN-HABITAT**

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Kenya, GROOTS Kenya	Facilitated slum communities discussion of issues with infrastructure, security, and resource distribution
Russia, The Information Center of Independent Women's Forum (ICIWF)	Discussion to strengthen resources, information, and capacities of poor women to create safe neighborhoods and improve and maintain community infrastructure
Argentina, The Center of Services and Exchange for the Southern Cone (CISCSA)	Created collective plans for sustainable use of resources with partners in government and professional fields
Tanzania, Women Advancement Trust (WAT)	Collaborated with local authorities to reclaim land entitlements and gain legal recognition for groups
The Czech Republic, Mother Centers	Organized campaign with local authorities, schools and media on funding for local playground
Uganda, Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWADE)	Held workshop for grassroots and elected women to create strategies that address issues in informal settlements

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In 2002, the Huairou Commission, supported by UN Habitat and USAID, chose six global civil society organizations to receive seed funding for Local-to-Local Dialogue pilot projects. The projects incorporated lessons learned in the Asian experience in their efforts to strengthen grassroots women's ability to present local development needs and priorities to local leaders from a community perspective. The six pilot projects demonstrated how Local-to-Local Dialogues can open up a new democratic space for cooperative effort and build relationships among grassroots women and local leaders.

In 2004, the Huairou Commission began making small grants so that grassroots women's groups could evolve and use the Local-to-Local Dialogue in their communities. Grassroots women have continued to host dialogues as a strategy for obtaining space in development project committees, influencing resource allocation, and improving services in their communities. Many self-help groups and community-based organizations in rural and urban informal settlements have seen significant successes that are directly attributed to Local-to-Local Dialogue process.

## TRAINING PROGRAMS

In April of 2007, GROOTS Kenya, with funding support from UN-HABITAT and the government of Norway, designed and facilitated the first Local-to-Local Dialogue Training program as a means of disseminating the key principles of the process to other grassroots women leaders. In November of 2008, the Huairou Commission organized a half-day training on Local-to-Local Dialogue for the UN-HABITAT World Urban Forum in China with over forty participants. The training was facilitated by Huairou Commission members, GROOTS Kenya and the Uganda Community Based Association for Child Welfare (UCOBAC).

In 2009, the Huairou Commission organized and conducted two Regional Local-to-Local Dialogue Trainings in Ghana and Ecuador with the support of the UN-HABITAT Gender Mainstreaming Unit and the governments of Norway and The Netherlands. These trainings gave grassroots groups an occasion to share their experiences in building partnerships with local governments and influencing local decision making. Lessons and tools shared during these two regional trainings have contributed to this Resource Manual. As a result of these two trainings, women's organizations in Africa and Latin America have implemented Local-to-Local Dialogues in their own communities and continue to add to the body of knowledge.

## WOMEN TRANSFORM THEIR PUBLIC ROLE

These remarkable efforts by grassroots women all over the world serves an important purpose: to empower poor, marginalized women to lead community development. In reality, there are many parties in this conversation. The image below points out the main players: leaders in the public sector, leaders in the civil sector, and women leaders in the local sector. Local-to-Local Dialogues are a strategy for helping women transform the way they are seen in the public sphere—to be partners and stakeholders in local development—and to move beyond electoral politics to build sustainable, empowering local governance structures.





## Key Principles

Local-to-Local Dialogue is a strategy of engagement initiated by grassroots women. While there are many strategies that groups and individuals use to voice their opinions to those in positions of power, the Local-to-Local Dialogue is a way to promote harmony, partnership and collaboration between local communities and their leaders in a sustained and meaningful way. Unlike many development and planning processes in which women are considered passive beneficiaries, Local-to-Local Dialogues set the stage for consultations and joint efforts in which the community can take the lead as an equal partner.

“The Local-to-Local Dialogue is a long process [that] begins with the communities having a lot of problems continuously. Then they identify who has the solution for their problems. To mobilize the communities we come together, we sit down, and then agree – we identify the issues. Then... we identify... which relevant authority we can invite to help us get a solution... and who is the key person to call for the dialogue.” *Ann Wanjiru, Mathare Mother Center, GROOTS Kenya*

Most communities have a clear understanding of their problems and a practical sense of possible solutions. But a significant paradigm shift is needed before joint initiatives and sustained efforts are possible. At the heart of this paradigm shift are three key principles that local people must learn to embody. They were adapted from *Local to Local Dialogue: A Grassroots Women’s Perspective on Good Governance*. See the handout on page 160.

### PRINCIPLE 1 — FROM BENEFICIARIES AND CLIENTS TO CITIZENS

Residents and communities at the margins of society as a result of their socioeconomic status have been seen as social burdens, whether as beneficiaries or clients. As beneficiaries, they are seen as passive recipients of state handouts. They may also be seen as clients and purchasers of services. The latter view is the result of reforms in the government sector that value public-private partnerships and a more profit-oriented approach to service delivery. It means having to pay for services and may foster two insidious expectations: 1) the efficiency of services is proportional to the amount paid for them, and conversely, 2) when no money is paid, a government has no obligation to serve its citizens.

Local-to-Local Dialogues are an assertion of people’s rights and responsibilities as citizens and a government’s obligation and opportunity to serve and be accountable to community members. For the Huairou Commission, it is a method to build grassroots women’s leadership and capacity to negotiate with local government to ensure accountability and transparency in decision-making.

*What does this mean for the actual Local-to-Local Dialogue?* Community representatives and the local leaders present are aware of citizens’ rights and responsibilities and the program frames community issues in relationship to citizens’ rights to the resources and services needed to address issues effecting their wellbeing.

## PRINCIPLE 2 — FROM ADVERSARIES TO ALLIES

Concerned citizens may believe that confrontation—letters of protest and demonstrations—is the most effective way to communicate dissatisfaction. The assumption underlying the Local-to-Local Dialogue approach is that passivity, submission, fatalism, or violent confrontation are all self-defeating; none offers a way forward. Strategic negotiation with local governments is a more effective way to approach and engage people in positions of power.

Local, county, state, and regional decision-making bodies increasingly make important decisions about the distribution of resources and services. Many governments are involved in a process of “devolution” and “decentralization”—shifting governance and development decision making away from the central government. Local-to-Local Dialogues give citizens a way to participate in this process and make the voices of grassroots communities matter in local decision-making spaces. For grassroots women, Local-to-Local Dialogues provide an opportunity to present their solutions and strategies to community problem-solving in a way that builds collaboration and partnership with local authorities and stakeholders.

*What does this mean for the Local-to-Local Dialogue meeting?* Presentations, program design, and facilitation are opportunities for community representatives to send a strong message of alliance building and cooperation. Quotes promoting the idea of working as allies might be included in the title of the meeting or as the theme of a section of the meeting. Similarly, organizers could frame everyone’s expectations by posting quotes on meeting room walls that set a tone of constructive effort and practical outcomes.

## PRINCIPLE 3 — FROM POWERLESS TO POWER-SHARING

One of the reasons that some societies are full of injustice and unevenness is that governing institutions only serve the interests of a powerful few. The institutions themselves need to be reformed. The Local-to-Local Dialogue process is a strategy that supports reform by working with, and where possible, within a local government by raising awareness and building alliances. The Local-to-Local Dialogue process is an important step in the journey towards better governance processes in all our countries.

*What does this mean for the Local-to-Local Dialogue meeting?* If local government officials are to view citizens as potential allies in development, community representatives must build their own and their community’s capacity to take on this new role. When grassroots women build awareness, gather data, do their own analysis, and bring relevant information to negotiations, they can be confident in their own ideas, solutions, and themselves. It takes preparation, research, trust, solidarity, and time to develop skills before communities will have clear strategies and plans to share with their local government allies.

How do the Key Principles fit together? Grassroots women create a new kind of political space where empowered citizens, civic organizations and public leaders meet as allies and share the challenges of social change. This dialogue space becomes a safety zone where old patterns can be set aside and more effective relationships and projects can emerge.

## Distinctive Practices

What distinguishes Local-to-Local Dialogues from other change processes is that grassroots women and community members initiate, develop, and lead the process. The success of the dialogues is a result of the empowerment of people in communities and other leaders who will own the results of the dialogue long after resources have dried up and the priorities of local authorities have shifted.

The Local-to-Local Dialogue process gives people typically excluded from political decision-making a way to share responsibility for organizing, agenda-setting, and negotiation. The balance of decision-making power shifts when it is shared among community, government, and stakeholders. Even decisions such as where meetings are held provide opportunities to balance power relationships. Community members who call and host a meeting in their own space, drawing on their own knowledge of the community, empower themselves as leaders because they are masters of the most fundamental information needed to address priority community issues.

The six Distinctive Practices are related to preparation, leadership and follow through. They take women, their neighbors and local authorities on the journey described in the Key Principles. These six practices are linked in a pattern of steps that can be repeated and evolved over time. They are listed here in the logical order in which they would most probably be taken. But all situations are unique and people preparing for a Local-to-Local Dialogue will want to adapt the flow of events and activities to suit their own needs.



### 1. STRENGTHENING WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

Establishing and supporting women's leadership means encouraging women to extend their leadership beyond their homes and families and into the community. By understanding the pathways to empowerment, grassroots women recognize the assets they bring, find ways to work together effectively, and strengthen their power base. Specific cultivation of broader leadership roles for women helps shift the relationships between communities and local government authorities. The effective involvement of women can bring the voice and influence of typically marginalized people into the political and decision-making processes.

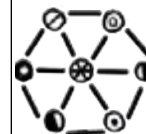


### 2. ORGANIZING AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL

Organizing and consensus-building at the community level is the next important step in any political process. The Local-to-Local Dialogue process begins when grassroots women bring community members together to collectively discuss and prioritize local issues. Community consultations build consensus on shared values, priorities, and strengths. Activities that build a common vision and commitment motivate community members to develop a shared agenda, make proposals, and enter into negotiations during the Local-to-Local Dialogue.

### 3. MAPPING LOCAL NEEDS, ALLIES, RESOURCES, AND LEADERS

When grassroots women map their realities, it empowers them with information and mobilize others to address issues locally. For example, if violence and safety is a concern, engaging women in mapping where they feel unsafe in public spaces becomes an entry point for awareness and actions. Mapping the roles and responsibilities of local officials and the relevant resources available inside and beyond creates a picture of where the community can turn for help. For example, knowing who is responsible for policing and which government agency has funds for improving street lights would be essential for developing issues and proposals for the dialogue. When grassroots women generate and own their own knowledge they can function at an equal level with other stakeholders. Community-led mapping often uncovers local knowledge and indigenous know-how that isn't typically found in government statistics.



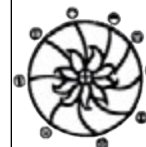
### 4. PREPARING FOR THE LOCAL-TO-LOCAL DIALOGUE

Smooth preparation requires that organizers agree on all of the details related to the Dialogue before the event itself: what will be presented to community leaders and local authorities; who will prepare the data needed to present concerns; who will draft the meeting agenda and prepare the speakers and facilitators; who will draft invitations to participants, think through protocol, and make seating plans; who will make arrangements for setting up the meeting room and handling other logistical details. The success of the Local-to-Local Dialogue depends on the whole community being ready for the event.



### 5. LEADING THE LOCAL-TO-LOCAL DIALOGUE

The actual dialogue event is the culmination of initial awareness raising and capacity building at a grassroots level. Particularly in poor communities, the dialogue event may be the first time some women have met with local authorities, government departments, municipalities, NGOs, development partners, the private sector, and the media. The dialogue event is the starting point to change how local authorities and community members listen to each other and build trust for collective collaboration. An implementable action plan ensures that the community's issues will be addressed and that its residents will view the dialogue event as a success.



### 6. DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING AN ACTION PLAN

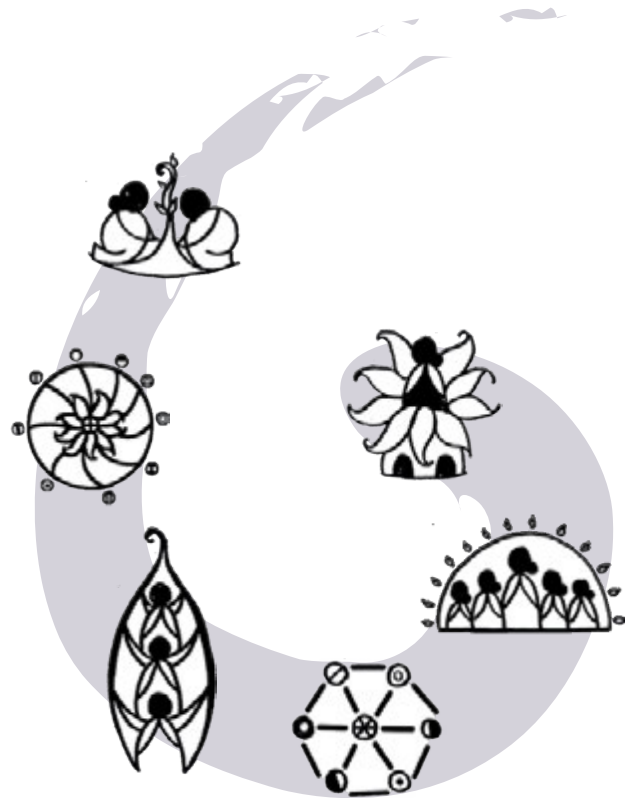
Once the Local-to-Local Dialogue is held, the process has just begun! Without sustained follow through and monitoring of commitments and next steps, all the previous work will be lost. Sustained follow through depends on the organizers having an action plan that includes communicating with the people who attended the dialogue, monitoring commitments made at the dialogue, appointing working groups, and making contacts with the media to publicize outcomes of the meeting. This phase deepens grassroots women's power base, it demonstrates their ability to partner with allies and negotiate for community benefits.



## A Long-Term Process

The Local-to-Local Dialogue is a long-term process and we hope that you will heed the voice of experience. “Go slow early to go fast later.” This advice makes sense in most community organizing contexts and certainly holds true for the Local-to-Local Dialogue process. “Going slow” means taking the necessary time to do the needed ground work to build a solid foundation. This means (a) fostering greater awareness, (b) ensuring preparation that builds confidence, and (c) sustaining commitment and support for the process.

*Awareness-raising* includes problem identification and dialogues about community vision, principles, and priorities. *Preparedness and confidence* result from all the work mapping the community, practicing new roles and skills, and strengthening the core leadership team. *Commitment and support* result from a leadership team’s effectiveness and clear agreements on the processes and structures by which the community will organize itself.



Although this process is not necessarily linear—steps may overlap or be adapted to suit the situation at hand—thoughtful planning and preparation are needed to ensure the sustainability of the process over the long-term. While it is true that a central component of the L2L Dialogue process is engagement with local authorities and lobbying for greater access and decision-making over matters related to resource and service allocation, this process is ultimately about social transformation—fundamentally altering the system of governance—from the bottom up. Thus, long-term sustainability should guide the planning of the L2L Dialogue process throughout each of the different phases.











From the perspective of the Huairou Commission and grassroots women's organizations that have pioneered this process, addressing issues of gender, race, class, and ethnicity are core to shifting the relationships between communities and local government. Ensuring a spirit of shared understanding, mutuality, and respect is essential, in every sociopolitical or cultural context. The L2L Dialogue process, like all processes that promote democracy, consensus, and human connection, can be adapted to suit different sociopolitical, economic, and cultural contexts. If you are uncertain about how to adapt the processes suggested here, please review the "Key Principles" of Local-to-Local Dialogue at the beginning of this section. Taking time to understand and interpret this foundation will help you succeed in your world because you are in synch with the spirit of the L2L Dialogues.

## This Resource Manual and Ways to Use It

- *A manual with a mission* The Key Principles and Distinctive Practices came from grassroots women's groups and their L2L Dialogue partners all over the world. This manual contains practical wisdom to help grassroots women, communities, and their partners use these principles and practices in their daily lives to create communities and relationships that work for all.
- *A resource for a wide audience* The manual was designed for grassroots women's groups and the various community-based organizations, local authorities and institutions that work with them. Some people using this manual are new to community organizing, group facilitation, and political negotiation and others have years of experience working with local leaders and governments. New people can use the manual to explore community needs, develop grassroots leadership and engage others. Experienced organizers can find resources for addressing specific challenges, resolving stubborn problems, and succeeding in difficult negotiations.
- *A collection of practical tools* The manual gives facilitators activities and guidance on how to engage communities, particularly grassroots women, in initiating and building long-term, equal partnerships with local authorities. It includes tools to help communities map common issues, develop their own platform for planning and negotiation, identify appropriate partners, participate more effectively in the processes of local governance, and hold individuals and institutions accountable for their community responsibilities.
- *A step-by-step process and a palette of resources* Sections one through six describe the six process steps that lead to a L2L Dialogue and beyond. You can view these sections both as a systematic approach to improving community governance and as a palette of resources to draw on in many different contexts. The sections include examples and suggestions from real life and cross references to related material.

A "Facilitation Guide" with activities for building women's capacity for broader leadership in their community and practical information about process skills. A selected bibliography and other resources follow the Facilitation Guide.

- *Identifying the process steps through images* Each of the six process steps is introduced with a unique image—one artist’s visual interpretation of the step (see the chart on the next page). You can use these images or draw your own! Use them to introduce and follow the steps as you lead your group through the process. We invite you to be creative and use the images and suggestions as you see fit. Use your *imag*-ination.
- *Spotting the different resources in each section* As you look through each section, you’ll see two kinds of resources: information and processes. These resources are represented by the unique icons that are organized in the chart below. As you turn the pages, the icons give you a quick signal of what’s on the page.

The icons flagging resources in the manual					
<b>Information</b>	Key Information  KeyInfo	Example  Example	Quotation  Quote	Model  Model	Handout  Handout
<b>Process</b>	Methodology  Method	Skits/Role Plays  Skit/Role Play	Reflection  Reflection	Timing  Timing	Checklist  Checklist







## FACILITATOR’S NOTE ON USING THIS MANUAL

This manual is written for grassroots women leaders, community-based groups led by women, and NGO facilitators who work with women. It assumes that your group is already organized with a change agenda, and therefore offers approaches for staying organized and expanding your work. It formalizes change strategies that help grassroots women:

- recognize their assets as leaders and fortify themselves as a group
- strengthen the group’s social network
- work through conflicts and differences within the group and the community
- address issues in relation to family, community, and power structure
- acknowledge women’s public and political work
- sustain the process so community development work can be managed

Introducing the six steps in order lays a strong foundation for both the actual dialogue event and the follow-up. But you may have good reasons for using different approaches in different community settings. Just remember that keeping the big picture plays an important part in the overall L2L Dialogue process. Together, these complementary activities create a strong synergy to sustain the momentum and energy released by the L2L Dialogue.

## Language and images for Local-to-Local Dialogues

	one word	short phrase	one sentence	section title	visual concept	icon
<b>Step 1</b>	strengthening	broadening women's engagement	Expand and support women's leadership.	"Strengthening Women's Leadership"	Women blossom into their full potential when they are able to offer leadership both at home and in the community.	
<b>Step 2</b>	organizing	community consensus building	Build a common vision and agenda for joint action.	"Organizing at the community level"	Local-to-Local Dialogue begins by organizing a common space where women work together and grow independently.	
<b>Step 3</b>	mapping	community-led information gathering	Compile information about local needs, allies, resources, and leadership.	"Mapping local needs, allies, resources, and leaders"	Mapping helps women visualize the people, institutions, and issues that effect their community and identify the relationships needed for change.	
<b>Step 4</b>	preparing	community-wide event preparation	Coordinate detailed preparations for the Local-to-Local Dialogue event.	"Preparing for the Local-to-Local Dialogue"	Women connect with each other and support one another in creating an uplifting new leadership structure.	
<b>Step 5</b>	leading, planning	cooperative action-planning	Demonstrate community leadership.	"Leading the Local-to-Local Dialogue"	The L2L Dialogue meeting focuses the energy of the whole community on common issues and helps people connect so they can move forward together.	
<b>Step 6</b>	implementing	community project implementation	Implement priority community projects together.	"Developing and Implementing an Action Plan"	Women and men work together to nurture projects launched by the L2L Dialogue.	

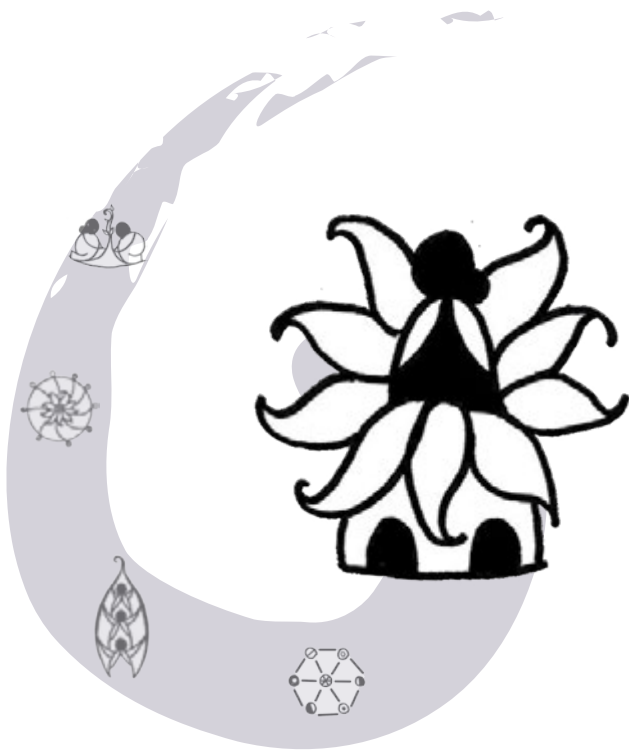






**Checklist: where are we in the Local-to-Local Dialogue process?**

Question	√ -or- ?	Where might we look for help?	What should we work on next?
1. Is your Local-to-Local Dialogue process led by grassroots women?			
2. Does the process promote and support women's leadership?			
3. Is the community consulted, included, and taking ownership at all stages of the process?			
4. Is the process community owned?			
5. Are the issues and priorities to be presented at the Local-to-Local Dialogue chosen collectively?			
6. Does the process reflect common values agreed to by the community?			
7. Is the process bringing everyone together and supporting more collaboration among community members?			
8. Will (or did) the dialogue take place in the community where the issues exist?			
9. Has the L2L Dialogue process added value to processes and work already going on in the community?			
10. Has the L2L Dialogue process helped to build long-term, sustained relationships among stakeholders in the community?			
11. __			
12. __			



## SECTION 1

# STRENGTHENING WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

The first section focuses on knowledge, tools, and activities that support and expand grassroots women's leadership to fortify themselves and solidify their power base. You're ready to take this first step whenever grassroots women want to explore the pathways to empowerment, recognize their assets, strengthen each other in their coalitions, and analyze how gender and power are at work. This section emphasizes internal preparations and may also be useful for groups that want to address challenges relating to leadership, conflict, burnout, and disagreements within organizations.

- Empowering Grassroots Women Leaders
- Transformative Leadership
- Working with Structures of Power
  - Handout 1.1 — The Leadership Support Process
  - Activity 1.2 — “The leaders I most admire...”
  - Activity 1.3 — Our community processes
  - Activity 1.4 — Trust-building exercise: River of Life
  - Activity 1.5 — Trust-building exercise: Tree of Life
  - Activity 1.6 — Developing listening skills
    - » Handout — Communication objectives in growing relationships
    - » Role plays — Three skits about patterns of communication

## Empowering Grassroots Women Leaders

Women's empowerment is the foundation of the grassroots change process.<sup>1</sup> Built on experience working in communities and negotiating with government, we see empowerment as multi-dimensional and holistic. The Huairou Commission MDG3 Accountability Initiative, in advancing grassroots women's empowerment through leadership development and engagement in local governance, identified five indicators for measuring progress.<sup>2</sup> Initiators of Local-to-Local (L2L) Dialogues can measure grassroots women's achievements toward empowerment in these five areas.

- *Leadership* the extent to which women's roles, capabilities, presence, and influence in decision-making processes increase at all levels
- *Collective organizing* the extent to which women are able to network, organize, and collaborate in order to achieve their mutually-agreed aims
- *Resource sovereignty* the extent to which women have control over their resources and derived benefits
- *Knowledge management and communication* the extent to which women are able to generate information and documentation about their own knowledge, access information, and exchange and communicate with relevant stakeholders
- *Accountability and responsibilities* the extent to which women and men scrutinize and hold governments to account



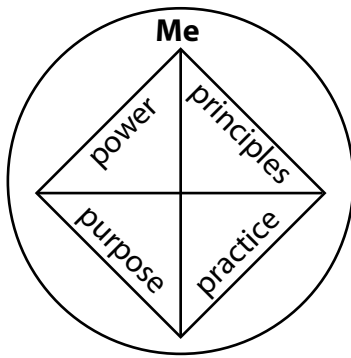
Though progress in any of these areas requires both internal and external preparation, this chapter focuses particularly on internal preparations, beginning with women being clear about their own priorities. Women need to address both their productive roles (e.g., incoming earning activities) as well as reproductive roles (e.g., childbearing and caregiving). The deep seated bias against seeing women's public work as an extension of their reproductive roles helps to explain the reluctance of government authorities and many civil society actors to provide formal roles for grassroots women in community development efforts. Empowered women confront this bias.

The experiences of grassroots groups in GROOTS International shows that it is not a matter of altering the nature of women's "traditional" roles, but rather, to start with what women have and recognize the contributions they make by legitimizing and valorizing their roles to achieve greater social, economic, and political visibility and power in the public sphere. The following sections further explore elements of empowerment in this transformative process.

## Transformative Leadership

Grassroots women use the expression “transformative actions” to describe the process of turning their skills, insights, resources, and social mobilization into concrete benefits for their communities.<sup>3</sup> To embrace transformative leadership, women need to begin tackling power by “working on themselves first,” says Srilatha Batliwala, a feminist activist and researcher based in Bangalore, India.

A complex web of real and perceived obstacles often holds women back from realizing their leadership potentials. Many women have bought into myths such as “some people are born leaders, whereas most people are followers”; “women cannot handle power”; or leadership in neighborhood development requires “professional expertise” and/or advanced degrees. These and other unspoken cultural biases tell us that while it is appropriate for women to lead in the personal sphere, it is not suitable for women to lead in the larger society.



To overcome these obstacles and to unpack the personal dimensions of leadership, Batliwala develops a “diamond” that captures the interconnectedness of four elements of leadership. She points out how transformative leadership comprises four elements:

- *Power* Leadership is first and foremost about power—holding, having, and exercising power—in multiple forms and settings. Grassroots women’s leadership means functioning with a greater consciousness of both others’ and one’s own power.
- *Principles* Leadership is always informed by values and principles. Values are the ethical norms, the moral code that guides behavior; principles are the norms that guide action.
- *Purpose* A key component of leadership is its politics and the nature of the mission that guides it. Batliwala refers to politics as the analysis of socioeconomic realities and its ideological lens (e.g., public good, gender equality, social justice, etc.). Purpose refers to the longer-term vision for change that emerges from politics.
- *Practice* This refers to the lived, transactional realm of everyday practice. It incorporates visioning work, political work, strategic work, building relations, communications, resourcing, managerial work, etc.

Grassroots women’s politics needs to be contextually defined; its ideology informs its leaders and the political agenda that it pursues. According to Batliwala, ideology is:

a complex structure of beliefs, values, attitudes, and ways of perceiving and analyzing social reality—virtually, ways of thinking and perceiving. Ideologies work through social, economic, political and religious institutions and structures such as the family, education system, religion, the media, the economy, and the state, with its administrative, legislative and military wings.

Ideology often sustains and justifies the status quo at the expense of the powerless.<sup>4</sup> As such, transformative leadership uses the analysis of gender bias as its starting point, no matter where it is being exercised, combined with an analysis of other forms of discrimination that may have ideological and cultural roots. Grassroots women’s leadership can, therefore, be defined as a particular focus by women on bringing together “both the individual and societal level of social justice concerns,” with “a desire to bring marginalized voices to the center of the dialogue process, and a willingness to take risks as one strives to enact a transformative agenda.”<sup>5</sup> The politics of empowerment must begin at home, from within the organization and grounded in the community.

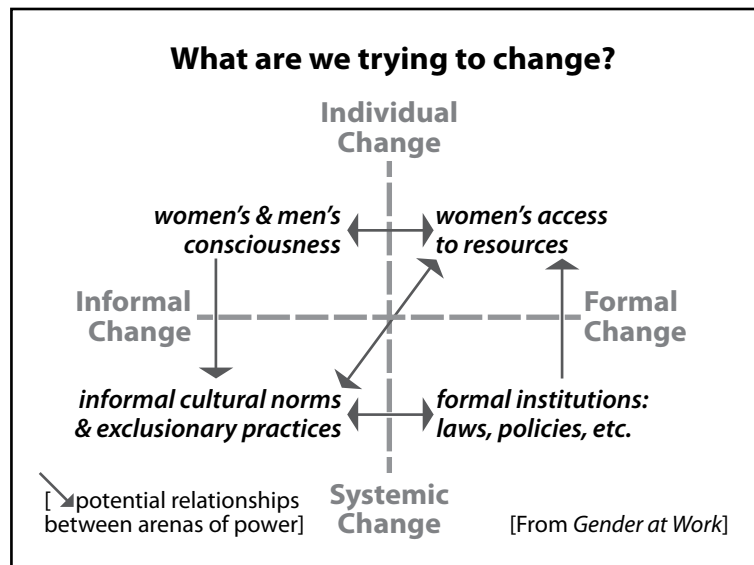
## Working with Structures of Power

In seeking to transform structural marginality and sexual discrimination, grassroots women face overt institutional barriers and all forms of subtle exclusions.<sup>6</sup> The international collaborative, Gender at Work, developed a diagram called “What are we trying to change?” which divides areas of change into four quadrants:

- *Individual access to resources* (top right) indicates changes in measurable individual conditions: resources, voice, freedom from violence, and access to health.
- *Individual consciousness* (top left) indicates knowledge, skills, political consciousness, and commitment to change toward equality.
- *Formal institutional rules* (lower right) are laid down in constitutions, laws, and policies.
- *Informal norms and cultural practices* (lower left) maintain inequality in everyday practice.



Model



Change in one quadrant is related to change in the others. The arrows show possible directions of relationship. In order for an organization to act as an agent of change in one or more of the clusters, leadership, accountability, and capacity need to be strengthened.

In Mexico, *Alianza de Mujeres Líderes de la Región del Istmo de Tehuantepec* used Local-to-Local Dialogues to increase women’s political participation in a congressional election in the state of Oaxaca. Alianza engaged 30 women leaders from various municipalities to analyze and identify problems related to the political participation of women in the Democratic Revolution Party (PRD) in the Istmo de Tehuantepec region. They then made proposals to improve conditions on the rights of indigenous women. Alianza crafted a strategy to boost participation of indigenous women leaders on municipal committees and PRD councils. This strategy included support teams and training in helping municipal governments make commitments to a political agenda for women.



Grassroots women leaders have to recognize how their needs, priorities, strengths, faults, abilities, and talents contribute to power and practice. They also have to recognize the dichotomy of aspiration: the disparity between the way things should be done and the realities—the baggage of history, culture, experiences of power, and pain that we bring to the process—that derail these aspirations. There are concrete tools and mechanisms to help women overcome their own fear of power and to understand internalized ways of using and misusing power. “The Leadership Support Process,” developed by National Congress of Neighborhood Women in the United States, offers an approach to creating appropriately democratic and transparent structures to help us achieve our visions. To be empowered is to seek to transform power relations:

- Control over resources (physical, human, intellectual, etc.)
- Control over ideology (beliefs, values, attitudes)
- Changes in the institutions and structures that support unequal power relations<sup>7</sup>

This also includes grassroots control over expenditures made in the name of women. Grassroots women leaders know that empowerment cannot be focused on working in one sector alone, because quick fixes in one sphere can be reversed. Women must work with multiple entry points to improve their communities and need to strengthen their power base so they can support each other and move the issues. When women do find ways to work together, they become more effective in using power within themselves, thus bringing change in individual conditions, individual consciousness, formal institutions and rules, and informal norms and cultural practices.

### Handout 1.1 — The Leadership Support Process

For decades, the women’s movement has shown that although women share a commitment to address gender subordination, it takes thoughtful effort to work out strategies for organizing and building alliances. Without this effort, differences in background, race, ethnicity, class, education, sexual orientations, etc., can cause friction and mistrust. Women need to find new ways to organize themselves, share leadership, and support each other as leaders in alignment with their personal and collective values. A variety of strategies, methods, and perspectives, and flexibility are needed in order to make women’s movements relevant to local politics in specific cultural, social, and economic contexts.<sup>8</sup>

In the Leadership Support Process (LSP), this means appreciating, listening, and accepting each other, and challenging obstacles by becoming aware of internalized oppressions. By adhering to basic agreements, women leaders balance openness with safety and put limits on the sharing emotions and taking group time.

LSP was developed and fine-tuned by women from the National Congress of Neighborhood Women in the United States (founded in 1974). The methods involve the use of small groups in which women think together and express the exhaustion, fear, confusion, hurt, pride, and hope they feel as leaders in the community.

Grassroots women leaders use LSP to run regular leadership support groups. Many organizations have found it useful to integrate LSP into their regular meetings and into the ways their organizations and communities function. When used to its fullest extent, organizations develop a culture of leadership support that helps to bring diverse people together. LSP comes out of many different methodologies and traditions<sup>9</sup> but its key elements are:

1. Starting with values and vision
2. Setting group standards together
3. Supporting each other as leaders
4. Becoming allies and principled partners by honoring diversity
5. Using appreciation and participatory meeting methods in various settings

LSP helps women learn to prioritize and support each other in meeting their own needs. By learning to sometimes put ourselves first or prioritize ourselves alongside our families and communities, we break centuries of traditions that tend to put women last. By practicing this self-care we can actually become stronger leaders and do community development in ways that empower and improve the lives of everyone.

[To obtain a copy of the *Neighborhood Women’s Training Sourcebook*, please contact the Huairou Commission. In addition to the tools in this section, see “Fostering unity and setting basic agreements” and “Participatory meeting methods” in the Facilitation Guide for other LSP activities.]



**Activity 1.2 — “The leaders I most admire...”**

**Context**

Leaders are people who recognize the importance of a mission and take “responsibility for continually being far-sighted about the group’s goals and clarifying the group’s endeavors.” *National Congress of Neighborhood Women*

**Objectives**

Facilitate community members’ reflection on the leadership qualities they believe are important for leaders and for the L2L Dialogue process in their community. This exercise is designed to uncover qualities of leaders who are active but unrecognized as leaders, particularly in the context of grassroots women’s leadership.

**Background**

Capable, compassionate leaders with a high degree of integrity are essential in any community development or social change project. Once a clear set of problems has been identified and the mapping exercise is complete, the next important step is to expand the base of leadership by selecting a core leadership/facilitation team that will champion the process. It is vital that the community be a part of this selection process to ensure that the core leadership/facilitation team has the support of the community from the very beginning.

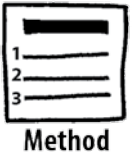
In this activity, community members explore their own ideas about the qualities they seek in a leader. Since an important component of our work is to strengthen grassroots women and their participation in community leadership and decision making processes, it is vital that we also work through gender-related images of leadership. This activity helps uncover the hidden assumptions and fears that might be held by community members. It can also lead the community into thinking about the kinds of leaders they would like to lead them through the L2L process.

**Resources**

- A large room or shady space outdoors
- Big sheets of paper
- Markers, tape

**Methodology**

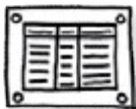
1. **Introduce the exercise** Ask participants to review their experience and choose two leaders they most admire—one male and one female. The person need not be famous. They may choose a person they know personally or one they have heard about, but in either case, someone who has shown leadership qualities that they admire in situations like the family, church, school, the community or the larger society. They must describe at least three qualities in each person that were the basis of their choice.
2. **Organize the small-group discussion** Divide the participants into groups of three and give the groups time to share with each other the characteristics of their most admired male and female leaders.
3. **Reporting in the whole group** After the small groups have had a chance for a thorough discussion, reconvene the whole group. Ask community members to briefly share the names of the two people they admire, who they are, and the three qualities they admire in each. The facilitator writes the qualities shared in two columns—one for the male leaders and one for the female leaders.
4. **Lead a discussion about the contrasting views** Once everyone has given their feedback, the facilitator reviews the two lists and leads a discussion to “tease out” some of the prevailing assumptions and stereotypes about women’s capacity for leadership. Methods for leading this discussion might include:
  - Compare the two lists and highlight qualities that are common to both lists. Note that qualities such as being honest, consultative, sharing, knowledgeable, reliable, courageous, etc. are not gender specific.





- Highlight qualities that are not common to both lists and that may be a stereotype of male or female leaders (e.g., men leaders are described as strong, brave, and decisive, or women leaders are described as caring, sympathetic, and kind). Note that these qualities can be found in both women and men. All are human qualities that can be developed regardless of gender.
- Ask the community members to identify the characteristics and qualities that they think are the most important to have in the core leadership team leading the L2L Dialogue process.

5. **Identify key leadership qualities** Once the discussions of the lists have drawn out and clarified different ideas and questions about leadership, move the group toward identifying 10–12 key qualities that they are looking for in community leaders. Write these qualities on a big sheet of paper.
6. **Use a ranking exercise as needed** If there is unclarity or disagreement in the group, you might use the wall chart below to help people come to an agreement. Once 15–20 qualities have been listed, ask community members to call out, or come up to the list and mark their ranking on each of the qualities. Choose the qualities with the highest rank to form the basic list that will be used in the next process of selecting leaders for the core leadership team.



Model

<b>Model chart 1.2 — Wall chart for ranking leadership qualities</b>			
<b>Quality</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Good but not essential</b>
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

**Session timing 1.2 — “The leaders I most admire...”**



<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Introduction and explanation of the activity	10 minutes	
Small group discussions	20 – 30 minutes	
Big group discussion	1 hour	
Agreements on the qualities of leaders	1 hour	

## Activity 1.3 — Our community processes

### Context

As the National Congress of Neighborhood Women's *Training Sourcebook* notes, "Groups, gardens, and young children grow wild if they are not carefully tended." In this exercise, community members work through the principles, processes, and structures that carefully tend to effective governance in community development projects.

### Objectives

Come to agreement as a community on the principles, processes, and structures to guide communications, decision making, and governance in the L2L Process. This exercise is designed to strengthen community processes, especially the capacity of community members to engage in local decision-making and to prepare for ongoing negotiations.

### Background

Once the community begins a process of consensus building and goal setting for development and change, it is vital that the community also arrives at agreements on the principles, processes, and structures that will keep these processes fluid, transparent, and flexible. A central piece of this conversation is the nature of leadership in the organization. The L2L Dialogue process advocates for a shared leadership process, where a core team of facilitative leaders helps the community with its planning and preparations for the dialogue with local authorities and local leaders.

### Resources

- A large room or a shady space outdoors with extra space for different small group discussions
- Large sheets of paper, markers, and tape

## Methodology

1. **Introductions and context** The session begins with introductions, then the facilitator/animator gives background on the relevance of the session, its methodology, and objectives.
2. **Organize the small-group discussions** Divide the meeting into small groups of 6–8 people. Each group should choose a participant who can facilitate the process within the group. Ask the group to assign one documenter who will report back to the whole group after the small group discussions. Each small group needs to work through its own leadership, meeting, and communications questions.
3. **Reports and agreements** The small groups reconvene and share views on each of the questions. After everyone's views have been stated, the facilitator leads the community members in a discussion that leads to agreements through a process of consensus building.
4. **Give additional inputs as needed** In a discussion such as this, it may be necessary for the facilitator to play the role of an animator, i.e., to give value-based inputs that point the conversation in the desired direction.
5. **Ensure documentation** It is important that these agreements are documented, because they will be the basis of community organizing right through the L2L Dialogue process and beyond. These agreements can be revisited regularly to see if they need to be adjusted or improved to accommodate new realities and perspectives.



Method

• **Leadership Questions**

- What should the composition of the core leadership team be?
- What other groups should be represented in the core leadership? (youth, disabled, People Living With Aids, etc.)
- When will the composition of the core leadership team be reviewed?
- Review the list of leadership qualities developed in Activity 1.2—“The leaders I most admire...” How can we encourage and support these qualities in the members of the core leadership team?
- How would we like to give feedback to and receive feedback from the core leadership team?

• **Meetings/Communications Questions**

- How often would we like to have meetings with the core leadership team?
- What process will we use to come to agreement?
- What mode of communications would we like our selected leaders to use to communicate with us? (Meetings for a weekly update on progress? A poster or news sheet put up in a central place that gives weekly/bimonthly updates?)



**Concepts helpful for shaping agreements**

- Agreements should be flexible and able to change as needed, keeping constant with our aims.
- Agreements should be sensitive to diversity and oppression issues. Good agreements will send a message to everyone that contradicts or goes against the social conditioning we call internalized oppression. This is particularly important for bringing out the contributions of so many grassroots women who have been given a social message that their contributions are less valuable than those from other people in the society.
- Agreements should take a stand and not compromise grassroots women's principles. They should reflect and support personal and group values. Our agreements are the ways we live our principles in a meeting situation. They are the promises that we make to each other about the standards we will hold on to no matter what happens.
- Agreements should make practical sense in relation to the group's purpose.
- Breaking agreements is seen as a mistake to be corrected. In the process of learning any new approach, people “break the rules.” However, because we have agreed to honor agreements in general in this community, broken agreements are understood as mistakes and are not defended as “my style” or “my right to be different.” If an agreement is too rigid and is not helping the group, then a discussion is needed about a replacement agreement rather than throwing out agreements in general.

National Congress of Neighborhood Women, *Training Sourcebook*, 1993

**Session timing 1.3 — Our community processes**



Activity	Timeline	Notes
Introduce and explain the process	10 – 15 minutes	Invite suggestions and questions.
Divide members into community groups for their group discussions	45 minutes – 1 hour	Ideally there should be one facilitator per group to help if the discussion becomes difficult
Feedback from the different groups	20 – 30 minutes (depending on numbers)	
Coming to agreement on the different points	1 – 2 hours	

**Activity 1.4 — Trust-building exercise: River of Life**

**Context**

In all important relationships sharing significant parts of our life experience and history helps lay a foundation of trust.

**Objectives**

Create an opportunity for core leadership team members to get to know each other in an environment of trust with confidentiality clearly established as a ground rule.

**Background** <sup>10</sup>

*Facilitator Note:* This exercise can be an unfamiliarly deep sharing experience for people who do not usually offer details of their lives outside their families. It is essential that team members feel safe in the knowledge that personal information will not be used against them in the future. Once the core leadership team has been selected, it is important for the facilitator to work with this team to develop group integrity through trust building and team strengthening exercises. One important trust building activity is for team members to share their personal history and the experiences and events that have shaped them as people. The “River of Life” and “Tree of Life” exercises provide two opportunities for this kind of sharing. The “River of Life” exercise works in many different cultural contexts because almost every culture has some relationship with rivers or water and people can easily relate to its symbolism.

**Resources**

- A large room or a quiet space outdoors where the team will not be distracted or interrupted
- Large sheets of paper, markers and crayons



Method

**Methodology**

1. **Draw the rivers** Give everyone a big sheet of paper and different colored felt-tip pens and crayons. Ask everyone to find a space on the floor to quietly reflect while they draw a river representing their own lives. Invite them to “ask their river” at its source (their early life with their family of origin) and continue through the other phases of their life. Give people up to half an hour to reflect on their lives and draw their pictures. They can use different features of the river to describe the different life phases:
  - Boulders, rapids, and waterfalls can describe stormy times, difficulties, excitement, and change.
  - Tributaries running into the main river can symbolize influences, ideologies, or periods of growth.
  - Trees, houses, or people on the bank can be achievements or people who made a difference in our lives.
  - Rivers can be a metaphor for slowing down and meandering as people get older.
2. **Sharing the river drawings** When everyone has finished drawing, the facilitator invites everyone in turn to share their drawings. Teams of five people or less can share their river stories in the whole group. It may be advisable for teams larger than five to divide into smaller groups of 3–5 people to share their stories.
3. **Post the drawings** Once everyone has shared their drawings, put them up on the wall so team members can browse each other’s drawings and ask each other informally about their stories.

**Session timing 1.4 — Trust-building exercise: River of Life**



Activity	Timeline	Notes
Introduce and explain the exercise	5 minutes	
Individual time for team members to draw their Rivers of Life	20 – 30 minutes	
Sharing in small groups/whole group	1 hour or so	

## Activity 1.5 — Trust-building exercise: Tree of Life

### Context

In all important relationships sharing significant parts of our life experience and history helps lay a foundation of trust.

### Objectives

Create an opportunity for core leadership team members to get to know each other in an environment of trust with confidentiality clearly established as a ground rule.

### Background <sup>11</sup>

Once the core leadership team has been selected, it is important for the facilitator to work with this team to develop group integrity through trust building and team strengthening exercises. One important trust building activity is for team members to share their personal history and the experiences and events that have shaped them as people. The “Tree of Life” exercise has been used throughout the world in many community, organizational, and movement settings. The tree can symbolize our lives with different parts of the tree describing different aspects of our life. This exercise is more structured than the River of Life exercise and it is helpful to follow up with a discussion of the different influences. Here too, guarding each other’s confidentiality gives team members confidence to share personal information.

### Resources

- A large room or a shady space outdoors with enough space to sit in a circle
- Large sheets of paper, markers and crayons

### Methodology

1. **Give people their supplies** Give everyone a big sheet of paper and colored felt-tip pens and crayons. Ask them to find some floor space to quietly reflect while drawing a tree representing their own lives.
2. **Explain the tree metaphor** Ask everyone to choose a particular tree whose qualities they appreciate and identify with. Mention locally recognizable examples: a banana tree always renews itself after bearing fruit; a coconut tree bears in abundance and can be used for food, building material, fuel, and household products; a mango tree bears sweet and delicious fruit; a Neem tree has many medicinal properties and is loved by birds. Give people up to half an hour to reflect and draw their pictures.
3. **Sharing the tree drawings** When everyone has finished drawing, the facilitator invites them to share their drawings. Teams of five people or less can share their tree story in the whole group. It may be advisable for teams larger than five to divide into smaller groups of 3–5 people to share their stories.
4. **Post the drawings** Once everyone has shared their drawings, put them up on the wall so team members can browse each other’s drawings and ask each other informally about their stories. It’s best if this exercise is done at the end of the day so people can relax, talk more, and share for as long as they are able to.



Method

### Session timing 1.5 — Trust-building exercise: Tree of Life



Timing

Activity	Timeline	Notes
Introduce and explain the exercise	5 minutes	
Individual time for team members to draw their own Trees of Life	20 – 30 minutes	
Sharing in small groups or as a big group	1 hour or more	

**Model 1.5 — Using metaphors to spark discussion (sample of possible life experiences) \***

The parts of a tree	Associations that might come to mind
<b>Roots</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family of origin, extended family, clan or community that shaped our early life</li> <li>• Strong influences (like relationships, institutions, or philosophies) that have shaped who we are now</li> </ul>
<b>Trunk</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The structure of our life that we have chosen today</li> <li>• Our family or significant relationships</li> <li>• The job that we do for our survival or the vocation/interests that sustain us</li> <li>• Organizations, communities, or associations we have that provide solidity in our lives</li> </ul>
<b>Leaves</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills and natural talents, things that we can tap into to strengthen our life path</li> <li>• Sources of input, support, and nourishment like friends, contacts, books, etc.</li> <li>• Values and principles that are most important to guide our lives</li> </ul>
<b>Fruits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our children</li> <li>• Our home</li> <li>• The different successes we have had in our life</li> <li>• Our achievements, projects, or work that we are proud of</li> <li>• Things that we have produced that we are proud of</li> </ul>
<b>Buds and flowers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our hopes and aspirations for the future</li> </ul>



**Model**

\* Think about the Tree of Life exercise. Different people in different groups suggest many different kinds of meanings for these images. There are no wrong answers to the question, “What memories and meanings about your life come to mind when you use a river or tree—or anything else—as a metaphor?”

## Activity 1.6 — Developing listening skills

### Context

Skillful communication is fundamental to good leadership and learning how to listen skillfully to each other is an important way to build trust in a leadership team.

### Objectives

Help team members become aware of and gain insight into their communication patterns and develop agreements about ways of communicating as a group.

### Background<sup>12</sup>

Many of us are unaware of the ways we communicate. We often listen to only a small part of what others say to us before floating off on our own stream of thought about what is being said. We formulate our own point of view as the other person speaks and often react without listening and reflecting on everything that's being said. In this listening exercise, team members volunteer to enact three scenes representing different situations common in any group. The skits are used to spark discussion and agreement on ground rules for communications within the group.

### Materials needed

- A large room or space outside where the group can interact freely without interruption
- 1–2 large sheets of paper, markers

### Methodology

- Organize three skits** Invite six members of the group to act out three short skits. The facilitator briefs volunteers in pairs about what they are expected to do and gives them a little time to prepare their skit.
- Facilitate the skits** Stop each skit when its point is made. Skits 1 and 2 go quickly; Skit 3 may take longer.
- Divide into triads** After the last skit, divide people into groups of three to answer several questions:
  - What did you observe happening in Skit 1? In Skit 2? In Skit 3?
  - Do these things happen in our daily lives? How so?
  - Do these things happen in our community meetings?
  - What can we do to help make communications in our team as good as possible?
- Whole group sharing** People rejoin the whole group and one appointed person per group shares their discussion's different points. The facilitator notes the points from the last question on a big sheet of paper.
- What next?** The group uses the points to develop its "Ground Rules or Guidelines for Communication."



### Session timing 1.6 — Developing listening skills



Activity	Timeline	Notes
Introduce the session and brief the six people chosen to do the skits	10 minutes	Make sure to choose a diversity of people to act out the skits.
Performance of the three skits	10 minutes	See the skits on the next page.
Small group discussions	30 minutes	
Plenary discussion to come up with a "Guideline for Communications"	1 hour	You might use ideas in "Communication objectives in growing relationships" on the next page.



**Handout 1.6 — Communication objectives in growing relationships**

Growing relationships share several basic objectives related to deep listening and compassionate speech.

- For people to be able to speak without fear of retribution and with honesty
- For people to be able to raise issues that are important to them
- For people to have the courage and maturity to give and receive honest feedback
- For people to be able to express their feelings if they think they have been wronged but in ways that do not blame or accuse others. Rather it is possible to hold people accountable for their actions and ask for change
- To encourage people who have been culturally, socially, or politically suppressed or prevented from speaking their views to have the right to express their minds and speak their truth without fear of reprisal
- To develop a culture where deep listening and compassionate speech is the norm, and where people have the ability to be silent when silence is necessary and to speak up when speaking up is necessary
- To develop the practice of listening deeply for what might be the need behind the feeling being expressed

**Role Plays 1.6 — Three skits about patterns of communication**

(Each pair decides on its conversation topic after the briefing by the facilitator).

**Skit 1**

Two people meet and greet each other. Person A asks the other how she is doing. As soon as this question is asked, Person B starts talking and gets so excited with what she is saying that she pays no attention to what Person A is saying. Person A tries to ask a question, make a suggestion, respond to what Person B is saying, but Person B pays no attention. In the end Person A goes silent.

**Skit 2**

Two people meet and greet each other. Person A mentions a topic such as a family achievement or something happening in the community. As soon as she begins though, Person B immediately launches off on his/her conversation with “Oh Yes, I know exactly what you mean...” and then proceeds to talk about an entirely different situation that has no connection. Person A continues to talk at the same time as Person B. Neither one is listening to the other.

**Skit 3**

Two people meet and greet each other. They begin a dialogue in which both ask each other questions, listen carefully, and respond by sharing their own opinions and views. There is good eye contact between Person A and Person B, and lots of non-verbal acknowledgement as they speak to each other.



Skits/Role Play



## SECTION 1 NOTES

1. Based on discussions with Jan Peterson, Sandy Schlein, and Suranjana Gupta. In addition to specific citations, this section also draws on the National Congress of Neighborhood Women's *Training Sourcebook* (1993); A. Yonder and M. Tamaki, *Our Spaces: Grassroots Women Formalize their Leadership and Access to Essential Services* (Huairou Commission, 2010); P. Gopalan, "Empowerment from below: self-education and empowerment of grassroots women's collectives" in R. Murthy ed. *Building Women's Capacities: Interventions in Gender Transformation* (Sage Publication, 2001). (NCNW is a USA-wide grassroots women's network that is also a member of GROOTS International and the Huairou Commission.)
2. Huairou Commission, *Midterm Review of MDG3 Accountability Initiative* (2010).
3. The following sections draw heavily on S. Batliwala, *Feminist Leadership for Social Transformation: Clearing the Conceptual Cloud* (2008); and A. Rao and D. Kelleher, *Innovation Circle: Building a Community of Reflection and Practice on Gender Equity and Institutional Change*" (Gender at Work, 2004).
4. Rao and Kelleher, 2004.
5. Drawn from what Srilatha Batliwala defined as feminist leadership.
6. Gender at Work, "What Is Gender at Work's Approach to Gender Equality and Institutional Change?" (n.d.).
7. Rao and Kelleher, 2004.
8. National Congress of Neighborhood Women's *Training Sourcebook* (1993).
9. The techniques featured in the training sourcebook evolved from peer-counseling training, personal experiences with consciousness-raising, and methods used by self-help groups.
10. Adapted from Anne Hope and Sally Timmel, *Training for Transformation: A Handbook for Community Workers*, Book 2, p. 35.
11. *Ibid.*, 36.
12. *Ibid.*, 25.





## SECTION 2

# ORGANIZING AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL

The second section focuses on the community organizing and visioning processes needed to bring diverse groups of people together around a common vision. Use this section if your group or organization has never worked with other organizations and/or partners, particularly local authority or government partners. It may also be useful to experienced groups that are beginning to work with new issues or new leaders.

- Bring the Community Together in the L2L Dialogue Process
  - Activity 2.1 — Community relationships and discussion:  
“The Big Picture”
  - Activity 2.2 — Community symbols and values discussion:  
“What makes us a community?”
  - Activity 2.3 — Graphic community vision:  
“When I envision my community in five years, I see...”
  - Activity 2.4 — Values and principles discussion:  
“Our ways of working”
  - Activity 2.5 — Role play: “How do we want to be governed?”
    - » Skit — The top-down approach to development
    - » Skit — The bottom-up approach to development

## Bring the Community Together in the L2L Dialogue Process

The starting point in community organizing work is to bring people together over the things that they feel passionately about. Sometimes the worst situations provide the best opportunities for people to start working together. When a situation becomes intolerable, more people will look for ways to improve it. One powerful way to do this is to change their relationship to those who have authority and the power of decision-making.

Before we can begin negotiations with local leaders and officials, we need to know what our community members think about different aspects of community living, what they are anxious about, and what they hope for. It is a common mistake for community leaders and organizers to make assumptions about how fellow community members perceive a particular situation. We also may not have talked about common goals for the community and how we might go about reaching them.



The *Grassroots Sisterhood Foundation* (GSF) operates in 27 communities in three regions of Northern Ghana. Since the beginning of the Local-to-Local Dialogue process in 2007, GSF has reported a visible shift in grassroots women leading decision-making processes in areas where women were almost entirely excluded from these roles. In 2008, women were granted ten acres of land for farming purposes and another 20 women registered land in their own names. In 2009, GSF facilitated a refresher course for 45 community watchdog members and 20 community paralegals (CPL), bolstered by six Local-to-Local Dialogues in 13 communities. Women have become increasingly more involved and more vocal to the extent that 27 women have now been nominated to lead community development and leadership committees. The local dialogues and awareness-raising work of GSF have also encouraged three influential Imams and two traditional chiefs to write wills and lead will-writing campaigns in GSF's operational area.

The first step for a facilitator/leader of change is to talk to people, understand their feelings about the situation, and identify what issues are “hot” and will likely bring the community together. Then, using this set of issues, the facilitator/leader has to convene community members to begin dialogue with each other.



### BUILDING COALITIONS IN THE L2L DIALOGUE PROCESS:

- Survey the pulse of the community and identify one or more themes that will draw people together in a dialogue.
- Have an initial meeting using one of the themes chosen to surface the issues that community members are passionate about, what they think are causes of these issues, and what actions may be taken to solve these problem.
- Establish a common vision of the community and a clear set of goals to work towards.
- Openly negotiate ways of working together by acknowledging the diversity in the community.

- Agree on common principles and ways of resolving issues that come up between members. These will actually be a platform for community governance that is evolving as the group evolves.
- Agree on leadership, roles and responsibilities and processes for taking decisions within your group.

## WHY CONSULTING WITH LOCAL PEOPLE IS SO IMPORTANT

When local residents are not consulted, communities are more likely to experience challenges and setbacks. Below are examples of situations that arose when communities weren't involved in local planning and decision-making.

### Examples of negative outcomes when communities are not involved

Negative outcome	Community setback
Structures in informal settlements are demolished after a community has invested in construction.	Wasted resources
Local leaders and institutions may not be accountable to the community because no one keeps an eye on them.	Corruption due to lack of transparency
When completed projects do not reflect community priorities, citizens are forced to accept outcomes that fail to meet their needs.	Poor prioritization of community needs
An NGO working in a community ignores the vision of local citizens.	Exploitation of community members
Communities fail to identify with local leaders' work in the community when their citizens are not consulted.	Lack of community forums and ownership of implemented projects



The activities in Section 2 all focus on involving community residents in meaningful ways. They help people to discuss their reality, consider their shared values, build trust, imagine the future, lay foundations for cooperative action, and empower themselves in relationship to the local authorities and communities.

## Activity 2.1 — Community assessment: The Big Picture

### Context

Empowered citizens can use any time, but especially times of hardship or struggle, to reflect critically on their situation, to identify skills or training necessary to facilitate change, and implement their own plans to make changes they choose.

### Objective

Create the opportunity for grassroots women and community members to reflect on their own and their community's current life situation, to analyze the relationships affecting their situation, and to develop and plan for next steps to impact their situation.

### Background

This exercise is based on the belief that grassroots women and community members are fully capable of analyzing their life situations and the challenges facing their community. The exercise helps them overcome frustrations by looking at the big picture. They identify their issues, who is responsible, and possible solutions available to them. The facilitator plays an important role in this process. The facilitator helps people move from complaining about the problems to helping them analyze why the current situation exists and choose activities to change the situation.

### Resources

- A large room with access to outdoor space or a shady space outdoors with enough room to sit in a circle
- Several big sheets of paper taped together to make one large sheet
- Markers (blue, black, and red)
- Sticky tape

### Methodology



Method

1. **Introduce the session** Tell the participants that “The Big Picture” drawing will be done with everyone’s cooperation and inputs. Ask a couple of people who can draw clearly and quickly to help prepare the big sheet of paper. The facilitator leads the community discussion that follows.
2. **Describe the demographics of the community** Who lives there, how many people live in the community, what is the situation of women, what jobs, salaries, age groups, etc.? Add this information graphically with a black pen, using simple representative images in the middle of the large sheet of paper.
3. **Describe the key features of the community** Add simple images of the churches, mosques, schools, public facilities, shops, roads, etc. to the large sheet.
4. **Determine the main problems in the community** What challenges do people face? Draw all of this on the large sheet in black, with simple graphics and labels representing each.
5. **Identify outside factors impacting the community** What outside factors do residents believe are involved in this situation? This may include politicians, business people, government agencies, a new law or policy, or a new development plan. Draw these people/factors like satellites around the community images in the centre of the large sheet.
6. **Identify community relationships** Ask participants where they see relationships of power, decision making and control. Use the blue and red markers to record information from this part of the exercise.

7. **Describe the relationships** Ask participants to examine the relationships among the grassroots leaders, community members, and other people of influence inside and outside the community. Invite them to state whether they think these relationships are positive or negative. Either way, how do they affect the community and why? Use a blue marker to indicate relationships that people consider positive and a red marker to indicate relationships that people consider uneven, difficult or unjust.
8. **Analyze the relationships** When the blue and red relationship lines are marked in clearly, ask people to analyze the drawing. Which relationships are they happy with and which ones are they unhappy with? What is the dynamic between men and women? What would they like to change in the picture?
9. **Organize small group discussions** Once the Big Picture has been completed and participants are expressing satisfaction, invite people to break into smaller groups for more in depth discussions about what change they would like to see. Ask each small group to prepare three suggestions for how this change might come about.
10. **Lead a whole group discussion** Regroup into one big circle. Ask each group to share what it would like to change and its three suggestions for how this change might come about.

### Session timing 2.1 — The Big Picture



Activity	Timeline	Notes
Introduce the session and explain the objective	10 – 15 minutes	Help participants understand what is expected of them.
Collectively work on the Big Picture sheet on the wall	45 minutes to 1 hour	This exercise happens with a big group, so every so often you will need to check in and see the pace, process and pulse of the group. (See Communicate with the group on the process on page 132 of the Facilitation Guide.)
Discussion in small groups about change and possible actions	30 – 45 minutes (depending on numbers)	
Feedback from the small groups to the larger circle	20 minutes	



## Activity 2.2 — Community symbols and values discussion: “What makes us a community?”

### Context

When a balance is created between individual and community needs and priorities, grassroots women and communities are in a position of strength when negotiating with institutions, authorities, and leaders with decision-making power. Increased self awareness and knowledge helps foster commitment, motivation and perseverance towards community building and social transformation.

### Objective

Create an opportunity for grassroots women and community members to reflect on their community and the collective values they hold. Foster trust and cooperation within a group of community members who are working together towards a common goal.

### Background

The word “community” is one that is full of meaning for people living and working at the grassroots level. Although there are many ways of speaking about a community, in the context of the Local-to-Local Dialogue process, a community is commonly thought of as “a group of people living in a shared geographical location who share social values and a struggle to overcome common challenges.” Often, however, the struggle for daily survival leaves community members with very little time to reflect on their community and the values they hold. With this tool, community members begin to identify what they think makes them a community and what they feel are shared values.

### Resources

- A large room with access to outdoor space or a shady space outdoors with enough room to sit in a circle
- A few pieces of notepad paper and pens for those community members who cannot go outside to select a symbol
- Large paper and markers
- Tape or adhesive to attach paper to a wall



Method

### Methodology

1. **Introduction and assignment** Instruct the community members to go out of the room and bring back an object that symbolizes their community for them. Ask them to think of something they value about the community that their object represents. Anyone who cannot walk can choose an item in their possession, in the room, or something they can draw on a piece of paper.
2. **Describe community symbols and values** Give everyone time to find the right object for them and to compose their thoughts. Once everyone is back in the circle, invite them to go around the circle, telling how their object symbolizes the community to them and describing the things they value in the community. Give everyone sufficient time to speak and help them stay focused with gentle reminders about the purpose of sharing with each other. Write what the symbols mean on one large sheet of paper and the things people value on another large sheet of paper.
3. **Reflect and name shared values** Lead a discussion after everyone has spoken. Read out the values that people have stated once again and invite people to give their views. If possible, encourage agreement on which values are most important to a community that is trying to build itself up, become strong, and negotiate with leaders and local authorities in positions of power.

## Session timing 2.2 — “What makes us a community?”



Activity	Timeline	Notes
Introduce the session and explain the objective	10 – 15 minutes	Help participants understand what is expected of them.
Find a symbol that represents the community to you.	10 – 15 minutes	Give examples of what sorts of things people might bring back: a stone, leaf, a fruit, a piece of plastic or paper, etc. Provide sheets of paper and felt tip markers for those who are unable to walk. Invite them to select something from within the room or simply to draw something on a piece of paper.
Share in a circle with other community members	20 – 30 minutes (depending on numbers)	Remember to keep noting down on the large sheet of paper summary points to be reviewed
Discuss and agree on the most important values for a community	20 minutes	

## Activity 2.3 — Graphic community vision: “When I envision my community in five years, I see...”

### Context

“A vision articulates a future that someone deeply wants, and does it so clearly and so compellingly that it summons up the energy, agreement, sympathy, political will, creativity, resources or whatever to make that vision happen.”

Donella Meadows as quoted by bell hooks in *All About Love: New Visions*

### Objectives

Create an opportunity for grassroots women and community members to develop a shared vision of the community they hope for in the future that will sustain them when obstacles arise as they work toward it.

### Background

In order to move forward in the Local-to-Local Dialogue process, it is important for everyone to have a clear, shared vision of how their community will develop in the future. They may never have expressed their hopes for the future publicly or noticed that they share many of the same hopes with their neighbors. This important exercise must be handled with care so that people appreciate that individual images of the future are seldom contradictory and don't need to block negotiated agreements about a shared community vision.

### Resources

- A large room with access to outdoor space or a shady place outdoors with enough room to sit in a circle
- Several large sheets of paper, one or more for each group
- Colored paper, scissors, glue and felt tip markers for each group
- Something to stick/hold paper to the wall



### Methodology

1. **Introduction and organizing peer groups** Once everyone understands the directions and has clarified what is expected of them, the facilitator divides people into broadly defined peer groups, for example, by age and gender: men, women, young adults and adolescents. If a community is more diverse, it might include categories such as older residents, recent migrants, care-givers and HIV/AIDS survivors. The facilitator will have a sense of the community already and may suggest categories of groupings, but might ask community members how they would like to be divided. Let everyone know that peer groupings allow people to be more open about their visions of the community.
2. **Choose small group discussion leaders and note takers** Once in their groups, ask the group to assign a person to lead the group's discussion. Also assign a note-taker who will take written notes or remember what people have shared. The discussion leader will lead the group members in sharing with each other:
  - When I envision our community in five years, I hope to see...
  - The three most important things I hope to see in our community in five years...
3. **Identify the important shared vision elements** Agree on the things that they think are the most important to their vision of the community in the future such as a primary school, a high quality clinic, roads, trees, drainage, a park for children to play in. As much as possible the group should all be happy with the things they agree to have in the future. Give the groups 30 to 45 minutes to complete this discussion.
4. **Draw the group's community vision on paper** Using these agreements, each group uses cut-out colored paper and felt tip markers to draw their vision of their community in the future on paper. Give the groups another 15 to 30 minutes to complete their drawings.

5. **Present each group’s community vision to the whole group** Have everyone return to the main group. One-by-one, have all of the groups share their vision of the community in the future. Make sure that each group is applauded after its report.
6. **Negotiate a broad consensus vision** When all of the small groups have shared their drawings, the facilitator reviews all of the drawings. For each drawing, call out the different things that people have identified in that drawing and see if there is broad agreement about these. When there isn’t, try to work through the arguments for and against until some consensus emerges concerning that vision of the community’s future. Help people recognize that in the long run, an inclusive vision of the future that accommodates the needs of as many people in the community as possible, is the one that is not only the most equitable, but also the most sustainable.
7. **Create a composite drawing of the community vision** Choose the drawing that is closest to this ideal vision of the future. Add to and subtract from this drawing using cut-out papers and glue, until you reach a composite image that everyone is happy with.

### Session timing 2.3 — “When I envision my community in five years, I see...”



Activity	Timeline	Notes
Introduce the session; explain the objective and methodology.	10 – 15 minutes	Help participants understand what is expected of them.
Break people into groupings of peers.	10 – 15 minutes	Ask the group to get comfortable with sufficient space and assign a leader for themselves.
People in small groups share their vision of the future of the community together.	30 – 45 minutes	The small group leader and the note taker play important roles in keeping this dialogue going. Help them by circulating among the groups and supporting the flow of discussions.
Draw the vision of the future on a big sheet of paper.	15 – 30 minutes	
Small groups share their vision with the whole group.	20 – 30 minutes (depending on numbers)	
Negotiate an agreement on a common vision for the whole community in the future.	30 minutes to 1 hour	Sometimes this can take longer, particularly in a diverse community or when people are simply not as familiar with listening to each other and negotiating common agreements.

## Activity 2.4 — Values and principles discussion: Our Ways of Working house building exercise

### Context

We use the metaphor of building a house to help grassroots women and communities establish shared values and principles. If and when conflicts arise in the process of organizing and implementing the Local-to-Local Dialogue process, it can be useful to refer back to this foundational agreement.

### Objectives

Provide space for grassroots women and community members to reflect and come to an agreement on what they think are the most important principles for working together. The House Building exercise leads to an agreement on commonly held values and principles that will guide the subsequent processes leading to the Local-to-Local Dialogues.

### Background

It is vital that working groups spend time surfacing their members' values and principles so they can be openly negotiated and agreed upon. Once these basic agreements are in place, community members can refer back to them to check whether their goals, strategies, processes, and structures are aligned with these commonly held values.

### Resources

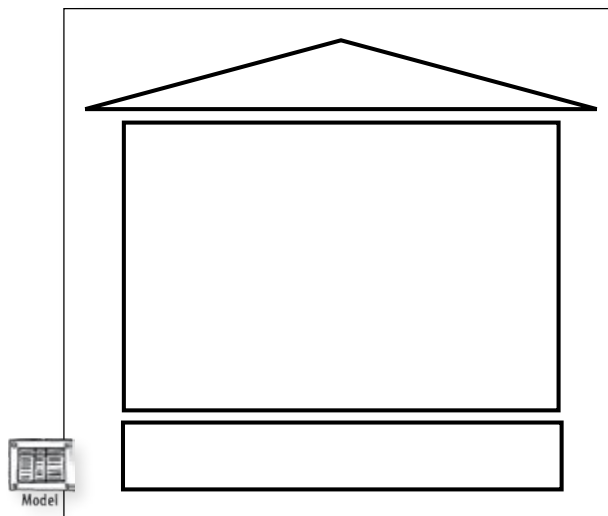
- Large room or shady place outdoors
- Large sheet of paper (or 2–4 small sheets combined) with an image of a simple house drawn on it
- Second sheet of paper with some values listed (if necessary to prompt discussion)
- Colored paper, two colors cut into rectangles, one into triangles (calculate 5–6 pieces for each group of 5–8 people)
- Markers and something to stick/hold the paper to the wall

### Methodology



Method

1. **Put a simple outline of a house up on the wall** Invite participants to call out the values and principles they think are important in community building. If people are not readily calling out values, the facilitator can prompt the group by listing examples of group values on another large sheet of paper like respect, participation, diversity, equality, attentiveness, sharing, honesty, accountability, transparency, shared responsibility, non-tribal, gender sensitive, sustainable, supportive, and democratic.



2. **Divide into small groups; pass out the paper and markers** After this quick brainstorm, divide the meeting into small groups of 5–8 people. Give each group 5–6 pieces of colored paper and 1–2 markers. Their task is to use these as building materials for a house they will build together. One colored rectangle is the foundation of the house. The second colored rectangle is for materials to build the walls, and the triangle is the roof of the house. Each group will have five pieces of each color of paper.

3. **Invite the groups to discuss and categorize their values** Ask the groups to have a discussion among themselves about different values and principles and to record the values and principles they have chosen in the following three categories:
  - Foundation: values that everyone in the group agrees are fundamental to building a strong community
  - Building Blocks: values that may not be present at the moment but need to be nurtured in order for the community to move forward together
  - Roof: values that are important for the community that we would like to bring about in society or nation
4. **Write the values and principles on colored papers** Once the groups have had time to discuss and agree, ask them to write these values and principles onto the colored paper they were given.
5. **Invite the small groups back to present to the whole group** Invite everyone to come back together in a circle. One representative from each group presents the group’s ideas and sticks the colored papers with their chosen words onto the drawing of the house.
6. **The facilitator leads a values discussion** Once all papers have been placed on the house drawing, the facilitator helps the group think through its shared values:
  - If there are values that are common and located in the same part of the house, then get everyone’s agreement that this is the place they should be.
  - If there are values in common but located in different parts of the house, what is the best location for this value based on the three categories.
  - If there are values that only one group has mentioned, reach an agreement about whether that is also a value commonly held by others.

### Session timing 2.4 — Our Ways of Working house building exercise



Activity	Timeline	Notes
Introduce the session, explaining the objective and methodology	10 – 15 minutes	Help participants understand what is expected of them.
Quickly brainstorm values and principles	3 minutes (brainstorming) 5 – 10 minutes (processing)	Refer to Participatory Method 7.5.3 - Brainstorming on page 152.
Divide people into small groups to discuss values and principles	45 minutes	
Share with the larger group and stick colored papers onto the house drawing	30 minutes (5–7 minutes for each group)	The representative of each small group explains why the group chose that set of values and principles
Discuss the values and principles expressed; agree on the best way to express shared values and principles	30 minutes to 1 hour	The facilitator leads a discussion that moves toward consensus on shared value and principle statements.

## Activity 2.5 — Role play: “How do we want to be governed?”

### Context

There are two starkly contrasting approaches to development: *Top-down*, when plans and decisions are made by governments without accounting for the concerns of the affected communities, and *Bottom-up*, when initiatives arise from the communities themselves, based on their needs and perspectives, and find support from governments.

### Objectives

Give grassroots women and community members a way to critically reflect on the kind of relationship they have with their local leaders and government officials using simple skits that contrast *Top-down* and *Bottom-up* development.

### Background

Poor or marginalized community members’ experience with “the powers that be” can be fleeting at best. People may not be consulted on decisions that will directly affect their lives. They may carry the perception that their opinions do not count and that they are powerless to deal with leaders and people in authority. Role playing followed by a facilitated discussion helps community members to think more critically about the sort of governance they desire and the kind of relationship they would like to have with people elected or appointed to positions of power and decision making.<sup>1</sup>

### Resources

- A large room or shady space outdoors
- 5–8 community members of different ages/genders who have practiced skits prior to the meeting
- Large name tags for different characters in the skits
- Big sheets of paper and markers for discussion questions
- Note taker to record major points raised in discussing the skits



Method

### Methodology

1. **Introduce the skits** Introduce the skits and tell everyone to pay close attention in anticipation of the discussion after the skits. Allow each skit to develop until the point is made, then stop the skit.
2. **Small-group discussion questions** After the two skits, divide into groups of 3–4 people to discuss the following three questions. (±20 minutes)
  - How did the local government official behave in the first Village?
  - How did the local government official behave in the second Village?
  - Note advantages and disadvantages of the approaches used by the government official in each village.
3. **Whole-group discussion questions** Reconvene in the whole group to discuss the four questions below. If the whole group is less than 15–20 people, it’s best to discuss the last four questions all together, but the facilitator must be particularly sensitive to ensure that all voices are heard. If the group is larger than 20, divide the group into two equal parts and have two facilitators lead the discussions simultaneously. Although there is no need to write anything on large sheets of paper, it is good to facilitate a discussion at the end so that people have time to reflect on development processes and governance issues.
  - After a 6-month period, what do you think would have happened in the two villages?
  - What approach have you seen or experienced most often in your life? Have you seen changes or improvements in your lifetime?
  - When and how is it practical for government officials to listen to the needs of communities when implementing development plans? When isn’t it practical?
  - What do you think is the best approach for your community?
4. **Concluding reflection** Lead a summary reflection on the development processes and governance issues.

## Session timing 2.5 — “How do we want to be governed?”



Activity	Timeline	Notes
The facilitator introduces the session	5 minutes	
Perform the two skits one after the other	5 minutes per skit	Practice the skits a few times before the actual meeting so that the “actors” know their cues and convey their attitudes effectively with their body language and facial expressions.
Divide people into small groups of 3–4 people to discuss what they observed in the two skits	45 minutes	Use the first three “small-group” questions opposite
Return to big group for a facilitator-led discussion on the last four questions	45 minutes	Use the last four “whole-group” questions opposite
Reflection/summary by facilitator(s)	10–15 minutes	





Skits/Role Play

### Skits 2.5.1 — The top-down approach to development

Four community members are sitting on the floor waiting for the arrival of a local leader in the village. The community head rushes in and announces the arrival of the government official. The government official walks in slowly with a look of great self-importance on his face. He is closely followed by two more people who are his assistants. One assistant rushes to get him a chair, and places the chair facing the audience (and not facing the four community members), while another assistant brings him a glass of water.

The community head announces the purpose of the visit: to listen to the concerns of the community. The government official then makes a brief but officious speech about the government wanting to help the people, and then asks the community members to tell him what their problems are. Each community member stands up and states a pressing problem he or she is facing. One person living with HIV/AIDS cannot afford the medicine; one person has been unemployed for two years; one person speaks about the lack of toilets resulting in the spread of disease; and the fourth person speaks about lack of affordable high school education for her children.

While the people are speaking the government official hardly listens to what they are saying. When they have finished speaking, the government official stands up, and still facing the audience, thanks the community members for their inputs. He then informs them that the government has set up a fund to upgrade the roads leading into the community. However, for this fund to be accessed by the community, they will have to contribute free labour towards building the road and if they want the road to go beyond the edge of their community closest to the main road, then they have to collect money to pay for the remaining portion of road.

The community members look at each other puzzled. One looks sleepy while another looks bored. One stands up and tries to speak up, but gives up because he is ignored. The government official then turns and leaves with his assistants.

(When the point is made, the facilitator stops the first skit and introduces the second.)



Handout

### **Skit 2.5.2 — The bottom-up approach to development**



Four community members are sitting on the floor waiting for the arrival of a local leader in the village. The community head walks in with the government official and his two assistants. The community head announces the government official who walks over and shakes the hands of each of the community members, greeting them in the local greeting. The assistant brings a chair for the official and another brings a glass of water. He waves away the chair and sits on the floor facing the community members, and requests that all the community members are given a glass of water.

The government official then proceeds to say that the government wants to help the people and invites the community members to tell him what their problems are. He listens carefully to each one. (The community members state the same problems mentioned in the first skit.)

The government official then asks the community members to say what they think is the most important problem that needs to be addressed with urgency. One community member states that the biggest problem is that there is no field or playground for the children to play in and that children are playing at the side of the railway track and main road. The situation is dangerous and recently one of the children got into an accident. The government official listens and asks the other community members what they think. A discussion ensues. One other community member disagrees with the idea for the field/playground insisting that there are more pressing issues.

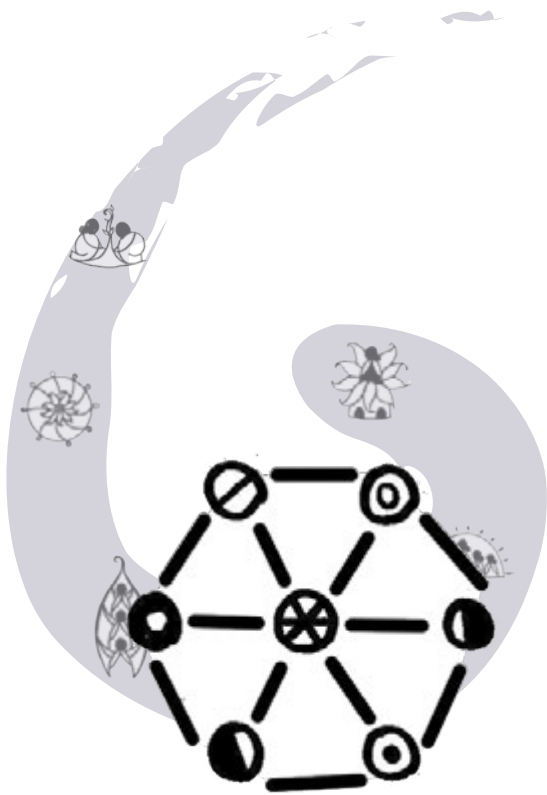
Finally, the three other community members all agree with the fourth that a field/playground would solve many problems of safety and delinquency among the children. The government official then discusses ideas of how the field can be developed. The community members excitedly respond to questions and plan which land can be cleared. They set the date and time for the next meeting. The government official then gets up to leave promising that he will make sure that there is support and funding for this community plan.

(When the point is made, the facilitator stops the skit and divides people up for small group discussions. See Methodology on page 44.)



## SECTION 2 NOTE

1. Skits and questions adapted from *Training for Transformation*, Book 1, page 69, by Anne Hope and Sally Timmel.



## SECTION 3

# MAPPING LOCAL NEEDS, RESOURCES, ALLIES, AND LEADERS

The third section focuses on analyzing power relationships, decision-making, resources in the community, and assessing how these relate to the issues being uncovered in the Local-to-Local Dialogue process. You're ready to begin this step if your group or organization has completed organizing, establishing common values, and identifying an issue to work on. It may also be useful to experienced groups that are ready to review their impact and revisit their strategies in the communities they serve.

- Tools for Mapping
  - Activity 3.1 — Understanding and prioritizing community needs and assets
    - » Checklist — Questions for understanding and prioritizing community needs and assets
  - Activity 3.2 — Role play: Understanding power and power relations, “Power Line”
    - » Handout — Four types of power
    - » Handout — Five bases of power
  - Activity 3.3 — Understanding gender-based oppression
    - » Role plays — Gender in the home and family
    - » Role plays — Gender-based oppression in the home and workplace
    - » Handout — Useful gender terminology
  - Activity 3.4 — Identifying and prioritizing community needs and actions
  - Activity 3.5 — Linking unmet needs to possible solutions
  - Activity 3.6 — Mapping the community constellation

## Tools for Mapping

Once we have a clear vision of what we'd like our community to grow towards, the next step is to clearly describe what life and our circumstances are like in the present. The second step in the Local-to-Local Dialogue process is to map and analyze power relationships, decision-making, and resources in the community.

The Local-to-Local Dialogue process is based on the belief that there is no one in a better position to identify problems and articulate needs than grassroots women and their communities. Through lived experiences, grassroots women intuitively know their strengths, challenges, and opportunities. With encouragement and the right kind of support, they are able to prioritize their needs and advise accordingly on what needs to be done to address the problems they face.

After naming the issues that the community wants to address, people need to decide which issues can be handled through their own community actions and which need to be brought to the attention and cooperation of local leaders and local government officials. Whether the issues can be addressed locally or require the cooperation of people beyond the community, residents need to identify and create a clear picture/map of available resources, allies, and leaders that can support the L2L process.



### MAPPING LOCAL NEEDS, RESOURCES, ALLIES, AND LEADERS TOGETHER HELPS COMMUNITY MEMBERS:

- Agree on their priority needs and articulate clear goals for themselves
- Become familiar with the appointed and elected representatives and local government officials responsible for resources and decision making on key community concerns
- Understand the human resources in their communities and their responsibilities
- Recognize and use their own power by understanding power relations and how the L2L Dialogue process can shift the community's power relations

The tools that follow help women develop “the eyes to see” power in its varied forms, think about their community's needs, and begin to make connections between their own empowerment and solutions to the unmet needs around them.



Checklist

**Activity 3.1 — Understanding and prioritizing community needs and assets**

**Context**

However complex its challenges, experience has shown that every community has the wherewithal to begin its own transformation. These questions are samples of the inquiry that is developed in depth during community mapping.

**Objectives**

Capture the imagination and spark the community conversation that energizes the L2L Dialogue process.

**Background**

Depending on conditions in the community and people’s readiness for group work, the tools in this section might be used to stimulate discussion and raise awareness in a series of informal meetings. When participants are ready to invest more time, the formal workshop sessions that follow revisit these and related questions to deepen community members’ understanding, commitment to the process, and motivation to act.

**Methodology**

Invite people to brainstorm answers to these questions. You might make notes in a notebook for future reference. When the context and group expectations allow, use a large sheet of paper on the wall to highlight the questions and record notes. Consider asking people what other questions are key to understanding their unique situation and its needs.

**Checklist 3.1 — Questions for understanding and prioritizing community needs and assets**

Questions to Consider	Answers and implications
What issues do we want to raise in the Local-to-Local Dialogue?	
What issues do people in our community largely agree must be addressed?	
Which issues can be addressed through community-based solutions?	
Which issues need to be brought to the attention of local leaders-local government officials for their cooperation?	
What types of actions are we aware of that are being taken in different localities?	
Who are the other stakeholders?	
What other people, including local leaders, are affected by our situation?	
Who are our appointed or elected representatives?	
What other people/institutions officially responsible for our issue area do we want to join our L2L Dialogue process?	
What other people do we know who are working on the same challenges?	
What needs to be done to improve the situation or address the issues raised?	

## Activity 3.2 — Role play: understanding power and power relations, Power Line

### Context

Power exists in all human relationships and unequal power relations can oppress, create tensions and stress, and limit the potential and capacity of people. Unequal power relations prevent liberation, freedom, and cooperation in relationships. Leaders who want to improve the quality of relationships among people must be able to recognize these power dynamics in every situation and to encourage relationships that are flexible and open to change.

### Objectives

Introduce and explore concepts related to power and power relations within the core leadership team and the community team; become conscious and sensitive to how our own power is perceived in different situations.

### Background

The Local-to-Local Dialogue process is a way to change the nature and quality of relationships among people. We pursue these changes by engaging local government officials and people in positions of power in dialogues where they can hear our key concerns and we can negotiate actively for our right to participate in solutions to the problems that affect our lives. In effect, we are working to transform the power dynamics within these relationships.

“Power can be defined as the degree of control over material, human, intellectual, and financial resources exercised by different sections of society. The control of these resources becomes a source of individual and social power and the extent of power of an individual or group is correlated to how many different kinds of resources they can access and control. Different degrees of power are sustained and perpetuated through social divisions such as gender, age, caste, class, ethnicity, race, north-south; and through institutions such as the family, religion, education, media, the law, etc.”

Srilatha Batliwala<sup>1</sup>

Power is not a “zero-sum game.” Thinking that power can not be shared can only lead to a sense of helplessness that prevents us from seeing our own sources of power. In other words, power is not something that you can gain only by taking it away from someone else or using it to prevent others from gaining it.<sup>2</sup> In reality, power relations change in different contexts and circumstances. Understanding subordination and resistance help us stay aware of power, name subordination and resistance when we see them, and develop strategies to address these misunderstandings.

Using language carefully can help us clarify power relationships in different contexts. Human relationships give us one framework for understanding the different types of power. In dependent relationships, one person has “power over” another person. By contrast, in independent relationships, people have “power within” themselves and “power to” affect others. When people appreciate that they are inter-dependent on each other, as we all are in community life, it becomes possible to share “power with” our neighbors.<sup>3</sup>

In L2L Dialogues, we often see government officials with “power over” the people in their constituencies. Our goal is to shift the understanding of these relationships from dependence and patronage to greater independence and inter-dependence. This is not easy, but it begins as soon as we can see and understand the power dynamics in a situation.

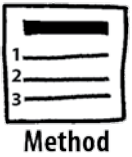
The second exercise in this section introduces a discussion about power in a community context. Use it and the resources that follow to open up a safe space for engaging ideas and integrating their meaning into everyday life. We suggest that you begin “at the beginning.” Talk about how power is relational (depending on human relationships with other people) and dynamic (changing, depending on the circumstance and context). From there, use the fact sheets and questions that follow as the basis for additional exercises and discussions.

### Resources

- A big room or space where people can form a single-file line of everyone present
- A4-sized white paper
- Marker pens
- Masking tape




## Methodology



- 1. Consider local factors** The facilitators set up the “Power Line” exercise ahead of time by deciding the key factors that determine power and access to resources in the community. They develop roles based on relevant factors such as gender, age, marital status, occupation, health status, religion, geographical location, and others. Each role should include a diversity of factors (at least five) so that participants will have an interesting discussion about how people access power and what determines their place in the power hierarchy in different contexts. Using multiple factors demonstrates that power is determined by an intersection of many different social, cultural, political, and economic factors.
- 2. Prepare role descriptions** Once these key determining factors have been worked out, write them on sheets of paper—one role per sheet, like the model on the right. There must be as many of these sheets as there are people in the room so that each participant has a sheet. This insures that everyone takes part in the exercise and has his or her own role to discuss. Leave the categories off the sheet if there isn’t enough room.
- 3. Give instructions and facilitate the exercise** When everyone comes into the room, the facilitator hands everyone a role description and tape. Once everyone can visualize their role, they tape the description to their chest. Their task is to mingle and arrange themselves in a single line, the person with the most powerful role at one end and the person with the least powerful role at the other. The participants decide this ranking among themselves by negotiating with each other where they think the person they represent belongs in the power hierarchy. Finally, participants arrange themselves in a single line facing the facilitator by haggling with each other (with humor!) to make a strong case for why they think they are more or less powerful.

**Person 1**  
**G: Woman**  
**Age: 55**  
**Marital Status: Married, husband abandoned her**  
**Occupation: Local Bakery Owner**  
**HS: HIV positive**  
**Religion: Muslim**  
**GL: Small town**  
**Other: Brother is a land-owning farmer**



Mapping

### Examples of roles for four people using the eight determining factors

Determining Factors	Person 1	Person 2	Person 3	Person 4
<b>Gender</b>	woman	man	woman	man
<b>Age</b>	55	60	37	45
<b>Marital Status</b>	married, but husband has abandoned her	widower	single	married, having an extramarital affair
<b>Occupation</b>	local bakery owner	day labourer at a wholesale market	caregiver to brother sick with AIDS	local government official
<b>Health Status</b>	HIV+ve	in good health	overweight with hypertensive disease	had a heart attack at 40
<b>Religion</b>	Muslim	Muslim	Christian	Christian
<b>Geographic Location</b>	small town	city	rural	small town
<b>Other</b>	brother is a land-owning farmer	homeless and rents a small room shared with five other people	finished accounting course in local college	from the majority tribe in that area





4. **Facilitate initial discussion** After the participants have arranged themselves in a line, the facilitator asks the person at the top end why they think they are the most powerful. Likewise, they ask the person at the bottom end why they think they are the least powerful. The facilitator uses the responses to engage others with questions such as, So what do others think about this explanation? Where do you think a person of this status belongs in the power hierarchy? and What are other factors that determine a person’s power?
5. **Encourage second reflections** The facilitator asks each person to read his or her key factors and asks the others whether they think this person is located “correctly.” The facilitator might also ask the two people standing next to each person being questioned, What do you think a better arrangement would be and why?
6. **Dig for deeper insights** This discussion helps people to interact significantly with the idea of power and power relations. Give sufficient time to the discussion about what the participants felt while doing the exercise, what their observations and analyses are, and what insights they’ve gained into the subject.
7. **Provide inputs and handouts** Continue the session by providing input on the issue of power and power relations, including the handouts on the next several pages. Handout 2.2.1 provides definitions of *types power*, while Handout 2.2.2 provides definitions of the *bases of power*. Both handouts contain a set of questions that can be used to help participants reflect on power and power relations in their own contexts.
8. **Small groups discuss a handout** Choose one of the handout sheets for the discussion. Depending on the group, the facilitator might briefly go through each of the definitions in the handout sheets and then invite questions or comments. After the general discussion, divide the participants into groups of 3–5 people. Invite each of these groups to engage the questions provided on the handout sheet. Encourage reflection and honest personal sharing rather than responding to the questions with the “right” answers.
9. **Closing discussion** Once people have had time to reflect, ask them to come together in a closing circle to share what they learn from the group discussion. Each person can be asked to share three insights gained from the whole exercise and three things they would like to do to create more empowering relationships in their own lives.

### Session timing 3.2 — Role play: Power Line



Activity	Timeline	Notes
Explain the “Power Line” exercise and give people their role sheets.	10 minutes	
Participants organize themselves into a single file “Power Line”	10 minutes	Let participants organize themselves without further direction, so that shy people will have to engage in the process and negotiate their position on the line.
Facilitate a general discussion while still standing in the “Power Line”	15 – 20 minutes	
Facilitator gives input on the types of power and power relations; leads open discussion	20 – 30 minutes	The facilitator may want to prepare flip chart sheets to provide some focus to the substantive points.
Small group discussions using the fact sheet handouts on the next several pages	30 – 60 minutes	
Closing circle with sharing of insights from small groups	30 minutes	

## Handout 3.2.1 — Four types of power

### Context

Power has been understood and described in different ways. We often hear people speak about power in connection with nations, economies, political figures, and religions. But there are also other ways to think about power that help us clarify the different expressions of power and what happens in human relationships.<sup>4</sup>



**Power over** This is the most common understanding of power. One definition of *power over* is “using or exercising one’s influence over something or someone.” There are positive examples of leaders like this—Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King Jr., Aung San Suu Kyi, and Wangari Maathai—who have used their influence over others for the greater good. However, more often than not, *power over* is abused, and people use *power over* others to meet their own needs, while depriving others of the opportunity to meet theirs. In even more destructive forms, *power over* means conflict, competition, violence, and greed by those with *power over* other people, perpetuating inequality, poverty, and marginalisation.



In the absence of alternative models, people often act out “power over patterns” in their personal relationships, communities, institutions, and movements. Often, women think that they must submit to men, because it is the natural order of things for men to have *power over* women. We also find that without models of leadership, women or people from marginalized communities who get into positions of power imitate the behavior of those who oppressed them. Instead of using *power over* in ways that are wise and further the greater good of all people, they fall into patterns of conflict and competition. For this reason, it is important not to assume that those who know the experience of being marginalized or “powerless” will be ready to be democratic leaders. Democratic and inclusive models of leadership and decision making have to be deliberately learned and practiced.

- **Power with** People generate *power with* when they find common ground and collective strength to achieve their goals in cooperation with others. We see *power with* in creative collaboration, mutual support, human solidarity, and collective struggles for human rights. *Power with* happens wherever people recognize and respect difference and diversity by building bridges, solving problems together, reducing conflicts, and working towards common goals. Social movements, organizations, and collaborative groups are all strengthened when strategies to forge *power with* are deliberately put in place. “Power with” counters the abusive forms of “power over.”



- **Power to** This is the power that each individual has to shape his or her life and surroundings. Education, training, and leadership development are all based on the belief that individuals have the *power to* make a difference in this world. *Power to* is strengthened and multiplied by new skills, knowledge, awareness, and confidence. When based on mutual support, *power to* strengthens people’s capacity to have *power with* others. This is why it is vital that community members’ *power to* is nurtured so that advocacy and organizing efforts are strengthened.



Handout

- Power within** This kind of power is given to us when developing the inner knowledge, skills, and confidence that increase the quality of our lives. With growing self-esteem and self-knowledge, we feel a sense of *power within*—a capacity to hope, envision the future, and act in the present. Our sense of *power within* is strengthened by our capacity to understand power, question, and challenge our self-limiting assumptions, and use power for a common good. For *power within* to be celebrated and affirmed, it is important that we create spaces where we can reflect and honour it in ourselves and others. Effective grassroots organizing methods use practices that help people recognize and affirm their own personal worth, nurture it in each other, and tap into their own *power within* and *power to*.



**Examples of women’s empowerment strategies**

Types of Power	Examples of empowering strategies
“Power over”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaging people in power</li> <li>Addressing access and control issues related to public and private resources and benefits</li> </ul>
“Power with”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthening women’s groups</li> <li>Asserting human rights in communities</li> <li>Developing advocacy and lobbying skills</li> </ul>
“Power to”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investing in education, training, and leadership development</li> <li>Stretching to practice new skills</li> <li>Building confidence through new experiences</li> </ul>
“Power within”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultivating the power to question</li> <li>Analysing and challenging assumptions</li> <li>Recognizing sources of subordination</li> <li>Celebrating the empowerment journey</li> </ul>



**Reflection questions 3.2.1 — Four types of power**



- Describe some times in your life where you experienced these different types of power?
- In what situations do you think “power over” is useful?
- How do we know that “power over” has become abusive?
- How do we know when our relationships or organizations are practicing “power with” and “power to” rather than “power over?”



## Handout 3.2.2 — Five bases of power

### Context

Social psychologists identified five distinct forms of power that reflect the different resources that power holders rely upon in their relationships with others. Our own power is often based on different combinations of these five forms.<sup>5</sup>

- **Positional power** In this form of “power over” people derive formal authority from their position in an organization, family, or society, often backed by policy, law, culture, and/or tradition.
- **Reward power** In another form of “power over,” power holders wield power by giving valued material rewards like money, benefits, time off, gifts, promotions, or increases in pay and responsibility. People involved in L2L Dialogues often see this form of power in the local politicians, government officials, and funding agencies that make decisions and distribute resources affecting communities’ lives. Developing partnerships based on “power with” is a goal of the L2L Dialogues that requires acknowledging power hierarchies where they exist and deliberately developing strategies to transform power relationships.
- **Personal Power** This form of power is based on the ability of people to attract others and build strong inter-personal relationships, to persuade people and build loyalty. This power is based on charisma and interpersonal skill. In some situations, “power within” and “power to” can also be used as “power over.” In a world where there is a strong push towards more democratic forms of decision making, there is less reliance on position power and a shift towards greater personal power.
- **Expert power** This form of power is derived from the skills, knowledge, and experience that some people have to offer those who need them but lack them. This power increases with the extent of a community’s needs for skill, knowledge, and experience. For example, a person with professional building skills would be highly valued in a community that is in the midst of reconstruction. Being well-informed and up-to-date with useful information is part of this power. This is also an example of “power to” but in some cases can be used as “power over,” especially where those skills and expertise are scarce and much needed.
- **Coercive power** This form of power uses fear and physical strength to ensure obedience. Coercive power is the most overt but least effective form of power; it builds resentment and resistance. “Victim Power” is a covert, indirect form of coercive power used by people who have been marginalised and/or see themselves as victims to create guilt or fear to influence situations in their favour.

### Reflection questions 3.2.2 — Five bases of power



1. What kinds of power do I use and rely on in different relationships in my life?
2. What kinds of power do others use over or with me?
3. What kinds of power are used in the relationships that govern our community?
4. What kinds of power do we want to use in different situations we may find ourselves in when going through the L2L Dialogue process?



### Activity 3.3 — Understanding gender-based oppression

#### Context

Women who decide to step up and take charge of the change they want to see are inevitably challenged to reexamine the assumptions they have traditionally made about gender roles and their place as women in society.

#### Objectives

Create awareness and space for using different analytical concepts to explore gender and gender-based oppression among the core leadership team.

#### Background

All of us live in families, communities, and societies that are carefully structured on the basis of social, religious, and cultural traditions, values, and beliefs. Few of us questioned these structures while growing up and those who did were told to accept what their parents taught them. The more we become aware of the social and cultural origins of women's and men's roles, the more questions will emerge. Addressing these questions about our place in society may take months. To integrate the ideas and insights that are uncovered, the leadership team must schedule ongoing discussions of gender issues and create an openness for such discussions to happen as a part of all other processes.

#### Resources

- A large room or a shady place outdoors with sufficient space for participants to carry out their role plays
- Some chairs and tables, cups, plates, scarves, marker pens, and white paper to use as props
- White paper and marker pens

#### Methodology



Method

In this activity, role play is used as the entry point to discuss gender roles and gender-based oppression. Two different sets of role plays are listed here. The first set can be used to start a discussion on socially constructed roles that men and women play, particularly within the home and family. The second set can be used to discuss gender-based oppression in the home and in the workplace.

**Learning Objective for Set One role plays** Get people to think deeply about what we may assume are the natural roles of mothers and fathers in families. The first skit portrays the mother as the faithful servant of the household. The second skit shows the father and mother working as partners to handle domestic affairs together, including the parenting. It could be discussed as a possible model for more equal roles between women and men in the family. The third skit helps people to further examine why they believe that it is a woman's role to help in the kitchen, and why girl children are often the ones who are required to help in this role while boy children are not.

**Learning Objective for Set Two role plays** The second set of role plays about gender-based oppression in the home and the workplace all focus on the most visible form of gender-based oppression—Violence Against Women (VAW). Though each of the role plays is quite different, all point to the unequal power relations that result in women experiencing some form of violence. The first skit depicts domestic violence, the second sexual harassment, and the third sexual harassment in the workplace.

1. **Introduce the role plays** Divide the participants into groups of 3 – 5 people. Write or type on pieces of paper (or photocopy Role Plays 2.3.1 and 2.3.2, whichever set of role plays you will introduce to the group) and give each group one role play. Explain to the groups that they are to use their facial expressions and body movements to express themselves in the role play and to rely on words or expressions only when absolutely necessary. Participants are free to improvise on the skits as they see fit. The best impact happens when participants just watch the skits and draw their own conclusions.

2. **Groups prepare their role play** Give each group ten to fifteen minutes to decide who will play the different roles and prepare its skit. Tell each group that the role play should be no longer than two to three minutes. It is important that the role play not go on too long or it will lose its impact. When it's time to end the skit, the facilitator can step to the front, start the applause, and thank the group for its effort.
3. **Explain the observers' role** As each group performs, ask the other participants to observe closely and take notes, if necessary, so they can share their thoughts and ask questions when the skits are discussed.
4. **Lead group discussions** Once all three skits in each set have been performed, discuss each of the skits in turn. Begin by asking the first group: what struck you about your own skit, how did you feel about your individual role play, and what do you make of the situation your skit describes. Give each group time to reflect on its own skit first, then ask everyone else for their own observations and reflections on how that skit compared to the two others. Repeat the same reflective process for each of the two other skit groups.
5. **Push the group for deeper insights** In both discussions, be sure to ask people why these situations are the way they are. Why *do* we know of so many families where the situations depicted in these skits exist? Explore the role of tradition and religion in determining the relationships between women and men. Is equality between women and men important, and if so, why? Which of the behaviors of the women and men, girls, and boys in these different skits are "natural" and which are socialised and learned behaviors? Are all women inherently nurturing? Are all men prone to violence and sexual misdemeanors?
6. **Introduce the handout** During the discussion, introduce the participants to important terms. Handout 2.3 - Useful Gender Terminology on page 62 will help anchor people's understanding of gender relations and gender-based oppression. Share copies of the handout so that everyone can reflect on the terms in the months after the workshop. Make sure that there is time to "revisit" these concepts on multiple occasions, so that people can integrate them into their own thinking and practice.

### Session timing 3.3 — Two role plays for understanding gender-based oppression



Timing

Activity	Timeline	Notes
Introduce and explain the purpose of the activity and its steps. Divide people into smaller groups and distribute the skits to the different groups	15 minutes	
Small groups prepare their skits	10 – 15 minutes	
Each small group performs its skit	15 minutes	Each group gets 2 – 3 minutes to perform its skit. The facilitator should step forward to end the skit once its point has been made.
Open Discussion on the issues that emerge from the role plays	1 hour or more	If people are uncomfortable offering reflections and observations on gender issues, the facilitator can give them more time and check in to offer encouragement, inputs, and moral support. This experience might become a valuable contribution to the whole group discussion.



### Role plays 3.3.1 — Gender in the home and family (skit set I)

**Skit 1** It's early morning and Mother wakes up first, lights the cooking fire, fetches water, and freshens herself. She starts cooking breakfast, setting the table, preparing the clothes for her husband and children. She hums to herself as she does all this, but becomes busier and busier as the skit progresses. Mother then wakes up Father and the Children (depending on the number of participants in the group). Father also freshens up and then Mother serves him his tea, while he reads the newspaper. Mother then attends to the children, getting them ready in different ways to go to school. Breakfast is served at a table and Mother serves everyone, rushing from the kitchen to the dining table and back, attending to everyone's needs. Father and Children leave for work and school, and soon after Mother also gathers her things and rushes out the door for work.

**Skit 2** It's early morning and Mother wakes up, freshens up and then wakes up Father, who then also goes to freshen up. Mother lights the cooking fire, starts cooking breakfast, and is soon joined by Father. Father fetches the water, helps with preparations for breakfast, and starts setting the dining table. Father then goes to wake up the children and helps them in different ways to get ready. (The group might decide to have children of different ages, thus needing different kinds of assistance.) Mother puts breakfast on the table and Father and Children sit down to eat. Mother also sits down to eat with the family and then Father and some of the children leave for work and school. Mother stays at home and clears the dishes from the dining table.

**Skit 3** It's early morning and Mother wakes up first, freshens up and then wakes up her older Daughter(s), who freshens up and follows her mother into the kitchen. Together they proceed with lighting the cooking fire, preparing breakfast, fetching water, and setting the table. Then the Mother goes to wake up the Father and Son, both of whom freshen up and come to the dining table to be served breakfast by the Mother and Daughter(s). The Mother helps the Father and Son to get ready for work and school, while the Daughter(s) clear the table, wash the plates, and then proceed to get ready themselves to leave the house for work and school.



Handout

### Role plays 3.3.2 — Gender-based oppression in the home and workplace (skit set II)



Skit/Role Play

Mapping

**Skit 1** It's evening and Mother is busy in the kitchen preparing dinner. The Daughter is helping her with dinner, while the Son is playing outside with his friends. Father returns home, and appears to be somewhat drunk or simply irritable (the group can decide the mood of the Father). Mother hears her husband calling for her; she rushes out and finds him in a very bad mood. She brings him a drink and soon serves dinner. During the meal, the Father finds the food not pleasing and with one sweep of the hand knocks all the food off the table and slaps his wife. The Son and Daughter hide with fear when they see their father acting with such anger against their mother.

**Skit 2** Two Women are walking and pass a group of two or three Men. The Men block them and prevent them from passing. Initially they smile and whistle, but when they get no response from the women, they make rude comments about the women's bodies as they try to pass. One of the two women gets angry and shows her fist at the Men as they walk away. The Men immediately become aggressive. One charges over to the Woman, grabs her by her shoulder, forces her around, and holds his fist very close to her face in a threatening gesture.

**Skit 3** Two or three Women Workers are working in a garments factory, sewing at sewing machines (This of course will have to be role played with simply actions and sounds, perhaps using a white paper as the cloth that is being "stitched."). The Floor Supervisor (a man), arrives and inappropriately leans very close to each of the women, stroking their shoulders, hair or arms. All of them show great displeasure and distress and try hard to move away from his groping. All of them feel that they have no choice but to continue sewing at the machines. All of them glare angrily at him as he moves away.



Handout





### Handout 3.3 — Useful gender terminology <sup>6</sup>

- **Sex** The *biological differences* between women and men. These are universal and are the same across different cultures. There is a small group of people in any population who are born inter-sexed, meaning that they have both male and female genitalia.
- **Gender** The *social attributes* that are learned or acquired during socialisation as a member of a given community, including roles, activities, responsibilities and needs connected to being men (masculine) and women (feminine) in a given society, at a given time, and as a member of a specific community within that society. Because these attributes are learned behaviors, they vary across cultures. They can and do change over time, with increasing rapidity as the rate of technological change intensifies. Women's and men's gender identity determines how they are viewed by others in their societies and also how they are expected to think and act.
- **Gender relations** The *social relationships* between women and men. While gender relations are often cooperative, connected and based on mutual support, there are also aspects of difference, separation, inequality, competition, and conflict. It is important therefore to understand the distribution of power between the sexes that exists in gender relations. The unequal distribution of power between women and men in society creates and perpetuates systematic differences in men and women's position in a given society.
- **Sexual division of labour** In all societies, both women and men typically have distinctive tasks and responsibilities. This *allocation of activities on the basis of sex* is known as the sexual division of labour. These tasks are learned and understood by both women and men in any given community, and often understood by both women and men as being the "natural" roles and responsibilities of women and men. Changes usually take place when the society is under some form of stress or pressure. For example, when communities migrate to find work in another country, men who traditionally did not help with household chores or with child care may do so out of necessity.
- **Gender equity** Although short-term gender equity initiatives focus on improving conditions and attitudes that affect girls and women, their long-term aim is the promotion and improvement of *personal, social, cultural, political, and economic equality throughout all of society*. The term emerged out of a growing recognition in society of pervasive inequities based on gender. Continuing traditions of stereotypical concepts and discriminatory practices have resulted in the systemic devaluation of attitudes, activities, and abilities attributed to and associated with girls and women. Such negative stereotypes of women have an adverse impact on all of society, including both women and men.
- **Gender equality** This term was coined to reflect an *equal sharing* of power between women and men; *equal access* to all aspects of society including education, health, administrative, and managerial positions; *equal pay* for work of equal value; *equal* in parliament; and more. The international human rights convention that expands on the definition of gender equality is known as the 1979 United Nations *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)*.
- **Discrimination** Discrimination is a *difference in treatment based on age, sex, ethnicity, religion or other factors* rather than on individual merit (International Public Service [IPS], 1996). Systematic



discrimination is caused by the policies and practices built into the ways institutions operate and have the effect of excluding women and minorities. For example, in societies with a strong belief that whatever happens within the household is the concern of household members only, organs of government such as the police force and judiciary routinely avoid addressing questions of domestic violence. This results in systematic discrimination against all the women who experience violence within the home.

- **Gender-based violence** Gender-based violence refers to all forms of violence that happen to women, girls, boys, and men because of the unequal power relations between them and the perpetrators of such violence. Violence against women is supported and/or legitimized by gender norms, values, and beliefs in the superiority of males and subordination of women. In many societies, children learn that males are dominant and that violence is an acceptable means of asserting power and resolving conflicts. Women can also perpetuate violence by socialising girls to accept male dominance throughout their lives and by being violent in their own relationships with men. Violence can also be found in same-sex relations.



Handout

## Activity 3.4 — Identifying and prioritizing community needs and actions

### Context

Experience shows that community members, and women in particular, have a strong sense of community problems and needs.

### Objectives

Enable community members to identify and prioritize community needs and actions using a participatory framework and consensus-building methodology.

### Background

The challenge in communities is not to identify needs and problems, but to prioritize them in a consensus building process that includes the whole community. If there is a consensus on the most important problems and the actions needed to address them, there is greater ownership, commitment, and accountability for seeing the actions through. This activity is adapted from the “Community Action Planning (CAP) Methodology.”<sup>7</sup>

### Resources

- Space for small group discussions with enough wall space to hang up all the worksheets
- 20 – 30 large sheets of paper
- 2 A3 (42cm x 30cm or 11”x17”) sheets of paper; markers; tape

### Methodology

Prior to coming for this activity, encourage community members to do their own informal “surveys” by talking to their family, friends, and neighbors to find out what others think the problems and needs in the community are.

Before you divide into small groups, encourage people to ask questions openly so that everyone is clear about the methodology. Then divide into small groups comprising 6–8 people who represent a cross section of the community. Given the intensive nature of discussions, each of these small groups should include someone who is able to facilitate the discussions and act as a resource person.



1. **Small group discussion** The first step is to identify problems and needs in small groups. Ask each small group to record its discussion in the following format on a big sheet of white paper.

#### Model 3.4.1 — Small group problem/need list

Problem/need	Why is it a problem/need?	For whom is it a problem/need?



2. **Reports and agreements** After the small-group work, everyone reconvenes. Representatives present the problems/needs identified by their small group. All of the worksheets from the small groups are pasted/tacked up so they are visible to the entire group. The facilitator then takes over and leads the group through a process of agreeing on all the problems listed. With help from one or two participants, the facilitator sorts the worksheets into the following categories:
  - Problems raised by all of the small groups (“community-wide problems”)
  - Problems raised by a majority of the small groups (problems faced by “sections of the community”)
  - Problems raised by only one small group (problems faced by “a particular group”)

Model 3.4.2 — Whole group problem/need tally sheet			
Problem	All Groups agree	Majority of the Groups Agree	One or two Groups Agree
Problem A...	X		
Problem B...		X	
Problem C...	X		
Problem D...	X		
Problem E...			X



- Charts** After all of the problems are listed, transcribe community-wide problems onto a big sheet of paper titled “Common Problems” and the rest onto another big sheet titled “Group-specific Problems.” Make these charts during a break or adjourn to another day.
- Small-group discussion** When the meeting reconvenes, further discussion clarifies which of the problems can be addressed through the L2L Dialogue process. Divide the meeting into small groups and ask the groups to identify solutions for each problem, prioritize the problems, and decide whether a community action will be sufficient or whether the problem must be taken up with local authorities.

Examples of what might be considered when prioritizing can help community members rank local problems more easily. Try posting sample criteria on a poster like the model to the right.

**Prioritizing Criteria**

- **Urgency**  
(very urgent...urgent...not urgent)
  
- **Relevance to the community**  
(great...medium...little)
  
- **Extent of benefit**  
(great...medium...little)
  
- **Ability to be implemented**  
(readily...uncertain...doubtful)



Model 3.4.3 — Small group problem-solution ranking list			
Priority ranking	Problem	Solution	
		Community-level Action	Dialogue with Local Authorities
1			
2			
3			



- Setting priorities** After the second small group discussion, reconvene the whole group to agree on the priorities. The facilitator recommends that the group focus on the first six problems that the small groups have ranked first, second or third. These are problems that everyone agrees are the highest priority. After these six problems are listed on a fresh sheet of paper, the whole group re-ranks them together by consensus. The final ranked list of common problems is saved for the further planning that follows.

### Session timing 3.4 — Identifying and prioritizing community needs and actions



Activity	Timeline	Notes
The facilitator introduces the session and clarifies the process.	10 – 15 minutes	
Small groups discuss problems in the community	1 hour	See Model 3.4.1 on page 64.
Small groups report on their discussions in the bigger group	1 hour	Allow for discussion after each small group presentation, so that the whole meeting gets to interact with the perspectives presented by each small group.
The facilitator helps the group list the problems by levels of agreement (everyone agrees, most agree, one or two agree)	45 minutes	See Model 3.4.2 on page 65.
Reconvene into small groups to discuss possible actions and priorities.	1 – 2 hours	See Model 3.4.3 on page 65.
The facilitator leads a final discussion to build consensus on the priority problems to be addressed through the Local-to-Local Dialogue process.	1 hour	

## Mapping



In Uganda, *Slum Women in Development* (SWID) has used Local-to-Local Dialogues to create a platform for meaningful discussions among grassroots actors, architects, financial institutions, and government authorities. They discuss how to support the construction of houses for grassroots women and improve the lives of all community members through housing finance. SWID increased its collaborative relationship with the Jinja Municipal Council and built sustainable community mechanisms that protect women’s rights to land and property inheritance. SWID offers step-by-step workshops on property laws, where to obtain title documents, and how to write wills that empower women.

As a result of SWID’s work—based on mapping needs, assets, actions, and solutions— women began to register and document their land and property, legalize their marriage, and increase their understanding and knowledge of land-related policies and women’s rights to land. In Mafubira, women used a Local-to-Local Dialogue with the local council chief of Jinja District to raise the issue of land that was claimed by the sub-county. SWID also invited the area Member of Parliament to dialogue on development issues concerning their community. They received his commitment to support the group’s urban farming initiatives and help them start up a poultry project that would improve women’s socio-economic position.

## Activity 3.5 — Linking unmet needs to possible solutions

### Context

People in poor or otherwise marginalized communities face interlinked problems. Exploring social factors and how they relate to physical, infrastructure, economic, political, and environmental factors helps bring perspective to their efforts.

### Objectives

Explore unmet needs, problems, and possible solutions in the community context using story telling and/or role plays.

### Background<sup>8</sup>

The Local-to-Local Dialogue is one important step in a series of actions in which community members take responsibility for themselves and their future. Community members will be following up on their commitments and monitoring their progress well after the actual dialogue with one another is over. This tool uses story-telling as a vehicle for engaging people in discussion and is particularly useful in communities where many residents are unable to participate in exercises that involve writing/reading. The aim of the discussion is to:

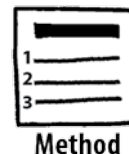
- Describe what was difficult in the lives of the three characters presented
- Decide whether the difficulty described is arising from a situation in the community or if it is linked to the situation of the society at large
- Agree on which of these difficulties are also being faced by members of the community
- Identify different things that can be done to address those problems

### Resources

- A meeting room or shady outdoor space
- 2–3 prepared stories about different people's lives in the community
- 4–5 large sheets of paper
- Markers, tape


### Methodology

- The stories need to be developed prior to the meeting. The best stories are the ones that take into account the particular situation of the community and weave together the different struggles of the community. The stories can be developed by a few people ahead of time or the facilitator can develop the stories herself and check in with other community members to see if they think the story is realistic.
- Since there are many different kinds of people in any given community, the stories need to represent a cross-section of the community. If you are working as a team, each story can be told by a different person, using the style and intonation of the character in the story. Try to capture the diversity in the community.
  - An older woman who is taking care of several young grandchildren because her daughter has died of HIV/AIDS
  - A middle-aged man who has a small business in the community
  - Adolescent girls or boys whose parents cannot afford to send them to school
- In order for the purpose of the session to be met, all of the stories need the following elements:
  - The life of the person told with all the elements of where they live, grew up, work, their home circumstances, and different life experiences, including life in the community
  - Emphasis on the struggles, successes, hardships, and joys of each person portrayed. People hearing the story should be able to empathize with the characters in the story and find elements of the story they can relate to.
  - A conversational tone, as if being told to friends or to children.
  - The story-telling form that is common in the culture the exercise is being told in.



1. **Introduce the story telling** Inform participants that after the stories are told there will be a discussion, followed by an exercise to identify unmet needs and possible solutions.
2. **Organize the discussion** After two or three stories have been told, the facilitator invites the whole group to join a discussion. If the group is small (15–20 people), then the discussion can be held as one big group. Otherwise the meeting can be divided into several smaller groups with a facilitator to lead each small group discussion.
3. **Identify unmet needs and possible actions** To make the discussions more concrete, draw a chart like Model 2.5 below onto big sheets of paper. Use this chart to systematically determine whether the needs are being met, and if not, what possible actions might be taken. Divide the problems identified into those that can be handled within the community and those that need to be brought into a dialogue with local leaders and government officials.
4. **Wrap-up** The facilitator should summarize the discussions and agreements before closing the session.

<b>Model 2.5 — Linking unmet needs to possible solutions</b>			
<b>Needs</b>	<b>Met/partially met/unmet</b>	<b>Possible actions</b>	<b>By whom? (community members? local authorities? others?)</b>



### Session timing 3.5 — Linking unmet needs to possible solution



<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Introduce the session	5 minutes	
Story telling	20 minutes (7 – 10 minutes per story)	
First set of group/small group discussions	45 minutes	
Facilitate a discussion to add information to the wall chart	1 hour	
Summarize the discussion and agreements	10 minutes	

## Activity 3.6 — Mapping the community constellation

### Context

Experience has shown that all communities, regardless of their status in their society or nation, have resources, representatives or appointed leaders, and allies available to them. Preparation for the L2L Dialogue event with the local authorities and leaders gives community members an opportunity to cultivate and draw upon these assets.

### Objectives

Identify and map available resources, allies, and leaders, and develop strategies to harness their support for achieving community objectives.

### Background

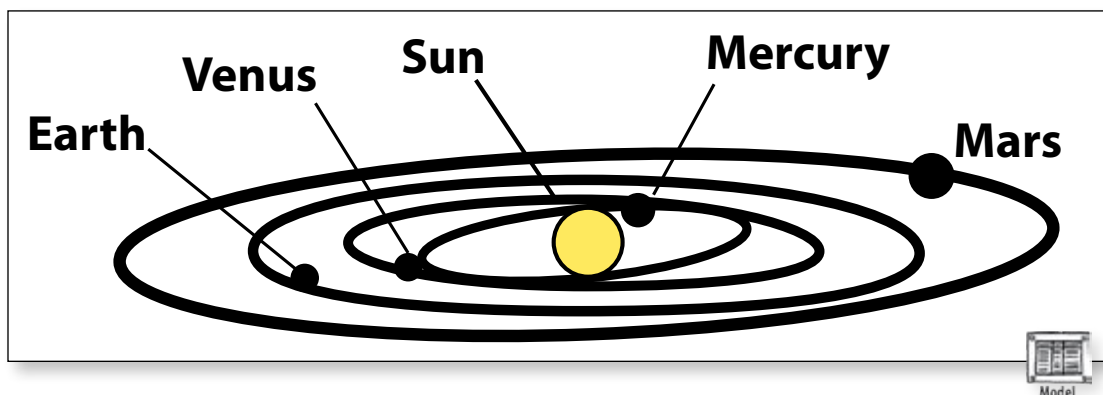
Once a community has identified the priority concerns it wants to address through the L2L Dialogue process, it's time to identify the resources, leaders and allies that can support them and bring their efforts to the attention of local authorities and community leaders. This mapping tool enables communities to visualize which local actors can address the problems or needs they face and to analyze the 'constellation' of people, institutions, programs, and resources with whom they will need to negotiate and work to create the change they want to see in their communities. This exercise uses the analogy of the solar system. The "sun" in the centre represents the community and colored round shapes that orbit the sun are the planets, representing resources, allies and local leaders.

### Resources

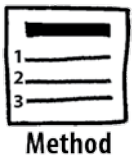
- A large room with space enough for people to freely move about
- 2 large sheets of paper taped together and prepared with a drawing of a solar system (see the model below)
- 3 different colored papers cut into round shapes of different sizes
- Markers, extra colored paper and scissors, tape

### Methodology

1. **Preparation** Before the meeting, prepare a drawing of a solar system on two large sheets of paper taped together, as in the model below.
2. **Introduce the exercise** Begin the session by explaining the solar system analogy: the sun represents the community and the planets represent people, institutions, programs, and other resources. The exercise helps community members visually map the resources, allies, and local leaders available to support them in addressing their community issues and engaging in the Local-to-Local Dialogue process.

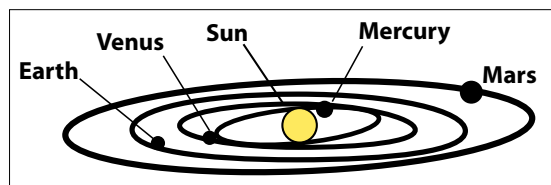


3. **Explain the process** Inform participants that the round, colored papers will be "planets" representing the resources, allies, local leaders and stakeholders revolving around a sun at the centre, representing the heart of the community itself, viewed as a "solar system." Use different paper colors for the "planets"—pink for resources, green for allies, yellow for leaders, blue for stakeholders, etc.





4. **Organize the small group discussions** Divide the meeting into small groups of 5–6 people. Give each group four planets of each color. Ask them to discuss available resources, allies, leaders, and stakeholders among themselves and come to an agreement on the four most important in each category and where there are located. Group members write the names on the appropriate colored-paper planets.
  - What are the most valuable resources available to us for the L2L Dialogue process? Where are they located? (in or next to the community, in a nearby district or township, within the country, international/overseas)
  - Who are our most valuable allies? Where are they located? (in or next to the community, in a nearby district or township, within the country, international/overseas)
  - Who are our appointed or elected leaders? Where are they located? (in or next to the community, in a nearby district or township, within the country, international/overseas)
  - Who are other stakeholders who can help us? Where are they located? (in or next to the community, in a nearby district or township, within the country, international/overseas)
5. **Small group presentations** Reconvene the meeting. Ask the small group representatives to present the resources, allies, leaders, and stakeholders their groups have identified and to stick their planets at the spot in the community solar system where they believe each is located.
6. **Push for deeper reflections** The facilitator’s role is to help clarify the small group presentations and to organize the “planets” so that there are no repetitions or overlaps. Once all the representatives have given their reports and stuck their planets on the wall, the facilitator helps the group explore what has emerged from the discussion in greater depth:
  - Which of the resources, allies, and leaders are the most readily accessible?
  - Who else is affected by the problems we are facing? Are any of the local leaders affected by the same problems?
  - Are there other factors that we need to consider in this solar system? The political climate, national issues or the global economic situation might be considered “meteors” that community members need to be careful of as they try to establish links with allies, leaders, and stakeholders.
  - Are there supportive factors like legislation, policies, programs, international treaties and the like that we can use in support of our community?
  - Which of the resources, leaders and allies should be contacted first. How? Who has access/knowledge that can help us initiate contact?
7. **Wrap-up** The facilitator should conclude this session by summarising the discussion and ensuring that there are clear agreements on next steps.



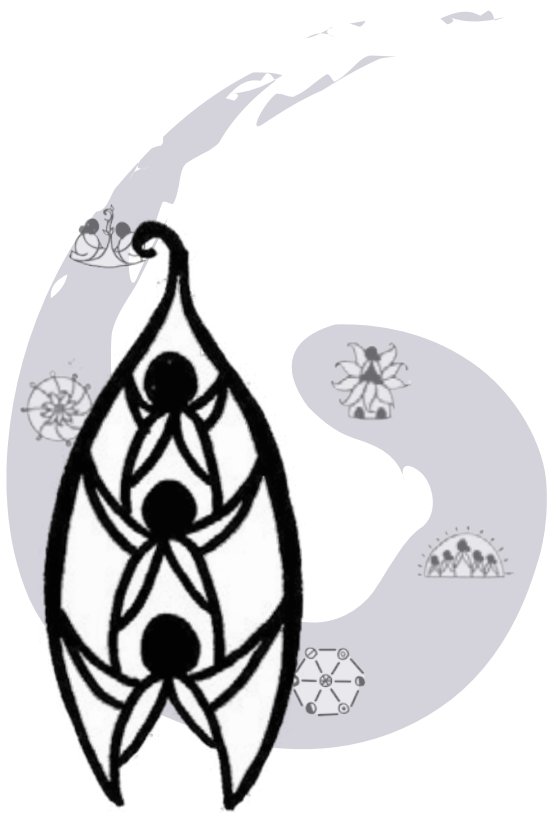
### Session timing 3.6 — Mapping the community constellation



Activity	Timeline	Notes
Introduce the session and explain the process. Divide into small groups of 5–6 people each.	10 – 15 minutes	Hold up the colored round papers to clearly indicate which category each color represents. Consider illustrating the color coding on a large sheet of paper.
Small groups discussions	45 minutes	
Build the solar system diagram together as the small groups make their reports	30 minutes (maximum 5 minutes per group)	
Facilitator led discussion and coming up with agreements	30 – 45 minutes	

## SECTION 3 NOTES

1. As quoted in Just Associates, *Power: Concepts for Revisioning Power for Justice, Equality, and Peace*. Making Change Happen Series, Nos. 3 & 4 (2006)
2. Just Associates, *Power: Concepts for Revisioning Power for Justice, Equality, and Peace*. Making Change Happen Series, Nos. 3 & 4 (2006)
3. Barefoot Collective, *Barefoot Guide to Working with Organizations and Social Change*, (2009), [www.barefootguide.org](http://www.barefootguide.org).
4. Adapted from the Barefoot Guide Collective's *Barefoot Guide to Working with Organizations and Social Change* ([www.barefootguide.org](http://www.barefootguide.org)) and Just Associates Making Change Happen Series No. 4 & 5 on Power ([www.justassociates.org](http://www.justassociates.org)).
5. Adapted from the Barefoot Guide Collective's *Barefoot Guide to Working with Organizations and Social Change* ([www.barefootguide.org](http://www.barefootguide.org)).
6. Adapted from FEMNET's *Training Manual on Gender-based Violence*.
7. The Community Action Planning (CAP) methodology was developed over a period of many years by Nabeel Hamidi and Reinhart Goether. It was described in their book, *Action Planning for Cities: A Guide to Community Practice*, published in 1977 by Academic Press, but now out of print.
8. Adapted from a activity entitled "Unmet Needs" that is a part of the Women's Health Project, South Africa and UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR)'s training activity entitled, *Health Works for Change: A Manual to Improve Quality of Care*.



## SECTION 4

# PREPARING FOR THE LOCAL-TO-LOCAL DIALOGUE

The fourth section focuses on the tasks and tools needed to prepare for a successful L2L Dialogue event. You're ready to begin this step if you have a leadership team committed to a formal face-to-face meeting with local authorities. It may also be useful to experienced groups that want to prepare for other participatory events where local citizens meet with the leaders and organizations with whom they wish to partner.

- Physical and Logistical Preparation
- Planning Meetings and Timeline
  - Checklist 4.1 — Activities for planning and progress meetings
  - Checklist 4.2 — Preparation for Local-to-Local Dialogues
- Preparing for Advocacy and Participation
  - Activity 4.3 — Preparing spokespeople for advocacy
  - Activity 4.4 — Preparing the environment for participation
- Information Gathering and Processing
  - Activity 4.5 — Community information gathering: The Talking Map
  - Activity 4.6 — Community information preparation and consolidation

## Physical and Logistical Preparation

All of the preparation so far has been pointing toward a decision that it's time to begin preparing for the event—the face-to-face meeting with community leaders, government officials, and local citizens. Preparations involve details and it's a good idea to start with an orderly overview. You'll find a checklist on page 79. Facilitators may find that their work does not follow such a logical sequence, though, particularly in relation to the negotiations with the local authorities. So think of the materials in this section as a comprehensive set of resources that you can orchestrate to fit your real needs.

While much of the actual preparation may be led by the core leadership team, be sure to draw community members into the process and include them in the circle of information. Involving community members roots the L2L Dialogue process in the development of the community and engages women in preparing for the L2L Dialogue meeting.

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### Overview—physical and logistical preparation for a Local-to-Local Dialogue event

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Date-time, place-space	Participation	Invitations	Meeting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• date and time</li> <li>• venue</li> <li>• meeting room</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• community participants</li> <li>• roles and responsibilities</li> <li>• cultivate new leaders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• invitation list</li> <li>• invitation letter</li> <li>• invitation follow-up</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• program</li> <li>• protocol</li> <li>• documentation</li> </ul>

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### DATE AND TIME, PLACE AND SPACE

- *Date for the dialogue* Before agreeing on the date for a Local-to-Local Dialogue, the organizers should consult widely with the stakeholders and everyone being invited. Checking ahead of time to find a day when most people are available will avoid having to make apologies on the day of the event.
- *Community participants* The number of community participants influences the eventual output of the dialogue. The organizers must ensure that the community representatives and invited guests add up to a number that permits dialogue and not just a “rally.” Too many people trying to reason at once can limit the quality of the dialogue.
- *Venue* The selection of the venue—the *place* where the Local-to-Local Dialogue will be conducted—is a key component of ensuring the success of the workshop. Ideally, the dialogue should be held in or as close to the community as possible, so that community members can be integrally involved in this process and feel the strength of hosting the meeting. Wherever the Dialogue is held, the venue must be both accessible and secure. Everyone needs to be able to get in and out easily and to feel safe while they're inside.
- *Meeting room space* The meeting room must be large enough so that people are not squeezed together or forced to overflow out of the room. Arranging the seating so that participants can see and hear one another fosters a participatory approach and an atmosphere that supports the Dialogue process.

## PROGRAM AND INVITATIONS



- *Meeting program* The program of the meeting should be developed prior to sending out the invitation letters so that the agenda can be included with the letter. The core leadership team may need support from its NGO allies to work out the details of this more formal style of meeting. However, it is important to ensure that this is a community-led process, in keeping with the spirit of the L2L Dialogue.
- *Invitation list* Drawing up the invitation list is an important part of this process. A balance must be created between a wide inclusivity of key allies and stakeholders and the need to ensure that full participation and effective meeting process is possible. The box to the right suggests stakeholders to invite:
  - **Possible Stakeholders**
    - People who invest in the community, like faith-based and non-governmental organizations, and business representatives
    - Government representatives, including chiefs, sub-chiefs, and representatives from relevant ministries
    - Elected officials, like ward councilors, mayors, members of parliament, union representatives, and others the core leadership team has identified as important allies in the process
    - Other important development partners like UN agencies, multi-lateral organizations, and donors, if there is already contact with such groups
- *Invitation letters* Community interactions tend to be very informal and much more laid back. However, when communities begin to work with governing entities such as local governments, they need to adapt to the structures and requirements of formal interaction.
- *Help local leaders prepare* Invitations should be sent to relevant local leaders and stakeholders in the community at least two weeks before the dialogue. These letters acknowledge informal agreements that have already been negotiated with the different stakeholders. The invitation letter should be accompanied by a copy of the program so the recipient knows ahead of time what will be discussed during the Local-to-Local Dialogue and will have ample time to prepare. (See Using Information to Strengthen the Community on page 84.)
- *Set the right tone* While the program helps those attending to prepare, it may sometimes result in people forming a pre-set notion of what the meeting is about. You can help local leaders come with an open mind by including the principles of the L2L Dialogue in the invitation letter: a community-led dialogue seeking equal partnerships and alliances among local governments, community members, and other stakeholders.



## TAKING RESPONSIBILITY AND SHARING LEADERSHIP

- *Delegation of roles and responsibilities* It is vital that core leadership team members define and delegate roles and responsibilities among themselves as well as to other community members who are keen to be a part of this process. It is important here to make sure that grassroots women have key roles to play in the L2L Dialogue process.

- *Supporting and developing new leadership* Organizing a meeting requires a range of skills that are mostly acquired from experience and training while doing. This is a good time to bring in young adults who are already part of a community youth group or who have indicated interest through their links to members of the core leadership team. Exposure to the meeting planning and organizing process will provide valuable experience.



The *Mathare Mothers Development Centre*, Kenya (MMDC) learned about the Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF) and thought that this money could be used to resolve issues such as a blocked sewer and lack of toilets in the community. MMDC knew that the key person to talk to about accessing these funds was the area councilor. Before they could write a letter of invitation, it was necessary to see him in person to present their issues and make a case for his participation.

MMDC needed to convince the councilor that his presence would benefit both the community and his own work. They would reason that working with community members would help dispel any accusations of unconcern or corruption. MMDC could assure the councilor that his presence would demonstrate to the community that he was not an obstacle who spends the LATF, but that the fund is designed to be transferred to the community.

Three early morning meetings were required, but approached in this way, the councilor finally agreed on a date that he would be available for the dialogue and began working with the group. For its part, the community developed a new appreciation for the councilor as a part of the community through his identification with its members and their projects.

Even with the proper contacts, perseverance and commitment are crucial.



## HONORING GUESTS AND ENSURING PARTICIPATION

- *Observing protocol* Given that different local leaders and government officials will be invited to the event, it is very important that the core leadership team goes over all the details of protocol in relation to the people being invited. Even if we are working towards equal partnerships with these leaders, we must recognize the hierarchy of relationships that currently exist and give them the necessary recognition. Organizers must ensure attention to an appropriate dress code by community members attending the Dialogue and make sure that everyone is referred to with the right honorific names. Social, cultural, and traditional practices regarding seating, food, order of speech and negotiations need to be observed in the initial meetings until the leaders are fully engaged in the process. When there is a longer term relationship, the protocol may be shifted to a more equal and less formally structured Dialogue.
- *Following up invitation letters* Most leaders and local government officials are as yet unable to appreciate the strength of grassroots women and their local community in organizing around their priorities. Given unquestioned traditional understanding, many leaders tend to undervalue women's leadership and may consider meetings organized by them inappropriate or less important. It is thus crucial to follow up on the invitation letters personally in non-threatening ways that ensure that those key leaders and officials are present in the workshop.

## PREPARING TO DOCUMENT THE DIALOGUE



- *Documentation* Many important things may be said, but it can be hard to hold government officials accountable for their spoken agreements. Documentation is the link between what is said and what gets done. A brief verbal summary at the end of a meeting can plant an image of the way forward in participants' minds. But a simple written document summarizing the agreements and plans, circulated among all parties soon after the meeting, is the only way to ensure that people will remember their decisions. The documentation team must carefully plan its work ahead of time: (a) what it will document, (b) how it will be done, and (c) what equipment will be required. If possible, borrow recording equipment from NGO allies so that no details are lost.

## Planning Meetings and Preparation Timeline

Be sure to leave enough lead time to prepare for the L2L Dialogue meeting—a minimum of one month beyond the completion of the planning process. It will most likely take more than one meeting for all the decisions and tasks to be worked through, so plan on having regular follow-up meetings to keep track of the detailed preparations for the actual L2L Dialogue. The essential ingredients needed to handle all the details begin with a task list, a timeline, and specific assignments. The first two meetings are the most important.

### Getting the first two meetings right—planning and follow-up



Meeting	Timing	Activities
Initial Planning Meeting	approx. 2–3 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop ground rules and guidelines for time-keeping, communication, decision making, and other needs (See Chapter 2.)</li> <li>• Prepare a task list as a reference during the planning process.</li> <li>• Celebrate</li> </ul>
Follow-up Progress Meeting	approx. 1–2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refer to the task list and report on progress</li> <li>• Plan for overcoming obstacles or uncertainties</li> <li>• Celebrate</li> </ul>

The initial meeting should conclude with a task list that will be used as a reference throughout the planning process. If the group has not yet agreed on shared values and principles, the core leadership team might need to help the group develop ground rules for subsequent meetings. (See page 42.) This will give the group a set of basic guidelines for conducting their meetings, including time-keeping, communications, decision making, and other common agreements.

The next page provides a sample meeting agenda with a partial list of activities you could use at different times during your planning meetings. You probably will never use all of these activities in a single meeting. As you develop specific agendas for particular meetings, you can select the activities that suit the unique purposes of each meeting. Over time you're certain to add additional activities to the list.





Checklist

## Checklist 4.1 — Activities for planning and progress meetings

Parts of the meeting	Possible activities for that part of the meeting
Welcome and Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome by the facilitators</li> <li>• Opening ceremony</li> <li>• Present an overview of the agenda</li> <li>• Introduce the goals, objectives and outcomes of the meeting</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Warm up/Introductory Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal introductions</li> <li>• Agreeing on ground rules</li> <li>• Rapport-building activity</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Needs Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expectation check</li> <li>• Agreements on what can be achieved in the meeting</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Presentations and Information Sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentations about the issues at hand:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Spokespeople share their overview of the community situation and its problems.</li> <li>-or-</li> <li>b. Local leaders and government officials make their speeches and respond to the issues presented by the community.</li> </ol> </li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Planning and Joint Problem Solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visioning/goal setting and environmental scan</li> <li>• SWOT analysis</li> <li>• Stakeholder focus groups</li> <li>• Collective strategizing</li> <li>• Planning for implementation</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Relationship Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust-building conversations</li> <li>• Celebrating success</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Evaluation and Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing expected outcomes</li> <li>• Post-meeting evaluation</li> <li>•</li> </ul>

One of the best ways to keep track of details is a simple checklist. You can carry it with you on a clipboard and when it's time to meet, you can transfer your notes to a flip chart to focus everyone's attention on the tasks at hand. Consider starting with a checklist like the one on the next page and add the particulars unique to your situation.



### Checklist 4.2 — Preparation for a Local-to-Local Dialogue

During your planning meetings, use a checklist like this to help you keep track of preparation details and who is responsible for each.

Tasks	Action/Resources	Person(s) responsible	By when
1. Choose meeting date.			
2. Choose appropriate venue.			
3. Develop meeting agenda.			
4. Develop community participant list.			
5. Develop guest list			
6. Write invitation letters. (See sample in Appendix.)			
7. Follow up invitation letters with phone calls.			
8. Agree on lead facilitators, note-takers, and on spokespersons and their presentation formats			
9. Work out the flow of the meeting program,			
10. Develop a list of materials needed for meeting (flip charts, felt-tip pens, charts, maps, tape, pins, chairs, tables, drinking water, snacks, utensils, etc.).			
11. Arrange for recording and communications equipment. (Can they be borrowed? )			
12. Arrange translation for different language groups.			
13. Create a welcome banner.			
14. Make arrangements for needed security.			
15. Prepare flip charts with the meeting program.			
16. Prepare a sign-in sheet.			
17. Prepare flip charts with relevant community data.			
18. Prepare a "Talking Map" if one will be presented. (See page 85.)			
19. Inform and prepare community about protocol.			
20. Clean up and prepare the meeting venue.			
21. Organize an opening and closing presentation of a song or cultural performance by community members as appropriate.			
22. Arrange for snacks and drinks as needed.			
23. What else can you think of?			

# Preparing for Advocacy and Participation

The month(s) before the Dialogue are an ideal time for capacity building. There are two key arenas: (a) preparing residents to be effective advocates, and (b) preparing the meeting space to encourage everyone's participation. Use these pages as guides as you prepare to work with the budding leaders on your team.

## Activity 4.3 — Preparing spokespeople for advocacy

### Context

The planning meeting can be an ideal setting to share information and practice a public role as a community advocate.

### Objectives

Become familiar with choosing spokespeople and helping them prepare their presentations for the L2L Dialogue meeting. Give spokespeople time to share new information by practicing presenting in planning meetings and other occasions.

### Background

For members of grassroots communities, particularly grassroots women, being chosen as a spokesperson will be both an honor and a challenge that stirs some level of anxiety. Few people have the opportunity to speak directly to government officials to represent and lobby for the interests of their entire community. The L2L Dialogue process provides this transformative opportunity for both the spokespeople and the core leadership team. Everyone will need to give time and effort to preparation. Preparing in advance is likely the single most important ingredient to ensure the successful outcome of the face-to-face meeting with local government officials in the L2L Dialogue process.

### Resources

- Information about the structure and systems of local governance
- Information about local officials and leaders who are being invited to the L2L Dialogue meeting
- Access to a computer and the Internet can be useful for research

### Methodology

The leadership team and community members build their capacity to be effective spokespersons as they learn together. Fact finding gives everyone chances to be both coaches and sources of new information.

Preparing

### Activity 4.3.1 — Learn about the person you want to work with



Method

No matter who you are meeting, the team preparing spokespeople needs a good working knowledge of the local government officials being invited to the L2L Dialogue. Guests' profiles might include the following:

- The person's full name, official titles, job description, list of responsibilities, and areas of authority.
- What are the person's areas of decision making? What decision making bodies does the person sit on?
- Biographical information that might be useful in lobbying. (This person may have links through school, place of origin, community grouping or language that can lead to common ground and better rapport.)
- If the person is a member of parliament, be sure to note his or her law and policy making record.
- Note the political affiliation of the local government official. The positions that the official's political party takes can be referred to in presenting the issues of concern.

- Any known views or public statements that the government official has already made in relation to the issue that you are bringing to the official's attention. If you do your research well, this knowledge can be very useful when preparing your statement or entering negotiations.
- What can you learn about this local official from the other people and community groups that have lobbied him or her in the past. It will be good to know what sorts of relationships other community groups have developed with the local officials being invited to the face-to-face meeting.

### Activity 4.3.2 — Focus on your message

Spokespersons and team members will be full of a wide range of information as a result of the community visioning, problem identification, research about the government representatives attending, and planning exercises. It will be doubly important for them focus on the main objective of the L2L Dialogue process in order to develop a simple message to be presented. The following questions will help everyone focus on essentials.

- What does the community want to achieve vis-a-vis the problem? State the problem and provide background on what needs to be addressed.
- Why does the community want to achieve this? What benefits will result from change, and/or what negative results are likely if nothing changes? This is the place to provide pertinent statistics as evidence of the problem and anecdotes that put the problem in a human light.
- How does the community propose to achieve it? Describe the community's suggestions for possible problem-solving strategies.
- What action does the community want local government officials to take?
- It can be very helpful if these key points are put together in the form of a brief position paper. This paper can be handed to local government officials after it has been presented by the spokespeople so that the officials can be clear about what is being requested by the community.

#### Solution Fact Sheet

- A statement of the problem that the community wishes to address using available facts and data to support the claim.
- A proposed solution or set of solutions that has emerged from community consultations and the main supporting arguments.
- The counter arguments against the proposed solution and an analysis of why the community is proposing this solution.
- Where to find more information.



- If two or more spokespeople are presenting, each one must speak to the same set of points with different examples and experiences, but with the same key messages that the community has agreed upon.
- If the community has the resources, additional data related to the issue might be presented on posters or a brief fact sheet. (See an example in the sidebar.) When NGO allies can offer research support, the location of additional information resources on the issue might be added to a poster or fact sheet.
- The organizing team will need to decide when to hand the prepared documents to the invited government officials. If the written documents are handed at the start of the meeting, there is a risk that the government official will spend his or her time reading the document rather than listening and participating in the dialogue. However, if the documents provide data that is useful in negotiations at a later stage, it may be useful for them to have the information in written form during these verbal proceedings.



### Activity 4.3.3 — Choose the right messenger

The spokespeople play an important role in the face-to-face meeting with local government officials. Use the following criteria for choosing the right spokespeople.

- Spokespeople should have direct experience of the problem being raised. The most effective way of presenting the problem is by telling the story of one’s lived experience. This story acts as a piece of evidence, but also it adds a human face to the issue being raised.
- Gender balance is crucial in the presentation of community issues. For example, if the issue being presented is the inadequate number of public toilet facilities in the community, it is vital that both women and men present their perspectives and experiences of the situation.
- Spokespeople must have some basic skills in presenting issues in a positive manner—honest, yet non-confrontational. Coming straight to the point is important. Meandering or losing track of the key message that the community is trying to convey could jeopardize the success of the Local-to-Local Dialogue process.
- Remember, if more than one person is presenting, the presentations of all spokespersons must be carefully coordinated for consistency of message without overlaps.

### Activity 4.3.4 — Practice!

The only way to get comfortable with the role of spokesperson is to practice. Rehearse your presentation in the presence of others from the organizing team. Your team can set up different role play scenarios with different people taking the role of the local government official so you can practice responding to different situations.

- Develop scenarios where the government officials are: (a) polite but non-committal, (b) supportive and in agreement, and (c) disagreeing and countering the points that you make. In each scenario, work out the strategy that will be used by the spokesperson to respond most effectively.
- Assign some members of the team to play the role of observant audience members. Give each person in the audience something in particular to observe. Is the spokesperson making eye contact? Are there specific verbal ticks the spokesperson needs to avoid (such as “ah, uhmmmm, you see, you know”)? Are hand gestures, body posture, body movements, or facial expressions appropriate? Ask the observers to give an honest appraisal of the presentation style and the way the spokesperson responded to questions.
- Another technique used by people who provide public speaking training is to record presenters with an audio recorder or video camera. The presenters can hear (or hear and see) themselves when the recording is played back after the presentation. Even a simple play-back cassette tape combined with audience feedback can help spokespeople improve their presentation skills and develop a more relaxed style, just by being conscious of their body language, facial expressions, and manner of speaking.
- Find time to meet a day or two before the actual L2L Dialogue to quickly review and fine-tune the presentations before the event.

## Activity 4.4 — Preparing the environment for participation

### Context

A meeting can be an occasion to practice arranging the space so that everyone in attendance is encouraged to participate. This is a perfect role for a person who prefers to work behind the scenes for the community good.

### Objectives

Develop and agree on a formal seating arrangement for the L2L Dialogue that supports a participatory approach.

### Background

Research shows that the arrangement of a room can strongly affect the level of participation and interaction in a discussion. People who are able to see everyone are more likely to participate in the discussion. Therefore, circles always work better in seating arrangements. However, since the L2L Dialogue meeting includes government officials and local leaders, traditional protocol may have to be maintained and certain people may need to sit facing others. It is all the more important to check in with the basic principles of the L2L Dialogue process. (See page 9.) The ability of community representatives to dialogue directly with local authorities on an equal footing is crucial. Effective seating arrangements can support the dialogue and sharing that create a sense of partnership for the community good.

### Resources

- Venue
- Tables and Chairs
- Standing boards, tables or cloth sheets to act as walls (if needed to define a working space in a large area)

### Methodology

Before finalizing their arrangements, the people responsible for set up and seating need to assess the meeting room and care for the space so that its arrangement supports dialogue and working together.

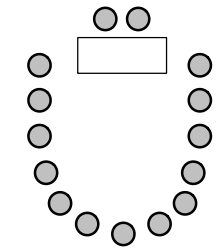
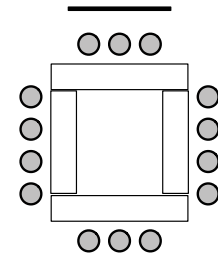
- **Size of the room** Is the room large enough for the number of people expected at the meeting? Ideally, there should be enough space around the chairs and tables for people to walk freely. If the room is too big, however, people may lose their sense of connection. You can help people concentrate by defining just the right amount of space for the meeting using standing boards or tables or pieces of cloth.
- **Wall space** Is there sufficient space to post the community data and meeting agenda that has been prepared on white sheets of paper? If there are too many windows, boards or large sheets of cloth can be brought in to create “working space” over uneven wall surfaces.
- **Lighting** Is there sufficient light in the meeting venue during the day? Ideally, the space should get natural lighting without direct glare from the sun. If not, is there sufficient artificial lighting in the room? What contingency measures need to be taken just in case there is an electricity outage?
- **Entryways** How many doors are there to the meeting room? Ideally, there should be more than one for safety reasons and to ensure that the meeting is not disrupted by people going in and out of the room.





• **Seating arrangements** We talk about creating a “dialogue space” in a metaphorical sense. We can create dialogue space in the literal sense, to encourage participation whenever we gather. The traditional seating arrangement with senior government officials seated behind a head table does not need to stifle participation. Several simple guidelines for working out seating arrangements will support equal participation and creative interaction in meetings like the L2L Dialogue.

- Try not to seat people in straight rows, either all facing in one direction or in straight rows facing each other. People will be staring at the back of other people’s heads and won’t be able to interact with or hear each other.
- If the meeting is small enough, tables can be organized in a rectangle or a square with the chairs around the outside of the tables. Arrange the seating to ensure a balance of community representatives and invited guests across the table. The senior officials may be seated together on one side of the rectangle if required by protocol.
- Be sure that the chairs and tables are arranged so that people have room to stand up and move around easily. If community data is presented on white sheets of paper, free movement allows invited guests to browse the information sheets during break times.
- When a head table is used, arrange the chairs for the rest of the participants in a “U” so that the head table closes the “U.”



Preparing

## Information Gathering and Processing

### Using information to strengthen the community



Preparing for a Local-to-Local Dialogue involves knowing who’s who and what’s what. The community is gathering new information (a) to prepare for the L2L Dialogue meeting, (b) for leverage in negotiations, and (c) for alliance building with local authorities and community leaders. Here are three pointers about the purposeful information gathering needed during this preparation phase.

- Be prepared with accurate and up to date information on our settlements and communities.
- Research and consolidate information about relevant organizations, regulations, government policies, development funds and plans, and other data.
- Contact other community leaders who have engaged local authorities to compare data and find out more about their negotiations.

## Activity 4.5 — Community information gathering: The Talking Map

### Context

One of the most valuable resources that communities can bring to the table when they are negotiating and setting up alliances to work with governments is accurate and up-to-date information about their communities.

### Objectives

Involve the community in mapping their physical community by collecting necessary information and analysing their present situation in preparation for the L2L Dialogue.

### Background

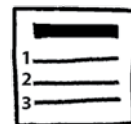
Local authorities are always in need of accurate data and feedback on whether their programs or services are working. When community members approach local authorities, they come to the negotiating table as partners if they are clear about what their community needs and have evidence to back this up. In this exercise, community members join in gathering data to support their work with local authorities and community leaders.<sup>1</sup>

### Resources

- A large room with enough space to sit in a circle
- Big white cloth or paper for drawing a map; markers, glue
- Survey sheets
- Access to a computer to tabulate data and present the information in a creative way

### Methodology

1. **Prepare a large “aerial” map of the community** This session requires the core leadership team to prepare ahead of time. Either using a survey map of the community that already exists, or actually doing a survey of the area, draw a map on the piece of white cloth marking down boundaries, roads or railway tracks, trees, open spaces, fields or vegetable patches, school, religious buildings and so forth. This is essentially an aerial view map that will provide geographic details.
2. **Publicize the focus of the information gathering meeting** Inform community members of the focus of the meeting stating clearly which issues will be discussed. Use the issues prioritized by the community earlier in the process. For example, priority issues might include things like public toilets, water pumps, and an allocation of space and resources to set up a children’s crèche within the community.
3. **Gather community information for discussion** Other available basic data about the community should be made available at the meeting and during discussions.
4. **Invite all interested parties** Make an effort to invite the people who raised these issues in previous community forums, or those you have identified as having a special interest in these concerns. Also make sure that everyone has an opportunity to know that the meeting is being held, so that no one is excluded.
5. **Facilitate comments and reflection on the map** The facilitator introduces the meeting and invites community members to share comments about the map. Invite community members to interact with the map, giving additional details and talking with each other about their points of view about the map.
6. **Facilitate focused information gathering** Community members will give inputs based on their experiences on the particular issue being discussed and their assessment of the situation. For example, if the issue is water pumps, then participants in the meeting will help to plot out all the water pumps in the





community, and give estimates on what they know of the water pump. Examples of questions to be asked could be: (a) How many people use the pump on a daily basis? (b) How long do you have to wait to collect water? (c) How many buckets or pots of water is each resident allowed to take at one time? (d) Is the water clean? How often? When it's muddy, how long does that last? (e) How often is there a water shortage? (f) Do you or your neighbor collect water from other sources? (g) Do you buy water from a supplier to meet the needs of the family? (h) How often do children have diarrhea?

7. **Facilitate recording and verification** All the information is tabulated as people give their inputs. Invite the community members to (a) brainstorm the causes and the interlinkages among the different issues and (b) tabulate the information gathered. Ask who will help verify the data following the meeting.
8. **Organize community survey teams** After this, invite participants to help verify the information that has been gathered through the meeting. The core leadership team develops simple survey sheets for volunteer surveyors. It can organize survey teams for different geographical sections in the community or by already designated clusters or blocks. Information gathering might take a few days depending on the size of the community and the availability of volunteers.
9. **Collate and analyse all available information** Once gathered, a smaller group can tabulate and collectively analyse the data. The group will want to identify creative ways in which the information and analysis can be presented to the local authorities in the L2L Dialogue.
10. **Use the map in future discussions** The cloth map can be used again and again as a reference tool to help people visualize the whole community as they discuss community affairs.



Model

<b>Model 4.5 — Facilitator’s data tabulation chart</b>		
<b>Questions</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Other observations</b>
<b>Basic data</b> Block/Sector number: No. of Families in Block No. of families who use the water pump How long do people line up for water? Average time.		
How many buckets/pots of water can each family have per day?		
Is the water clean? How often?		
Is the water muddy? How often?		
How often are there shortages?		
How many families buy water?		
How many families get water from other sources?		
Where do people bathe?		
Where are the toilets located in relation to the water pumps?		

## Activity timeline 4.5 — Community information gathering



Activity	Timeline	Notes
Preparation of the cloth map	2 – 3 hours	Some data gathering will have to take place prior to the meeting. This may include gaining access to an official survey map of the area and doing a walk through of the community for an informal survey.
Talking map session with interested community members	2 hours	Send out an announcement of the meeting well ahead of time.
Survey teams gather data on the specific community issues to be raised in the L2L Dialogues	1 – 3 days	This will depend on the number of volunteers available. The survey sheets need to be prepared, and all volunteers need to be fully briefed on how to go about conducting the survey.
Collating and analyzing the data	1 – 2 days	
Preparing the findings in a creative presentation for use in the L2L Dialogue	1 day	

### Facilitator’s note

It is vital to stay focused on gathering information specifically for the issue that we are trying to address. People always have many needs and concerns and the expectation of regular information gathering surveys can help them focus on the issue at hand. A Community Score Card or Citizen’s Report Card is one of the forms a survey might take. (See Activity 6.3 - Community Report Cards on page 112.) Below are some useful tenets when setting up a participatory way of surveying information in preparation for the Local-to-Local Dialogue process.

### Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) — Five key tenets



1. <b>Participation</b>	Local people’s input into PRA activities is essential to its value as a research and planning method and as a means for spreading the participatory approach to development.
2. <b>Teamwork</b>	To the extent that the validity of PRA data relies on informal interaction and brainstorming among those involved, it is best done by a team that includes local people with perspective and knowledge of the area’s conditions, traditions, and social structure and either nationals or expatriates with a complementary mix of disciplinary backgrounds and experience. A well-balanced team will represent a diversity of socioeconomic, cultural, gender, and generational perspectives.
3. <b>Flexibility</b>	PRA does not provide blueprints for its practitioners. The combination of techniques appropriate in a particular development context will be determined by such variables as the size and skill mix of the PRA team, the time and resources available, and the topic and location of the work.
4. <b>Optimal ignorance</b>	To be efficient in terms of both time and money, PRA work intends to gather just enough information to make the necessary recommendations and decisions.
5. <b>Triangulation</b>	PRA works with qualitative data. To ensure that information is valid and reliable, PRA teams follow the rule of thumb that at least three sources must be consulted or techniques must be used to investigate the same topics and to confirm the consistency of the data from all three sources.

## Activity 4.6 — Community information preparation and consolidation

### Context

The best way to approach government officials is to be fully aware of our rights and entitlements as citizens and the different structures, programs, processes, and resources available for addressing an issue at the community level.

### Objectives

Gather data on relevant bodies, regulations, government policies, development funds, and plans in preparation for the Local-to-Local Dialogue event.

### Background

Not even knowing where to start looking may make public information seem inaccessible. Most democratic systems of governance, however, have places that you can visit where information is available. Sources of public information range from the local politicians' or ombudsmen's offices, to different government institutions, to the Internet. This activity suggests how information can be gathered and tabulated for future reference.

### Resources

- A meeting space that is large enough to hang up the Talking Map and interact with it
- Large sheets of paper, markers, tape, and a computer with an Internet connection

### Methodology

The work of gathering and consolidating information requires different tools and skills within the group. It is important for the core leadership team to remember that no one needs to know everything. What's vital is to know what we do not know and where we can get help and support for filling any knowledge gaps.

1. **Identify broad information needs** The first step in consolidating the needed information is for the core leadership team to meet and brainstorm what information is needed. Including other community members is always useful. This does not have to be community-wide at this stage, but rather a discussion with select members who have connections with associations or trade unions, who work in nearby companies or factories, or who work outside the community and have links to the nearest municipal headquarters. Remember that it is important to not gather too much data, but rather the data necessary to be fully aware of the conditions and resources related to a particular issue or set of issues.
2. **Tabulate needed information** You might review the information from the "Mapping the Community Constellation" activity on page 51. After the initial brainstorming and discussion, the available and needed information can be tabulated in an Information Consolidation chart like the one on the next page.
3. **Assign information gathering tasks** Identify research tasks for everyone in the meeting. Assign people with contacts among local leaders and influential people inside or outside the community to meet these people with power. The purpose of this informal contact is to find out the sentiments of potential allies and to draw their support for the process. They may also provide information and direct introductions to people in local authorities and government bodies who are responsible for the issue at hand.
4. **Faithfully record and share information** The chart on the next page can be maintained and reviewed every time the core leadership team meets to discuss the preparations for the Local-to-Local Dialogue. All information gathered needs to be written down and compiled in a document that can be referred to by the spokespersons and the organizers of the L2L Dialogue when the actual event occurs. One or more computer savvy people should be assigned to tabulate this data and make it available in an accessible form for community use in the future.

Preparing



Method

## Activity timeline 4.6 — Community information preparation and consolidation



Activity	Timeline	Notes
Core leadership team meets to prepare for the meeting with select community members	1 hour	
Meeting with core leadership team and community members	2 hours	
Team members do their assigned research and contact local leaders and other sources of information.	1 – 3 weeks	The duration depends on how much time people have for their research, contacting others, and gathering data.
Meet to consolidate the information base and documentation.	1 week	

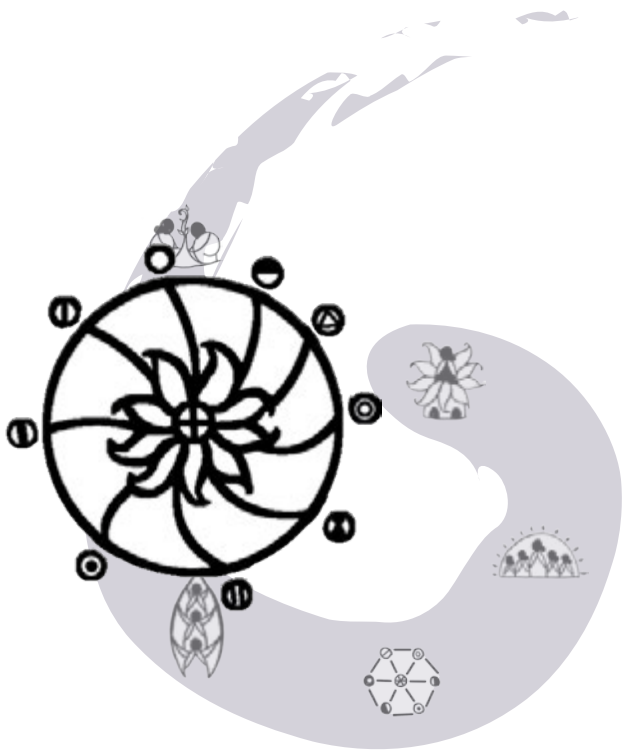
### Model 4.6 — Information consolidation chart

Data needed	Available? Where?	Action required	Assigned to/ deadline
1. Which government bodies are responsible?			
2. How are these government bodies (particularly the municipality) structured?			
3. Who are the people in charge within these institutions?			
4. Where are the final decisions made? How often does this body meet?			
5. What are the policies and programs related to the issue concerned?			
6. What does the national development plan say about this issue? What has been done at the national level about this issue?			
7. What resources are available that have been designated by government in relation to this issue?			
8. What other resources, such as local charities, foundations, and international funders, are available?			
9. Which other communities do we know that have been working on this issue?			
10. Which NGOs, local religious groups, or academic institutes are working on this issue and might be able to support us?			
11. Have there been any positive statements made in the press by the minister in charge of the issue, the mayor, or a local politician that we can use?			
12. How can we best use the media to bring support for our issue?			



## SECTION 4 NOTES

1. Jo Hann Tan, *SEAPCP Art of CO: A Training Manual for Community Organizers, Facilitators and NGO Workers*, Southeast Asia Popular Communications Programme (SEAPCP) and Community Communications Centre (KOMAS), 2007, p. 93. Idea adapted from the “Talking Map” module.



## SECTION 5

# LEADING THE LOCAL-TO-LOCAL DIALOGUE

The fifth section focuses on the agenda, participatory process and formats of the actual Local-to-Local Dialogue meeting. You're ready to use this section whenever you're ready to anticipate the details of running your own Dialogue event. It may be useful to groups that need to build a capacity to run meetings that engage and benefit all of the people present.

- Leading a Meeting that Makes a Difference
  - Activity 5.1 — Review the principles of Local-to-Local Dialogue
  - Activity 5.2 — Brainstorm details to remember during the Dialogue
    - » Handout — Leading effective participatory meetings in communities
    - » Checklist — Details to remember during the Dialogue
  - Activity 5.3 — Facilitation strategies for participatory meetings with local government
  - Checklist 5.4 — Facilitator tips for the day of the Local-to-Local Dialogue

# Leading a Meeting That Makes a Difference



The actual L2L Dialogue meeting is an important opportunity for increasing the input of community members—particular community women—in planning and policy processes at the local level. At one level, the L2L Dialogue is just one step in a series of important steps that communities take in the process of sustainable community development. But at another level, it represents a significant shift in perspective on governance and a break in the top-down approach that is so prevalent.

L2L Dialogues are unlike the policy dialogues or consultations that local governments might call to discuss certain policies with their constituents. Often just one or two community representatives attend an event where the venue, agenda, invited participants, protocol, and process are determined by officials in positions of power.

L2L Dialogues depend on a community’s work building capacity, mobilizing citizens, and preparing details before the event. This work can lead to a major change in traditional power relations. This section looks more carefully at the ingredients of a successful meeting: an appropriate context, conscious leadership, and an engaging participatory process.

## Activity 5.1 — Review the principles of Local-to-Local Dialogue

### Context

Local-to-Local Dialogues have a rich philosophical and value foundation that is essential to the work of personal empowerment and community building.

### Objectives

Consider the practical implications of the philosophical and values foundation of the L2L Dialogue by recalling and discussing the Key Principles.

### Background

The L2L Dialogue process represents an evolving methodology for strengthening the capacity of grassroots women’s groups and their communities to engage with local government and people in positions of power. Behind this process are three key principles that need to be kept in mind for focus and inspiration amidst the complexities of the actual L2L Dialogue meeting.

### Resources

- Copies of the Key Principles (beginning on page 6 of the Introduction)
- A comfortable place to have a purposeful discussion

### Methodology

- **Discuss implications of the Key Principles for participatory process** Read the Key Principles together and discuss their implications for attending to all of the details of the meeting and its participatory process.



## Activity 5.2 — Brainstorm details to remember before the Dialogue

### Context

Paying attention to details can ensure a smooth flow of almost any event. Although this does not guarantee the outcome of the event, at the very least detailed preparation can help the organizers remain calm and focused!

### Objectives

Develop a check list of details to remember before the beginning of the L2L Dialogue.

### Background

When it is just a few days before the actual L2L Dialogue meeting, the core leadership team and others involved in planning need to get together to run through all that still needs to be done. Any remaining protocol issues or cultural sensitivities will need to be discussed and attended to. The spokespeople, if they are not in the organizing committee, will need to be brought in to rehearse what they are going to say, and how.

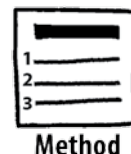
A successful L2L Dialogue meeting depends on keeping your eyes open and attentive to many details all at once. It's easier said than done. The handout on the next page is a short briefing about these details to give you eyes to see what needs attention or special care. Checklist 5.2 - Details to remember before the Dialogue on page 96, is a checklist you can begin to fill in before this session to guide your final preparations.

### Resources

A meeting room  
Big sheets of paper, markers, tape

### Methodology

- 1. Prepare wall-size and page-size details checklists** Prepare large sheets of paper before this meeting with a wall-size version of the details checklist on page 96. Fill in the key categories and all of the areas of work that are already ongoing from previous meetings and discussions. Photocopy a page-size version of the checklist and distribute it to the members of the organizing team. They can write in additional categories that come to mind and use the checklist as a reminder of their tasks on that day.
- 2. Brainstorm, discuss, and troubleshoot last-minute details** Begin the meeting by explaining to all present that the purpose of the meeting is to remember any additional things that need to be attended to and to find solutions for any problems that may have emerged in the last few days that must be addressed before the L2L Dialogue meeting. This can be done as a brainstorm with the whole group or people can divide into their sub-teams to think together and return to the larger group with their ideas. These ideas should be added to the details checklist and discussed together.



Method

Leading

### Session timing 5.2 — Details to remember before the Dialogue



Timing

Activity	Timeline	Notes
The facilitator(s) prepare the details checklist on a big white sheet	30 minutes	
Introduce the meeting and its process	10 minutes	
Small group discussions	20 minutes	
Plenary discussion and finalizing the details checklist	1 hour	



## Handout 5.2 — Leading effective participatory meetings in communities

This outline gives details of the three most important considerations during L2L Dialogue meetings—logistics, social dynamics, and processes. Use it with the checklist on page 96 to brainstorm details that need special care and attention.

### 1. Logistics

#### Meeting venue

The venue will need to be checked, cleaned, and prepared the day before the event. If the meeting is being held in the community, community members can be invited to help clean up the surrounding areas. Make sure that the road leading to the meeting venue is clear and free of obstructions. It will also be vital to ensure, whether the meeting venue is within the community or outside, that there are reasonable restroom facilities for both women and men and that they are clean. It is also important to check to make sure that there are no competing events taking place nearby that might cause noise or disturbance. A meeting can completely lose focus if there is a lot of noise in the next room or in the vicinity.

#### Seating arrangements

Make sure that seating has been set up as the organizing team had agreed before the event. It is especially important to check for wobbly tables and chairs! Stabilize the wobbly tables and benches by putting paper wedges under their legs. Remove and replace all wobbly chairs. Do your best to avoid the small things that distract from the process.

#### Meeting permits

In some countries, you may have to meet certain requirements before getting permission to hold a public meeting larger than a particular size. If a meeting is held in the community, this tends not to be a problem. However, if the meeting is being held in a place outside the community, it is best to check whether there are any such requirements.

#### Food and drinks

Providing some food and drink is one of the ways to create an atmosphere of sharing at any meeting. This does not have to be extravagant; a simple sharing of drinking water is sufficient if funds are low. The day before will be the day to make sure that utensils are clean and that there is a table available for placing food, drinks, and utensils. Depending on the prevailing custom, the food and drink can be left on a common table for everyone to partake of during the breaks. Otherwise, if it is a part of social etiquette, food and drink may be served to every guest.

#### Stationery

It is an unnecessary expense to provide stationery to everyone at the L2L Dialogue, but it is crucial that there are notepads, paper, and pens available for anyone who has come to the meeting without them. Ensure that supplies such as markers, flip charts, tape, and other materials needed for action planning are available.

#### Flip charts, talking map, and other materials

It is important that all the information that we want to convey to the local government officials is available. Some useful information can be put up as white sheets of paper on the wall. If the community prepared a Talking Map, it can be displayed to demonstrate the processes that the community has been engaged in to the local officials and leaders.

#### Welcome banner or sign, name tags

A welcome banner is always a generous way to make people feel welcome to a process. A banner can be prepared on cloth with paints, or a simple welcome sign can be drawn with felt-tip pens on a flip chart sheet inside the meeting room. Name tags are also very useful in a meeting where people do not know each other. It also allows for a more intimate atmosphere even while maintaining formality. These name tags can be simply a cutout piece of cardboard with a safety pin attached to it.



Handout

### **Audio recording and amplification**

Where possible, set up recording equipment so that everything said in the meeting can be recalled and compiled in a meeting report for follow up with local government and for monitoring commitments made at the meeting. If it not possible to record the meeting, more than one person should be assigned to take notes. If at all possible, try to get a simple audio system so that there is at least one microphone and loudspeaker in the room. Depending on the venue and the level of ambient noise, it may be hard for some people to hear or concentrate without at least some amplification. A simple sound system can usually be borrowed from wedding halls, religious institutions, or NGO allies.

## **2. Social dynamics**

### **Cultural sensitivities, social etiquette, and protocol**

All societies are structured with certain protocols that must be maintained when local leaders and government officials are present. Some protocols are common sense and applicable in all cases. For example, the organizers of the meeting must dress in clean and reasonably formal attire that indicates seriousness. Key organizers of the Dialogue must arrive well before the local leaders and invited guests arrive. Other protocols, such as who should officially open the dialogue space, who should speak first, how people should be seated, when people should sit or stand, and what cultural or religious rituals may be necessary to open a meeting, will depend on the communities concerned. Someone on the core organizing team should be assigned to check on all these issues and advise the group on how to proceed.

### **Starting with culture and spirit activity**

Religion and religious rituals are very important for many communities, but it is necessary to prevent one cultural or spirit tradition from excluding or demeaning others. In the Neighborhood Women's Leadership support process, we rotate traditions and explain that we do so. Many L2L Dialogues meetings start with some kind of opening ceremony that often includes a prayer. However sensitivity to the diversity of people attending the meeting is essential. If people from diverse faiths or atheists are present in the meeting, it would not be appropriate to use a prayer from a particular religious tradition. Instead a ecumenical (universal) prayer or reflection piece might be used.

## **3. Processes**

### **Signing in**

It is a good idea to have a sign-in sheet on a desk where people can be greeted and oriented to the meeting. A sign-in sheet also acts as a form of documentation to collect the names of all who attended so they can be attached to the brief report that is developed at the end of the meeting. If name tags will be used, the sign-in desk would be the place to distribute them. Blank name tags can be filled in by the participants or by the organizers ahead of time, depending on what makes sense in a particular situation. If participants are to fill their own name tags, have felt-tip pens ready. Materials to be distributed can either be provided at the sign-in desk or left on the desks or chairs in the meeting room.

### **Opening and closing rituals**

It makes sense to have some ceremony for opening and closing events. It helps create the spirit of dialogue. The general themes of opening events tend to be hope for the success of the event, togetherness, and dialogue, while the general themes for closing events tend to be commitment, continuity, renewal, and forward looking.

### **Facilitation**

The L2L Dialogue must be well facilitated. The facilitators must be well prepared with details such as the correct full names of the leaders and government officials including their necessary titles, the protocols for inviting people to speak, and familiarity and ease with the issues being raised in the meeting. The facilitator's role will also be managing emotional reactions and troubleshooting the process. The appointed facilitator of the dialogue should have a fairly high level of experience. Facilitators must be able to intervene in potentially tense situations and have the necessary tools and skills to maintain the dialogue spirit. For example, because we tend to personalize when we speak about issues that we are passionate about, the facilitator must be able to steer the conversation towards neutral ground, while reminding people that we are referring to the accountability of institutions and leaders in their official capacities.



Handout



Checklist

**Checklist 5.2 — Details to remember before the Dialogue**

	<b>Tasks at hand</b>	<b>Ready/done</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Logistics</b>	1. Meeting venue — clean, set up?		
	2. Restroom — clean?		
	3. Access road — clear?		
	4. Surrounding areas — clean? noise levels?		
	5. Seating arrangements		
	6. Tables and chairs — wobbly or needing replacement?		
	7. Refreshments — food and beverages, table/tablecloth for putting food and beverages down?		
	8. Drinking water, pitchers and glasses or cups		
	9. Utensils — clean and sufficient?		
	10. Supplies — paper, notepads, pens, flip charts, felt-tip pens, appropriate tape		
	11. Materials — community data photocopied, talking map		
	12. Welcome banner		
	13. Name tags, sign-in sheet		
	14. Recording equipment — batteries, extra cassette tapes, or storage files		
	15. Sound equipment—mic, amplifier, loudspeakers		
	16. Security		
	17. Translation		
<b>Social dynamics</b>	18. Culture, spirit opening—song or performance?		
	19. Protocols for introductions and welcomes		
<b>Processes</b>	20. Spokespersons' presentations—rehearsed, ready		
	21. Program flow — rehearsed? timing?		
	22. Troubleshooting contingencies — what can go wrong in the program?		
	23. Closing		
<b>Others</b>	24. Cancellation or postponement procedures		
	25.		
	26.		

Leading

## Activity 5.3 — Facilitation strategies for participatory meetings with local government

### Context

Engaging everyone is a central principle in bringing communities together in the L2L Dialogue process.

### Objectives

Practice participatory planning processes that can be used during the L2L Dialogue meeting and elsewhere to help diverse groups come to agreement on collaborative work involving both the community and the local government.

### Background

Participatory processes enable everyone present and concerned to be fully involved in the discussion or work at hand. But when we bring local government officials into a L2L Dialogue meeting, a different set of dynamics can emerge that the leadership team needs to be aware of, acknowledge, and plan for ahead of time. It is still possible to achieve a fully participatory process in which everyone feels engaged and included, if we keep basic facilitation strategies in mind when conducting the L2L Dialogue meeting. Since most groups will be diverse in different ways, these facilitation strategies will apply to any meeting or setting where decisions need to be taken.

### Resources

- Sheets of large white paper
- Colored index cards
- Marker pens
- Masking tape

## Methodology

This section describes distinct processes that can be used in participatory meetings. Think of them as strategies for leading meetings or process tools to use in a variety of settings. The best way to learn them is to see them demonstrated, to practice them with colleagues, to receive coaching from mentors, and to invite feedback that encourages and supports everyone to seek opportunities to use these new skills “in real life.”



Method

1. **Convene and describe the practice session** Introduce a new strategy and how it can be used in the L2L Dialogue meeting. Describe the session’s abbreviated “demonstration-practice-debrief” approach.
2. **Demonstration** Set up a realistic scenario. An experienced facilitator/trainer demonstrates the process.
3. **Practice** Use the same practice scenario or create another realistic practice scenario so team members can practice the process “on their feet” and receive coaching and feedback. Have one or more members of the team facilitate successive steps of the workshop while the rest of the group plays the role of workshop participants. The trainer offers coaching as needed to keep the practice workshop on track. Conclude the workshop when the simulation has played out and one or more facilitators have had a chance to practice in front of the group.
4. **Debriefing** Suggest a format for debriefing and giving feedback to each facilitator:
  - ask the facilitator to briefly describe his/her experience leading the group in practicing a new process
  - invite other group members to comment on the facilitator’s gifts in this role
  - invite other group members to suggest areas where the facilitator needs to practice
5. **Conclude the session** Ask participants to reflect on their experience and insights into the use of this facilitation strategy.

### Facilitation strategy 1 — Use small groups of similar people to differentiate views



- Before any decisions are made, it is always important to hear the range of perspectives in a room. Even if community members are coming to a meeting with local government officials with collective agreements on what they want to put forward, there will still be a diversity of views that need to be voiced and clarified before moving towards decision making.
- To help people surface the different viewpoints and perspectives in a room, ask them to do some personal reflection on the topic at hand and/or to discuss their personal perspective with people in small groups who share similar functions, values, aims, etc.
- For example, in the context of a discussion on setting up a community-based program for HIV-positive people in collaboration with the local health care centre and local government, you would want to have caregivers, people living with HIV/AIDs, family members, other community members, public health officials, and local government representatives in separate groups to clarify their respective stakes in the matter.

### Facilitation strategy 2 — Use mixed groups to help integrate views



- Once different perspectives have emerged in small stakeholder groups (i.e., small groups of caregivers, local government, health care professionals, etc.), further discussion in small mixed groups can help people integrate their diverse perspectives and discover common ground across these perspectives. Small groups provide a safe setting where people, particularly if they have differing views, can ask questions and clarify matters they might not be comfortable speaking about in a larger meeting.

### Facilitation strategy 3 — Have small groups report back to the whole group



- It is always important to ask the small groups to report back to the whole. When working in a larger group, people benefit from hearing the reports of all the small groups. Hearing reports from others helps people clarify their own views. In this kind of well-grounded, reflective atmosphere, people invited to respond to small group reports are apt to draw lines of commonality from what has been reported.
- Ask the whole group to answer one or two questions to reflect on the reports they have heard. If few comments are forthcoming, it might be useful for the facilitator to ask people to continue the discussion back in their small groups, with the person next to them, or in a group of three nearby people.
- Reporting back to the whole group is a vital step in ensuring that the whole group moves forward together with the meeting agenda. If small groups do not report back to the whole, a meeting can end with participants having had many conversations but with little integration and advancement towards a common purpose. Ending without tangible forward movement frustrates people.

#### Facilitation strategy 4 – Allow enough time



Method

- To encourage participation, match the time spent with the goals of the meeting. How long a meeting will take depends on factors like its purpose, the group size, and the time available. Two questions are key: What needs to happen for this meeting to reach its goal? How much time do I need to allocate to every step? The art is in finding the right balance. It is important for everyone to feel like they have had a time to give their inputs, have their views heard, and advance the goal of the meeting. It is equally important to limit the time so that everyone feels that their time has been well spent. Weisbord and Janoff say that if we want an implementable plan at the end of a meeting, we need to allocate time so that people can:
  - Collect their thoughts
  - Differentiate their stakes, aims, and goals
  - Integrate their ideas
  - Make action commitments

#### Facilitation strategy 5 – Explore the whole elephant



Method

- In order for an L2L Meeting to advance with an implementable plan and working commitments, it is important that “my facts” and “your facts” become “our facts.” This movement requires techniques that support comprehensive thinking—exploring the whole. “Exploring the Whole Elephant” is a useful image that encourages participation and comprehensive thinking. Telling the story in a workshop is an indirect way of inviting people to pay careful attention to other perspectives before they draw conclusions.
- There is an ancient tale of six blind men and an elephant. When the six blind men encountered the elephant, each of them touched a different part and stated what the animal was like. The one who felt its tusk said that the elephant was like a spear. The one who felt its trunk declared it was like a snake. The one who felt its knee was sure it was like a tree. The one who touched its tail thought the elephant was like a rope. The one who touched his ear thought it was very much like a fan.



Drawing by Friedel Stern

- This little story illustrates what can happen in a group when an issue is not explored fully. Telling the story to introduce a step in a workshop can help people work with complexity or diversity with an open mind.<sup>1</sup>

#### Facilitation strategy 6 – Apply a “go-around”



Method

- This technique is often used in community-based meetings, but can be used in any setting, including the L2L Dialogue meeting, as a way of getting everyone to participate in the process and to build a sense of community by acknowledging every person’s presence. The meeting can start with a go-around, asking people to give their names, affiliations, and why they came to the meeting. The same technique can be used throughout the meeting to have people say something about the topic at hand. It can also be a way of gauging what people are thinking or feeling about the discussion. It helps everyone know where others stand before making a decision or seeking to resolve a problem. When a group gets bogged down or confused, a go-around can create space where people can differentiate themselves by offering their own views on how to move forward.

## Facilitation strategy 7 – Use timelines



- A chronological scan can help people recall and learn from the past, examine patterns in the present, and explore the implications of action in the future. This technique has different uses in different contexts, but in the context of the L2L Dialogue meeting, it can be used as a way for everyone in the meeting to recall the context and history of an issue being raised. You need a long strip of white paper or several sheets of white paper taped together and put on the wall. The long strip is labelled with the topic at hand and marked with either a vertical or horizontal timeline with intervals of five years, i.e., 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010, and “Present.”
- Working in small groups, people recall and visualize what has happened with a particular issue over the years. As they discuss related events and turning points they compile a coherent story about the issue.
- When its “story” is ready, the group records the story on the white sheet by using drawings or writing on index cards. After each group has put up their index cards on the white sheet, each group tells its story to the other groups and how it is linked to the topic.
- Once the information and images are available, everyone benefits from hearing the different stories, clarifying, and coming to a common view of the situation.



Here is an example of one approach to a chronological scan.

People want to address the need for public transportation in the area where the community is located. One small group will discuss what the situation was like in 1990, when everyone had to walk about 1 km to the main road to catch a bus. Another will discuss 1996, when a change in government led to a twice-daily public bus service whose route came closer to the community. This went on for three years until the collapse of the government. Another group will discuss 2001, when a private mini-bus service became available, coming right into the community. The price of tickets has increased every year and the service is sporadic. This unreliability continues to the present.

Leading

### Session timing 5.3 — Facilitation strategies in participatory meetings with local government



Activity	Timeline	Notes
Introduce the session with an overview of facilitation strategies.	10 – 15 minutes	Highlight the strategy to be practiced during the session. Consider a warm-up activity if needed.
Set up a scenario and demonstrate the use of the strategy.	10 – 15 minutes	Ask an experienced facilitator to demonstrate the strategy.
Set up another scenario or use the one demonstrated. Assign one or more people to practice facilitating using the strategy.	20 – 30 minutes	For this practice workshop, if more than one person will facilitate, decide what part of the process each will do. Be sure to prompt the hand off from one facilitator to the next.
Debrief the simulation and ask for feedback for each facilitator.	20 minutes	The facilitator asks participants to note the gifts of the facilitators in the practice workshop and to offer pointers and/or encouragement for further practice.
Conclude with a reflection on the session and insights on this strategy	10 minutes	



Checklist

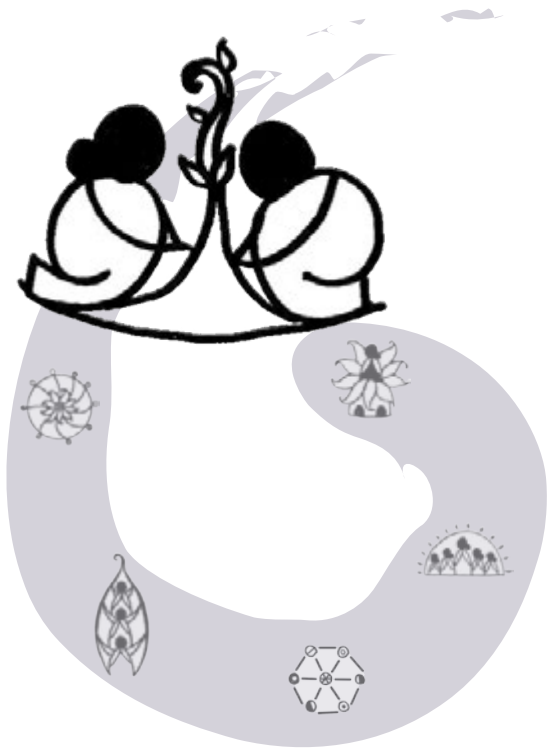
Leading

<b>Checklist 5.4 — Facilitator tips for the day of the Local-to-Local Dialogue</b>	
<b>Tips</b>	<b>Notes</b>
1. Timing – Observe Time	
2. Identify Speakers	
3. Prepare for Managing Conflicts	
4. Respect and Prepare for Local Cultures and Customs	
5. Select Strong Grassroots Women Leaders to Chair	
6. Make a participants list (with contacts) – this is important for follow up work	
7. Consider gifts to recognize participation if culturally appropriate and will be understood in the right spirit	
8. Security	
9. Dress code	
10. Mark clearly where the L2L Dialogue is in the community	
11. Be mindful of translation that might be needed for different language groups	
12. Select appropriate meeting place	
13. Observe protocol	
14. Organize food, drink	
15. Organize supplies including name tags	
16. Ensure that grassroots women have key roles	
17. Choose a meeting goal that is doable in the time allowed.	
18. Plan a series of meetings if necessary to address an issue thoroughly.	
19. _	



## SECTION 5 NOTES

1. The drawing of the elephant is by illustrator and cartoonist Friedel Stern. See:  
<http://urila.tripod.com/Elephant.htm>  
An article about Friedel Stern is available at [http://cartoon.org.il/eng/Article/6/Friedel\\_Stern](http://cartoon.org.il/eng/Article/6/Friedel_Stern)



## SECTION 6

# DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING AN ACTION PLAN

The sixth step focuses on sustaining momentum after the L2L Dialogue event. It provides tools for ongoing partnership with the local government and for implementing projects as a community. You're ready to use this section whenever you begin thinking about what to do after the L2L Dialogue event and certainly before your first follow up meeting. It may also be useful any time groups are interested in evaluation, assessment, and media advocacy.

- What Sustains the Dialogue Process?
  - Activity 6.1 — Local-to-Local Dialogue follow-up meeting
    - » Handout — Follow-up strategies after the Local-to-Local Dialogue meeting
  - Activity 6.2 — Assessing the Local-to-Local Dialogue initiative
    - » Handout — L2L Dialogue assessment: asking the right questions
  - Activity 6.3 — Community Report Cards: Developing community monitoring strategies
  - Activity 6.4 - Understanding Media Advocacy
    - » Handout — Tips on Media Advocacy Work

## What Sustains the Dialogue Process?

Many people say that the “real” work begins after the actual face-to-face L2L Dialogue meeting with local government officials. There are always continuity issues because of frequent turn-over of people in decision-making positions. Initiating and keeping follow-up activities on track after a Dialogue has to be the responsibility of the community. Every L2L Dialogue should end with agreement on next steps.



The Mathare group experienced a change in leadership in a number of the key roles and individuals who participated in the dialogue. Ann Wanjiru says, “It’s not necessary to have a big dialogue, but [to give] updates or courtesy calls to the people and offices they are working with. It’s important to give updates and results and solicit feedback. They are not the ones that will call, so don’t expect it. And as a community, we must keep them on their toes at all times.”

*Ann Wanjiru, Mathare Mother Center, GROOTS Kenya*

Follow-up strategy takes many forms. Plan for an immediate post-meeting follow-up with each of the local leaders and government officials. This is followed by ongoing interactions and contact with the leaders and authorities concerned.



### FOLLOWING UP TO ENSURE RESULTS

- Go back into a planning process based on agreements at the meeting
- Set up committees within the community to take up different aspects of the work
- Begin mobilizing resources
- Conduct community-level monitoring and evaluation
- Explore possibilities for raising awareness of community concerns through the media

An important part of the process is sustaining on-going dialogues that keep working relationships active and create a sense of connection with the community’s new goals. But instead of long formal dialogues, you can organize feedback sessions for updates and on-going communication between the parties involved. This section provides activities that explore these areas of work. It suggests how the core leadership team can continue to work with local government officials and how the community can realize the objectives it set in the L2L Dialogues process.

## Activity 6.1 — Local-to-Local Dialogue follow-up meeting

### Context

Successful Local-to-Local Dialogues bridge the gap between leaders and communities making important decisions.

### Objectives

Determine the follow-up activities that the core leadership team will have to carry out after the L2L Dialogue meeting.

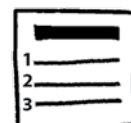
### Background

Before a relationship is set up between the community and local government officials, only the most enlightened government officials will go back to a community on their own to check on or remind them of their earlier agreements or discussions. The core leadership team will have to make concerted efforts to keep the channels of communication open with local leaders, government officials, and other stakeholders who participated in the L2L Dialogue.

*Follow-up* is an important strategy that the local community should use to help local leaders *follow through* on their commitments to help address community needs. Follow-up activities remind local leaders of the decisions they made at the L2L Dialogue meeting, enhance partnership, and open up opportunities for further collaboration. If follow-up is not done, the local community risks losing the advances made with local leaders as a result of the dialogue process.

### Methodology

- 1. Convene and context** Describe the work to be done in this session. For example, “We need to determine areas of work so our core leadership team, with community input and guidance, can develop key strategies, activities, and working groups for bringing about the changes the community has chosen.
- 2. Consider how to set priorities** Several factors might influence the choice of the work to be done first:
  - The shared values and vision developed in the course of the L2L Dialogue process
  - The areas of need that are the most pressing
  - The area of change that will benefit the largest number of people
  - The opportunities that have emerged during the L2L Dialogues meeting with local government officials
  - The skills and existing resources available in the community
- 3. Introduce possible strategies** Several widely used follow-up strategies are available to help ensure the next steps of the L2L Dialogue. A brief description of these strategies appears on the next two pages. You may want to hand out copies or post a chart with the titles on the wall.
- 4. Discuss and choose appropriate strategies** Use one or more appropriate meeting processes to help the group read and discuss these follow up strategies. The discussion questions you ask will depend on your particular purposes and hopes for the meeting. See if the discussion of the various strategies available suggests practical activities that need to be taken on.
- 5. Wrap up and celebrate** Decide tasks, assignments, and next steps and then enjoy some appropriate celebration of a significant step forward.



Method

## Handout 6.1 — Follow-up strategies after the Local-to-Local Dialogue meeting

- **Thank you letters** Within a week of the L2L Dialogue meeting, send out thank you letters to all the invited guests, briefly repeating any of the key points raised in the meeting, especially the agreements that were made. Inform the local leaders, government officials, and other key stakeholders (such as NGO allies and donor agencies, if invited) that the meeting report that is being prepared will be sent to them. Inform them that the community will be revisiting the agreements in the meeting and return “to the drawing board” to chart out a new plan of action. Express the hope that you will be able to continue to work with them in the future
- **Echo-back session with community members** It is vital to hold a timely “echo back” session with community members. Even if the L2L Dialogue meeting was held within the community, not everyone in the community will be able to attend and they will all want to know what transpired. It will be important for the leadership team to plan for a community meeting soon afterwards to inform everyone of what was discussed and what agreements were made. This is also an opportunity for community members to give their inputs and suggestions on how to move forward with the plans made.
- **Meeting report** Immediately prepare a 4–6 page meeting report for the community and officials that includes:
  - The agenda of the meeting
  - Key statements made by local government officials about programs, resources, and opportunities
  - Key points raised by spokespersons regarding the issue of concern
  - Agreements that came out of the planning process
  - Next steps and the way forward

The language of the report should be clear and simple. Bullet points are useful for clarity and brevity. Send the report out with a cover letter. State in the letter the hope that they will give the report their attention and express once again the community’s keen interest and hope to work as allies with the local government in the future.

- **Continued networking** After the first report, the core leadership team will need to send regular updates to the local government officials while they are expanding their network of contacts and support within the same offices and institutions. The language of working as allies, partnerships, and mutually beneficial cooperation will help build bridges with local government officials. Invite local government officials to attend the community’s ongoing planning meetings. Even if they do not come, send them regular updates on the progress of planning, resource mobilization, and community development. Also, make an effort to invite them to other community events like cultural events, community clean-up efforts, and community-level celebrations that might be held.



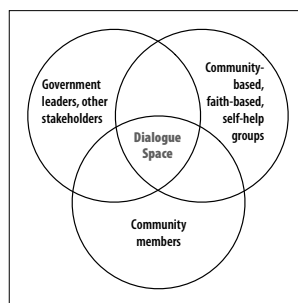
Handout

- **Taking a seat at the table** One of the most important ways to influence change is to work from within the local government. In many local government units, there are decision-making bodies that seek public participation. Get to know the workings of your local government to discover opportunities for participation. Make a list of all the decision-making bodies that relate to the areas of change that your community is working on. Check whether they are open to civil society representation and where possible, submit the name of a community representative. Select a representative from the community who is prepared to invest time in doing advocacy on behalf of the community. This representative will need support to be on the committee, including support for preparation of materials, knowledge of the issue, advice on effective interventions, and knowledge of how to negotiate different issues.

In Nicaragua, the *Union de Cooperativas de Mujeres “Las Brumas,”* a cooperative organized by grassroots women farmers, used Local-to-Local Dialogues to negotiate that five percent of the municipal budget go to women’s livelihood, education, health, and infrastructure priorities. Women consulted on the projects and allocations in committees established for this purpose in these four areas. Concerned that the budgetary allocations and the consultative positions that grassroots women currently hold could be lost in future elections, grassroots women are currently advocating for a municipal ordinance that would mandate mayors, regardless of political affiliation, to establish budgetary set-asides and consultation mechanisms for women’s priorities.



- **Keeping an eye on the system** It is vital for the core leadership team to continue to be aware of the changes happening within government systems, particularly in the areas that may impact the resources and livelihood of the community. Some of these areas will include (a) policies, laws, and the way they are enforced, (b) national, city, and local government budgetary allocations and expenditures, (c) regulations and codes in districts and local areas, and (d) local and national development plans. Staying abreast of changes in these areas often takes effort, resources, and time, and many of the documents produced are long, technical, and boring. Creative collaborative arrangements with civil society organizations that do policy advocacy work would be useful to help community leaders stay abreast of and give inputs on changes taking place at the local level.
- **Reworking the community development plan** After the initial round of follow-up discussions with local officials and other responsible people following the L2L Dialogue meeting, the community needs to “return to the drawing board” to determine what issues they should pursue first, revisiting the original purpose of the dialogue, the actors involved, and the new relationships and partnerships formed as a result of the Dialogue.



The deceptively simple image of three interlocking circles is a reminder of the point of all the strategizing: implementing an action plan keeps the community’s working relationships active and beneficial. Action adds the energizing dimension of *working together* to the *Dialogue Space* created by the L2L Dialogue event.



## Activity 6.2 — Assessing the Local-to-Local Dialogue initiative

### Context

Assessment is usually done at a turning point, at the end of a process, or after a designated time period. The insights gained and lessons learned from the assessment process can then inform planning for the future.

### Objectives

Examine the relationship established with local government officials and the outcome of the L2L Dialogue process from the perspective of the vision and objectives set out by the community.

### Background

Once some regular contact with local government officials is established, it is vital that the core leadership team engage in an evaluation process to examine the extent to which they have established a working relationship based on the principles that the community upholds. One danger that a community could encounter is being wooed or otherwise coerced into meeting the personal political agendas of local leaders or local government officials. The core leadership team members will need to be very clear about the kind of relationship they are trying to set up, what they hope to achieve, and how far they have gotten in that process.

Assessment of the vision and objectives that gave direction to the L2L Dialogues process happens best when very clear milestones were set up at the beginning of the community planning process. These milestones, also known as indicators, can be simply stated, but they must embody several essential characteristics:

- They indicate changes that are observable over time
- They reflect the community's own, inner criteria of success
- They assess an aspect of the plan for which data is available or can be collected
- They keep the community focused on what residents were trying to achieve at the very outset

Formal meetings are an important approach used by organizations and community groups for the regular monitoring essential to the assessment process. During meetings, everyone who is responsible for different aspects of work report on what they have been doing so that the group can check the progress of different activities against the current plan. A formal meeting specifically for assessment might be scheduled at the completion of a project. For example, if the goal of the community was to have two sets of public toilets set up in the community, it would be a good time to formalize an assessment process when one or both of these toilets had been built.

*Note:* This assessment meeting uses small groups of similar people called “affinity groups” to encourage more in-depth and honest discussions because participants are among peers in terms of their experience and engagement levels.

### Resources

- A large room with sufficient wall space and enough room to sit in a circle
- Sheets of large white paper
- Colored dots, Post-it™ notes or small pieces of paper
- Marker pens
- Masking tape

### Methodology

1. **Prepare and publicize a meeting agenda** Prior to any assessment process, the core leadership team should meet to develop the meeting agenda and process. Circulate the agenda to all those who will participate in the meeting and prepare space so that people can face each other as they speak. Ahead of time, be sure to inform the people who need to prepare their own reports for the assessment process.
2. **Prepare working charts** Ahead of time, draw up 3–4 large white sheets of paper with key information:
  - a. The community vision that was developed at the start of the L2L Dialogues process
  - b. The key issues identified for collective action
  - c. The goals and objectives in relation to each of these identified issues



Method

3. **Prepare a comprehensive invitation list** Invite all of the needed people to the assessment meeting:
  - Everyone from the core leadership team
  - The spokespersons who presented their cases at the L2L Dialogues meeting
  - Community representatives who have been participating in local government decision making bodies
  - Members of the different community-based subcommittees set up to implement the community plan
  - Members of the community who have been affected by and/or benefited from the changes that have occurred as a result of the L2L Dialogue negotiations
  - Members of the community who are critical of the changes that have occurred
  - Anyone else in the community who has an interest in being a part of the assessment process
  - Representatives from outside organizations and institutes that have been active in realizing the changes
  
4. **Convene and describe the meeting context** At the start, propose a process for the meeting and have people give their inputs. In general, an assessment process should include:
  - Reviewing the vision, key issues, common values, goals, and objectives of the community
  - Reviewing the community plan developed prior to the L2L Dialogue meeting and refined as part of the follow-up process afterwards
  - Examining the milestones: what has been achieved and what is still in process
  - Examining the practices and processes that have been used to achieve these milestones
  - Reflecting on insights and lessons learned, and how to integrate them into the next phase of work
  
5. **Recall, discussion, reports** Invite people to recall the vision, common values, key issues, goals, and objectives of the community. Then divide people into random groups of 3–4 for a quick discussion about each of these areas. The facilitator invites each group to report on its discussion and records their input.
  
6. **Organize small groups** After the short reports, the facilitator shows the vision, common values, key issues, and goals, and objectives wall charts. The group is divided again into smaller groups to evaluate in broad terms the key issues, goals and objectives, the milestones, values expressed, and the process and practices. Each small group should now comprise people with similar roles and levels of engagement in the L2L Dialogue process. For example, people heavily involved in leadership and planning the process are grouped together, while less involved people join another group. (See this activity’s background note.)

Before people go into their small groups, coach participants on how to present their discussions once the groups have reconvened. Each group will elect one person to prepare a quick verbal summary of its discussion to the whole group. Instruct them that although their discussions on each question may be much longer, their presentation must only state the *three* strongest points on each question.

7. **Focused small-group discussion** Once in their small group, people will have a discussion based on the questions presented in Handout 6.2 - L2L Dialogue Assessment on page 111.
  
8. **Compile a discussion summary chart** After the small group discussions, bring the group back together and allow 5–7 minutes for each small group’s presentation of its three strongest points. Have one or more people help record all of these responses on paper and then have a discussion on all the points raised. Help the group draw out key insights and lessons that emerge from the presentations. Tabulate the discussions in a simple chart like the one at the top of the following page.



<b>Model 6.2.1 — Assessment discussion summary chart</b>			
<b>Key insights</b>	<b>Lessons learned</b>	<b>What we could have done differently?</b>	<b>What do we need to put more effort into?</b>



9. **Explain use of the Dotmocracy tally sheet** After this discussion, move on to the next part of the assessment exercise. This part uses a facilitation method known as *Dotmocracy* to gather everyone’s individual assessments.
- Each person is given a number of small pieces of colored paper. (The size of these papers may vary, but they should be approximately 2" by 2". Sticky colored dots or Post-It™ notes can be used if they are easily available and affordable.)
  - Give each person the same number of pieces of paper as the number of questions to be answered.
  - Statements are written on separate sheets of white paper with the following choice options— Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, I Don’t Know/Not Sure—along side those statements.

<b>Model 6.2.2 — Dotmocracy tally sheet</b>						
	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don’t know/ not sure</b>
Statements in the lefthand rows...	• • •	• • • • •	• •	•		• •



10. **Wrap up discussion and closing** When all of the people have placed their dots, wrap up the session with a discussion of the “findings” of the Dotmocracy assessment and a closing circle.

**Session timing 6.2 — Assessing the Local-to-Local Dialogue initiative**



<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Welcome, introductions, and agreement on the agenda of the meeting	10 – 15 minutes	
Recollection of the vision, shared values, key issues, goals, and objectives of the community through random small group discussions	10 – 15 minutes	
Plenary discussion of the vision, shared values, key issues, goals, and objectives of the community	20 – 30 minutes	
Small affinity group discussion of assessment questions	60 minutes	See Handout 6.2
Plenary sharing of three strong points per question from small affinity group discussions	30 minutes	
Individual assessment using the Dotmocracy process.	30 minutes	
Final discussion and closing circle	30 minutes	

## Handout 6.2 — L2L Dialogue assessment: asking the right questions

The purpose of evaluation is ultimately to reflect on, learn, and re-think the work of the community, based on experience and progress over time. Assessment exercises allow a group to consider many things: its shared values and vision, the context of the work being done, the surrounding conditions that need to be considered, and the effectiveness of different approaches, strategies and activities. Below is a list of important evaluation questions to ask. A community doesn't need to ask and respond to all of these questions in an assessment exercise. It may be sufficient to choose one or two questions from each of the sections. Through the assessment process, we draw lessons from our practices and try to measure the extent to which we have been successful in doing our work.

### • **Key issues raised**

- What key issue were we most successful in raising and addressing through the L2L Dialogue process?
- To what extent were we successful in gaining the attention, trust, and cooperation of local leaders and government officials in addressing our key issues?
- What were the issues that we had to negotiate and think we may have compromised in the process of negotiations?
- What issues have we lost from the picture in the process of achieving the key goals that we set out for ourselves? Do we need to return to these issues now?
- What else do we need to address in the next phase on our work?

### • **Goals, objectives, and strategies**

- To what extent were we successful in achieving the goals and objectives we set out for ourselves?
- What are the milestones that we had towards achieving each of these goals and objectives? To what extent have we reached these milestones? How much farther do we need to go?
- What were our key strategies in achieving our stated goals and objectives?
- How successful were our strategies in achieving these goals?
- How would we have done it differently if we had known what we know now?

### • **Shared values, processes, and practices**

- Which of our shared values turned out to be most useful when we were engaged in the L2L Dialogue process?
- What shared value did we forget along the way that might have helped our processes more?
- Which values do we think are the most relevant in continuing our partnership with local government officials in the future?
- To what extent did we manage to keep everyone who was interested informed, consulted, and participating in the process?
- How effective were our decision-making processes at the community level? What were the challenges we faced in our consultation and decision-making processes?
- To what extent did we manage to engage in a “power with” pattern with local government officials?
- What were the challenges faced in negotiating a more collaborative relationship with local government officials?
- What external and internal factors affected our ability (both positively and negatively) to create linkages with local authorities and seek alliances on behalf of the community?



Handout

## Activity 6.3 — Community Report Cards: Developing community monitoring strategies

### Context

Communities have the right and responsibility to hold governments accountable and transparent in their management of public resources and their delivery of what are regarded as “public goods.”

### Objectives

Provide a simple approach for community members and other stakeholders to monitor local government service delivery and to create a space for public participation and dialogue on local government performance.

### Background

The idea of Community Report Cards was first developed by community organizers in Asia working with urban poor communities as a way to collectively voice their concerns about the state of the urban environment and to assert their rights as citizens. The idea was refined, further developed, and popularized “as a set of tools for assessing public satisfaction of local governance processes and for establishing a mechanism for the participatory appraisal of good local governance” by a UNDP initiative in the Asia Pacific region known as The Urban Governance Initiative (TUGI).

The Community Report Cards approach is based on an understanding of good governance: governments should adhere to a set of values and principles that guide their management, implementation, and administrative functions in response to the needs of the people they serve. See the Good Governance Handout on page 160.

The Community Report Card approach is fairly simple. It involves:

- Identifying an issue area
- Deciding what aspect of local governance performance to assess in this area
- Gathering the community and others with a stake in the issue area including public officials
- Developing a set of indicators for each aspect
- Using a report card format to score performance based on a simple scale that participants choose
- Sharing and discussing the results of the report card exercise with local governments

In the L2L Dialogue process, Community Report Cards can be a way to monitor plans and agreements made in the Dialogue process. The issue(s) selected may be key needs and concerns identified during the community mapping work or matters raised during the L2L Dialogue meeting with local government officials.

The data gathered and the assessments made should not be seen as substitutes for quantitative data that guides policy toward more sustainable human development, but rather as a qualitative input on how poor urban and rural communities perceive and experience the services and infrastructure provided. This is also an important way to raise awareness among community members of their rights as citizens to adequate and affordable services and their responsibilities to ensure transparency, efficiency, and accountability in local government’s use of public resources.

The tool can be given an alternate name that is more appropriate in the context in which it is being used, e.g., Citizens’ Score Cards. The name chosen should be sufficiently catchy so that people remember it, refer to it, and use it to promote conversation and to support a media strategy advocating government accountability and transparency.

### Resources

- A large room or a shady space outdoors that has enough space to sit in a circle
- Wall space or flip chart stand
- Large white paper, marker pens
- Masking tape

### Methodology

1. **Select an issue of concern** As part of monitoring the Community Development Plan, the leadership team needs to choose the issue areas in which they want to review local governance performance.



Method

2. **Convene a stakeholders' meeting** Once identified, the leadership team convenes a small meeting with key stakeholders, including all people with a direct interest in the topic. Make sure that sufficient time is given and sufficient clarity provided on the project and the nature of involvement required so that community members feel motivated and fully informed about the process. This meeting will need to be at least one to two days long so that Steps 3, 4, and 5 can be conducted during the course of the meeting.

This meeting is an ideal time to involve the local government officials with whom the community has built relationships. If government officials are busy and not prepared to sit down in a meeting following a participatory workshop, men and women representing the community can visit the officials concerned to inform them about the project and the issues the community intends to assess. In outlining the project, the community representatives can point out the different places where the official's input would be appreciated and what the community hopes to achieve as a result of its work.

3. **Define an objective for the use of the report cards** The stakeholders' meeting creates a statement of consensus that outlines (a) Community Report Card project, its purpose and objective, (b) the value of monitoring in pressing for good governance standards and practices, and (c) how the project will help the community. *Note:* When using the Report Card process to rate the *local government performance*, a subjective, citizens' opinion approach can be used. However, if the Community Report Card is being used to *support policy decisions*, a more objective method of data collection needs to be used.
4. **Select respondents** The stakeholders' meeting decides which segments of the community will be included in the assessment, who the respondents will be, how many people will fill out the Report Cards, and what the specific conditions are vis-a-vis the area being assessed.
5. **Select the aspects of governance to be assessed** It is also important during the stakeholders' meeting to select which aspects of governance the stakeholders want to assess. It is feasible to assess up to 4 or 5 characteristics/principles. Good governance has been defined in different ways by different agencies and different groups. The TUGI *Report Card Users' Manual* selected the following key good characteristics/principles: participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, consensus orientation, equity, effectiveness and efficiency, accountability, and strategic vision.

*Facilitator's Note:* A facilitated activity like the one below is an effective approach for making these choices.

- a. Everyone at the meeting is asked to create his/her own list of the 8–10 most important characteristics of good governance.
- b. Each person is then paired off with another person. These two people have to agree on eight characteristics/principles and to make a new, combined list. (During this and the succeeding group work periods, the teams must explain to each other why they think one characteristic is more important than the other and then negotiate a new consensus based on the information shared.)
- c. One pair is then teamed up with another pair, and this time the four people in the new team have to come up with a consensus list of 6–8 characteristics/principles.
- d. Then two groups of four people are paired and the resulting group of eight has to do the same process of working through their different points and coming up with a consensus list.
- e. In the end, there will be two large groups. The facilitator takes over and reads through the two group lists, helping the whole group agree on a single final list of good governance characteristics.

6. **Develop a set of indicators** Indicators are what will measure the performance or service delivery that will be assessed by the different respondents when filling out the Community Report Cards. These indicators have to be developed with members of the community themselves—the people whose issues we are trying to address through the Report Card exercise.
  - a. Focus group discussions (FGDs) or guided discussions will need to be held to fully understand the actual concerns related to the issue chosen by the stakeholders. FGDs are held with different segments of communities that are likely to have similar experiences or have an affinity with each other as a result of their identity or the common issues they face. For example, young girls might be gathered for one FGD and older married women in another. People living within 50 meters of a pump might be in one group and people living 200 meters from the pump might be interviewed in a different group. After some discussion, the key concerns of different segments of the community become clear. The feedback from these discussions becomes the material from which the indicators are developed.
  - b. The TUGI *Report Card User's Manual* suggests developing a set of four indicators (the questions measuring a perception) for each characteristic/principle chosen for assessment in an issue area. If the issue of concern selected in Step 1 is “Water and Sanitation” and five characteristics/principles are selected for assessing Water and Sanitation service delivery or distribution of resources, the Report Card would consist of 20 indicators (5 characteristics/principles x 4 indicators each). The example below illustrates the use of characteristics/principles and indicators.



*Example:* A community is developing a set of indicators for a situation where treated water is being supplied through a water pipeline that fills standpipes inside the community. Approximately 50 households share each standpipe, the flow of water is intermittent and the water is often murky. The stakeholders' meeting identifies water delivery as the area of local government service they want to assess. They want to examine water delivery in light of the “effectiveness and efficiency” characteristic/principle of good governance. Based on the information gathered from the focus group discussions, the four indicators to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of water delivery might be:

How good is your access to water for daily use?

How good (clean) is the water that the standpipe provides you?

How good (steady) is the flow of water from the tap?

How good (easy to use) is the pumping mechanism of the standpipe?

Indicators such as those above are clearly subjective and qualitative, focusing on people's perceptions and experiences in a particular situation. Subjective data produced through this type of indicator may not be scientific or concrete enough in some situations. However, it is important to recognize the Community Report Card methodology as one tool to gauge or assess the performance of local governments in their delivery of services and infrastructure. It can be explained to those who are skeptical as a sort of “customer satisfaction” survey, with community members being in effect the rightful “customers” in local governance processes.

- c. For the Community Report Card process to be effective as a way of gathering the views of community members for dialogue, policy advocacy and awareness raising, the indicators need to be:
  - *Relevant:* they serve the objective of the Report Card project
  - *Understandable:* they are simple and easily understood by all
  - *Reliable:* they gather credible information based on experience and not hearsay or assumptions
  - *Attainable:* they gather information that is readily available

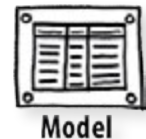
- d. Five different types of indicators are commonly used to measure performance:
- *Input Indicators* measure the resources required to produce outputs, including materials, budget, human resources, time required, and so forth.
  - *Process Indicators* measure the actions necessary to achieve the results.
  - *Output Indicators* show the externally visible results of the inputs and processes. These might include things like the numbers of toilets, street lights, water stand pipes, or drains built; the number of students completing primary school; or the number of women who are literate, etc.
  - *Outcome Indicators* measure the mid-to-long-term benefits derived from a process, usually in the form of changed behaviors, lifestyle, and satisfied needs.
  - *Impact Indicators* measure the impact of public resource distribution and service delivery that have an impact on the overall quality of life and economic, social-cultural, and environmental conditions.

7. **Decide on a rating system** The rating system selected should be simple enough for people to respond to. One simple way recommended in the TUGI *Report Card Users' Manual* is to rate each indicator from 1 to 5, with 1 being “very poor” and 5 being “very good.” We noted above that “good” and “poor” are subjective judgements that depend on how people understand these words. Nevertheless, indicators can be clarified so that the meaning of “good” and “poor” can be substantiated in each case and respondents can provide ratings based on their actual experiences and perceptions. Create a tally sheet for each of the characteristics of good governance you will assess, with space to tally the scores for all four indicators. You can see a full-size version of this example on page 163.

The Good Governance Issues Report Card:  
Cultural Heritage

**Core characteristic of good governance #7:  
Effectiveness & Efficiency**

Indicators to measure the level of effectiveness & efficiency <small>(See suggestions below or identify your own. Please list four indicators.)</small>	Grade (1-5)
1)	
2)	
3)	
4)	
<b>Total</b>	
<b>Percentage [total ÷ 20 x 100]</b>	
<p><b>Some examples of indicators on effectiveness &amp; efficiency could be:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proper utilisation of the scarce municipal resources for heritage conservation activities. <small>(Cost effectiveness with no compromise on quality)</small></li> <li>• Collection of taxes, revenues and service charges from monuments and sites of cultural importance.</li> <li>• Over all level of care for monuments and sites of cultural importance.</li> <li>• Mobilization of internal resources from private sector, civil societies and individuals.</li> <li>• Mobilization of external resources from institutions, individuals and tourists.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Grades</b></p> <p>5: Very Good 4: Good 3: Moderate 2: Poor 1: Very Poor</p>



The example on page 114 involves four indicators related to efficient and effective delivery of water through standpipes. The table below illustrates the use of the rating system in this example involving responses from three community residents (the “respondents”). The total score and the percentage of this score are calculated by adding up the individual scores and dividing this by the total possible score. This is then multiplied by 100 to come up with the percentage score. In the example, the score for this principle is:  $37 \div 60 = .617$  or 61.7%.



<b>Water and sanitation delivery</b>					
<b>Four indicators for Principle #1: Efficiency and Effectiveness</b>					
(Example of rating a single characteristic/principle)					
<b>Ratings:</b> 1 = Very Poor   2 = Poor   3 = Moderate   4 = Good   5 = Very Good	<b>Rating 1–5</b>			<b>Rating Totals</b>	<b>Percentage of possible</b>
	<b># 1</b>	<b>#2</b>	<b>#3</b>		
<b>3 respondents</b>					
1. “How good is your <i>access</i> to water for daily use?”	3	2	3	= 8	<b>53.3%</b>
2. “How good ( <i>clean</i> ) is the water that the standpipe provides you?”	3	2	2	= 7	<b>46.7%</b>
3. “How good ( <i>steady</i> ) is the flow of water from the water?”	4	4	3	= 11	<b>73.3%</b>
4. “How good ( <i>easy to use</i> ) is the pumping mechanism of the standpipe?”	4	3	4	= 11	<b>73.3%</b>
<b>Subtotal for each respondent</b>			<b>14</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Total score for all 3 respondents =</b>			<b>37</b>		
<b>Total possible score (5 possible points x 4 indicators x 3 respondents) =</b>			<b>60</b>		
			<b>37 ÷ 60 = 61.7%</b>		

After going through all of the indicators for each of the characteristics/principles being measured, and calculating the percentage score, you will have a table like the one on the left below. You can see a full-size example of this sheet on page 164. This overall grade of 54.3% could be interpreted on the basis of the suggested scale on the right below.

Implementing

<b>Water and sanitation delivery scores</b>	
<b>Principles</b>	<b>% score</b>
1) Participation	55.4%
4) Responsiveness	60.3%
6) Equity	50.7%
7) Effectiveness and Efficiency	61.7%
8) Accountability	43.6%
Overall Grade for five measures of Water and Sanitation Delivery	<b>54.3%</b> (average of scores)

<b>Suggested “grading scale”</b>	
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Quality of governance</b>
85% – 100%	Very Good (Keep it up!)
65% – 84%	Good (But still room to improve)
50% – 64%	Fair (Can do much better)
35% – 49%	Poor (More commitment and attention needed)
Below 35%	Very Poor (Something is drastically wrong; needs immediate attention)



8. **Compile data** Where community members are either busy, illiterate, or for some reason unable to fill out their own Community Report Cards, data can be gathered by a simple survey. People are approached separately and asked to rate the indicators verbally while a researcher fills in the report cards for them. Where it's appropriate, you might use an interactive educative process in which the Community Report Cards is completed at a consultation or meeting. People gather and sit together, fill out their own report cards, then participate in a lively discussion on the issue area. This kind of meeting can include local government officials if they were a part of the initial stakeholders meeting. Otherwise, as Step 9 suggests, a consensus report card might be sent to the local government officials, inviting them to participate in a dialogue with the community on perceptions and experiences regarding the performance of local governments in that particular area of service delivery or resource distribution.
9. **Disseminate and discuss results** After these results have been calculated, they need to be put in an understandable, clear, and eye-catching format that can be used to good effect as a tool to gain the attention and interest of local government officials and to bring them into a dialogue process.

One of the most useful ways in which the Community Report Card process has been used is to raise awareness and gain more leveraging power by publicizing the results of the Report Card and any follow-up action through the media. News releases, press conferences, and media interviews can encourage local government officials to sit up and take notice if they have not taken the negotiations of the community seriously. It can also be a way to highlight the collaborative nature of the L2L Dialogue process and the way a particular community is seeking to work in partnership with local government authorities.

Disseminating the results is in many ways the most crucial component of the Community Report Card process and it is wise to strategize about the dissemination and dialogue process at the stakeholders' meeting and to develop a media advocacy plan well before the data has been compiled.

### Process timeline 6.3 — Community Report Cards for community monitoring strategies



Activity	Timeline	Notes
1. Select an issue of concern	2 – 3 hours	
2. Convene a stakeholders meeting	1 – 2 days	
3. Define an objective for the use of the report cards		In the stakeholders' meeting
4. Select respondents		In the stakeholders' meeting
5. Select the aspect of governance to be Assessed		In the stakeholders' meeting
6. Develop a set of indicators	1 – 2 weeks	Depends on the number of focus group discussions held
7. Decide on a rating system		In the stakeholders' meeting
8. Compile data	1 – 2 weeks (if survey) 1 day (if consultation workshop)	Whether data will be compiled through a survey or through a consultation workshop can be decided in the stakeholders' meeting
9. Disseminate and discuss results	1 – 4 weeks	



## Activity 6.4 — Understanding media advocacy

### Context

One of the ways in which advocates bring awareness to and gain support for their key concerns is by informing the general public using mass media.

### Objectives

Introduce the concept of doing media advocacy to advance the goals of the community in the L2L Dialogue process.

### Background

Creating awareness and support among the general public is known as media advocacy. It is an advocacy strategy that is becoming increasingly popular globally among all sorts of groups. There are several reasons why media advocacy can be an important avenue of influence for community leaders to explore:

- Greater visibility for pressing community issues
- Public awareness and potential support for these key concerns
- Credibility as a community-based group
- Improved position in negotiations with local government officials
- increased potential for reaching decision makers we are not directly negotiating with

There are many different types of mass media: (a) daily and weekly newspapers, (b) magazines and newsletters of various sorts, (c) radio and television, (d) and Internet-based media such as websites, blogs, web-based news networks, and newsgroups. While mass media are still controlled by the government in many countries, particularly in the South, increasingly media are becoming privately owned and operated. There are also small but important initiatives in community media, including television, radio, and the Internet, which are all potentially important allies.

It is important that we develop media advocacy skills and gain more knowledge of how the media work in order to be effective in doing media advocacy work. We need to know how to get our stories told in the news, but more importantly, we need to ensure that our issues are reported in a way that supports our advocacy. For this we need to seek out the training in media advocacy work offered by various civil society organizations and donors in the development world. Alternatively, we can seek help from other groups that have already developed good media relations and are willing to help us in our own work.

Invite the people to this activity who are interested to becoming involved in media advocacy in the community. A small exercise will help initiate a discussion on media advocacy work. The exercise is followed by an input session on media advocacy that can draw upon the key points presented in Handout 6.4 — Tips on media advocacy work on page 121.

This session will require more than one facilitator as participants are exploring new skills and will probably need more support as they go along. Plan for at least two facilitators to support participants in their process during the buzz group and small group work.

### Resources Required

- A large room with sufficient wall space and spaces for small group work.
- Large white sheets of paper
- Colored marker pens
- Old newspapers, magazines, and newsletters
- Masking tape

### Methodology

1. **Introduce media advocacy** Begin the session with a brief introduction to media advocacy and its potential as a tool to strengthen the community's efforts to bring about social change. The facilitator might invite a resource person familiar with media advocacy from a local civil society organization to give a short presentation. If this is possible, brief the resource person on the community's basic concerns and community plan, and ask them to speak for no longer than 20–30 minutes.



2. **Facilitate a discussion on the presentation** Once the resource person has given her input, open the meeting for a round of questions and answers. Note down on flipchart paper the questions arising that may be useful to expand upon at a later time.
3. **Discussion on successful media advocacy** Ask participants to form groups of three with the two people nearest to them. Ask them to discuss examples of successful media advocacy work carried out by local, national, or even international community groups that they know about. Give the buzz groups no more than 10 minutes to think about what made these media advocacy initiatives successful. When sharing with the whole group, have each small group name 2–3 media advocacy initiatives that they consider most successful and three reasons why.
4. **Bring media advocacy “tips” to the current situation** Use ideas from the successful media advocacy discussion in step 3 in a discussion of the “Tips on media advocacy work” handout beginning on page 121. Divide the participants into groups of 4–6 people. Distribute different newspapers, magazines, and newsletters to each group to help spark ideas. Ask the groups to come up with a media plan for advancing work on one of the community’s issues and give them the following instructions:
  - a. Come up with a message you think must be conveyed, to which audience, and why.
  - b. List different media outlets that you might approach to reach the particular audience you just identified. How will you approach these media outlets?
  - c. Prepare a brief message using the guidelines in the “Tips on media advocacy work” handout. What information would you need to include in that media message? Where would you be able to find that data? What human angle would you use to ground the issue? What ideas do you have for an image or series of images that could accompany the media message?
  - d. Come up with an idea for creating a news event to bring attention to the issue you have identified. Describe some of the key elements of what you would do. Who would you involve? Have fun with this!
5. **Small group preparation and presentations** Give the groups at least one to 1½ hours to complete their work. Invite the groups to present their work in creative ways, using more than one member of the team for the presentation. They are free to use large white paper, colored markers, colored paper, and anything else that they can think of to describe their idea to others. Allow no more than 7–8 minutes for each group to present its ideas. Tell them that the idea behind the best presentation will be used as the basis for the community’s media advocacy initiative.
6. **Vote on the best media advocacy ideas** Once all the presentations have been made, invite participants to give their votes on the best idea to take forward. This can be done by asking participants to raise their hands or stand up to indicate their vote when the name or number of the small group is called out. A ranking can also be done, with people raising either two hands or one hand, indicating the presentation they liked the best with two hands raised, and the runner-up with one raised hand.
7. **Closing circle and reflection** After the excitement of the presentation, voting and clapping for the best idea presented, bring people back into a quieter circle for a quick reflection on the half-day spent together. Invite people to share freely but limit their inputs to three minutes.

## Session timeline 6.4 — Understanding media advocacy



Activity	Timeline	Notes
A round of introductions followed by an introduction to the topic of media advocacy	10 – 15 minutes	
Input on media advocacy by a resource person followed by a round of questions	30 minutes	If a resource person is invited to make input, brief her ahead of time on the community's needs and concerns.
Buzz group of 2–3 people on successful media campaigns they know of, followed by quick report back	20 – 30 minutes	
Small group work to develop ideas for media advocacy for the community	1 – 1½ hours	
Report back from small group work	30 minutes – 1 hour	time depends on the number of small groups
Vote on the best idea to bring to the community media advocacy plan	15 minutes	
Closing circle	10 – 15 minutes	

## Handout 6.4 — Tips on media advocacy work<sup>1</sup>

1. **Be clear about your message, audience and purpose** Media advocacy work needs clarity and focus. In the L2L Dialogues process, the core leadership team will have to decide what message it wants to convey, to which target audience, and why. There are several times during the L2L Dialogue process when media advocacy might be useful. At the beginning of the process, when the community has developed its vision, goals, and community plan, media coverage might give the community credibility, highlight key community concerns, and attract the attention of potential allies. Once the community has actually linked up with local government officials, the L2L Dialogue process itself—how communities build partnerships with local governments—might be a story worth telling.

If the community is facing challenges contacting the right local government officials and is seeking allies and support, the right media coverage can strengthen the position of the community in the process. The other important thing to recognize is that different media will communicate to different audiences. For example, if an article is published in an environmental magazine, a local trade union newsletter, or a church bulletin, or if a community spokesperson goes on a local radio talk show, a different audience is reached in every instance. It is important to decide who the community wants to influence through its media advocacy and what message it wants to convey.

2. **Timing is everything** Doing media advocacy work takes considerable time, effort, and resources. It is therefore vital that the community is ready for such an engagement. Before a community group launches its own media advocacy work the community needs to have: (a) a vision, shared principles, a basic community plan in place, and some unity of agreement about the central issues they want to address together; (b) some awareness of what is involved in media advocacy work and general agreement with the community leadership team about going ahead with media advocacy work on behalf of the community; (c) initial data gathering efforts to support their advocacy; and (d) someone prepared to present the community's views to reporters if needed.

A second aspect of timing is staying abreast of events at a societal level. For example, if a road safety campaign has just been launched by the transport minister and a community has been advocating an overhead pedestrian bridge for their children to get to school, then bringing their story to the media at that time would be a good media advocacy strategy.

A third aspect of timing is staying abreast of political happenings and big issues that may overshadow your message because they have taken over the time and attention of mainstream media. Under these circumstances, different strategies may be required.

3. **Developing the message** Getting the media to use a story is only half of the challenge facing anyone doing media advocacy. The prior and more important half is reporting the issue in a way that supports the community's advocacy position. It is vital that people involved in media advocacy ensure that the story describes accurately the actual situation "on the ground." At the same time, how the story is "framed" or the "spin" given to a story has a strong influence on how the audience views the issue, the people presenting the issue, and the possible solutions presented. It is important therefore to understand the nature of mass media as well as the people who work in it.



Handout

Although news is often presented in a way that appears open, fair, and even-handed, media entities are owned and controlled by people who have vested interests and particular political positions. This is true of media professionals, including journalists, and reporters. They doubtless hold opinions on different issues and may even have deep biases or prejudices that affect the way they report a story. We also need to keep in mind that media professionals are likely to have real time and space limitations. The most effective advocates help media professionals do their job by providing them with news feeds and media messages that show the reporter why an issue is newsworthy. These media messages, also known as “press releases,” need to contain four main parts:

- a. *Statement*: The statement is the main idea of the message that comes at the start of the press release. You need to be able to present the heart of your message in just a few strong sentences.
- b. *Evidence*: The evidence supports the statement or the central issue with facts and any available figures. Evidence should include data that is easy for the reporter to use and easy for the audience to understand.
- c. *Example or anecdote*: After providing the facts, it is important to give them a human face. Try to include an anecdote or a personal experience that presents the human element of the issue clearly. You can also submit photos that illustrate the facts or the human face of the issue.
- d. *Action desired*: The desired action is what you want the audience to do as a result of hearing your message. If the objective of the media advocacy is to bring about a certain sort of solution, that should also be clearly stated in this section.

It is important to frame the message as a matter of social justice and not an isolated problem. The struggles that communities face need solutions larger than individual or collective action alone; they need to include government accountability for ensuring the basic human rights of all people. The media message needs to make that perspective very clear in order for the story to have the right “spin.” While it is important to find ways to catch the attention of media professionals, it is best to stick to the facts and never over exaggerate or connect unrelated issues unless there is clear evidence for such a connection. It is also important never to lie to reporters. If they ask a question that you cannot answer, simply say that you do not know the answer, but will find the answer and communicate it promptly.

4. **Ideas for Creating News** Often, sending out a press release or calling a reporter to inform them about a story is not enough. These days a story is only newsworthy if it is sensational or dramatic. Therefore, if advocates are keen to get an issue into mainstream media like national or regional newspapers, radio or television, they must become creative and stage what is known as a “news event.” News events range from press conferences to demonstrations, rallies, marches, or events that result in compelling photographs or images.

Community-based groups have used many different strategies for “grabbing” media attention. One particularly successful media campaign has been using the Community Report Cards process. Once the community has used the report cards to assess a particular issue or situation they face, they hold a news event to publicize their findings and perhaps give out awards. Awards are often given with wit and sarcastic humor. Awards such as the biggest polluter among local factories, the most improved community environment, or most child-friendly hospital all draw attention to different issues in a way that makes news.



Handout

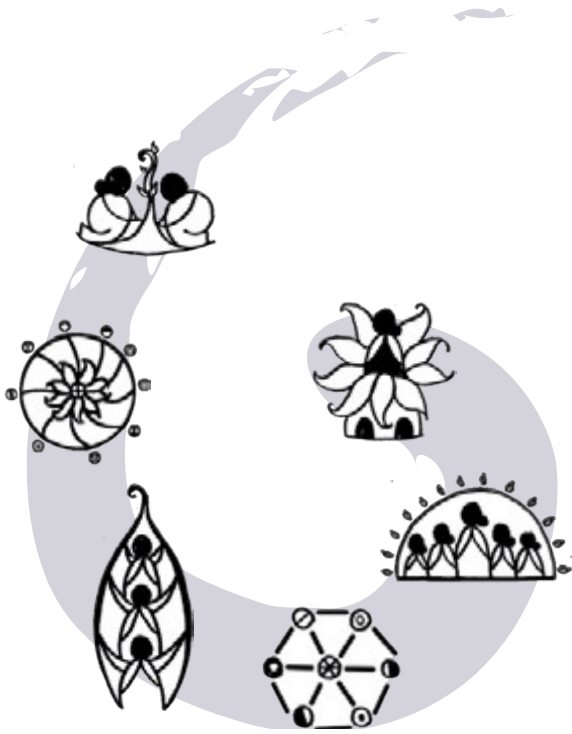
5. **Working with Reporters** You will be much more successful doing media advocacy work in the mainstream media if you understand how media establishments and reporters work. Here are five important tips for working with reporters:
- a. Different media establishments have different deadlines and different requirements. Inquire and find out what these guidelines are so they can inform your planning process. We need to be flexible, as bigger media outlets are often inflexible and will not accept information or press releases at the last minute. This is also increasingly true of online media and smaller publications such as church, trade union, or women’s club newsletters.
  - b. Familiarize yourself with local reporters, particularly those who are interested in community issues. Find out which desk of the newspaper will be interested in your stories. These may be the news desks responsible for environment, women’s affairs, local council issues or local community news. Some community leaders establish ties with media professionals through other engagements and then use these linkages to draw their attention to the L2L Dialogue process.
  - c. Treat reporters with respect and draw out their professionalism by speaking to them civilly and only with the facts. Be careful not to damage your credibility by overstating an issue, becoming emotional, or using strong language. It is also unlikely that reporters will contact you again if you are in any way aggressive with them.
  - d. Choose one or two people from the core leadership team to be the community’s media liaison. Media liaison people are entrusted by an organization or a community to be the contact for reporters to follow up on a press release or a news event. This person should be available in a regular and reliable way, and should have a contact number where they can be contacted.
  - e. A working relationship with the media means being able to respond to their queries and questions on other issues as well. Advocates often find that journalists and reporters will contact them on points unrelated to the original issue they have been pushing. For example, a community media liaison person who has been working with the media on the issue of sanitation and drainage may get a phone call from a reporter asking for an opinion on recent changes in local government budgets. It is clearly important to stay well informed about other issues related to your own community media advocacy issue.



Handout

## SECTION 6 NOTES

1. Taken from the Asia Pacific Council of AIDS Service Organizations (APCASO) series, *HIV Advocacy from the Ground Up: A Toolkit for Strengthening Local Responses*, Part 4, “Advocacy Action Tools.” Available from <http://www.apcaso.org/> and elsewhere.



## FACILITATION GUIDE

The last section focuses on the art of facilitation and the process tools that help community members work together effectively. You're ready to use this section anytime you want to focus on the practical details of leading groups in a participatory way. It may be useful to leaders looking for techniques to support project teams or insights that further their own self-development as facilitators.

- Practicing the Art of Facilitation
- Six Principles of Facilitation
- Five Pointers for Facilitating Meetings and Groups
- Consensus Building
- Useful Community Process Tools
  - 7.1 Icebreakers
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  - 7.3 Fostering unity and setting basic agreements
  - 7.4 Team-building exercises
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## Practicing the Art of Facilitation

In order to conduct any phase of the L2L Dialogue process it is crucial to have good facilitation. Often groups overlook the importance of a facilitator in ensuring the success of a process. The quotes included on this and the next several pages reflect the particular qualities and attitudes facilitators need to effectively facilitate group processes. In the case of the L2L Dialogue, the facilitator is often a grassroots woman leader within the community with a stake in the issues being raised. The challenge will arise in making the subtle though essential distinction between leading and facilitating a process.



The role of the facilitator is to provide a process that will help the group to discuss their own content in the most satisfactory and productive way possible. The facilitator is neutral about the content of the meeting, and has no stake in the decisions that are taken. The facilitator is totally concerned with process and not at all with content. The facilitator's responsibility is to ensure that there is good communication in the group and that all members are satisfied with, and fully committed to, the decisions taken.

– Anne Hope and Sally Timmel, *Training for Transformation: A Handbook for Community Workers*, Bk 2, p. 49.

The traditional leader is the one who takes charge of a situation, responds quickly with decisions that need to be made, and is ready to stand in the front line when it comes to taking action on decisions made. However, in community processes, leaders also need to master the art of facilitation: listening deeply, helping others see and respect the perspectives of everyone in a group, gently urging and supporting emerging processes, and being self-reflective and mature enough about their own interests to let the decisions that emerge take hold. The *Tao Te Ching* says, “The mark of a great leader is that the people will say, ‘we did it ourselves.’” This statement is equally true if we substitute the word facilitator: “The mark of a great facilitator is that the people will say, ‘we did it ourselves.’”

The main goal of the facilitator in the L2L Dialogue is to enable effective involvement of grassroots women leaders and their partners in making positive changes in their own lives and the lives of their communities. The role of a facilitator is to support the emergence of the best in the people who engage in this process. This is not easy given that grassroots women leaders typically live in the communities they work in. This is why it is very important that facilitators work in teams to support each other, helping each other stay clear about the process, while staying transparent and open with community members.

This support is essential as facilitators develop their own personal philosophy and practices while leading a community through a process such as the L2L Dialogue. Facilitators need to stay self-reflectively conscious of their own interests in particular issues and make efforts never to use facilitation to give them personal power or control. Facilitating as a team is a way to help each stay mindful of serving the group rather than personal interests. Know Yourself on page 130, offers a set of questions that facilitators of the L2L Dialogue process can use to better understand themselves even as they help community members better understand their community and concerns.

# Six Principles of Facilitation



Another way to help keep the focus on serving the community is to steep yourself in the principles and practices of good facilitation. While every community where the L2L Dialogue process will be used is different, there are universal principles that will apply to every situation. Here are some of the key insights that facilitators initiating and leading the Local-to-Local Dialogue process need to keep in mind.<sup>1</sup>

## 1) PLAN THOROUGHLY

Although issues raised in a L2L Dialogue meeting with local government officials may be quite urgent, it is best not to rush. Advance and thorough preparation and planning, including fully engaging community members in the process is vital.

- *Consider sustainability* From early on, think about the sustainability of the process. Pace and design the process to ensure long-term relationships and activities.
- *Make a back-up plan* Always have an alternative plan in case the path you're on doesn't work out. The facilitators need to be able to help the community stay flexible and open to new circumstances and alternative solutions.
- *Utilize living resources* Network with others who have conducted their own L2L Dialogue process to identify and assess their strategies, how they managed different situations, and how they approached the local governments in their areas.
- *Facilitate as a team* If there is more than one facilitator leading a community, it will be essential that the facilitators are clear among themselves about their roles and responsibilities. Working as a team has many advantages in a community context; there is likely to be more dialogue, participation and a chance to experiment with different way of organizing the community.
- *Practice before implementing* If there are sections or activities in this resource manual that you have not tried out before, try to use them with a group of friends or colleagues before using them for the first time with a community group. Some games and learning processes require practice in order to deliver the instructions for them well.
- *Consider diversity* Anticipate that in every group of people there may be unevenness and hierarchies. As facilitators, we need to be aware that social, cultural, and economic factors such as education level, gender, age, personality, and income level will also determine people's ability to participate freely in community processes.
- *Understand that everyone participates and learns differently* Encourage participation of all by allowing sufficient time for everyone to think through their responses. Consider using different formats such as pairings, triads, and small groups to ensure that everyone is able to participate in the discussion.

- *Prepare for conflict* Be prepared with techniques to intervene, take control, and redirect the proceedings of a meeting or a session if there is a surge of emotions or a conflict arises. A facilitator might decide to call for a time out or a break to allow time for processing what has arisen with those concerned. It is important to know how to balance between interventions and letting the process flow to allow people to voice their frustrations and unmet needs.



“To facilitate means, to make things easy. [A Leadership Support Process] facilitator is an individual who enables groups and organizations to work together more effectively, to collaborate and to effectively plan and work towards goals. She does this by supporting the best thinking of the group, encouraging full participation and fostering shared responsibility.”<sup>2</sup>

-National Congress of Neighborhood Women

## 2) MAINTAIN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Effective communication is the lubricant that greases the hinges of any social process. The facilitator has a pivotal role in ensuring effective communications. Here are key practices.

- *Listen more speak less* Deep listening is one of the keys to effective communication. It is vitally important that a facilitator be fully present during the process she is facilitating and actively listen to what everyone in the community is saying. This means fully absorbing, acknowledging, and bringing in seemingly divergent views so that everyone feels listened to in the process.
- *Pay attention to non-verbal communication* Listening also means recognizing both verbal and nonverbal messages that indicate emotions that cannot be communicated easily in groups. When people are uncomfortable, bored, tired, or otherwise not participating in the process, they often communicate these feelings in nonverbal ways.
- *Maintain neutrality* Another vital aspect of good facilitation is maintaining neutrality through the process. Be conscious not to take sides, but to allow all “sides” to emerge in a discussion. Be conscious when making statements like “good idea” or “good point” after someone has made a comment you like. This may appear to another community member who holds an opposing few that you have taken sides (Ingrid Bens, p. 23).<sup>3</sup>
- *Reflect ideas back to the group* Repeat ideas and points made by community members back to ensure that you have understood the point they made. Do not paraphrase or improve what they say. Simply reflect back what you hear them say with minimum alteration, to give them an opportunity to give examples or clarify further if they choose.
- *Stay With the Group* When recording ideas from the discussions, do not put in words that you think are better without first checking with the people participating in the process. Adding your own words could result in people losing confidence in what they are saying and thinking that the facilitator is partial to her own perspective over theirs.

- *Intervene Where Appropriate* Try not to interrupt people when they are speaking, but if the person has gone off topic, gently try to bring them back to the focus of the discussion. If a person's time is up, gently indicate that to them using an agreed upon system.
- *Silence is O.K.* Allow silence when necessary so that people have time to formulate their thoughts and questions.
- *Use Simple Language* Be conscious of participants' different levels of language comprehension by using language that can be understood by most people in the meeting.
- *Check Audio-Visual Equipment* If any audio-visual equipment is being used, be sure that it is working prior to the meeting and that you or someone in the room is familiar with the device being used.
- *Facilitate Communication Through Seating* Arrange seating in a circle, if possible, to enhance communication. If the room is too small, be sure that those in the different corners of the room are drawn into the discussion process.
- *Eliminate Distractions* Be conscious of ambient noise in and around the room. Sometimes it is possible to reduce noise levels by a simple verbal intervention to help maintain the focus in the room.

### 3) STAY FOCUSED ON THE OBJECTIVE

Once the L2L Dialogue process has gotten underway, the most important work of the facilitator is to help people clearly identify community concerns so that they will be able to raise these concerns to local authorities. It is always important to keep checking in with everyone involved in the process to listen and interact with any concerns, new problems, and suggestions being raised. If we were to rigidly hold onto a plan, without recognizing the emergence of new factors and possibilities, the beauty of this transformative process may be lost. One way to keep the thread of the goals of the L2L Dialogue running right through the process is to:

- Reiterate and check in on common understandings as you go along
- Recap common agreements from meeting to meeting and session to session
- Keep creating opportunities for consensus building
- Regularly refer back to the big picture and the overall change that we want to see to help people connect with their passion for the work

### 4) ESTABLISH RAPPORT AND MODEL BEHAVIOR

- *Gaining trust* Demonstrating your sincerity to the community will take time, particularly if you are not from the community. The best way to gain people's trust is to be honest and transparent about your interests and to listen deeply rather than

immediately offering solutions. If you are a member of the community where you are initiating the L2L Dialogues process, find common ground by honestly sharing your own experiences and life story.

- *Speak and share from experience* Sharing our lived experiences is always the best way to establish rapport with others. In a community context, facilitators carry rapport with them if they are already acting as community organizers. When personal sharing isn't possible or appropriate, a facilitator grounded in a community can still help others raise concerns and discuss issues in ways that are relevant and productive.
- *Instead of speaking, act!* Model the behavior that you would like to see in the group. For example, if starting meetings on time is an issue, the facilitator has to model punctuality by always being ready at the agreed time.



Quote

“The role of an animator is to help a community discover and use all its potential for creative and constructive team work. An animator needs all the skills of a facilitator but the animator also has a special responsibility to stimulate people to think critically, to identify problems, to find solution.”

– Anne Hope and Sally Timmel, *Training for Transformation: A Handbook for Community Workers, Book 2*: p. 49

## 5. TAKE TIME TO UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION

While the underlying patterns that lead to poverty and disempowerment may be similar, each community and situation has a sociocultural, historical, and political context that is unique. Becoming clear about the actual situation is fundamental to the change process, including what the desired outcome is, who needs to be involved, and how to effectively keep them engaged. Give sufficient time for this kind of foundational work and resist the urge to rush through mapping, identifying values, building trust and commitment, and forming a common understanding and community-wide consensus.

## 6. KNOW YOURSELF

*Be aware of your own perceptions as a facilitator* Awareness of our own thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and beliefs helps us to become better facilitators. Sometimes strong biases are based on our personal beliefs. If we are not aware of them, we can unconsciously impose them on a group. Self-knowledge helps us stay conscious of our own barriers to understanding and keeps us objective as we guide others through community processes.

Take time after every session to self-evaluate. Think about how the whole process went and what you would do differently the next time. If you practice journaling, write down your thoughts in your journal. If you are working with other facilitators in a team, talk to the others about your work, and seek and give honest feedback to each other after each session. This approach can prevent tensions from developing within the facilitation team.

# Five Pointers for Facilitating Meetings and Groups



A formal meeting bringing together all community members is an important tool in the process of consensus building and decision making that will be needed throughout the L2L Dialogue process. Many styles of meetings are possible, so facilitators need to understand the context well in order to develop the best possible meeting style for the community they are working in. Unless the meeting involves, for example, five people and under, it is best that meetings use a facilitated process so that the time spent is used as productively as possible. (See Participatory Meeting Methods on page 150.)

Since the L2L Dialogue process seeks to empower community members and strengthen women's roles in community processes, the style of meeting chosen will need to reflect the foundational values of participation and inclusivity in decision making. The following guidelines focus specifically on conducting meetings.

## 1. CLARITY, PURPOSE AND RESPECTING AGREEMENTS

- *Meet beforehand* If the facilitators are working as a team, it will be important for them to meet prior to the meeting or workshop to go over their key points and the desired flow and structure of the meeting.
- *Prepare for decision making* If decisions need to be made at the meeting, know what information sharing and consensus building is needed before these decisions can be made. Ensure that all of the information and resources are available and that all of the people who need to give inputs and reports are given sufficient time to prepare.
- *Communicate the context* State the purpose of the meeting clearly before calling the meeting.
- *Provide participants with a clear agenda* Soon after a meeting's welcome and "check in" process (described below), clarify the purpose, process, expected outcomes, and time required with everyone present.
- *Negotiate extra time* If meetings cannot end on time, then half an hour or an hour before the established end time, check in with the group to ensure that everyone agrees to continue the discussion for a set amount of time.

## 2. CHECKING IN AND SETTING THE TONE

- *Set the tone* All meetings benefit from having a short time at the start to set the tone of the meeting. This could mean setting ten minutes aside for singing, sharing, or playing a game that fosters a spirit of community and togetherness. (See Fostering Unity and Setting Basic Agreements on page 145.)

- *Personalize each gathering* “Checking in” is a process often used at the beginning of meetings run by women. It is advocated by the Leadership Support Process of the National Congress of Neighborhood Women, a member of the Huairou Commission and GROOTS International. “Checking in” involves sharing something personal, not issue- or task-related, at the start of the meeting. Different questions can be used depending on the level of familiarity of the group. Examples include: What is one thing that has been going well in your life this week? What is something that is not going so well in your life this week? and What is something you like to do to relax?
- *Establish working agreements* Establish some simple meeting ground rules early in the process. This means getting everyone in the meeting to agree on how the meeting will be conducted and what agreements everyone is making to ensure that the goals of the meeting are achieved. Ground rules, or basic agreements, can include things such as listening deeply without interrupting others; agreeing on time limits; acknowledging agreements about the facilitator’s role in the meeting; making I-statements that reflect personal experiences; distinguishing observations of others from judgments of others; agreeing about other factors such as smoking, hand phones or cell phones, and other possible distractions; sharing understandings about consensus building; and agreeing on how to resolve differences when conflicts arise.
- *Agree on meeting process* Get the group to agree on processes that will guide the meeting. For example, agree on a time limit for input and a way of informing people (such as a bell) when their time is up. These agreements prevent a few people from monopolizing discussions and allow for more input and participation. They will also allow the facilitator to gently intervene if people are going off topic or their time is up.

### 3. MAINTAINING THE MEETING PROCESS AND CONSENSUS BUILDING

- *Keeping momentum and excitement* Establish the use of devices such as energizers, icebreakers, and different forms of group dynamics that keep people engaged and in a participatory mode. Even if the discussions are serious the group can take a break and be light and relaxed between discussions. (See Icebreakers and Energisers on page 137 and the pages that follow.)
- *Communicate with the group on the process* Check in regularly with participants to see whether they are keeping up with the process and whether they are able to understand the discussions that are going on. This can be done by stopping at regular intervals to check on the pace, the process, and the pulse of the meeting (Bens, p. 84). These are times to ask people questions such as: How do you feel about the pace of the meeting? Is this a good process? Are we making progress? Shall we try another technique? How is everyone feeling? and How are energy levels in the room?

- *Allow space for comments* Some facilitators use what is known as a “wailing wall,” “democracy wall,” or “speak-out space.” The facilitator posts a sheet of paper on the wall where people can draw an image or write a question or comment during break times. This can also help the facilitator gauge the level of clarity or support for an issue.
- *Establishing consensus* While consensus building is the best methodology for coming to community agreements on vision, principles, and values, and for identifying issues that will be raised as a community in the L2L Dialogue process, it is also the hardest type of decision making because it requires time, ample homework to gather all necessary information, and some level of trust built within the group prior. (See Consensus Building on page 135.)
- *When consensus fails, try democracy* When consensus building fails to lead to a consensus decision, another option is to use “multi-voting”—identifying priorities by placing dots or ticks against a list of possible decisions. The decision option with the most dots is proposed as the consensus. What is different about multi-voting is that people prioritize the different decision options rather than choosing one over the other. See “Dotmocracy” on page 110.

#### 4. IMPROVING YOUR QUESTIONING SKILLS

Asking the right question at the right time is an essential facilitation skill. The right probing question can lead a group into a deeper conversation, while a weak question can set the group in the wrong direction. Although this skill can only be mastered through experience in actual group situations, there are several guidelines to consider when preparing ourselves for a facilitation exercise (Bens, p. 35).

- Tailor questions to fit the contexts in which they are being asked
- Ask questions that people are capable of answering
- Use language that is clear and precise
- Create an atmosphere of safety before asking difficult questions
- Avoid leading questions, i.e. questions that lead people to specific conclusions
- Learn to ask follow-up questions that guide the flow of the conversation forward
- Prepare for every session by thinking about the whole session and what questions might need to be asked at different times



## 5. CLOSING AND MEETING SUMMARY

- All meetings benefit from a summary at the end. A summary is a quick review of all the main issues that were discussed and the decisions and assignments made—to help people take responsibility for tasks after the meeting. When appropriate, a guided group reflection on the meeting can serve this same function. Either way, this process brings clarity and focus to community members and should be followed up by a brief meeting note that lists the actions that need to be taken and who is responsible for the work.
- Close the meeting with some form of check-in for reflection and to share thoughts and feelings. This gives participants time to express their lingering concerns, give feedback on the content and process of the meeting, and offer appreciations. Different questions may be posed by the facilitator appropriate to the type of meeting.
- In some communities, it may be culturally appropriate to end with a song, prayer, or a mindful breathing and/or meditation exercise. This is a useful way to bring closure to a meeting and build solidarity, leaving participants feeling courageous, supported, and empowered to deal with what lies ahead.

See Closing, Evaluation, and Appreciation on page 154.

# Consensus Building

Decision making is a key process in meetings because the L2L Dialogue process itself is “based on collective agreements” crafted through a consensus process. Consensus building is “a series of systematic steps that involve people in working together to objectively search for optimal solutions.” Consensus does not mean that everyone gets exactly what they want or that they are 100% happy. Consensus means that the agreement is one that everyone can live with and is fully committed to implement (Bens, p. 70).

The facilitator plays a key role in the process of consensus building. Here are four ways in which facilitators help create consensus:

- Summarize a complex set of ideas to the satisfaction of everyone present
- Help a group create a common goal through consideration of everyone’s inputs
- Link people’s ideas together so that everyone feels that they are saying the same thing
- Make notes on a flip chart in a way that allows everyone to feel that they can accept the notes and all that has been recorded

## KEY ELEMENTS OF CONSENSUS

Consensus building needs time and care if the resulting agreements are to have the whole community’s full support and commitment. Key elements of consensus building include:



- *Sufficient time* Everyone must agree to allocate sufficient time for a decision that needs to be made, including time for gathering necessary information and for helping everyone understand all of the implications of different possible decisions.
- *Clear statement of the issue* Everyone needs to be clear about what issue is being discussed and what decisions need to be made.
- *Agreements on process* Prior to taking a decision, members agree on codes of behavior and on how a consensus will be reached if the process becomes difficult.
- *Thorough analysis* Facilitators provide all of the facts and identify all of the assumptions, clearly distinguishing the one from the other. The group must thoroughly analyze and understand the current situation in relation to the needed decision.
- *Brainstorm possible solutions* Once a thorough analysis has been conducted, the group brainstorms possible solutions. All suggested ideas are accurately recorded and neither interpreted nor judged by the facilitator. The suggested solutions are then evaluated according to a set of criteria created by the group.

- *Agree on a final decision* When the group reaches a final decision and an action plan to implement the decision, the facilitation team troubleshoots the action plan by anticipating all the possible reasons they may fail to implement key steps.



## GRADIENTS OF AGREEMENT

Sometimes when a group is arriving at what seems like a consensus statement or decision that everyone in the group appears to agree with, one member announces at the end of the conversation that she can't accept the group decision. At this point, others in the group may look upon her with disdain or try to use guilt or group pressure to insist that she conforms. This way of handling dissent only creates ill will in the group. At this point a facilitator might use a technique known as "Gradients of Agreement." In this technique the facilitator draws a scale like the one below on a flip chart (Bens, pp. 61–62).

<b>"Gradients of Agreement"</b>				
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
"I am totally opposed and have major differences with the solution."	"I have several serious reservations about the proposed solution."	"I have one or two reservations about the proposed solution."	"I can live with the proposed solution."  <i>(Note: This is the point of consensus, not 5.)</i>	"I am in total agreement with the proposed solution."



Once everyone has indicated where they want to be placed on the scale, the facilitator asks people who have placed themselves in 1, 2, or 3 to respond without judgment to two questions.

1. What puts you there?
2. What would move you to number 4?

The answers participants provide to the second question provide suggestions on how the consensus statement can be amended until it is agreeable to everyone. The facilitator's role is very important. She must actively solicit responses and facilitate the process until everyone can confidently indicate that they are at number 4 on the scale.

# Useful Community Process Tools

Facilitators bring the principles, practices, and pointers they've learned with them when they come to work in a community. But it's the facilitator's kit bag of process tools—the particular step-by-step procedures—that help the community move forward and work together. The rest of Section 7 is a tool kit with many of the techniques that have been used and refined in Local-to-Local Dialogues around the world. This is where to come to look for the “how-to” details you need in day-to-day practice.

## ICEBREAKERS AND ENERGIZERS

The first set of tools contains the activities commonly known as “icebreakers” and “energizers.” Icebreakers are used to introduce sessions and to give people a chance to introduce themselves to one another in an informal way. If carried out well, icebreakers can set the tone of a meeting or workshop and convey the message that we need the participation of everyone for the success of the event or process.

Energizers are similar to icebreakers in that they are short, fun activities. But energizers help people relax or rejuvenate themselves in a long program or during a difficult period of discussion. Energizers provide a physical break from the intensity of a workshop or meeting discussions and help lift the mood of a group. Often they involve physical movement, songs, or short games that make people laugh, relax, and unwind.

If icebreakers and energizers are done in a thematic way, they can even serve to reinforce a particular lesson or prepare the way for a discussion of a particular issue or concern. Facilitators and animators need to be sensitive to several things when leading an icebreaker or energizer:

- The particular sociocultural or religious norms of a community that may affect people's ability to participate fully in an icebreaker or energizer.
- The special needs of people in a group may limit the range of appropriate activities. A written word game, for example, may prohibit those who cannot read or write to participate. A game involving running might not enable people with physical challenges, such as elderly, pregnant, or sick people, to participate.
- The space available for the activity

Once a facilitator or animator becomes familiar with icebreakers and energizers she can draw in other creative ideas and use the exercises in different ways and in different moments.



## 7.1 Icebreakers

### Icebreaker 7.1.1 — Matching Sayings (proverbs)

**Time:** 15 minutes

**Resources:** Several sheets of paper, felt-tip pens



Method

#### Methodology<sup>4</sup>

1. **Prepare proverb pieces** The facilitator chooses ahead of time a few proverbs or common sayings from her community or country. She writes them down on pieces of paper and then tears each of these proverbs up into two or three pieces. There should be enough pieces for everyone in the room.
2. **Give a piece to everyone and describe the task** Tell everyone that they must find the rest of the proverb or saying by finding the one or two people who have the other pieces. Encourage everyone to introduce themselves to each other as they go about the room looking for their partners.
3. **Discuss any relevant proverbs or sayings** If a saying or proverb has special significance for community building, governance, or the topic of the workshop, the two or three people with those pieces can be asked to discuss the significance of the saying in relation to the workshop. The sayings can be adapted for the purposes of the workshop.

#### Variations

If there are people who cannot read in the groups, then drawings of animals can be used. Each person is given half of the animal picture and they have to find the person who has the matching half. Once the participants have found their partners, they can talk to each other about the myths within their cultures associated with that animal. Again, this will have to be adapted to the specific cultural setting.

Yet another variation is for the facilitator to whisper half the saying into the ear of one participant and the other half to another participant. She should have the saying written down and tick them off as she assigns different people to the phrase. In this case, choose sayings that are very familiar so that people are not confused by its wording.

## Icebreaker 7.1.2 — Birds of a Feather

**Time:** 15 minutes

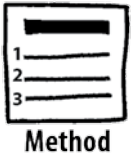
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**Resources:** Pieces of paper, pen; small bottle, bowl or box

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### Methodology

- 1. Prepare slips of paper** Think of birds and animals that have distinct but commonly known sounds like crows, hens, pigeons, dogs, cats, cows, and goats. Write one of these names on 3–4 small pieces of paper. Write another animal name on 3–4 more pieces of paper, and so forth, until the number of pieces of paper with names equals at least the total number of people in the group. Fold these pieces of paper up and put them in a bottle.
- 2. People locate their team mates** Ask people to pick a piece of paper to identify which animal they are. Participants will then locate their “team mates” by making the sound of their bird or animal as loudly as possible while listening to others. Ask people to pick a piece of paper. When everyone has a paper, the facilitator calls out “Start” and everyone has to find their bird or animal team mates as quickly as possible. If there are people who cannot read in the room, whisper the name of their animal or bird into their ears.
- 3. Introductions and checkin in the small groups** When everyone is in a small group, ask group members to introduce themselves to each other and to share three words that describe how they are feeling.



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### Variation

In a hilarious variation, the facilitator adds an action to the sheet of paper that people have to do while making the animal or bird sounds. For example, “Dogs—wag your tail as you say ‘bow-wow’” or “Cows—hold your hands on your head like ears as you say ‘moo moo.’” It is best to give them a definite action to do, as people can be very inventive and create actions that others in their group may not recognize.

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## Icebreaker 7.1.3 — Ball of String

**Time:** 20 minutes

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**Resources:** A ball of string

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Method

### Methodology

This is a great introduction exercise for a small group of between 10–15 people seated in a circle.<sup>5</sup>

1. **Describe the exercise** The facilitator explains to the group that she will throw the ball to another person in the circle after tying the end of the string to her finger. The string unwinds as it is thrown to the next person. The person who catches the ball of string states her name and chooses one word to describe a value or attitude that will be important to the meeting. She then wraps a bit of the string around her finger and throws the ball to another person.
2. **The group draws the string taut** As this exercise continues, a web of strings is formed in the middle of the circle. Some strings are held tightly and others are held loosely. Once everyone has introduced themselves, the facilitator asks everyone to tighten the web by winding any loose string around their fingers.
3. **Invite people to share analogies and metaphors** Meaningful analogies or metaphors can be drawn from this web of string, such as the inter-connectedness of the people in the circle that the web of string makes visible. Ask people to share what comes to mind. Be sure someone mentions the responsibility of everyone in the group to keep the web taut and well. “Since we are all interconnected, when someone has a low day or otherwise needs support, we can support each other when it’s needed.”
4. **Rewind the ball of string** After the analogies are drawn, the facilitator asks the last person with the ball of string to get up and walk back to the person who threw her the ball of string, winding the string back onto the ball as she walks. She then recalls the name of the person who threw her the ball and the one word that she contributed to the group. The next person then stands up and walks over to the person who threw her the ball, again stating the name and the one word contributed by that person. This continues until the ball of string has been rewound and returned to the facilitator.

## 7.2 Energizers

### Energizer 7.2.1 — “I love you because...”

**Time:** 10 – 15 minutes

**Resources:** None

#### Methodology

1. **Ask the participants to sit in a circle** If you are using chairs, make sure that there are only enough chairs for the number of people in the room, less one.
2. **The facilitator explains the process**
  - The person in the middle goes up to one person in the circle and addresses that person by name, saying, “\_\_\_, I love you because...”
  - The speaker then chooses a physical feature of the person, such as something the person is wearing (earrings, glasses or watch), the color of the person’s outfit, the length of the person’s hair, or the person’s gender or age. For example, the person in the middle might go up to a participant and say, “Stella, I love you because you’re wearing blue today.”
  - As soon as this is said, everyone wearing blue must stand and switch their seats.
  - While this scramble for seats is happening, the person in the middle quickly finds an empty seat.
  - The person who remains standing becomes the next person in the middle and repeats the same process.
  - This goes on for a few rounds until people have had a good laugh and a bit of a workout.



Method

### Energizer 7.2.2 — Community Drums

**Time:** 5 – 10 minutes

**Resources:** Whatever is available in the meeting room

#### Methodology

- **Collect, gather, make music, and dance** Ask participants to look around the room for things they can use for drumming: bottles, plastic containers, cans, sticks, etc. Use whatever is available in the meeting room or nearby space, the more imaginative, the better! Everyone finds an “instrument” and is invited to come into a circle. Anyone who is comfortable can vocalize drumming sounds or use different parts of their body as a drum or musical instrument. The facilitator invites someone to take the lead in getting everyone to dance in a sort of procession while playing their instruments. This continues long enough to get a good rhythm going, then participants return to their seats.



## Energizer 7.2.3 — Making Melodies

**Time:** 5 minutes

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**Resources:** None

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### Methodology

Making Melodies is a simple song that is sung with actions.<sup>6</sup> The basic words of the song are:

Making melodies in my heart (x3)  
To the king of kings

**Demonstrate and practice** The facilitator sings the song once and then asks people to join in. After one or two rounds of singing the song, the facilitator demonstrates the actions while calling out “neck bent” and “hand front.” Then she sings the song again while she and the group hold their necks bent and their hands in the front position.

- Add a third action while singing** In the next round, the facilitator adds an action and shouts out the new series: “necks bent, hands front, knees bent” while she and the group hold these positions as they continue singing.
  - Add a fourth action while singing** In the next round, the facilitator adds another action and shouts out the new series: “necks bent, hands front, knees bent, tongues out” while she and the group hold these positions and continue singing (with their tongues out!).
  - Add a fifth action while singing** In the final round, the facilitator adds a final action and shouts out the final series: “necks bent, hands front, knees bent, tongues out, turn around” while she and the group hold these positions and continue singing the song.
  - Clap and conclude** By this time everyone is laughing because of the silly sounds that we are making with our tongues sticking out. Have everyone clap and return to their seats.
-

## Energizer 7.2.4 — Sagudu, Sagudu, Sagudu

**Time:** 15 – 20 minutes

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**Resources:** Chalk, a piece of tape, or string to draw a line on the ground.

---

### Methodology

This energizer sets up an exciting competition that requires both sides to invent interesting strategies. This game works well with less than 15–20 people, but only if everyone is able bodied and eager to run around and have a laugh.<sup>7</sup>



Method

1. **Divide the group and draw a line** Divide the participants into two groups. Draw a border line between the two groups.
  2. **Describe how to capture a person** Inform the two groups that each group has to “capture” as many members of the other group as possible. This happens by taking turns sending one representative across the border line to try and capture a person on the other side. The trick however is that the representative has to take a deep breath and chant “Sagudu, Sagudu, Sagudu” rapidly and continuously without taking a breath while trying to make the capture.
  3. **...how the game is played** She will grab one person on the other side and try to pull this person back across the border line to join her group. She may run back to her side if she thinks she is running out of breath. If she runs out of breath while she is still on the other side of the border line, the opposing group may catch her and keep her on their side.
  4. **...the teams’ role** Players will try to prevent captures and to keep the ones chanting Sagudu from getting back to their own side.
-

## Energizer 7.2.5 — Mother Hen and the Fox

**Time:** 5 – 10 minutes

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**Resources:** Two handkerchiefs

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**Method**

### Methodology

This popular children’s game also makes an excellent team spirit game. In this version of the game, the group is divided into two teams of 5–10 people.

1. **Describe the game and organize the players** Ask each group to designate one person as the leader of the group. She or he will be the Mother Hen. Everyone else stands in a row behind the Mother Hen, linking their hands around the waist of the person standing in front of them.
2. **The fox pulls away while players hold on** The facilitator then acts as the Fox, chasing the last person on each row, trying to pull them away from the Mother Hen. The people whom the Fox manages to pull away become the Fox’s accomplices, who then help the Fox tear others away from the Mother Hen.
3. **Laughter and conclusion** The game ends whenever all the people are out of breath and have had a good laugh.

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### Variation: Catch the Dragon’s Tail

In the “Catch the Dragon’s Tail” variation, the group forms two lines with the first person in each line as the head of the dragon. The last person on each line waves a handkerchief—the dragon’s tail. The two “dragons” chase each other, trying to catch the other dragon’s tail. Again, the game ends when one of the dragons catches the other’s tail or when people are laughing and have had a good time.

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## 7.3 Fostering Unity and Setting Basic Agreements

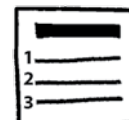
### Unity and agreement 7.3.1 — Cooking a Pot of Stew

**Time:** 30 – 40 minutes

**Resources:** Flipchart paper with a drawing of a big pot on it; colored or plain paper; scissors and felt tip pens; tape to stick the cut out shapes onto the flip chart paper.

#### Methodology

This is a good exercise to foster a sense of common responsibility for the success of a meeting or workshop.<sup>8</sup>



Method

1. **Prepare a drawing of a big pot** Draw on a flip chart or large sheet of paper ahead of time. Make it look realistic by drawing a fire underneath the pot.
2. **Describe the context and distribute resources** Distribute colored papers, felt tip pens, and scissors to the participants. Tell them that we are using the analogy of cooking a pot of stew. To make a pot of stew we need many ingredients, including meat, potatoes, carrots, spices and so forth. The meeting is like a pot of stew that needs a lot of good ingredients to make it a success.
3. **Describe the task** Ask each participant to cut a piece of colored paper into the shape of an ingredient to be added to the pot of stew. Instruct them to write on their cut out paper one expectation they have for the meeting or one thing they want to contribute to the meeting.
4. **Collect the ingredients** Invite participants to stick their ingredient inside the pot with tape. Once everyone has shared their ingredients for the meeting, the facilitator reviews all of the inputs and summarizes their expectations and contributions. The purpose of reviewing expectations is to achieve a kind of “contract” with the participants about the focus and content of the workshop. The purpose of reviewing contributions is to acknowledge people’s implied commitment to the meeting’s success.
5. **Review expectations and contributions** Keep the “pot of stew” up to the end of the meeting or workshop and cross check the evaluations to see if the expectations for the meeting have been achieved.

## Unity and agreement 7.3.2 — Rowing the Unity Boat

**Time:** 30 – 40 minutes

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**Resources:** A drawing of a long boat on a flip chart sheet, colored paper cut into the shape of oars, felt tip pens and tape to stick the oars on the drawing.

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Method

### Methodology

This exercise uses the analogy of rowing a boat together to emphasize the importance of working cooperatively to meet the objectives of the workshop (to move the boat in the intended direction). This exercise can be used as a way to set ground rules or to check expectations for a meeting.

1. **Preparation** Draw a long boat on a flip chart sheet ahead of time. Prepare sets of “oars” by cutting letter-size sheets of paper in half the long way, then cutting the strips into an oar shape.
  2. **Agree, write, and “row”** Invite the participants to get into groups of 3–4 people and distribute 2–3 oars to each of these groups. Ask the groups to agree on the key elements and collective agreements needed for the meeting to be a success—or their expectations for the meeting—and write these on their oars. Tape the oars to the boat.
  3. **Review and summary** The facilitator reviews all that has been written, working with the group to process the information and formulate a summary that reinforces the exercise.
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## 7.4 Team Building Exercises

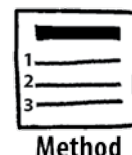
### Team building 7.4.1 — Caterpillar Race

**Time:** 15 – 20 minutes

**Resources:** A clear, open space large enough to accommodate a start and finish line for each team; paper, stapler or glue, and felt tip pen to make paper dice

#### Methodology

This exercise gives teams an occasion to develop a strategy for moving forward together.



- 1. Preparation** Prepare two or three dice ahead of time (one for each group formed in step 2). Each side of the dice should be about six inches by six inches, so cut six pieces of paper into squares for each dice. Staple or glue the pieces together in the shape of a cube. Write one of the following numbers (+6, -6, +1, -4, -2, +3) with a bold, dark felt tip pen on each side of the cube.
- 2. Form groups and describe the task** Invite the participants outside or to a part of the room with enough open space to have a start and finish line. Divide the participants into two or three groups depending on the size of the meeting. Inform them that they are going to be caterpillars and will hold on to each other's waists in order to move in unison. Everyone in a group must step forward with the same foot at exactly the same time.
- 3. Rolling the dice and moving together** The head of each caterpillar will throw that group's dice. Once the dice is thrown, each caterpillar moves forward or backward depending on the number that is facing up from its dice. Each caterpillar head keeps throwing the team dice or nominates another person on the team to throw the dice. (Often the team that decides to take big strides forward when they get a plus number from the dice and tiny steps back when they get a minus number turns out to have created the winning strategy.)
- 4. Declare the winner** This continues until the first team is over the finish line and is declared the winner of the caterpillar race.

## Team building 7.4.2 — The Longest Line

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Resources:** Whatever materials are available in the room



Method

### Methodology

This game helps groups think strategically and work together as a team.

1. **Create groups** Divide people into groups of 6–7 people.
2. **Describe the task** Inform them that they can connect together whatever materials are available in the room or in their possession, including their bodies, to make the longest possible line. Possible materials include sticks, computer cords, shawls and scarves. The group that comes up with the longest line in the shortest possible time will win.
3. **The competition and judging** Sometimes it is best to ask two people to be the “judge,” particularly when excitement is high and there is a boisterous sense of competition in the air!

## Team building 7.4.3 — Life Boat

**Time:** 10 – 15 minutes

**Resources:** None

### Methodology

The game must move very quickly, so that people become excited, move around quickly, and are forced to think on their feet.<sup>9</sup>

1. **Describe the challenge** The participants are told that they are on a ship that is sinking and have to get into lifeboats. The “capacity” of each lifeboat is strictly limited. Depending on the size of the group, the facilitator might indicate that the lifeboats are for only two, three or five people.
2. **People scramble into the lifeboats** When the facilitator calls out the size of the lifeboat, for example, “three,” participants quickly form groups of three and hold hands to form a circle. The remaining individuals try to get into one of these circles.
3. **Elimination and regrouping** The facilitator eliminates the groups that have either greater or fewer people than the announced capacity. The facilitator then calls out another number and the remaining people quickly regroup once again. This continues until there is only one group left.

## Team building 7.4.4 — Construction Team

**Time:** 20 – 30 minutes

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**Resources:** raw eggs, paper cups, sticky tape, newspaper, scissors, and any other available material

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### Methodology

This game provides people with an opportunity to think as a team and strategize together. The goal for each team is to come up with a way to cushion and protect the egg so that it will not be crushed when thrown.



1. **Divide people into teams of five** Each team is given an equal set of materials: one egg, one or two paper cups, sticky tape, scissors, and a newspaper. They are told that they can gather any other natural materials around them, such as leaves, sand, or wood scraps to supplement what they already have. They can use as much natural material as they can find, but must use only the manufactured materials you have provided.
  2. **Teamwork** Give the teams ten minutes to work. Each team creates the best way it can to cushion and protect the egg.
  3. **The big test** When the allotted time is up, the facilitator takes each team's cushioned egg and throws it against the wall or onto the floor.
  4. **Declaring winners** The teams whose egg survives intact are declared "winners." (You will know quickly whether the shell is broken, because raw egg will start seeping out of the layers of materials.)
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### Variation

There are many variations to this game. Identical sets of materials are given to each group. The materials might include, for example, drinking straws, string, empty tins, bits of cloth, balloons and scrap materials. Each group is then tasked to come up with something creative, like a musical instrument, a tool, or a toy. In this version, the facilitator could select one or two other people to be the "judges" who determine which product is most functional, aesthetically pleasing, or otherwise best meets the announced criteria.

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## 7.5 Participatory Meeting Methods

Many different participatory methods have been developed to involve everyone in different meeting processes, rather than limiting input and decision making to just a few people. These methods are a way to embed the principles of the L2L Dialogue in every group process. (See also the methods presented in Section 4, Physical and Logistical Preparation on page 74 and the following pages.)

### Participatory method 7.5.1 — Opening Circles

**Time:** 10 – 15 minutes

**Resources:** Space enough for the group to gather in a circle



Method

#### Methodology

The Opening Circle is a process that brings participants' attention to the meeting and to the present moment, setting the tone and spirit of the meeting. Rather than start immediately with the agenda of the meeting, the Opening Circle brings awareness of the humanity of everyone in the circle and provides people a chance to speak from a personal perspective. By firmly ensuring that everyone receives an equal amount of time to speak, the facilitator establishes that everyone's perspective is given equal weight and importance.

1. **Calling the group to attention** The group should be in a circle. If some are standing or behind a door frame or pillar, the group needs to make space to include them. It is also important for the facilitator to ask everyone in the group to give full attention to the person speaking and not to engage in anything other than listening.
2. **Guarding everyone's voice** The facilitator poses one or two questions then keeps track of time so everyone has an opportunity to speak about what is going on in their lives in the present moment or about their vision for what can be achieved during the meeting. If there are new people in the group, participants can be asked to introduce themselves to others before responding to the facilitator's question.

#### A group commitment to begin a meeting

We commit to go through this meeting in a spirit of togetherness as we review all ideas and consolidate them to reach a consensus among us. We make a commitment to use compassionate ways of speaking and deep listening to bring about success in this meeting. We promise not to hesitate to share our ideas and insights but to do so in a way that is sensitive to the lives of others present in the meeting. We are also determined not to allow tension to build up in the meeting. If anyone senses tensions arising, we will stop the meeting and take a break until we have calmed down. We will continue with our meeting only when we have re-established a sense of harmony and peace within us and are once again able to speak to each other with the spirit of friendship and mutual respect.



Model

## Participatory method 7.5.2 — Temperature Taking

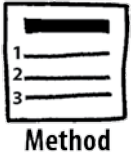
**Time:** 10 – 15 minutes

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**Resources:** None

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### Methodology



- Temperature Taking is a facilitation tool for gauging the mood of a group in meetings and workshops and as an intervention to keep the process moving forward. This is done by asking one or more questions that help the facilitator assess the group's readiness to proceed when participants are tired, confused, tense or frustrated with the process and need a break. This tool can be used anytime during the meeting or workshop when the facilitator notices changes in the energy level in the room. Temperature Taking is also useful at the beginning of a meeting, after a break, or towards the end of a meeting.
- Broadly speaking, there are three main things to monitor using Temperature Taking (Bens, p. 84):
  - *The pace* "How are people feeling about the pace of this meeting? Is it dragging or do you feel rushed? What would you suggest to improve the pace?"
  - *The process* "Is the approach we are using working or shall we try something else?" How else do you think we can do this? Do you think our discussions would benefit from trying...?"
  - *The pulse* "How is everyone feeling? How are our energy levels right now? Is anyone feeling (frustrated, confused or worried)...(that their points haven't been heard, about the topic being discussed, or that the meeting is not on track)?"
- In this process, there is no need to go around in a circle. People who have ideas and want to give their input can respond, and these responses are recorded. If there are matters that cannot be addressed immediately, the facilitator notes them or puts the ideas on a sheet of paper (popularly known as a "parking lot") to be addressed later. Whatever emerges during a Temperature Taking needs to be addressed promptly by the facilitator by making necessary adjustments to the process or otherwise responding to the concerns raised.
- When Temperature Taking is being done at the beginning of the second day of the meeting, it can be good to ask the group to give one or two concerns, followed by one or two things that are working well for them. This helps people acknowledge the positive even while bringing up matters that need adjustment or change.

## Participatory method 7.5.3 — Brainstorming

**Time:** 2 – 5 minutes for a brainstorm, an additional 15 – 20 minutes for processing

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**Resources:** Big sheets of paper, marker pens, empty wall space or a flip chart stand

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### Methodology

Brainstorming is a very useful methodology for bringing up what people are thinking about in relation to an issue or concern that needs to be discussed in greater depth. There are two types of brainstorming.

- For matters that *do not require* decision making, brainstorming can be used to uncover assumptions and subconsciously held thoughts and opinions on an issue in a non-judgmental atmosphere.
- For matters that *do require* decision making, brainstorming can be used to surface issues, ideas and solutions that people have that are relevant to the decision to be made.

There are several ways to do brainstorming. When the aim of brainstorming is to warm up to the topic, the different thoughts that come up can be treated as individual ideas.

1. **Set up subgroups** A group is divided into two or three subgroups. Each group is asked to be ready with a piece of paper and pen and to designate one person in the group as the scribe.
2. **Announce the brainstorm question or topic** The facilitator then announces the topic or issue, for example, “List all the words, concepts, or ideas that come to mind when you think of...”
3. **Monitor individual’s progress** In this style of brainstorming, there is a sense of competition between the subgroups to come up with the most words, concepts, or ideas.
4. **Subgroup reports** After the allotted time—usually between 3 and 5 minutes—the facilitator calls for the end of the brainstorming and each of the subgroups reports on the word, concepts, or ideas they have come up with.

It is important that the facilitator not critique or ridicule what people put up, though it is possible for everyone to laugh and joke since the element of competition between groups makes it more fun.

When the ultimate aim of brainstorming is to inform a decision, however, further work is required. In this case it is important to categorize, analyze and find common threads in what has emerged in the brainstorm to support the next stage in the decision-making process.

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## Participatory method 7.5.4 — Buzz Groups and Breakout Groups

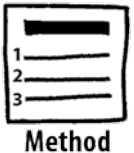
### Timing:

- 5 minutes for buzz groups
- 15 minutes to an hour for breakout groups
- 10 – 30 minutes for processing

**Resources:** Big sheets of paper, marker pens, empty wall space or a flip chart stand

### Methodology

In meetings and workshops with more than 10–12 people, it is always useful to divide up into smaller groups that encourage a deeper level of interaction, more focused or intensive dialogue on specific issues, or clarification of a matter that is causing tension.



- A “buzz group” is a methodology of brainstorming in which 2–3 people turn to each other and in a short period of time think through a question posed by the facilitator. This can be used as a way of doing introductions, checking expectations, uncovering assumptions, getting people to focus on one or two strategic questions, or personal sharing.
- Dividing people into pairs (two people) for personal sharing can help resolve matters that are at the level of the heart.
- Breakout groups of 5–8 people can accommodate a larger set of questions posed to the group for consideration and response. Breakout groups might assign a group facilitator and note taker so that the highlights of each discussion can be brought back to the whole group. Though the breakout groups work autonomously, the facilitator should circulate and listen in for short periods of time to check how people are responding to the questions and whether support is needed for the group’s process.

## 7.6 Closing, Evaluation, and Appreciation



### Model

Closing a meeting is just as vital as opening a meeting as it sets the tone for how things will be taken up after the meeting. Several important activities and products are needed:

- A summary of all the agreements on how to move forward and the points of action, reconfirming the people who have agreed to take on different responsibilities
- An evaluation of the process of the meeting or workshop and suggestions for improvements in the future
- Appreciations and thank yous for everyone who has made the meeting or workshop possible

### Closing 7.6.1 — Evaluation Go-Around

**Time:** 15 minutes

**Resources:** None



### Method

#### Methodology

One of the common ways to end a session is to have a period when people can reflect on the meeting, the process, and the issues discussed. There are several ways to do this.

- One way is to simply go around the room and ask everyone to say two words describing how they are feeling at the moment and a brief explanation of why they chose those words. This approach helps people focus in on their feelings and link those feelings to their thoughts.
- Another way is to throw a small rubber ball to a participant and ask that person to share one or two thoughts about the meeting. Participants hold the ball while they share their views and then throw the ball to another participant, who then shares her views. This continues until the ball has been passed to every person in the meeting.
- During a go-around, people have the option of not sharing. When someone chooses not to comment, she simply passes the ball directly to another person.

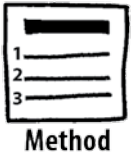
## Closing 7.6.2 — Closing Circle

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Resources:** None

### Methodology

- A closing circle is a period of time at the end of every session, when everyone comes into a physical circle once again. The facilitator could lead the participants in a quick relaxation or breathing exercise to help them bring their awareness and focus back to the present moment. Then the facilitator poses a question that the group answers by going around the circle. If the meeting was a difficult one, with tensions, the question could be worded to help uncover emotions: “How are you feeling now about what we discussed? Do you think this process is leading us in the right direction?” As in the Opening Circle, everyone is asked to give their full attention and to practice deep listening. The facilitator uses the insight provided as feedback for preparing the next meeting.
- A closing circle might also include a song, poem, ritual or prayer, depending on what the group is comfortable with. The main purpose of bringing in a cultural note at the end of the meeting or workshop is to end the meeting on a high note. Inspiring words that evoke heart-level connections and thoughts are in order. If a prayer is chosen to end the circle, it is important to check that everyone is of the same faith or to use a prayer that is sufficiently universal for all to feel comfortable.



## Closing 7.6.3 — Pat on the Back

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Resources:** Marker pens, letter-size sheets of paper, sticky tape. Use recycled paper if possible: you only need one side of the paper for this exercise.

### Methodology

- Prepare the exact number of sheets of paper as there are people attending the meeting or workshop. Distribute pens, paper, and a couple of rolls of sticky tape, and ask everyone in the group to stick a sheet of paper (with the blank side up) on another person’s back with the sticky tape. The facilitator then instructs everyone to remain standing and use the marker pen to write some words of appreciation on the sheets of paper on the back of all the other participants. The participants mingle and write on each other’s paper as they move from person to person. When everyone has given appreciative comments to everyone else, they can pull the paper off their back and read the comments. If there is time, these comments can be read aloud as a way of appreciating people in public. When time is limited, everyone reads the comments written for them at their leisure.

## Closing 7.6.4 — Circle of Appreciation

**Time:** 15 – 30 minutes

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**Resources:** None

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**Method**

### Methodology

Expressing appreciation for each other at the end of a meeting or workshop is an excellent way for people to feel affirmed, supported, and accepted by the group. While expressing appreciation, we only focus on what is positive about the other person and what has contributed to our growth. There are no “ifs” or “buts” in an appreciation session.

- This process can work in different ways. When people are already familiar with each other, one way is to ask everyone to pair off with a colleague by turning their chairs to face the person next to them. The facilitator then instructs the pairs to practice deep listening and compassionate speech as they take turns sharing what they appreciate about their partner. Each person is given 3–5 minutes to express her appreciation of the other person, who listens without comment. If people are comfortable, they can hold each other’s hands while sharing.
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### Variation

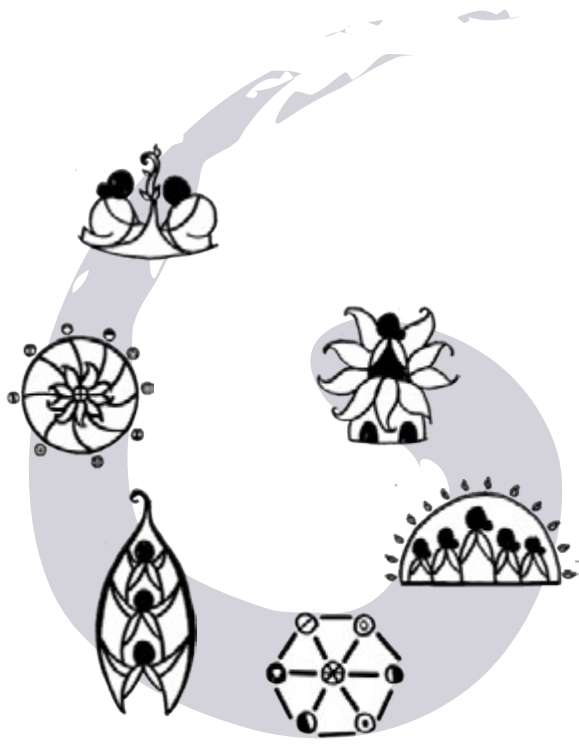
- Participants sit in a circle. Everyone will offer appreciations to the person before them as they go around the circle. The appreciations can go in either direction. The facilitator or another person who has done this activity before leads the process and models how it works.
  - The leader offers her appreciations to the people on either side of her. One of these neighbors then offers her own appreciations to the leader. The person on the other side of this neighbor then offers appreciations to the person before her (who has just appreciated the leader). The process continues around the circle in this direction (either clockwise or counter clockwise) with each person appreciating the person before her, until the last person has been appreciated.
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## FACILITATION GUIDE NOTES

1. This section is inspired by similar sections found in The Women's Health Project, *Health Workers for Change: A Manual to Improve Quality of Care* by the Women Health Project, South Africa, and the National Congress of Neighborhood Women, *The Neighborhood Women's Training Sourcebook*, 1993, Brooklyn, NY.
2. Leadership Support Process (LSP)
3. Ingrid Bens, *Advanced Facilitation Techniques: Tools and Techniques to Master Difficult Situations*: p. 23.
4. *Health Workers for Change: A Manual to Improve Quality of Care* by the Women Health Project, South Africa, and UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special Programme for Research and Training on Tropical Diseases (TDR): p. 58.
5. This game has been played in many learning circles in the past. This particular version was shared with the writer by Jean Brown, founder of the Creators of Peace Circles, Initiatives of Change, Australia.
6. Introduced by Violet Shivutse of Kakamega, Kenya during the L2L Dialogue Training in Accra Ghana, in March 2009.
7. Jo Hann Tan, *SEAPCP Art of CO: A Training Manual for Community Organizers, Facilitators and NGO Workers*, Southeast Asia Popular Communications Programme (SEAPCP) and Community Communications Centre (KOMAS), 2007: p. 93.
8. Ibid.
9. (See note 4 above. This game was originally from "VIPPP" Techniques by UNICEF, Bangladesh.)







## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Good Governance
- Sample Invitation Letter
- Community Report Card Indicator Tally Sheet
- Community Report Card Summary Sheet
- Selected Bibliography

# Good Governance Handout

## WHAT IS GOOD GOVERNANCE?

For the Huairou Commission, good governance is inclusive, responsive to the needs of citizens in all economic strata of society, and especially recognizes the historically vulnerable position of women in society. Good governance also means the inclusion of citizens as collaborators in development, rather than as clients or recipients of aid. For this reason, the Huairou Commission works to empower women to be aware of their role as bearers of rights, agents of development and informed citizens. Bringing women to the center stage of decision making implies bringing grassroots women's ways of organizing, learning and deciding into governance spaces and institutional policies.

Political intentions alone, like constitutional amendments or gender quotas, have proved not to be enough to truly integrate women into decision making on an equitable basis. Training and capacity-building tools for women do not always result in women actually claiming their potential political influence and power. Grassroots women's groups have developed solutions that go well beyond traditional strategies of engendering local governance in that they address the reasons why political rhetoric, training and legal frameworks often fall short.

The culture in political arenas more often than not marginalizes grassroots women's voices and institutional arrangements are often hostile to grassroots women's participation. Consequently, if there is no institutional arrangement to make sure that grassroots voices count equally, they are likely to go unheeded.

Bridging cultural and language gaps, raising awareness of what grassroots women are bringing to the table, as well as building sustainable structures for ongoing interaction and dialogue are important elements of engendering local governance.

Grassroots strategies begin with creating a favorable environment for grassroots participation and advocacy, while aiming to make local governance reflect the expertise that comes from dealing with the everyday life concerns of families and communities. In doing so, grassroots women's groups challenge the paradigm of professionalism, lowering the psychological threshold to participation in formal decision making spaces, and creating governance models responsive to citizen's needs.

(Excerpts from *Advancing Governance through Peer Learning and Networking—Lessons Learned from Grassroots Women*, by Monika Jaeckel, for The Huairou Commission.)



Handout

## ENGENDERING GOOD GOVERNANCE REQUIRES THREE SHIFTS

### 1. *Shifting perceptions of women as clients and beneficiaries, to acknowledging them as citizen problem-solvers*

When states interact with grassroots women's groups or take decisions on behalf of women, there is a tendency to see women either as beneficiaries or as clients. Many state reforms around the delivery of resources and services seek to change citizens from being passive beneficiaries to becoming clients who "act" through choosing one product over another, and along the way get people to pay for services provided by the state (and, increasingly, by the private sector.) In reality, communities living in poverty have few choices. Whether they belong to the government or the private sector, service providers usually have a monopoly in the market and poor people are forced to pay for these services, regardless of their quality.

Increasingly, grassroots women refuse being passive beneficiaries waiting for hand-outs, and instead organize to find solutions to their everyday problems of housing, healthcare, childcare, education, livelihoods, water supply and sanitation. They are engaging with the state as citizens who are ready to take an active role in problem solving with the support of the government.

### 2. *Changing women's advocacy relationships from being adversaries to allies in development*

Citizens need to find new ways to engage with authorities if globalization, decentralization and devolution are to serve citizen's interests. Without this, they will revert to patterns of engagement that reflect their historical relationships with the state. Some of the "old ways" in which citizens relate to the state are by protesting, demonstrating or simply waiting for the state to take action. Grassroots women have to find ways to work with state authorities to jointly find solutions to the everyday problems that their communities face.

### 3. *Reconfiguring power relationships between marginalized people and governments.*

Much of the discussion on good governance appears to be about reforming institutions. Yet, these debates rarely acknowledge that dysfunctional institutions persist because there are powerful interests that support such institutions and benefit from them. Thus, reforming institutions entails a redistribution of power. By acquiring skills, knowledge and assets, and by creating collectives and building alliances, women are working to tip the balance of power in their favor, enabling them to collectively influence government policies and programs.

*(Local to Local Dialogue: A Grassroots Women's Perspective on Good Governance, prepared by UN-HABITAT and Huairou Commission in 2004: Excerpts pp. 19–20.)*



Handout

# Sample Invitation Letter



Model



UCOBAC

UGANDA COMMUNITY BASED ASSOCIATION FOR CHILD WELFARE

Plot 17, Quarry Avenue, Mbuya Zone 1, Off Kinawataka Road, Kampala.  
Telephone: 256 -414- 222 962; Email: ucobac@ucobac.co.ug

10 April 2008

Honourable H.W. Al Haji Nasser Ntege Sebyggala  
Mayor of Kampala  
City Of Kampala

Dear Honourable Mayor,

Re: Invitation to Local-To-Local Dialogue; 30 April 2008

On behalf of UCOBAC, it is our pleasure to invite you to the Local To Local Dialogue planned for be held on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> April at 2:00 – 5:30pm at our office.

The Local To Local Dialogue is organised by the communities organizations from the Kawempe division of Kampala City to have a discussion on basic services issues that they would like to work in partnership with the City Of Kampala.

We hope you will be able to take time in your busy schedule to attend this Dialogue session. We would also appreciate you appointing a senior staff member from your administration dealing with the basic services to participate in this Dialogue.

We thank you for your kind attention to our request and look forward to having you at the Local to Local Dialogue on 30<sup>th</sup> April.

Sincerely,

Birungi Frances Odong  
Senior Programme Officer  
UCOBAC

# Community Report Card Indicator Tally Sheet



Checklist

The Good Governance Issues Report Card: Cultural Heritage <b>Core characteristic of good governance #7:                      Effectiveness &amp; Efficiency</b>	
<b>Indicators to measure the level of effectiveness &amp; efficiency</b> (See suggestions below or identify your own. Please list four indicators.)	<b>Grade (1-5)</b>
1)	
2)	
3)	
4)	
<b>Total</b>	
<b>Percentage [total ÷ 20 × 100]</b>	
<b>Some examples of indicators on effectiveness &amp; efficiency could be:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proper utilisation of the scarce municipal resources for heritage conservation activities. (Cost effectiveness with no compromise on quality)</li> <li>• Collection of taxes, revenues and service charges from monuments and sites of cultural importance.</li> <li>• Over all level of care for monuments and sites of cultural importance.</li> <li>• Mobilisation of internal resources from private sector, civil societies and individuals.</li> <li>• Mobilisation of external resources from institutions, individuals and tourists.</li> </ul>	<b>Grades</b>  5: Very Good 4: Good 3: Moderate 2: Poor 1: Very Poor



Model



# Community Report Card Summary Sheet

The Good Governance General Report Card  
Cultural Heritage  
**Overall grade for good governance**

Characteristics of good governance	Grade (1-5)	Percentage
1) Participation		
2) Rule of law		
3) Transparency		
4) Responsiveness		
5) Consensus orientation		
6) Equity		
7) Effectiveness and efficiency		
8) Accountability		
9) Strategic vision		
<b>Total (Percentage = total ÷ 180 × 100)</b>		



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**THE LOCAL-TO-LOCAL DIALOGUE** process is a series of community-initiated, locally-customized strategies for change. Grassroots groups, most often women-led, are equipped to initiate and engage in ongoing dialogue with local leaders and government authorities. Together they negotiate a range of development issues, priorities, plans, and programs in ways that enhance community participation and address women's priorities.



*Local-to-Local Dialogue Resources* and other titles in the Toolkit Series are available from: The Huairou Commission: Women, Homes & Community

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