

PARTICIPATION of people living in poverty **IN POLICY- MAKING**

Lessons for implementation of post-2015

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1

Executive Summary

Throughout the last 12 months, the global community has been discussing what should replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) when they come to an end in 2015. While a range of governments have participated in these debates, with input from stakeholders across civil society and the business community, the ultimate success or failure of the new development agenda will depend in large part on its implementation in different countries.

While the MDGs have often been praised as a global success for galvanising international attention around issues crucial to eradicating poverty, the reality is that many policy-makers at national or local level are unaware of decisions taken at the global level. Global policy debates and their outcomes are often disconnected from national development plans and poverty reduction strategies. Overcoming this ‘implementation gap’ poses a significant challenge.

An inclusive and participatory global dialogue has helped shape the *content* of proposals for the post-2015 process so far but as of yet, there has been too little discussion about how these proposals will be implemented at a national level. The debate needs to deepen at national level to involve local and national politicians, policy-makers and government officials.

This report proposes a number of recommendations for how the post-2015 agreement could inform national development priorities and policy-making in a participatory way, responding to the priorities of people experiencing poverty, vulnerability and marginalisation. These recommendations do not focus on *what* the goals and targets should contain, but the means through which they are implemented.

This will help global goals and targets to be relevant and responsive to complex national realities and contexts; assist with effective interventions and resource allocation; and promote a post-2015 agenda that responds to the aspirations and priorities of people living in poverty.

This report analyses the lessons learnt from 10 experiences of CAFOD partners, and is based on 10 participatory policy-making processes involving people living in poverty. The report aims to inform the design, implementation, monitoring and accountability of the post-2015 process through *inclusive* and *effective* participatory spaces and processes for women and men living in poverty.

Main recommendations:

- 1** Incorporate participatory spaces at the local, sub-national and national level
- 2** Include an explicit effort to enable the participation of the most marginalised people
- 3** Recognise and validate a variety of spaces and ways of participating
- 4** Encourage national-level institutionalisation of participatory approaches in the global accountability mechanism for post-2015
- 5** Provide dedicated resources for people to actively participate in policy-making on an ongoing basis

2

Background

“How development is carried out is as important as what development is”

CAFOD’s COMPASS report presents the perspectives of those living in poverty to identify their priorities for a post-2015 agenda. Report findings are the outcomes of participatory research conducted by partners. The findings have informed CAFOD’s position on the contents of a new framework. An important message from the research was that people would like to actively participate in policy-making on an ongoing basis. The COMPASS and the wider Participate initiative have explored how change happens in the lives of the most marginalised and excluded communities. Across this wider research in 29 countries, a clear message was that *how development is carried out* is as important as *what development is*. People value being consulted and engaged in the design, monitoring, delivering, and evaluation of interventions that affect them, to ensure that these respond to their aspirations and include them as key agents of change.

Debates over the past 20 years have revealed that the crux of the matter in participation is *power* and that participatory approaches are meaningful only when they are able to empower people to impact on the decisions that affect their lives. For people living in poverty, this increasingly means participation in policy spaces where these decisions are taken. CAFOD’s ‘100 Voices’ report showed that having a global policy framework for development was important to organisations who work with poor and marginalised communities, stressing the need for an open, participative process that includes poor citizens in developing countries .

“Policy-makers have a responsibility to include those whose lives are most difficult”

For a long time, Catholic Social Teaching has emphasised how participation in these policy spaces relates to people’s dignity: ‘It is in keeping with their dignity as persons that human beings should take an active part in government’ (Pacem in Terris Peace on Earth, #73 Pope John XXIII, 1963).

In a global world, where policies decided in one place can have major impacts on people living elsewhere who are potentially unaware of new policy being made, it is important that men and women have their voices heard and can be sure decisions are taken in their best interests. Policy-makers have a responsibility to include those whose lives are most difficult and to make their interests a priority.

3

Theoretical Framework & methodology

This section will introduce current discussions on participation in policy and governance, explain key concepts and terminology adopted, and provide a brief overview of the methodology.

Since the 1990s, the intersection of democratisation and development agendas has led to an increased recognition of the importance of citizen participation in governance. Democratisation strategies based solely on the formal electoral arena demonstrated to be insufficient to address the concerns of the poorest citizens. A growing interest in approaches aimed at ‘deepening democracy’ by extending the range and scope of citizen participation led to the creation of ‘new democratic spaces’ (Shankland, 2006). In these spaces, citizens were recruited in order to enhance accountability and state responsiveness (Cornwall & Coelho, 2006). Participatory approaches at the local level were mainstreamed and scaled-up within large development agencies. By the end of the 1990s, a central concern developed around participatory governance, underpinned by ‘the belief that involving citizens more directly in processes of governance makes for better citizens, better decisions and better government’ (Cornwall & Coelho, 2006, p. 4).

However, extensive empirical studies have demonstrated that the participation of the poorest and most marginalized is far from straightforward, and that a number of preconditions exist for entry of the poorest people into participatory institutions. Moreover, many of the new spaces created became bureaucratic arenas where ‘one-size-fits-all’, unable to take into account people’s contexts and therefore failing to empower participants, *de facto* legitimising decisions taken by others. Putting structures of participation in place is not enough to create political institutions that respond to the priorities of the people living in poverty. In their analysis of these new spaces for participation, the Citizenship DRC initiative¹ argue that only a few are strongly accountable, inclusive and representative, and fewer still go beyond resource management or delivery to impact on law and policy.

“The participation of the poorest and most marginalized is far from straightforward”

An important differentiation to make when discussing citizen participation is to clarify whether we are talking of *organic* or *induced* participation (Graph 1). **Organic participation** refers to civic groups acting independently of, and often in opposition to, government (e.g. civil rights movements, collective action against particular interventions, or local participatory processes led by local small organisations). A lot can be learned from these processes, which often manage to create meaningful participation opportunities for those involved. These processes generate what are often called **claimed spaces**, spaces that powerless or excluded groups create for themselves. These spaces range from ones created by social movements and community associations (networks, forum, mobilisations, etc.), to those simply involving common places where people meet to debate outside of the institutionalised policy arenas.

¹ The Development Research Centre on Citizenship, Participation and Accountability was a 10-year research network based at IDS <http://www.drc-citizenship.org/>

In contrast, **induced participation** refers to participation promoted through policy actions of the state and implemented by bureaucracies. These create **invited spaces** provided by the government in response to popular demand, donor pressure or shifts in policy. There is often some overlap between organic and induced participation. For example, a government may decide to scale up the efforts of small-scale organic initiatives and thus turn them into induced initiatives.

“Participatory exercises became performances that were shaped by power relations”

One important example of a global development framework that was implemented at national and local level and sought to mainstream and use participatory methods were the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) initiated by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund in 1999. Unfortunately, and in line with other research (Cornwall & Brock, 2005; Participate, 2012), these spaces for participation have excluded significant sections of the population, such as people living in poverty, faith-based groups, women’s organisations, disabled people and others in favour of predominantly urban, middle-class NGOs and CSOs.² Often, these participatory exercises became performances that were shaped by power relations rather than contesting them. Cornwall and Brock describes a sub-county planning meeting in Uganda where government officials gathered 120 people who were unlikely to be able to understand their presentation, let alone contribute to the discussion.

The relevant civil servant from the district stands on the platform and addresses the audience, writing key points on flipcharts in writing so small it cannot possibly be legible from the second row of the audience, even if the audience were literate. The presentation is hardly audible from the front row, let alone the back; and it is in English, not the local language (2005:1053)

However, despite the many shortcomings, Cornwall argues that these new spaces can have an emancipatory potential; for instance they give people access to government officials, often for the first time, opening new possibilities for dialogue and contestation. Moreover, ‘while participation may indeed be a form of ‘subjection’, its consequences are not predetermined and its subjects are never completely controlled’ (Williams, 2004, p. 557). According to Cornwall, participation in mainstream development policy and programmes has not only created new development techniques but has created an *enabling environment for political struggle* which may ‘enable those excluded [...] to exercise agency through the institutions, spaces and strategies they make and shape for themselves (Cornwall 2002, p. 78). Therefore, it makes sense to learn from existing experience in order to ensure that invited spaces, within the context of processes of induced participation, are designed and work in a way that provides a meaningful platform for women and men living in poverty.

2 Participate: ‘What do we know about how to bring the perspectives of people living in poverty into global policy-making?’ p.9 2013

Participatory spaces/processes should be:

Inclusive:

While increased citizen participation, transparency and accountability may be positive, this is not the same as the participation of those living in poverty. To be inclusive, **poor women and men** should be able to participate in these spaces and bring a valuable contribution to the deliberations. This criterion involves issues such as language, participants' selection process, and the removal of barriers, including financial, social and cultural. It implies thinking about who is and who isn't included in these spaces, as well as analysing the power relations amongst participants in such spaces.

Effective:

Do deliberations in these spaces lead to concrete changes? Are there mechanisms that translate decisions made in participatory spaces into implementable policies? In other words, are these decision-making or consultative spaces? This is an important difference. If participatory spaces are institutionalised within the mainstream policy-making process, it is more difficult for power holders to dismiss these deliberations. If participatory spaces only have a consultative role, what is the political capital of participants to push for the implementation of their decisions?

Moreover, how is the scope of the deliberations defined? What participants can discuss inevitably shapes the outcome of the process. Can they change the rules of the game or are participants constrained by rules set by others? Are participants able to impact on policy and legislation, or are they restricted to resource allocation only? Can they change the allocation of substantial development resources or just a marginal percentage?

Conceptual framework: Spaces and types of participation

(Author drawing upon the following work Cornwall, 2002; Gaventa 2006; Cornwall & Coelho, 2006; Gaventa & Barrett, 2012; Mansuri & Rao, 2013)

Spaces	Description	Type of participation	Description	CSO	Government
Claimed	Spaces created by powerless or excluded groups. These range from spaces created by social movements and community associations, to those simply involving common places where people meet to debate outside of the institutionalised policy arenas.	Organic	Spurred by civic groups acting independently of, and often in opposition to, government. Usually driven by social movements aimed at confronting powerful individuals and institutions and improving the functioning of these spheres through a process of conflict, confrontation, and accommodation. Effective because they arise endogenously, within a country's trajectory of change, and are often directed by highly motivated, charismatic leaders who mobilize citizens to give voice to their interests. They ultimately achieve their goals when they are able to influence the political process or obtain political power.	Create	Oppose Institutionalise Listen
Invited	paces provided by the government in response to popular demand, donor pressure or shifts in policy.	Induced	Refers to participation promoted through policy actions of the state and implemented by bureaucracies.	Shape	Create Close
Closed	spaces where decisions are taken without any participation of citizens	No participation	N/A	Open	Maintain closed Open

Terminology used in the report regarding civil society organisations

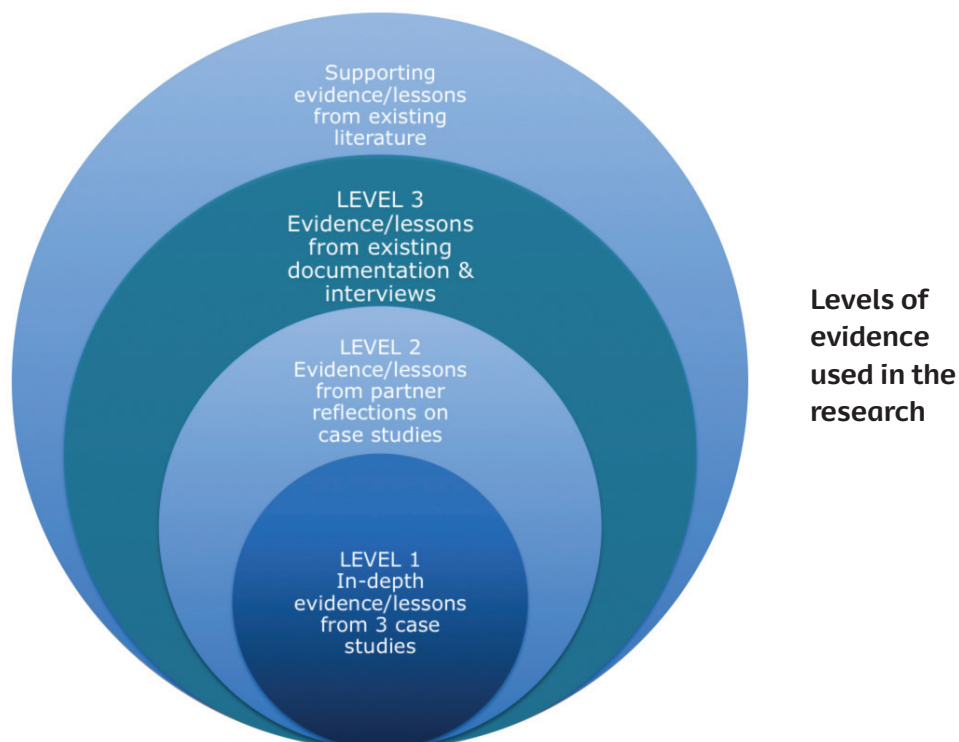
Civil society organisations (CSOs)	
<p>Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) NGOs including CAFOD and some of our partners. These are organisations with staff made of professionals who mostly do not belong to the communities living in poverty.</p>	<p>Grassroots organisations These include small local organisations, groups or social movements. Their memberships generally belong to the communities living in poverty.</p>

Terminology used in the report regarding different scales

Scales									
In different places, the language used to indicate the scale of the process varied slightly. To avoid confusion, this table provides the terminology used from the smallest local level to the global.									
Local	Community	Village neighbourhood	District city	Provincial	Regional (within the country)	National	Regional (international)	Continental	Global

3.1 Methodology

After an internal callout to CAFOD’s Governance Community of Practice, the international division and to some partners with experience in using participatory processes, relevant processes involving the participation of people living in poverty in policy-making were identified. Ten case studies were selected for this research: 3 in Latin America, 3 in Africa and 4 in Asia. CAFOD staff and partners were commissioned to capture the learning from these experiences following the guidelines of a set of research questions (see Annex 1). The case studies were documented in three different levels of depth. In the most intensive cases, CAFOD commissioned a learning process, facilitated by local consultants, with the actors involved. In others we asked the partners to think about the process and compile a form following research guidelines. Finally, in the most ‘light touch’ cases used a mix of semi-structured phone interviews with partners, CAFOD staff involved at different levels in the process and review of existing documentation (e.g. project monitoring reports, evaluation reports, materials prepared for external dissemination). These materials were complemented by some of the learning emerging from the Participate initiative and relevant empirical evidence from recent literature, particularly the work of the initiative Citizenship DRC and around participatory budgeting processes.



4

Case studies

Summary of case studies (different colours indicate the 3 levels of depth of the documentation)

Partner	Place	Process	Description
Fundación ACLO	Sucre, Bolivia	Participation of peri-urban neighbourhoods in drafting the municipal constitution	Participatory construction of the Sucre “Carta Organica” which is a mini-constitution for a municipality which defines its level of autonomy, principles of functioning and distribution of resources. Neighbourhoods elected their own representatives (1 man & 1 woman) to represent them on the committee which drafted the “Carta Organica”. ACLO ran educational workshops and media campaigns (they have a radio station operating in Spanish and Quechua) to ensure everyone in the communities understood the process. They also ran leadership training for the people elected so that they could fulfil their role.
Unión Nacional de Instituciones para el Trabajo de Acción Social (UNITAS)	El Alto, Bolivia	Political and social mobilisations of neighbourhood organisations against municipal taxation policies which negatively impacted on the poorest and most vulnerable people	Neighbourhood organisations united into a federation and carried out a number of activities, including capacity building processes, occupation of decision-making spaces, and engendering public debate. These were accompanied by marches and road blocks which paralysed government buildings and forced the municipal government to negotiate and accept the federation’s proposals. Through the social strength and support they gained, representatives from the neighbourhood organisations met with national government representatives to set a new transformative agenda. UNITAS accompanied the process with training and accompanying work to help the creation of influencing strategies.
Ecosystems Work for Essential Benefits (EcoWEB)	Mindanao, Philippines	Grassroots Participatory Budgeting Process for Poverty Reduction	Poverty Reduction Action Teams composed of an equal mix of CSO representatives and elected local government officials identified development projects to be implemented with funds allocated by the national programme Grassroots Participatory Budgeting Process.
Caritas Zambia	Zambia	Communities and dioceses challenging the government and mining companies on taxes, environment and Corporate Social Responsibility	In the framework of a complex advocacy strategy on mining issues, the Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ), Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ) and Zambia Episcopal Conference (ZEC) organized the event “Our Minerals! Our Future! Putting People First in Zambia!” to deliberate on issues around extractive industries. Participants were drawn from traditional leaders, CSOs and representatives from communities in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Botswana who shared experiences and knowledge pertaining to the detrimental effects of extractive Industries. The workshop ended with a public demonstration showing displeasure by the CSOs that local communities were not benefiting from the mineral resource extraction. Hundreds of poor men and women marched through the streets of Ndola showing solidarity with the rest of the communities who were facing the same challenges in the mining areas.
Active Citizenship for Development Network (ACDN)	Sri Lanka	Citizen Forums organised at local level to formulate claims and priorities to bring to local government authorities	The programme develops the capacity of civil society to promote and defend citizens’ socio-economic rights. Strategies adopted to achieve this purpose were capacity development of civil society to engage with local government agencies and setting up participatory budget monitoring network of 4 local partner organizations to work with organized local community members to identify, analyze, monitor and influence the local government budgetary processes. Main activities were citizens’ forums, which were community meeting on a monthly basis and quarterly district meetings. Engagement of local government authorities and coordination of advocacy at National level.

Partner	Place	Process	Description
APOIO and Movimento de Defesa do Favelado (MDF) - Urban Programme	São Paulo, Brazil	Articulate strategies including claimed and invited spaces of participation to influence housing policy and practice in São Paulo	Organising, training, supporting, and mobilising communities to participate in a) claimed spaces, e.g. mobilisations and occupations and b) invited spaces of consultation and dialogue with government - in order to demand properly implemented and better policies which benefit those who are homeless and the vulnerably housed.
Soroti Catholic Diocese Justice and Peace Commission (SOCAJAPIC)	Soroti, Uganda	Promoting Peaceful Co-existence between the Iteso, Thur and Karimojong	CSOs facilitated a series of meetings at different scales between members of different communities and traditional and political leaders. In these meetings, people living in poverty were able to voice their concerns to the power holders but also discussed with members of other ethnic groups their concerns for violent episodes.
Poverty Action Network in Ethiopia (PANE)	Ethiopia	Citizen Report Cards to collect evidence from citizen about public services and demand accountability	Citizen Report Cards (CRC) were used to conduct surveys in Ethiopia with the aim of providing CSOs with evidence around poverty and development progress. These survey mainly measured the level of satisfaction of the community towards accessibility, adequacy, usage, affordability and quality of the services provided. The presentation of shadow reports which would monitor progress from the perspective of citizens on the ground were used to challenge government claims and promote accountability.
NGO Forum	Cambodia	Support affected communities to request an inspection panel for a damaging World Bank's project	Affected communities and NGOs successfully requested an inspection panel from the World Bank (an internal accountability mechanism of the Bank). The panel investigated a WB-funded forest concession project and acknowledged that the project violated World Bank own policies. Ultimately, the project was stopped.

Summary of issues which emerged from the research and their occurrence across the case studies. The last column expresses the percentage of the cases in which a specific issue has been identified.

		ACLO - Bolivia	UNITAS - Bolivia	EcoWEB - Philippines	CARITAS ZAMBIA - Zambia	ACDN - Sri Lanka	Banteay Srei - Cambodia	Urban Programme APOIO - Brazil	SOCAJAPIC - Uganda	PANE - Ethiopia	NGO Forum - Cambodia	Total Cases	%
1	<i>Lack of access to relevant information</i>	x		x	x	x	x	x			n/a	6	67
1.1	Information available but not in an understandable format for the poor	x		x	x	x	x				n/a	5	56
1.2	CSOs' role to translate information into a comprehensible format	x				x	x				n/a	3	33
1.3	Importance/challenge of management of knowledge, evidence and information	x	x		x	x		x			x	6	60
2	<i>Lack of self-esteem as barrier</i>	x	x			x	x		x	x	n/a	6	67
3	<i>Importance of local leaders</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			n/a	7	78
3.1	Capacity building of local leaders	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			8	80
3.2	Local leaders elected in invited spaces & democratic politics	x	x	x				x	x		n/a	5	56
3.3	Importance of building collective capacity	x	x			x	x	x			n/a	5	56
3.4	Importance of peer exchanges	x	x		x	x	x	x					60
4	<i>Law or national/international policy shift created the opportunity for the participatory process/space</i>	x	x	x		x		x		x	x	7	70
4.1	New participation opportunities opened by a process of decentralisation	x	x	x		x			x			5	50
5	<i>Challenge of long-term sustainability of participatory process/space</i>			x		x	x	x	x			5	50
6	<i>Centrality of the relationships between people living in poverty and local government authority</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			8	80
7	<i>Participation to prioritise needs (vs. limited resources at local level)</i>	x	x	x		x			x			5	50
8	<i>Processes worked well at local level but problematic to scale them up to national level</i>	x				x	x		x			4	40
9	<i>Participation in policy making has a potential to deal with conflict in society, potentially preventing or transforming violent conflict</i>		x			x	x		x			4	40
10	<i>Complementarity of claimed / invited spaces</i>	x	x		x	x	x	x				6	60

5

Lessons learnt

This section presents some lessons learnt that have been identified through the analysis of the ten case studies. It begins by outlining two crosscutting findings, after which the main lessons learnt are grouped under three broad themes. These are:

- Legal framework, institutional arrangements and power
- Information, knowledge and exchange
- Capacity building and local leadership

The section ends with further reflections on the difficult balance between *participation* and *representation*, and how the nature of the issue at stake impacts on outcomes of the participatory process.

5.1 Why participation in policy matters

Two cross-cutting findings emerged from the analysis on the importance of participation in policymaking processes by those living in poverty, namely how participation can **contribute towards the prevention of violent conflict and how it can help to identify priorities when resources are limited**.

In contexts where there is a high level of social conflict or risk of violence, inclusive processes and participation in policy-making may bring together actors and diffuse conflict. If the social mobilisation happening in ‘claimed spaces’ finds influence and traction in ‘invited spaces’, people see that their voices are being heard and will channel their demands through such spaces. If these claimed and invited spaces for participation do not exist, people feel that their priorities and aspirations are not being heard or are being actively ignored, contributing to increased tension and risk of conflict. Similarly, invited spaces can provide a platform for mediation and negotiation in which civil society organisations can play a major role in (re) organising the interface between communities and government.



Another important aspect is the way in which spaces for participation are able to contribute to prioritising competing needs. In the Philippines, EcoWEB considered the main achievement of the participatory process to be the changing of spending priorities and the influence on the 2014-15 city budget for poverty reduction projects. The potential risk is that often the issues prioritised are those that benefit the majority or simply the groups that participate, which may not necessarily be the poorest or most vulnerable people or communities.

5.2 Legal framework, institutional arrangements and power

The first broad theme is around the legal framework and institutional arrangements for participation in policy-making, as well as the relationships between people living in poverty and party politics.

5.2.1 Discretionary power of decision-makers

An important characteristic noticed by partners and participants is the power of government officers and elected decision-makers to arbitrarily open or close spaces for participation, and/or give importance to (or withhold importance from) these spaces and the claims made in them. Strategies adopted to reduce the input of participation include not convening the spaces, opposing them and delegitimizing their outcomes, or simply ignoring their deliberations.

The attitude of power holders towards these spaces is often ambivalent. Deliberations from participatory spaces are taken into account by power holders depending on the nature of the issue at stake (see section 4.6). Often the success of these spaces depends on the individual attitude of a small number of people in position of power; for instance a supportive Mayor can mean that local participatory process have an impact on municipal policies. Similarly, one or two people in positions of power who oppose participatory processes can mean that the space for participation is shut down, or that the outcomes are rendered irrelevant. This situation makes the sustainability of these spaces for participation problematic. They are vulnerable and precarious, with a constant threat that the space may be closed as a result of a radical outcome from participants or a change in government, for instance after an election.

The experiences reviewed in this report revealed some of the strategies employed by CAFOD's partners and their constituencies to consolidate the gains from these spaces:

- **Building relationships with (local) authorities** and other decision-makers (see section 4.3.2).
- Accompanying participation in formal invited spaces of participation with constant **political pressure** through claimed spaces of participation such as **social mobilisations**. This makes it more difficult for politicians and government officers to ignore or close participatory spaces and their deliberations (see section 4.2.4).
- A key strategy is the **institutionalisation** of participatory spaces by including them in national legislations and political practice. This is a long-term process that also presents some risks (see section 4.2.2).

5.2.2 Institutionalisation

The strategy of institutionalising existing spaces of participation is deemed important to:

- **Enable sustainability:** making the closure of these spaces more difficult and making their existence independent of the good will of those in power.
- **Improve participation** within these spaces: once the space is legally recognised, people can push to gradually improve its effectiveness and functioning.
- **Allow independent deliberations:** if the space is a consolidated and guaranteed institution within the political process, participants will feel more able to 'push the boundaries' and deliberate on what they consider important and less afraid that a controversial proposal may undermine the existence of the space.

In the Philippines, CAFOD's partner EcoWEB and many other CSOs are pushing the government to transform an existing memorandum into law. The Local Poverty Reduction Action Program, where civil society and government deliberate on the poverty reduction budget is based on a joint memorandum between the Department of Budget and Management, Department of Interior and Local Government and the National Anti-Poverty Commission, with the participation of relevant national government agencies. However, since the programme is not part of any legislation, it may be terminated at any time by the administration.

Following these considerations, a global policy framework that promotes the creation of such spaces for participation could legitimise and give force to local requests for institutionalisation. Spaces for participation created through legislation, or arising from the institutionalisation of existing claimed spaces, will not spontaneously become effective and inclusive everywhere. However, once they exist, women and men can and should struggle to transform and shape them. This process can only take place if the spaces are guaranteed and secure. The case studies analysed in the making of this report suggest that the process of participation and change through institutionalised spaces is incremental and long-term. It takes time before women and men living in poverty can ‘fill the space’ with their proposals. For this reason, a long-term process is needed rather than one-off, staged performances of participation such as those witnessed, for example, during the consultations for the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) (see above).

Participatory budgeting in China

Albeit not part of CAFOD’s work - and therefore placed in a box - the case study of participatory budgeting in China reveals the potential of the participation of people in policymaking. Inspired by participatory budgeting in Brazil, residents in various parts of China participate in the decision-making, implementation, execution and monitoring of a part of the public budget. For instance, the Municipality of Chengdu developed policies and regulations “to empower local villagers to take part in decision-making, monitoring and evaluating village level public services projects” (Cabannes & Ming, 2013, p. 6). Through participatory budgeting, residents have the power not only to decide on the use of public money but also to control it through community-led mechanisms of monitoring (p. 2). “Participatory budgeting channels significant resources towards the village “commons” and increases their value as commons and indivisible social and economic spaces. We argue that participatory budgeting funds have helped to strengthen local people’s common social and economic interests. It is an investment in local solidarity, not just in village public services and infrastructure” (p. 17). Participatory budgeting in China allowed millions of rural residents to decide local projects, obtain the disclosure of detailed budget information, and increase people’s voice and local public officials’ accountability. However, it has limited capacity to scale up empowerment and bring the same level of participation and accountability at regional

The ambivalence of institutionalising participation

The process of institutionalisation also carries with it risks for organic forms of participation. Three issues were identified in the cases studies, where institutionalisation of participation was used to:

“The process of institutionalisation also carries with it risks for organic forms of participation”

- Extend state power over areas where the state would otherwise have difficulty influencing through conventional means
- Increase local contributions (of both information and taxes) in the context of reduced national public expenditure
- Penetrate popular spaces to build political patronage and electoral consensus

Governments may want to transform claimed spaces into formal spaces of participation to extend control or influence over areas which may have previously been challenging or antagonistic. Such spaces also have the potential to offer sites to build political consensus and therefore can be a target of political parties. It is in this context that civil society organisations need to critically engage with these processes to ensure their transparency, legitimacy and independence.

In the Bolivian city of El Alto there are more than 650 *barrios* (neighbourhoods), each with its own neighbourhood committee, most of which are part of the Federation of neighbourhood committees of El Alto (FEJUVE). Through the national Law of Popular Participation and Law of Municipalities (Ley de Participación Popular y la Ley de Municipalidades), farmers, indigenous and neighbourhood organisations were incorporated and fully institutionalized in the political, juridical and economic life of the country. The practices and customs of these organisations were respected and adapted to function within the state rationale of democracy and development. Since they were set up, the popular membership of neighbourhood committees has made them into attractive spaces for political parties, as places where they can build electoral consensus, often through political patronage.³ This situation brought the neighbourhood committees to adopt strategies comprising a mix of presenting demands, mobilisations, and negotiations with local politicians to fulfil their immediate demands.

In El Alto, one of the aims of the municipal government through the institutionalisation of participatory processes was to increase local taxation by 300%. Local knowledge and participation was sought as a means to map property in a highly complex and informal environment. Participation was needed to gather information for taxation and control that would be difficult to gather without residents' collaboration. Moreover, members of these neighbourhood organisations would prioritise and take decisions on local infrastructure development to be paid for through locally raised taxes.

However, the increased exchanges between local community members and politicians created new opportunities for people to subvert decision-making processes and exercise pressure. The realisation of the limitations of formal spaces of participation led to social mobilisations in El Alto which notably increased the negotiating power of local residents.

Another problem associated with invited spaces or the institutionalisation of organic forms of participation is that only certain actors are recognised and allowed to take part in the process. This purposeful selection often excludes more critical voices or those making claims unacceptable to local authorities (see section 4.6), whether by oversight or by design. In Cambodia, there have been examples of local leaders fostering community participation processes being recruited by political parties hoping to translate the popular support enjoyed by community leaders into votes for the party.

It is very important to note that not every actor supports participation for the same reasons. Civil society organisations should use political analysis to reveal and understand unstated objectives of different stakeholders and devise strategies to shape these spaces and achieve their goals. However, even when there are different interests and a clear intention to instrumentalise participation for specific aims, participation can lead to unexpected outcomes. In El Alto, a public demonstration supported by many neighbourhood organisations paralysed the city and contributed to rebalancing power towards citizens.

Scaling up

The institutionalisation of local spaces of participation – sometimes through appropriate legislation (see next section) – is unavoidable when scaling up processes of participation in

³ See CAFOD 'Setting the post-2015 development compass: voices from the ground' 2013 for examples of how political patronage can affect people living in poverty.

policy-making by people living in poverty. In different contexts, while it was felt that these processes worked well in local spaces, many questions were raised about intentions to expand them significantly. In Sri Lanka, while increasing the reach of these processes was seen as having possible benefits and opportunities, it was recognised that it takes time to find the most appropriate forms to scale up successfully. A potential risk of scaling up participatory processes is of mirroring existing institutions, duplicating them rather than adding value. Therefore, it was felt that strategic efforts are needed to design these spaces effectively and mitigate against increased burden of bureaucracy and ensure processes and spaces that contribute to people’s empowerment.



In São Paulo, CAFOD’s partner APOIO is also involved in the attempt to support social movements to institutionalise a landmark occupation by 237 homeless families of a building in the city centre. The Mauá building, a former hotel left empty for 17 years, was taken over by working families in need of low cost housing in a city where the housing market has pushed low-income households to the marginal periphery areas, and many families have to choose whether to eat or to pay rent. In 2013, the families conquered a social interest decree by the newly elected PT Labour government that legitimises their action by declaring the building of social interest, and pushes the City Council to purchase the building from the private owner in order to establish social housing for low income families in those premises. If this happens as planned, the families will have institutionalised a claimed space, legitimizing the right of the urban poor to live in the heart of city and challenging existing policies. The institutionalisation of a claimed space, through participation in judicial processes, becomes an effective tool in changing policy-making, although this specific process only benefited a limited number of families rather than extending the right to the city to all.

5.2.3 Legal framework

A key finding from the different experiences is the importance of legal frameworks in facilitating or obstructing spaces for participation. In seven case studies, legal frameworks played a key role.

“Laws provide ‘hooks’ for people to frame requests for participation.”

Laws provide ‘hooks’ for people to frame requests for participation. In many countries, the legal framework opened new spaces and opportunities that civil society has filled or used to formulate proposals. However, even when laws or policies are in place, often they are not implemented. Through direct participation and mobilisation, women and men living in poverty can remind policy-makers of commitments undertaken and push for implementation.

In Sri Lanka, a constitutional amendment and a specific Act devolved power to provincial councils and local authorities, and made specific provision for local communities to participate in the activities of local government authorities. This piece of legislation was used by the ACDN as part of their training of local citizens on their rights to contribute and work alongside local authorities. The legislation was also used to open up new spaces. ACDN encouraged



citizens to approach local government authorities and, using the legislation as a source of legitimacy, establish a permanent dialogue, enhancing their participation at the local level. Once citizens were allowed to the meetings of local government authorities, they brought proposals elaborated within the autonomous spaces of the Citizen Forums. The proposals included people's budgets with concrete ideas on how to spend government funding.

In Brazil, CAFOD's partners APOIO and MDF working on the Urban Programme know that pro-poor laws often exist (conquered through active civil society engagement and participation) but are not necessarily implemented. It requires social pressure from the ground to get them put into practice. However, the existence of legislation



legitimising “from above” the participation of citizens in policy-making remains fundamental to articulate demands. This was not only important in the case of Brazil but also, for example, in Bolivia where citizen participation is embedded in the constitution. In Zambia, it was equally important to train local leaders on their rights under existing laws. Similarly, Participate’s policy brief states: ‘formal recognition of rights in law or as constitutional requirements are a critical milestone, but do not automatically translate into concrete outcomes. [...] Collective action is needed for them to become a force for positive change’.

Reversibility of spaces for participation

As mentioned above, without legislation to protect claimed spaces for participation, they can be lost after a change of government. In the Philippines, claimed spaces linked to local processes of participation were formalised through memoranda of understanding, a formal agreement but not a permanent law. Therefore, CSOs involved hope to be able to obtain legislation to protect these spaces of deliberation from government changes and to institutionalise at national level the practice of having local authorities and CSOs to decide together the allocation of development funds. They saw the process of institutionalising participation in the country’s legal framework as an incremental process.

However, even when there is legislation in place, the gains of participation can be quickly reversed by other processes, for example, the introduction of other laws. An interesting case is Ethiopia. Under the pressure of international donors, including the World Bank, and using national and international law, civil society organisations managed to gain a more central role in making the government accountable. CAFOD’s partners PANE introduced participatory methodologies such as Citizens Report Cards Reports to assess the quality and perception of public service delivery in the country and produced shadow reports that provide an alternative perspective based on the voices of citizens.

“Decentralisation and national processes played an important role in participation dynamics”

Decentralisation

In five case studies, the achievement of greater participation in policy-making at the local level was associated with processes of devolution and a greater role for local authorities.

Decentralisation policies and processes at national level played an important role in the dynamics of participation in policymaking.

However, the process is not unproblematic or uniformly positive. In Bolivia, the institutionalisation of participation promoted by the process of decentralisation recognised political parties and neighbourhood organisations as the only legitimate actors to engage with the state. The law created a constrained system of participation focused on micro-local spaces, which limited the influencing capacities of social organisations at the national level. As a result, many organisations organised themselves in alternative spaces to make their demands on the government at local and national level.

5.2.4 Complementarity of spaces

In five case studies, there was a strong emphasis on the complementarity of claimed and invited spaces and the importance for people living in poverty to be active in both. Rather than suggesting a linear trajectory through which claimed spaces are institutionalised and transformed into invited spaces, the cases revealed that spaces for participation are most effective and inclusive when CSOs devise complex strategies entailing action in both spaces. Similar conclusions were reached by the research initiatives DRC Citizenship, Participation and Accountability and Participate, both based at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Brighton.

In practice, this complementarity works in different ways, depending on the local context and existing institutional arrangements. In many of the case studies, local claimed spaces supported and provided leverage and legitimacy to other more formal invited spaces, allowing representatives of women and men living in poverty to negotiate better outcomes.

Change happens through multiple types of citizen engagement; not only through formal governance processes, even participatory ones, but also through associations and social movements that are not created by the state. Strengthening these broader social change processes, and their interactions, can in turn create opportunities for state reformers to respond to demands, build external alliances and contribute to state responsiveness (Gaventa & Barrett, 2012).

In reflecting on the relationship between poor people’s participation and policy-making, the Participate initiative created a metaphor to explain the dynamic that shapes policy-making. Decisions are made and policies are created within the ‘palace of power’; people living in poverty seek to change, impact and influence the processes and outcomes within these walls. However, for interventions to be sustainable, the walls of the ‘palace’ need to be ‘scaffolded’ with multiple types of people’s engagement to shape decision-making spheres and ensure that wins do not go implemented, gains are not easily reversed, and participatory spaces remain open. . It is therefore very important to analyse what needs to happen outside of formal spaces and link advocacy actions and participation in invited spaces with mobilisation and political actions on the ground, while building the capacity of poor women and men to participate in these spaces. Empowering people living in poverty and building their capacity is central to CAFOD’s partners’ work.



In São Paulo (Brazil), the social movements working on the Right to Housing for the urban poor, supported by CAFOD's partners APOIO and MDF, have adopted the strategy of occupying invited spaces without giving up direct action by their grassroots constituencies. They are aware of the differences between spaces and of the importance of being in all of them, stressing how participation takes

complex forms and CSOs need to use all available means and create complex strategies for bringing the issues of those living in poverty into policy-making. They considered the opportunities offered by new invited spaces to be very important. Therefore, they built the capacity of local community representatives and raised their awareness in order to make sure that people living in poverty would participate and elect their representatives in these spaces. What is interesting in the case of the newly established Ward-level Participatory Councils is the commitment of CAFOD's partners to get grassroots members elected in this new space for negotiation even whilst questioning what real effective force it will have to balance power relations but conscious that once inside the space, elected members will be able to struggle to shape the space.

In their reflection on the urban programme in São Paulo, CAFOD's staff explained:

The partners strategically chose to participate in both claimed and invited spaces because their experience has shown them that they are mutually reinforcing. Partners understand change as something that will come about when decision-makers recognise the power, strength and consciousness of social movements and so have to respond to their demands and pressure. Invited spaces are occupied strategically by CSO leaders whose legitimacy is rooted in their accountability to the communities they represent. Hence a lot of time and effort is put into building a vibrant movement and ensuring that CSO participation in invited spaces is mandated by, and accountable to the social movements.

A strategy built on the complementarity of the spaces also emerged from experiencing the limitations of formal invited spaces and appreciating the need for social mobilisation to put additional pressure and improve the bargaining power of their people's representatives in formal spaces.

However, **claimed informal spaces** are not only needed to put political pressure on formal spaces and decision-makers but also have the important function of bringing people together to create collective movement, ideas, and self-confidence, further explored in the following section on capacity building. In other words, they are crucial **laboratories of proposals and deliberation**. People living in poverty often fear expressing their positions in front of more

“People living in poverty often fear expressing their positions in front of powerful actors”

powerful actors, particularly government officials. Their fears are justified by their experiences. Having worked within an autonomous claimed space to collectively articulate a proposal will make it easier for people to contribute without fear. And when someone brings it to an invited space, she/he will be conscious of representing a collective claim and enjoy wider support. A related lesson regards the necessity of setting up a fair process of leadership selection so that elected representative in invited spaces will have the backing of a wide constituency. In so doing, an opportunity for some representatives to participate in an invited space becomes a way to put pressure and increase leverage by mobilising support around the representative.

Developing strategies across different spaces based on their complementarity is also important in order to overcome the exclusion of those who take part in public mobilisations and protests and, as a result, tend to be excluded from formal spaces. Those adopting confrontational strategies should be given the opportunity to contribute to formal processes. However, particularly at global level, there seems to be a division between those actors who operates inside formal invited spaces and those who exercise pressure from the outside.

As mentioned in the above example of institutionalisation of a landmark occupation in São Paulo, it is important that NGOs recognise that people living in poverty and their organisations as effective policy-makers through action, as was the case in Sao Paulo or the strike that blocked the city of El Alto in Bolivia, forcing the municipality to change policy and attitudes.

The spaces created ‘from above’ should not simply normalise, embed or attempt to substitute the informal and claimed spaces of organic participation. In order for participation in invited spaces to be effective, each society should guarantee an enabling environment for spontaneous collective processes to take place, rather than monopolising participation through invited spaces.

5.2.5 Participation and party politics: a complex relationship

The relationship between participatory spaces for people living in poverty and local party politics have been at the centre of the reflection of the processes analysed. Some partners have experienced processes of co-option. We have already mentioned how local political parties can try to capture electoral support from participatory spaces. In other cases, such as in Cambodia, political parties acknowledged the important role of emerging women leaders, and recruited them as political candidates. Although elected leaders often find themselves frustrated by the hierarchical functioning of formal politics compared to the community processes they were familiar with, there is recognition of the impact they are having in terms of changing the relationships between communities and local authorities. In this sense, the move of people at the grassroots level in formal elections processes was perceived as positive overall. Moreover, in Cambodia, local authorities (Commune Councils) invited local leaders trained by CAFOD’s partner Banteay Srei to participate in their meetings as representatives of the community. This has created mechanisms for monitoring and feedback of the activities of elected officials. However, local community leaders complained that when they made claims local government authorities didn’t like, they were accused of being part of the opposition party.

5.3 Information, knowledge and exchanges

The second broad theme drawn from findings by partners regards the important role played by information and knowledge, and exchanges at different levels between people. These issues are crucial in the process of empowering people living in poverty to be more effective at influencing policy.

5.3.1 Information, data, knowledge, evidence

Accessible information on laws and policies is fundamental for people at the grassroots to participate more directly in policy-making. Accessible, publicly available and understandable information makes participation more meaningful, while the lack of information helps an elite of experts to exercise influence. NGOs can help grassroots organisations and community leaders to understand and translate law and policy into people’s local contexts. In Brazil a key role of intermediary organisations is to source the necessary information that can inform the strategies of grassroots movements.

Information on existing laws, policies and their implication is particularly important in scaling up the activities when grassroots organisation want to make proposals at national level. The participation of people living in poverty also faces the challenge of managing the knowledge and information obtained over time. This is another area in which more structured civil society organisations can help. There is also a question around how to manage the knowledge produced in these spaces for participation. Who owns the knowledge? How can it be organised and made available when needed? Should participants in these spaces manage knowledge independently from government institutions? These seem to be key aspects to be discussed in the process of creation of participatory spaces. The ACDN in Sri Lanka stressed how the capacity of Citizen Forums in relation to collecting, storing, analysing and using the information is a critical and problematic issue for their work.

Often there is an inverse relation between availability of information and marginality. For instance, in Sucre vulnerable groups such as migrants lacked information on policy changes the most. Yet, migrants from rural communities made up the greatest number of the residents in the suburbs of Sucre.

CAFOD’s partner ACLO identified the following factors as those which undermined the participation of civil society in the design of public policies in different spaces (local, regional, state and national):

- lack of information and timely communication;
- lack of knowledge of the laws of the country;
- lack of training for vulnerable social groups.

In the Philippines, a great obstacle to effective participation of grassroots organisations in policy-making processes was not simply the lack of information but the lack of understanding of government financial systems and procedures. Without this type of knowledge and access to relevant data, citizens find it difficult to support, challenge or contribute to budget or policy proposals. CAFOD’s partner EcoWEB considers it fundamental to provide citizens with knowledge and skills to represent themselves and engage with the government, including knowledge on the relevant policies, systems and procedures. Similar observations were made in Sri Lanka where reliable and valid data and information were deemed to be a prerequisite for making budget proposals with adequate justification, rationale and prioritisation.

“Accessible information on laws and policies is fundamental for people at the grassroots to participate more directly in policy-making”

“Often there is an inverse relation between availability of information and marginality”

5.3.2 Knowledge exchanges and new encounters

A key aspect in six of the case studies was the possibility of people living in poverty meeting people from other areas sharing similar issues, reciprocally learning from their experiences and feeling supported by relationships of solidarity. It was also very important to create

participatory spaces that could facilitate encounters between people living in poverty and decision-makers at different scales.

For Banteay Srei, exchanges are very important. Communities are empowered when they meet activists from other places, who can share their confidence and help them understand that they are not the only ones facing certain challenges. It is also important to bring local activists to national forums in order to expose them to similar processes and build solidarity with other networks.

CAFOD's partner in Sri Lanka mentioned how political leaders respect genuine local processes (albeit the support often depends on the nature of the issue at stake, see section 4.6). Bidirectional exchanges at different scales were thought to be very important learning experiences that contributed to mutual understanding. These include local activists joining national policy forums as well as provincial/national government or civil society leaders meeting and listening to the 'targets of their interventions'.

“Poverty is often a result of unequal power relations”

Poverty is often a result of unequal power relations, and therefore the first step of some participatory processes is to build relationships between decision-makers and people living in poverty as these encounters across geographical, class and status divides can be empowering. These encounters can legitimise the involvement of people living in poverty and provide them with recognition for their contribution to the policy-making process. A result of these encounters is that grassroots leaders build relationships and confidence to enter formal party politics.

These encounters are also essential to bring direct testimonies from the ground level to ministers and other government actors (as well as to donors and international organisations). This was the case in Zambia where community members and local chiefs were given the opportunity to make presentations on the impact of the extractive industry's activities in their areas, as well as their position on the issues. They offered a perspective of what is going on in their communities and what they believe they need in order to mitigate and optimise the situation for the benefit of their communities and the country. This participation plays a key role in providing evidence for the policy changes advocated by NGOs and other actors, and also provides the necessary legitimacy for the advocacy action of CSOs.

5.4 Capacity building and local leadership

The third and final broad theme looks at capacity building of people living in poverty and their organisations and the role of local leadership in processes of participatory policy-making: interconnected areas that emerged during the course of this investigation.

5.4.1 Capacity building

CAFOD's partners considered building the capacity of people living in poverty to participate in policy-making as a very important part of their work. Policy-making requires specific skills. Participants in the process of writing the municipal constitution in the peripheral neighbourhoods in Sucre (Bolivia) recognised that it took time for them to fully appreciate the difference between laws and projects, understand what exactly laws are, and what should be in them. A big challenge reported in Sucre was “how to propose a public policy from the neighbourhood if we have never done it before”. A fundamental aspect of the process that has been mentioned in the previous section is acquiring the knowledge and understanding of existing laws and policy framework. This was a crucial step particularly in Sri Lanka, Cambodia and Bolivia. A particular emphasis was put on building the capacity of local leaders to avoid a situation where communities have to be represented by outsiders.

A further learning is that there must be a collective process of building the capacity of a community rather than only individuals, in order to grant sustainability to the process. If the historical memory of the process and the knowledge is in the hands of a few individuals, it may be lost if they may move elsewhere or join formal politics, forcing a community to restart a long, multi-year process of capacity building from square one. In Cambodia, Banteay Srei originally trained 5 women in each community before realising that it was better to train a larger group to grant long-term sustainability. In Sucre, only 20 out of the 30 community and political leaders that enrolled in the process of capacity building completed the process.

Another important factor is the need to not only **build the capacity** of the citizens but also of **other actors** including **NGO staff** and **local government authorities**. The latter needed particular attention so that they could embrace participation and open spaces to the contribution of women and men living in poverty.

In the Philippines, CAFOD’s partner emphasised the need for planning financial resources to build the capacity of people and their organisations. Lack of financial support meant that CSOs are struggling to influence and monitor the implementation of policies. EcoWEB warns that, without clear support for capacity building of the grassroots, the success of the projects agreed through participatory committees of government and civil society members may be jeopardised, risking the opportunity for poverty reduction.

It is also a two-way process; while capacity is needed for participation, participation also builds capacity and transferable skills such as the ability to negotiate, which can be used in peace-building or economic activities. Moreover, there are capacities and skills developed in claimed spaces that can be used and deployed in invited spaces. In other words, grassroots autonomous processes are laboratories in which citizen can prepare proposals and build confidence. In a powerful example, a participant from a poor neighbourhood in Sucre explained how the work of drafting written proposals was extremely effective because richer groups didn’t elaborate written proposals ahead of the negotiation and therefore members from poor communities found themselves in a position of advantage during the drafting a new municipal constitution because they had already prepared their requests. One of the members from poor communities who worked with ACLO’s in Sucre recalled:

“While capacity is needed for participation, participation also builds capacity and transferable skills”

“When we went to write the Constitution we are proud to have participated in this process that I consider very interesting and very important. Despite being between rich and poor and even though the other assembly members had professional training, we knew what to bring and therefore we did not feel inferior to them. While they were better educated, they were also not very clear in their proposals. We thought we would expel them if they believed to be superiors and didn’t value our opinions and proposals. However, they did not bring written proposals and they didn’t imagine that we would bring written proposals for them developed with our grassroots groups.”

By arriving in participatory spaces with clear written proposals they managed to incorporate the prioritised themes of the neighbourhood organisations in the Constitution.

Political capacity was also felt to be fundamental for achieving effective participation from the grassroots; specifically a capacity to understand the relationships and processes around

policy, and frame their demands beyond their immediate needs with a longer-term political vision. If the participation of those living in poverty is to be more than a tokenistic ritual, then there is a need for capacity building and grassroots work. UNITAS in El Alto is clear about the fact that it is not possible to generate organised political action without grassroots work that considers immediate claims in a wider political context. An important component of this grassroots work is a systematic process of building political capacity.

In nine case studies, capacity building was a key component of the process considered fundamental to effective and inclusive participation. In all these cases, CAFOD's partners emphasised the long-term character of the process. Three areas were identified as the most important with regards to the contents of the capacity building process:

- Understanding the legal context and rights
- Building confidence and self-esteem
- Understanding one's own and other actors' roles

Now we look at two key challenges:

- People living in poverty need to build confidence and self-esteem, learning to respect and value themselves. Too often, they think they do not know anything or that their knowledge is inadequate.
- People living in poverty need to meet their basic needs before being able to engage in other activities

“A barrier to the participation is lack of self-esteem, often coupled with little awareness of their rights”

Building confidence

A barrier to the participation of people living in poverty is lack of self-esteem. This is often coupled with little awareness of their rights. In this sense, processes of capacity building helped people to overcome this barrier by addressing individuals' fears through collective dialogues and exchanges, and by building solidarity between different communities. Again, time was considered a crucial factor in the process of empowering people living in poverty. Different types of inequalities (e.g. social, economic, educational) were also mentioned as playing an important part in the lack of self-esteem.

People living in poverty often demonstrated an ingrained fear that there would be retaliation for making demands if their requests challenge established power structures. In North Uganda, where CAFOD's partner SOCAJAPIC coordinated peace-building dialogues amongst communities in the context of violent conflict, many people refrained from speaking when local politicians attending the discussion started to quarrel. Some participants were afraid to take part in open discussions fearing for their safety, particularly those from unarmed communities.

Taking part in processes of capacity building in claimed spaces contributes to overcoming fear and believing in one's own capacities. To allow this progressive process of raising awareness and building confidence, these processes have to start locally. “For us women, the capacity building helped us to lose the fear of expressing our concerns and bring all the necessary information back to our home so that it will benefit our people.” (Pascual Chojllonos, Sucre, Bolivia)

The process of promotion of women's participation in policy-making demonstrates how awareness of rights and self-esteem go hand-in-hand. Particularly, in Sucre, CAFOD's partner

ACLO stressed the importance of work on the self-esteem and rights of women in order to build confidence and push participants to exercise their constitutional rights. Similar processes were witnessed in Cambodia by Banteay Srei who emphasised the time that it takes to develop the confidence that allows the full participation of women from families living in poverty. Many participants remain quiet for long time as those more active provoke and start the process. At first, only a minority of leaders engage while others silently observe. A key learning is patience: it takes a long time before they find the energy to speak up. There needs to be a process of building relationships and trust. The success is when people realise that they too can contribute to policy-making. Pascual Chojllonos said, “The topics discussed regarded what is a Municipal Constitutions, what is it for, how it could be applied, and how it could be built! This aroused interest in community leaders and local politicians, we initially thought that only lawyers could make laws and regulations”. What are needed are dedicated resources for citizen participation provided and budgeted for in public policies in a long-term framework.

Addressing livelihoods

It was difficult for partners to demonstrate specific strategies to ensure the participation of most marginalised people and how they benefited directly from the processes. Some of them highlighted their limitations and difficulties. For instance in Ethiopia, PANE struggled to get women to articulate their demands autonomously. In Cambodia, Banteay Srei learned that women living in poverty prioritise livelihood issues over their rights, which became secondary issues, as people prioritised the deficits which they felt most keenly in their own lives. Banteay Srei has therefore invested in initially addressing the issue of livelihoods, starting from income-generating activities. People who have pressing livelihood needs cannot afford to address them through a long-term process of claiming rights (e.g. land rights).

Effective participation takes a long time to realise when livelihoods are prioritised over rights; it may take years to create the livelihoods conditions that allow participation in policy processes. Moreover, Banteay Srei explains that in terms of supporting livelihoods, it can't be expected to be always successful and there is a need to plan enough resources for failures. If micro income-generating projects led by women fail, we need to have new resources. If the chickens die in a chicken-raising project, women lose everything and those important relations and seeds of a process of empowering and participation are lost unless additional resources are available to try again.

The evaluation of the Sri Lanka project ACDN emphasises this challenge and at the same time the importance of devising specific strategies and approaches to ensure that the most marginalised groups such as the disabled, women-headed households, migrants and the elderly among the poorest groups and minority ethnicities benefit, and to measure the extent to which their needs and aspirations are met through the Citizen Forums, the participatory process reviewed in this report.

5.4.2 Role of local leaders

The case studies revealed **the centrality of local leaders in processes of participation:** local leaders emerging from communities living in poverty as well as leaders working in local government authorities. As mentioned above, there is a **need to build collective capacity** and a broad leadership base with inclusive participation, albeit recognising local leaders. In Cambodia, Banteay Srei experienced trained leaders taking up NGO and government jobs in other places or run in local elections. This was perceived as largely positive because they could put community demands into formal political spaces.

The **identification of community leaders** is crucial and has to emerge with time among the community. Who they represent determines the success and legitimacy of the claims being put forward. It is also important to understand existing traditional leaders and think about how to broaden leadership without necessarily excluding these traditional actors, who can play a major role particularly in very problematic contexts, such as peace-building in North Uganda. **Strengthening local leadership and grassroots organisations** was acknowledged as a successful strategy to foster participation of local communities in policymaking, and particularly emphasised by Bolivian partners.

Often, discussions on participation tend to problematise the emergence of local leaders by viewing leaders as antithetic to horizontal participation. However, in practice, the experiences of CAFOD partners revealed that if there isn't a process of building local leadership, the interests of marginal communities will be represented by outsiders. While local leaders are not automatically accountable to their constituencies, local communities may be in a better position to influence and make a leader who is also part of the community accountable, rather than an outsider.

Finally, it is very important to think about what type of leadership is promoted by the interventions. In Sucre, ACLO is very explicit: "The organic relationship between the grassroots and the leadership is a prerequisite for the collective and democratic construction of political perspectives and the design of consensual collective actions. This requires a work of building and training of alternative leaderships in organisational spaces recognised and legitimised by the community and not outside of them".

5.5 Tensions between representation and participation

Analysis of the case studies revealed a subtle tension between representation and participation. Effective and inclusive participation is also determined by the capacity of finding the right balance between these two elements. Not everyone at all times can participate in policy-making processes and effective participation needs specific capacities. Therefore, a degree of representation is needed: communities have to choose who should bring their concerns to invited participatory spaces. The degree of representation increases vis-à-vis direct

“The degree of representation increases vis-à-vis direct participation with the scale of participatory spaces”

participation with the scale of the participatory spaces: i.e., in a regional or national process, people living in poverty are represented by a smaller number of people who have to act for the constituency they represent. This sliding scale may also alienate them from their community. If representation becomes too distant and too institutionalised, then the central question is: what is the difference and the added value compared with existing political institutions? Are participatory processes simply duplicating state institutions?

While at local level this tension may be easier to manage, it becomes more problematic as the process moves through different levels of scale. Representatives of community-based organisations or civil society organisations can effectively represent marginalised groups in local policy-making spaces and sometimes have better knowledge of resource use when taking part in joint civil society-government planning committees. For instance, in Iligan City (Philippines) mixed committees of local government and civil society organisations successfully participate together in the Poverty Reduction Action Team (LPRAT) to make decision on the use of development funds. However, as the scale changes the separation increases between members of local communities and civil society organisations.

A strategy that can make the difference is the use of participation in the design of spaces of engagement. The draft proposal for a municipal constitution in Sucre had an emphasis on the representativeness of community members taking part in the official committee. It is also emphasised the importance of defining mechanisms that allow people living in poverty to gain access to invited spaces through open processes.

In São Paulo Brazil, this tension and dynamic is recognised and addressed. CAFOD's partners strategically choose to participate in both claimed and invited spaces because their experience has shown them that they are mutually reinforcing. As mentioned earlier, partners understand they have to be answerable to social movements. Invited spaces are occupied strategically by CSO leaders whose legitimacy is rooted in their accountability to the communities they represent.

In Cambodia, NGO Forum describes the importance of the NGOs in representing communities, not only by supplying the technical skills needed for a complex process but also to protect community members from a potentially risky undertaking. However, local communities were those who had to live with the consequences of the legal action against the World Bank and potential retaliatory strategies from private companies or government. Therefore, NGO Forum left the communities to make decisions around whether or not to proceed with the investigation. It is important that there is a clear mandate and accountability in processes where, due to their nature or scale, there is a higher level of representation involved.

5.6 Importance of nature of demands and claims

In the cases analysed, there is mixed evidence regarding the reception of claims and demands from women and men living in poverty by those in positions of power. Rather than opposing *a priori* the legitimacy of participation, power holders seem to carefully evaluate the types of demands. Government authorities can have welcoming or hostile attitudes depending on how much the issue at stake represents a challenge to them. Therefore, the nature of the issue is a crucial factor in determining the chances of success of specific claims. For instance, Banteay Srei's experience shows how local government authorities strongly supported the work of women leaders on domestic violence but threatened them when they worked on the issue of land.

6

Conclusion: Recommendations for participation in post-2015 implementation

The recommendations drawn from this report aim to support the post-2015 framework to deliver transformative change for people on the ground, based on their needs, aspirations and priorities, and the kind of development they want to see in their own lives.

Participation in policy-making by people living in poverty has many potential positive impacts: minimising conflict, contributing towards more effective interventions, and creating policies that are people-centred. While the post-2015 framework can set the global parameters for development priorities over the coming 15 years, it is only at the local, sub-national and national level that effective participation in implementation, monitoring and accountability can take place. This means preparing for a shift from global level conversations to engaging the ministers, officials and civil society actors who will play a role in putting the new development framework into practice.

1 **Incorporate participatory spaces at the local, sub-national and national level.**

Effective and inclusive participation is a long-term process, particularly when influencing policy decisions and monitoring implementation. Governments need a strategy for facilitating and encouraging a variety of methods of participation of people living in poverty over the full 15-year timeframe of implementation. Decision-makers need to recognise that participation is not a ‘quick win’ and that it takes time to make institutions accountable and responsive, and for people to develop the capacity to engage with institutional mechanisms. Building on experience, specific mechanisms should be designed that give citizens a role in monitoring development interventions.

2 **Include an explicit effort to enable the participation of the most marginalised.**

If the post-2015 development wants to achieve its aspiration to ‘leave no one behind’, then sufficient resources and long-term capacity building processes must be included. There is an inverse relationship between vulnerability, marginalisation and poverty, and people’s ability to participate, which means that those who most need to have their voices heard, least often do. This includes ensuring that information is accessible and appropriate, through use of local language, suitable media, with specific provision for the hardest to reach.

3 Recognise and validate a variety of spaces and ways of participating.

Different forms of participation i.e. both formal and informal settings, claimed and invited spaces, face-to-face meetings, roundtables and public meetings, peaceful marches and mass mobilisations, all have a valid and valuable contribution to policy processes and can be complementary to each other. Politicians and decision-makers should be prepared to hear and act on input from different places and not just focus on formal or established spaces or 'usual suspects'. They should promote opportunities for people living in poverty and decision-makers to meet each other and build relationships and develop proposals together.

4 Use the global accountability mechanism for post-2015 to encourage national level institutionalisation of participatory approaches.

Many spaces for participation are dependent on the discretion of power-holders such as individual government officials and politicians, meaning that their existence is often vulnerable. This can curb the independence of discussions and proposals, as participants are afraid of challenging the status quo. Institutionalising participatory spaces through national legislation can protect them from changeable circumstances; recommending this through the post-2015 global accountability mechanism would help generate political will to institutionalise participatory spaces at the national level and provide national advocates with a lever to push for legislation.

5 Provide dedicated resources for citizen participation in public policies.

Legitimate and authentic participatory processes require investment to ensure that a range of people are able to engage. The post-2015 framework should support this through inclusion of resources within the accountability mechanism to allow for inclusive practices.

- 5.3. What age?
- 5.4. Were they belonging to specific organisations?
- 5.5. Were they part of specific groups (e.g. indigenous, ethnic majority/minority, farmers)?
- 5.6. Were they representing other people?
- 5.7. How were these people selected for participation?
- 5.8. Who selected these people?
- 5.9. Who decided the criteria for selecting the participants?

6. What were the methodologies/tools used to facilitate the participation of those living in poverty?

- 6.1. Who decided the adoption of these methodologies and tools?
- 6.2. Who designed them?
- 6.3. Where these methodologies and tools appropriate?
- 6.4. What would you do to make them more effective?

7. What was achieved?

- 7.1. What were the successes? For whom?
- 7.2. What were the problematic issues?
- 7.3. What were the limitations of the process? How could these shortcomings be addressed?

8. External factors/institutional arrangements

- 8.1. What were the external factors which had a positive influence on the process? (e.g. constitutional reforms, democratic transition)
- 8.2. What were the external factors which had a negative influence on the process?
- 8.3. Was there any specific legal and/or institutional arrangements/conditions that influenced the process? (e.g. new devolution law instituting local development committees) In what ways?

9. What role did local leaders (e.g. in the community, neighbourhood, organisation) play?

- 9.1. What type of local leaders were they? (e.g. were they elected representatives of a local organisation? Were they elected community representatives of the neighbourhood? Were they traditionally holding a position of leadership, e.g. community elders?)
- 9.2. What key capacities they deployed were central to the success of the participatory process?

10. Learning

- 10.1. Have the learning, capacities, and relationships poor women and men developed through this process been deployed in other contexts? (e.g. the experience gained in dealing with government officials in local health committees has been used to negotiate with the police, city council, etc.)
- 10.2. Were some of the successful aspects of these participatory practices institutionalised within the relevant policy-making processes?
- 10.3. What is needed to institutionalise good practices of citizen participation into 'long-term and sustainable changes'?
- 10.4. Was there any retaliation from other actors or risk for participants as a result of the claims that participants made? (e.g. participants were threatened because they criticised a specific company or government department)
- 10.5. What do you think we could learn from this case study?
- 10.6. What are the key lessons regarding involving poor women and men in policy-making? Why?
- 10.7. What are the three most important issues to consider in the design of inclusive and effective participatory spaces to enable poor women and men to contribute to policy-making processes?

11. Additional information

- 11.1. Has CAFOD provided any (direct/indirect) contribution to this process? Yes/no. If yes, what kind of support?
- 11.2. How did you get the information presented in this document?
- 11.3. Were the lessons and reflections formulated or shared with other people?
- 11.4. Was any of the participants able to convey their own learning (directly/indirectly)? (e.g. Directly: you have been asking some of the participants some of these questions. Indirectly: you collected participants' perspective on their involvement in the past and you have looked at that documentation/ remember their contribution)

12. Please use this space to add any relevant information that you would like to provide which didn't fit under any of the previous questions.

13. Please list any relevant documentation that you will attach

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