



# Where Change Happens

How international NGOs are shifting  
the focus of their advocacy & campaigning  
towards the Global South

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# 1

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## Executive summary

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In recent times we have seen a changing approach to advocacy across the international development sector, with a greater focus on influencing governments in the Global South. This shift has occurred, at least to some extent, as a response to some key changes to the development landscape.

- The sector has observed a **rise in fragile states**, a growing middle class and a youth population increasingly disengaged with the machinery of governance, and with little hope of employment.
- The trend towards **decentralised governance** in many countries has added a localised or provincial layer of advocacy, directed at influencing policy implementation of basic services.
- The new **post-2015** Sustainable Development Goals present an opportunity for civil society organisations to influence the development agenda, particularly around youth engagement.

This report highlights how new and flexible approaches to advocacy in developing countries ('in-country advocacy') are delivering change, closer to the ground. It suggests practical ways for international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) to invest in strong in-country advocacy that is driven by citizens who have a real stake in the outcomes: those affected by poverty and exclusion.

The report looks at how INGOs are adapting their advocacy approaches to this new social and political landscape, maximising impact in developing countries while strengthening their influence with donor governments and global institutions.

# Flexible approach to in-country influencing

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INGOs are tailoring their approaches across a spectrum from ‘top down’, determined by broad global themes, to ‘country up’, focusing on local policy implementation. While their approaches may differ, a common thread for all INGOs we interviewed for this report is the ‘participatory advocacy’ model, which links relevant policy change with active citizen participation at all levels.

The report shows that scaling up in-country advocacy in stages has proved to be the most effective way to adapt to the changing contexts. Five principles have emerged:

**1. A looser, more flexible framework** including:

- **Organisation-wide focus on influencing:** INGOs have either adopted issue-based steering groups around global targets, or merged advocacy teams into broader functions
- **Targeted resourcing** through specialist advocacy posts at local level or co-opting capacity of partner organisations and networks
- **Investing in local advocacy** through active citizenship initiatives

**2. Cross-country/peer learning**

to drive forward best practice and knowledge sharing

**3. Identifying a limited number of focus countries**

with a common set of features or conditions to increase efficiency. (Some report that this approach delivers a snowball effect, with other countries following suit)

**4. A ‘multi-country’ funding approach:**

this can be attractive for institutions and corporate donors, and offers a way of resourcing and measuring impact. Approaches that require organisations to work together, through networks or other means, are often favourable to funders

**5. An evidence-based approach**

drawing on participation from beneficiaries and partners, demonstrates impact and provides factual evidence to support policy change.

<sup>1</sup> 2013 UNDP Human Development Report estimates that 80% of the world’s middle class population will be living in developing countries by 2030.

The research also identified a common set of cross-cutting themes. These include:

- **Broader coalition building:** For example CARE and World Vision show how working in thematic coalitions has increased impact by amplifying ‘Southern voices’ through scaling up capacity building or technical-based forums
- **Adapting approach to fragile states:** INGOs are adapting to engage in the increasing number of ‘fragile states’, typically by working through grassroots and civil society networks
- **Active citizenship and youth engagement:** Restless Development and Plan demonstrate how young people in the Global South are actively engaged in targeting decision makers on issues that directly affect them.

The conclusion is that INGOs should adopt a staged approach to scaling up in-country advocacy. As a starting point, **establish a structure for coordinating advocacy focus** around core themes with strategic goals, linking national to global. Then, we recommend INGOs should **identify focus countries** for a scaled up approach to in-country influencing. **Evidencing advocacy impact** is then key, in order to increase appetite for in-country influencing, both across the organisation, and with INGO supporters and potential funders. At the same time, INGOs should build on their role as **convenors**, coordinating across different sectors to keep shared priorities high on the new post-2015 development agenda.



*The starting point is to establish an organisational structure for coordinating advocacy focus around core themes with strategic goals, linking national to global.*

# 2

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## Introduction

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In August 2014, Plan UK appointed The Eden Stanley Group to conduct a review to help strengthen Plan UK's approach to national in-country advocacy in the Global South, and improve its links to global advocacy.

Plan UK wanted to share this work with other INGOs. A well-attended seminar co-hosted by Bond (the UK membership body for INGOs) provided an opportunity for this, and generated further insights into the key themes, which we have added to this report. The overall findings provide a snapshot of effective models and initiatives for scaling up country-led advocacy and campaigning which have relevance across the sector.

This report pulls together intelligence across the international development sector on strong country-led advocacy with the intention of informing discussion about best practice. An evaluation of the impact of such advocacy is not within the report's scope.

The report scopes and assesses:

- The set up and efficacy of the support provided by INGOs for in-country campaigning and advocacy. It looks at their most effective models and considers approach, structure, resourcing and opportunities for scaling up
  - The activities and trends for INGOs to consider should they decide to support in-country advocacy in the Global South
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## 2.1 Methodology

Our methodology for this report includes:

1. Desk and online research to analyse relevant documentation
2. External interviews with 30 individuals from 15 INGOs. Most had a global strategic overview with some in-country and regional perspectives, from Amnesty International, CARE International, DFID, Girl Hub/Nike Foundation, INTRAC, Plan International, Plan UK, Oxfam, Restless Development, Save the Children, Tearfund, VSO, World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, World Vision International and Y Care International.

In addition, in April 2015, we co-hosted a seminar with Bond to share initial report findings and to prompt further discussion. 28 participants from the INGO sector attended.

## 2.2 Terminology

We use the term ‘in-country advocacy’ to cover campaigning, public mobilisation and lobbying, centred on Southern countries, in order to achieve change in policy and practice at national and provincial level.

We use ‘influencing’ to encompass both policy and behavioural change.

We use the term ‘INGO’ to refer to international non-governmental organisations.

### **A note on abbreviations**

Through this report we have abbreviated or truncated some organisation names as follows:

- Amnesty International is shortened to Amnesty
- CARE International is shortened to CARE
- Plan International is shortened to Plan
- World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts is abbreviated to WAGGGS
- World Vision International is shortened to World Vision
- Y Care International is abbreviated to YCI



# 3

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## Vision & approach

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This section looks at how many INGOs have begun to think differently about advocacy. This includes a greater emphasis on in-country advocacy, whilst employing a number of approaches.

CARE offers this definition of advocacy in an INGO context: *'Advocacy is the deliberate process of influencing those who make decisions about developing, changing and implementing policies to reduce poverty and achieve social justice'*.<sup>2</sup>

CARE considers that effective advocacy is less about transplanting a blueprint and more about operating at a series of levels to maximise impact. As Tearfund says there is *'no one size fits all'*.

There is a growing realisation that to achieve change, advocacy needs to move closer to the ground, not least because the change that ultimately matters is change to nations and people's lives, while lobbying foreign institutions can only get so far. Some organisations, like Oxfam and Amnesty International have redefined their strategic approach to incorporate this thinking. Oxfam's emerging focus is explicitly on Southern governments:

*'A lot of our work is focussed on the UK, the EU and international financial institutions. We want to reduce our focus there and to influence governments in the South'*.<sup>3</sup>

This marks a shift at Oxfam toward lobbying for policy change at a national government level. Moreover, due to the widespread policy of decentralisation, there is also a need to target provincial (e.g. state-level) government structures on service provision gaps.

Oxfam's new approach will focus on women's rights, food, climate and inequality with *'more reports on policy and strategy produced in developing countries to influence thinking by those governments'*. This suggests that a greater proportion of its future research and policy development will be done at country level.

<sup>2</sup> Quote taken from p1, 'The Care International Advocacy Handbook' [insights.careinternational.org.uk/media/k2/attachments/CI\\_Global\\_Advocacy\\_Manual\\_Web.pdf](https://insights.careinternational.org.uk/media/k2/attachments/CI_Global_Advocacy_Manual_Web.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Mark Goldring, Oxfam CEO in Guardian newspaper article 'Oxfam poised to axe 125 UK jobs as global strategy shift looms', 25.10.13

## Vision & approach *continued*

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<sup>4</sup> 14 changes UK NGOs must make to be relevant in 10 years time', the Guardian, Global Development Professionals Network, 10 March 2015

ActionAid has gone further in devolving power through relocating its international headquarters to Johannesburg. It has introduced fundamental changes in its operating approach, including introducing collective agreements on sharing financial resources to replace north-south country transfers. UK Director of Policy, Advocacy & Campaigns, Nuria Molina Gallart said that *'in 15 years we should see more of local civil society occupying local and national spaces and crowding out INGOs'*.<sup>4</sup>

Amnesty is following a similar path. Its vision is taking action *'closer to where human rights violations take place'* helping *'people to take charge of their own destiny'*. It has decentralised its global research function to a series of regional hubs, employing more local staff and working in localised advocacy partnerships towards speedier results.

Most organisations interviewed – from sector leaders like Save the Children to smaller players like Restless Development – demonstrate a high-level commitment to advocacy through their organisational Theories of Change. In addition, more progressive INGOs are adopting the term 'influencing' to convey a broader approach that includes policy engagement and behavioural change alongside the traditional advocacy and campaigns approach.

There is no single model for carrying out advocacy. Instead, INGOs are adopting a bespoke approach along a spectrum that ranges from 'top down', determined by global themes, to 'country up', focusing on local and national policy implementation with active citizen participation. Most large INGOs combine these approaches in order to create both strategic policy impact and directly benefit the lives of marginalised people. Both of these approaches employ the 'participatory advocacy' model, identified as 'strong on central command with a flexible local approach'. Small and medium-sized INGOs also favour the participatory advocacy model but their approach has tended to be less systematic, less documented and on a smaller scale.

### 3.1

## Global ‘top down’ approach

The focus here is achieving strategic policy change on globally agreed themes at multilateral and national government level. It includes high-level decision-maker lobbying supported by large-scale popular campaigning focussed around global moments. Characteristics include being strong on central command and identifying a clear ‘problem’ and ‘solution’.

This approach is apparent in the structure and tactics of Oxfam’s GROW campaign on climate justice and Save the Children’s EVERY ONE campaign to reduce child mortality. Importantly, both organisations operate a one programme approach, where influencing is integrated with programmes. This is publicly articulated through an organisational Theory of Change and cements their commitment to pursuing policy change, with an expectation of adequate resourcing.

### 3.2

## Organisation-wide focus on influencing

Both organisations above operate a linear structure, whereby progress towards strategic goals is coordinated by a global steering group, supported at regional level and implemented at national level. This provides an identifiable route to achieving change, although operational challenges are acknowledged. Oxfam acknowledges that the ‘*massive scale*’ of GROW means a ‘*less sharp*’ campaigning focus. Save the Children recognises that for some in the organisation, advocacy is ‘*a minority sport*’ and has set up a cross-organisational ‘Be the Voice’ project to link up all levels of its advocacy work and promote its impact to staff. Global campaigns are led by individual ‘affiliates’, or ‘members’. The current reality is that the ‘global lead member’ is most likely to be Oxfam GB and the UK arm of Save the Children due to their significant resources and existing advocacy focus. Within Oxfam, different interested affiliates and regions lead on global themes, e.g., Oxfam Novib in the Netherlands leads on food security and agriculture.



*Most INGOs interviewed demonstrate a high level commitment to advocacy through their organisational Theories of Change.*

Organisation-wide focus  
on influencing *continued*

### 3.3

## National ‘country up’ approach

**Below** Women in Pakistan meet as part of Oxfam’s Raising Her Voice project to promote the rights and capacities of poor women to engage effectively in governance at all levels.

Irina Werning/Oxfam

Both organisations support global campaigns across a series of ‘focus countries’, chosen for their strategic relevance. For Save the Children, this is a shift from their previous focus on influencing the UK government and global processes five or more years ago. Oxfam has had ‘mixed success’ here – for example, its support in Bangladesh strengthened the voice of the Bangladeshi government in climate change negotiations, while, by contrast, its focus on the land grabs issue in Uganda was undermined by the lack of an associated in-country programme.

Both organisations are increasing their focus on national advocacy. For example Oxfam GB’s National Influencing Team works with country management teams to ensure influencing is an integral part of five-year country strategies.

The focus here is national and provincial (e.g. state) level policy influencing. It includes lobbying in partnership with others, supported by large-scale citizen participation to build momentum. Characteristics include advising and supporting local systems of governance, and as a critical friend to decision makers.

CARE’s coordination structure largely mirrors the model adopted by Oxfam and Save the Children, with a global steering group and implementation at the country level, but strategic support is offered by Head Office rather than by a southern regional hub.

CARE’s national level advocacy has included a ‘rapid mapping of existing programmes and priorities’. Its strong capacity at local level has been key: ‘giving a voice to vulnerable people themselves’ through its history of citizen action networks. CARE’s ‘critical friend’ role to governments stems from its experience in grassroots social monitoring and channelling evidence to policy makers.



## 3.4

### Organisations with limited resources

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#### **CARE's maternal health campaign in Peru**

CARE Peru's maternal health work is a '*shining example*' of the organisation's advocacy approach in sexual, reproductive and maternal health, where maternal mortality rates in parts of Peru are horrific due to the lack of professional support for home-based childbirth. CARE took a '*classic governance programme approach*' by training women as '*social monitors*' to observe health professionals and consult with their patients on their service experience. CARE's findings were shared with an Ombudsman, civil society groups and health providers.

The programme led to a substantial increase in health clinic births and a 50% drop in maternal mortality in affected communities. The Peruvian government subsequently invited CARE to collaborate in other parts of Peru. CARE is now working with the government on institutionalising citizen monitoring as national policy. In addition, the programme attracted '*local to global*' attention as a rights-based approach to maternal health and was discussed at the UN Human Rights Council.

CARE highlighted the importance of political context and key individuals to its success. It was beneficial to have a left-leaning government in Peru at the time – that saw political opportunity in improving maternal healthcare.

A common, less resource intensive approach adopted by smaller organisations, involves substituting staff with specialist volunteers, and building in-country capacity by working through partner organisations.

VSO operates its advocacy work through a '*skeletal structure*' of in-country advocacy volunteers across focus countries. They are supported both by country programme managers (on themes like health and education) and global advocacy advisors (offering strategic advocacy support). The volunteer's role is to build capacity in partner organisations.

Y Care International (YCI) adopts a different approach to securing the same end result, through offering training in '*strategy for advocacy and programming*' for partner organisations and '*training in techniques and tools*' for young activists.

Similarly, CAFOD has systematised their approach by employing 'Advocacy Accompaniers' to help staff in partner organisations develop strong advocacy programmes.

## 3.5

### Cross-cutting themes

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Two cross-cutting themes were reinforced in interviews with other organisations. Firstly, that INGOs are required to adapt their advocacy approach in fragile states, and secondly that they are increasingly working in broad coalitions for greater impact.

#### **Advocacy in fragile states**

Fragile states are a growing part of the development landscape and INGOs need to adapt their advocacy approaches and structures accordingly. Research by aid data specialists, Development Initiatives (DI), shows that increasing numbers of the extreme poor are living in fragile states. In 1990 only 20% of the extreme poor were in fragile states. That has now increased to 50%. Further analysis by DI shows that 96% of people currently living in poverty are living in countries that are either politically fragile, environmentally vulnerable or both. The Bond members' seminar proposed that a distinction can be drawn between civil society that is informally repressed, and where there is actual state legislation against its operation, with the former providing a more conducive INGO operational environment.

In fragile states, INGOs are most effective when they channel a local approach through trusted stakeholders. Jenny Ross, an advocacy consultant who specialises in complex contexts, says *'where the central elite is fighting against itself, the best advocacy is done at a local level'* and suggests INGOs have an impact when they have long-standing relationships with local communities and decision makers.

World Vision highlights the need to evidence any proposed change and pursue a *'grassroots upwards'* approach:

*'Start with a very local situation where you are already working. Look at services you're experienced in – like health – and how the quality of them can be improved. This will help you identify the issues that can be solved at local level. Anything that can't be solved locally can be taken to the provincial or national level. It's ultimately about finding funding solutions for services'.*

YCI echoes the need for a *'low-key'* approach saying where partner organisations are hesitant about national advocacy, e.g., in Colombia, it adapted its approach to channel an issue through local-level youth organisations – acknowledging that an insider approach is the most appropriate and realistic way to influence change.

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### **Working as part of broad coalitions**

Coalitions can increase impact. For example, CARE scaled up capacity building within the 'Southern Voices' programme for advocacy impact and World Vision addressed child nutrition through the 'Scaling up Nutrition' technical platform.

### **CARE's 'Southern Voices' capacity building programme**

The Southern Voices programme was established to re-energise capacity building in climate policy networks after the failure of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) talks to reach agreement in 2010. The programme supports 20 national and regional networks across Africa, Asia and Latin America. Funded by the Danish government, Southern Voices is supported by a consortium of NGOs, with CARE Denmark as the lead coordinator. It has four part-time regional coordinators facilitating South-South linking.

Southern climate networks face geographical, technical and capacity challenges in linking with like-minded organisations. Southern Voices provides on and off-line learning and capacity building through climate advocacy toolkits. It also provides some financial support for events and training.

These South-South links support learning and solidarity, whilst North-South alliances are effective when they are *'flexible and empowering'* as opposed to offering *'linear knowledge sharing'*. Where government relationships are productive, Southern Voices believes climate networks can have *'considerable impact'* on national policy making.

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## Cross-cutting themes *continued*

**Below** World Vision Kenya Nutrition Manager Jardine Ngolo, talking to First Lady Margaret Kenyatta on how World Vision Kenya is working with the government and health stakeholders to reverse the trends of maternal and child

World Vision

### **World Vision: ‘Scaling Up Nutrition’ Movement**

The Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement is a global movement engaged in a collective effort to improve nutrition. Member countries create national focal points to take forward four priorities for better nutritional outcomes: bring people together; put policies in place; implement and align programmes; and mobilise resources.

World Vision and Save the Children have encouraged SUN country membership. World Vision is a member of many of the 33 civil society alliances (CSA) that have been formed at national level and co-ordinates them in six countries, mostly with funded coordinator positions.

In Kenya (which joined the SUN movement at the same time as developing a national nutritional plan), World Vision and Save the Children identified some ‘serious policy gaps’ on child mortality, where policies relating to child and maternal healthcare were not implemented. A ‘*rapid analysis of nutrition issues*’ led to an awareness raising conference and the subsequent design of a national nutrition advocacy plan, aligned to the government budgetary process. This led to Kenya being designated an ‘official’ SUN country and the Kenyan Minister of Health responded by committing \$6 million to nutrition programmes, which donors match funded.





# 4

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## Organisational structures

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Once advocacy is integrated into an organisation's strategy, the next step is to secure dedicated resources, including at the regional and country levels. This is visible in Amnesty's relocation of its global research function to a series of regional hubs '*closer to where human rights violations take place*' and Save the Children's recruitment of a 'Head of International Advocacy' post.

Most organisations favour a staged approach. Four common principles, which we explore in the next few pages, are:

- adopting looser, more adaptive influencing frameworks
- identifying a series of 'focus countries'
- prioritising a 'multi-country funding approach'
- establishing an evidence-based approach to measuring impact.



*Other organisations acknowledge that the time pressures of global campaigns make it difficult for national level partners to fully engage at all stages.*

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## 4.1

### Working in looser frameworks

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This approach includes simultaneous but complementary processes running alongside each other, merging or refocusing teams into broader functions, taking a flexible approach to thematic leads and growing the number of in-country posts as programmes expand.

#### **Simultaneous but complementary processes**

Oxfam has two separate, complementary structures to support its *'top-down'* global campaigns and national influencing programme. In Oxfam GB, a team of four, each covering a specific global region, and each working with their respective country management teams, ensures influencing is an integral part of national strategies. Oxfam acknowledges that this team is *'quite stretched'* resource-wise.

Other organisations acknowledge that the time pressures of global campaigns make it difficult for national level partners to fully engage at all stages. A suggested solution is to have a broad global umbrella under which national campaigns can fit. Within CARE it is *'left to the country office to determine'* how they engage in global advocacy, while member countries engage directly with national offices on *'ad hoc'* advocacy, e.g., reports that have global and in-country resonance.

Oxfam's future advocacy vision is *'empowered and accountable countries, with headquarters becoming enablers, consolidators and centres of expertise'*.

#### **Merging or refocusing teams into broader functions**

Amnesty has merged its advocacy function into a wider 'Advocacy & Programme Team' including policy and government affairs, programme issue experts and advocacy outreach coordinators. This structure facilitates *'the development of a clear advocacy strategy for each programme area'*.

YCI has replaced the 'Campaigns and Global Youth Work' team with an 'Advocacy and Engagement' team. This team of four works across the YMCA movement on global issues, developing links between young people in different countries on issues such as youth justice.

Restless Development has expanded its global 'Policy and Practice' team from two to twelve staff. A Global Advocacy Manager supports in-country staff and coalitions. However, instead of investing in specialist in-country staff, Restless Development focuses on *'working through partner organisations'* on advocacy, e.g., offering 'Advocates for Action' training in Uganda to youth organisations.

Plan UK acknowledges that participation involving children and young people requires specialist expertise, so they have invested in youth engagement staff, including a specialist post to help scale up its advocacy programming to national level.

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## Flexible approach to thematic leads

Oxfam GB is the lead affiliate for the GROW campaign, with other affiliates and/or regions taking responsibility for specific sub-themes. For example, Oxfam Latin America & the Caribbean (LAC) leads on land grabs, co-ordinated by the global campaign team. This flexible structure means regional leads offer support irrespective of geography, e.g., Oxfam LAC supported Benin on land grab activity.

Oxfam says operating flexibly creates a sense of belonging for country offices, where they *'can feel part of something bigger, even while doing something quite discrete'*. However it recognises that this broad approach can result in a *'less sharp'* campaigning focus.

## Growth in posts as programmes expand

World Vision's six regional advocacy posts grew from part-time positions during the initial 'Child Health Now' campaign phase into full-time advisor posts as activity developed. VSO currently has one regional advocacy advisor post but has secured funding for a second post as part of programme expansion.

## Advocacy at the regional level

Although a number of organisations – including Oxfam, Save the Children, Amnesty and CARE – acknowledge the importance of regional advocacy targets, they vary in approach. Both Oxfam and Save the Children have African Union (AU) liaison offices in Addis Ababa. Oxfam also has a *'standing capacity'* to influence regional bodies such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Amnesty regards regional bodies such as the AU and the Organisation of American States (OAS) as becoming *'very important'*, but maintains a more flexible approach through a combination of global and national staff, depending on the issue.

Plan UK and the Girl Hub see an opportunity for INGOs to play a regional *'convenor'* role on broad themes through *'a more co-ordinated multi-sectoral approach'* to keeping girls' issues on the political agenda.

Amnesty believes INGOs should invest more in regional bodies, warning that *'regional blocks cannot be ignored and need to be used wisely. When the going gets tough, they can make a difference'*.

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While CARE has had ‘*ad-hoc engagement*’ with the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) to date, it intends to scale up work with African regional bodies such as the AU and the South African Development Community (SADC) on conflict issues in the Horn of Africa. Oxfam highlights the ‘*rise of regionalism*’, with bodies like the AU and EU becoming increasingly influential in prioritising rights. It suggests ‘*working more at regional level could help straddle tensions between global and national*’.

### **Range of approaches to regional resourcing**

While organisations varied in their degree of focus on regional-level advocacy, bigger organisations confirmed a need for dynamic and entrepreneurial staff at national level to achieve results. Smaller organisations suggested practical interim solutions to plug staffing gaps.

Only five of the 15 organisations interviewed had regionally-based advocacy staff to support national offices with capacity building and impact measurement. Amnesty’s regional hubs are bigger than most with, for example, a staff team of twelve covering research, campaigns and media functions for the Horn & East Africa region in Nairobi. Regional advocacy staff across all organisations interviewed also coordinate activity around global campaign moments.

Save the Children regional staff undertake some ‘*operational advocacy*’, for example, on Syria across the Middle East region.

Oxfam regions vary in their degree of focus on advocacy (with some being more focussed on humanitarian and programme delivery). Notable across WAGGGS is the fact that regional staff mirror the demographic of their older target audience, in that they are themselves young women aged 18 to 25 years old.

Several organisations with limited advocacy resources – Tearfund, Restless Development, YCI and VSO – have no regional staff. Tearfund operates a matrix of nine regional policy officers (some UK based and some country based) who offer direct advocacy support to ‘*country partners*’. Restless Development doesn’t see in-country advocacy as a specialist staff function, believing it’s more important to make an investment in building ‘*looser coalitions and movements*’.

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## Need for skilled and motivated national staff

Oxfam and Save the Children believe dedicated national advocacy staff are essential. In Southern countries these staff were felt to be more entrepreneurial and intuitive than their Northern counterparts – presumably by virtue of being closer to the ground. However, it is not a given that recruiting national staff will result in a more entrepreneurial approach – and this was reinforced by Amnesty, which said that some of its national and regional advocacy staff were ‘driven’ and pro-active on the human rights aspects of the spread of Ebola, while others passively *‘waited for global direction’*.

Oxfam, Save the Children and others recognised the need for dynamic, entrepreneurial, national staff, seeing success as dependent on the approach and skills of the post holder. Having the systems to leverage strong national capacity is equally important. For example, Oxfam acknowledges the *‘mixed success’* of the regional lead posts on the GROW campaign, noting that *‘only those who put the work into knowing and consulting with their countries were a useful conduit for two-way information’*.

Save the Children suggests recruiting advocacy staff *‘who understand the context of the country in which you’re working’* as a prerequisite to being able to navigate the detail and complexity of any national advocacy issue.

Advocacy consultant Jenny Ross agreed that *‘people in a country know what’s possible if you ask them’*, going on to state that *‘the biggest risk is when complete outsiders try to lead a process of national change’*.

A practical suggestion is to include advocacy as a required skill on country director job descriptions – as Oxfam and Save the Children have – ensuring that it is integrated into the country planning process.

Save the Children has prioritised national advocacy posts in its EVERY ONE campaign focus countries. The intention is that this will lead to other national offices recognising the advantages and need for advocacy staff and establishing their own capacity. However, Save the Children recognises that *‘it’s not a quick thing’* and seven years into their global campaign, resources are still *‘unevenly spread’*. Oxfam too acknowledges it doesn’t yet have adequate capacity, and both regional and national level advocacy work suffers as a result:

*‘Many people – particularly programme staff – are doing influencing at national level but the reality is it’s a small percentage of their role. Expecting them to make links across countries and globally is overambitious. We can’t reach that until there are dedicated national staff doing this role’.*

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## 4.2 Identifying focus countries

### Peer support and learning

Many of the larger INGOs we spoke to offer additional support and learning through hubs and peer learning exercises. World Vision operates ‘*regional learning labs*’ where country specialists can benefit from learning and training, while Oxfam has a virtual knowledge hub to ‘*drive sharing and learning from programme experience across countries and themes*’ (e.g., active citizenship).

CARE is undertaking a four-month cross-regional scoping project to assess whether its ‘Engaging Men and Boys’ programme in Bosnia (part of its global

A number of organisations, including Oxfam, Restless Development and WAGGGS, have adopted a ‘focus countries’ approach, where a common set of features or conditions suggest a greater potential for impact. Participants in the Bond seminar agreed that national partners must be part of the initial discussion as to whether a country qualifies as a focus country.

Oxfam’s GROW campaign has up to 15 focus countries where Oxfam supports campaign activity, research and shared learning, whilst Restless Development has identified eight programme delivery countries that offer an ‘*enabling environment*’. In addition, WAGGGS



*The medium to long-term aim for most organisations is that success in focus countries will create a ‘snowball effect’, with other countries following suit.*

violence prevention campaign) can be blue-printed in the African Great Lakes region. CARE’s flexible approach and ‘*lack of strict structures*’ means ‘*we are good at talking to each other across national and regional borders*’.

Smaller organisations like VSO acknowledged they lacked systematic peer support mechanisms and conduct learning on an ad-hoc basis, e.g., between Zambia and Zimbabwe as part of VSO’s Southern Africa regional HIV/Aids programme.

has 25 focus countries worldwide where ‘*there are already lots of vibrant and committed women*’.

The medium to long-term aim for most organisations is that success in focus countries will create a ‘*snowball effect*’, with other countries following suit.

## 4.3

### Adopting multi-country funding approaches

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#### Funding challenges

Many INGOs acknowledge the challenge of insecure advocacy funding. Save the Children has arguably one of the most diverse portfolios of advocacy funding, coming from trusts, foundations and corporates rather than bilateral grants. World Vision highlights the '*paucity*' of advocacy-specific grants to apply for, and how the grant cycle limits the longevity of the approach, even if successful.

Partly as a result of this, VSO funds its national advocacy almost entirely through its programme budget. Still, advocacy is currently viewed across much of the organisation as a '*luxury add-on*', meaning the decision to participate has to come from each national office, rather than being systematically embedded. However, integrating advocacy into programme work isn't necessarily straightforward. World Vision identifies tension between the need to integrate advocacy into programme strategies and the reflex to focus on technical programming.

Securing specific and dedicated funding is one of the biggest challenges to developing in-country advocacy. As guidance, Oxfam estimates that up to 25% of its programme budget is spent on advocacy, whilst for YCI it is up to 20%. (Save the Children's Global Advocacy Group agreed to earmark a percentage spend of any programme grant on advocacy, but it hasn't yet determined that figure).

There is emerging funder interest in the 'multi-country approach'. Save the Children secured funding from The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for its advocacy work for the EVERY ONE campaign and post-2015 work across eleven countries. Oxfam's National Influencing Team helped broker access to funding for the 'My Rights, My Voice' education campaign programme across eight countries. Acknowledging the resource challenge for such 'multi-country' bids, Oxfam is now using a virtual hub to generate a 20-country proposal on ending violence against women and girls.

Other organisations see the potential of this approach, with CARE saying '*we could be more focussed and target a few countries for on-going advocacy work – fundraise for a specific multi-country approach*'. Linked to this, CARE sees potential in pursuing '*South-South advocacy partnerships*' for greater impact. This is examined in the South-South advocacy partnerships section below.



## Adopting multi-country funding approaches *continued*

**Below** Women leaders at a School Management Committee meeting, Seraghari village, Nepal. Oxfam's Raising Her Voice programme helps women participate actively in community & national decision making.

Aubrey Wade/Oxfam

### The future for funding

Presenting advocacy as part of an holistic package can be helpful, but the advice from Save the Children is *'don't make requests too big, instead identify specific posts needed to deliver advocacy in-country, and set out what sort of advocacy you are trying to do'*. This can involve lateral thinking, for example accessing funds for advocacy through grants directed at improving governance or building civil society partnerships. In addition, World Vision suggests funders favour cross-organisational approaches, saying *'donors are directly encouraging collaborative and network approaches, compelling organisations to work together'*.



CARE is investigating developing unrestricted income through 'CARE Action Networks'. This idea is being piloted in India and Peru, as a way to mobilise middle class activists but also to develop a relationship with future funders.

### South-South advocacy partnerships

CARE sees an advocacy gap where its *'local to national'* approach could create impact. Moving forward, CARE may be able to identify *'a few strategically important countries'* from across the Global South that could *'tip the balance'*, e.g., exploiting Uganda's special status as President of the UN General Assembly as an opportunity to influence the UN on gender issues. In this way, CARE could *'treat strategic Southern countries as players in the same way as the EU'*.

WAGGGS operates an 'unofficial' structure of South-South partnerships in southern Africa as part of their influencing approach. A joint delegation from Kenya, Tanzania, Burundi and Uganda met high-level ministers to discuss peace building. In addition, their West Africa partnership provided cross-country advocacy and governance training for young people.

A broad range of NGOs at the Bond seminar agreed that cross-country sharing and peer networks are useful for building South-South advocacy partnerships.



## 4.4

### Achieving impact through evidence

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An evidence-based approach to measuring advocacy results has been widely adopted, with organisations acknowledging that it can take up to three years to create identifiable impact, with World Vision taking a five-year approach.

A number of INGOs with long-term donor funding use log frames to track impact. However it was recognised that, with respect to advocacy, this approach can fail to capture all cross-cutting factors that determine success or failure. VSO recognises that, whilst progress on issues like education is successfully captured in their country log frames, it doesn't capture broader, underpinning issues such as gender and governance. It is addressing this by developing its own monitoring and evaluation tools.

Organisations with more resources take a more structured approach to monitoring and evaluation. World Vision measures impact at national, regional and global level. This provides an assessment of specific *'wins'* (recorded as quantitative data at national office level), *'significant contributions to milestones'* (data from each country office is compiled and tracked against progress to combined regional goals at regional office level) and *'identifies where offices are gaining influence'* (when data from all regional offices is amalgamated and assessed at global level).

For World Vision, national-level monitoring focuses on internal accountability (how the campaign budget has been spent), with a set of mainly quantitative data collected at regional level. Campaign processes are monitored globally. World Vision uses these data to identify national office resource needs, how offices are performing relative to each other, and whether a baseline standard is being maintained across the campaign.

Organisations with limited resources tend to use simpler tools. VSO has a 'capacity development scale' against which it measures improvements in local-level partners' advocacy capacity. The Girl Effect initiative subdivides its target group of adolescent girls aged 10 to 19 years into three specific groups (namely *'invisible'*, *'stressed yet functional'* and *'stable yet vulnerable'* girls) to help them more directly monitor impact. YCI sees engaging young people in advocacy as *'an end in itself'* and this is reflected in participation being one of its performance indicators. An advocacy consultant who specialises in this area agreed that *'intermediate outcomes have value too'*, and indeed the rights of children to participate is enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and is a legitimate advocacy aim in and of itself.

<sup>5</sup> oxfamblogs.org <http://oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/14-ways-for-aid-agencies-to-better-promote-active-citizenship/>

<sup>6</sup> Ups & downs in struggle for accountability: 4 real-time studies' by Duncan Green, 'From Poverty to Power'

## A work in progress

Most organisations acknowledge gaps in monitoring and evaluation, particularly in their ability to gather qualitative information. It is difficult to draw out usable findings from quantitative indicators unless well supported by qualitative evidence. Amnesty highlights challenges in measuring the impact of human rights work in terms of causality and attrition, then determining the organisation's specific contribution. Oxfam acknowledges large-scale programme data and qualitative evidence are current organisational gaps, with the latter tending to be anecdotal. It is piloting several approaches, including using mobile technology to gather data in Bangladesh and a three-country broad data gathering approach with centralised technical support.

In his blog, Oxfam GB's Senior Strategic Advisor, Duncan Green, highlights the pressure that demonstrating results and value for money puts on active citizenship work, where attrition is hard to prove and most (if not all) evaluation is qualitative and often seen as second best by donors.<sup>5</sup>

Private sector funders appear to be more flexible. While Save the Children told us '*corporate donors need us to demonstrate impact*' through regular funding, it also said they '*trust us to explain what kind of progress we'll make*', allowing INGOs flexibility to develop their own organisational performance indicators.

An emerging view is that less structured 'real time' evaluations, measuring impact and learning may be the way forward, with Duncan Green suggesting:

*'The ability of CSOs [civil-society organisations] to adapt to shifting political circumstances is at least as important as their ability to front load their planning through log frames and theories of change'.<sup>6</sup>*

In his view, the starting point for 'real time' evaluation and learning is on-going governance research rather than finite success stories, thereby allowing the recording of the '*true messiness of building social contracts between citizens and states; the ups and downs, the almost-giving-up-and-then-winning*'.

# 5

## Towards good governance

Approaches to increasing political participation and contributing to good governance include amplifying Southern voices at decision-making fora and promoting active citizenship.

Empowering local people to hold public officials to account is a social accountability tool favoured by INGOs, described as ‘a form of civic engagement that builds accountability through the collective efforts of citizens and civil society organisations to hold public officials, service providers and governments to account for their obligations with responsive efforts’.<sup>7</sup>

INGO approaches to social accountability include beneficiary-led hearings (World Vision) and youth-led data initiatives (Restless Development). Approaches at a community level include audience-specific behavioural change campaigns such as the ones run by Girl Hub (for adolescent girls) and CARE (for men and boys).

<sup>7</sup> Houtzager, P. and A. Joshi (2008). Introduction: Contours of a research project and early findings. IDS, Bulletin 38 (6), p. 1-9.

**Below** Young people from different countries campaign against youth violence at a Youth Justice In Action solidarity day, Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

Y Care International



## 5.1

### Developing credible spokespeople

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<sup>8</sup> Youth and international development policy: the case for investing in young people, Paola Perezniato ODI 2013

One of the most visible trends in civic engagement is the ‘youth voice’, where young people target global and national level decision-makers on issues that affect them. Their approach includes using data to hold providers to account on issues such as basic service delivery, supported by actively promoting behavioural change on issues like pregnancy.

The backdrop to this heightened activity recognition of young people’s disenfranchisement and their significant growth in numbers. Young people are rarely seen in political leadership positions and tend to be both economically and socially marginalised, yet at the same time they represent a potentially huge political voice – comprising a quarter of the global population, with almost 90% of them living in the Global South.<sup>8</sup>

#### Youth voices at the global table

Youth delegations to the UN and other high-level fora can present a united ‘youth voice’. It builds confidence whilst also bringing a critical youth perspective to policy dialogue and decision-making. On UN International Day of the Girl 2013, a ‘Girl Effect’ delegation travelled from Egypt, Burkina Faso and Nepal to hand over a ‘Girl Declaration’ calling for a focus on girls in the post-2015 UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Training young people to understand human rights mechanisms enables them to hold their own governments to account and make the links from national to global advocacy. A WAGGGS delegation of 17 young people from countries including Uganda and Nigeria attended the 2011 UNFCCC meeting in Durban, South Africa. They received advocacy and media training, equipping them to join speakers’ panels, meet government representatives and undertake media interviews.

The Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) organised a 100-strong delegation from across Africa to participate in the African Union Heads of State Summit. The initiative was to raise the profile of young women and adolescent girls through a leadership skills workshop, and a High Level Panel discussion with leaders.

#### Taking youth justice action from national to global

YCI identified youth justice as an important advocacy issue, with many young people joining gangs, or being locked up for too long in unacceptable conditions with little or no access to legal representation. Research was undertaken in a series of focus countries – including the UK, Togo, South Africa and Sierra Leone – with a team of directly affected youths engaged in data collection. The UK Children’s Legal Centre collated the research into a series of country and global reports.

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National advocacy plans were developed on the basis of the YCI report findings, but lack of resources has impeded their implementation.

Nevertheless, representative young people from all countries involved were trained to be global advocacy spokespeople. In Geneva they presented findings to their countries’



*Young people are rarely seen in political leadership positions and tend to be both economically and socially marginalised, yet at the same time they represent a potentially huge political voice – comprising a quarter of the global population, with almost 90% of them living in the Global South.*

representatives at the Human Rights Council. As a result, the Austrian government asked them for input to a rehabilitation resolution, which was duly passed. A follow-up visit to the Human Rights Council was arranged in 2010 and YCI is continuing to support young people in Togo and South Africa to undertake associated work at national level.

Due to insufficient rehabilitation-related funding, it has proven more challenging to continue youth justice work in other countries such as Sierra Leone.

YCI argues that in order to realise the full worth of human rights related treaties, they need to be ratified at country level, which young people can then use as an advocacy tool.

### **Youth appeal through youth-centred tools**

There is growing recognition within INGOs that developing tools to engage young people in their own evidence gathering is key to understanding the issues that matter most to them.

Plan International’s global network of 25 Youth Advisory Panels is doing this in countries like Indonesia and El Salvador. Building on its work to systematically engage young people in research, data gathering and political analysis, the network aims to strengthen young people’s appetite and confidence in political engagement through directly investing in and encouraging them to question decision makers.

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## 5.2

### Active citizenship

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<sup>9</sup> World Vision, Child Health Now report, 'Europe Can Make the Difference, How Social Accountability Improves the Lives of Children' 2014.

Mirroring the experience of organisations where in-country advocacy plays out through a governance programme approach, young people are developing youth-led, data-driven campaigning approaches on key governance issues, using tools such as citizen scorecards to hold local and national service providers to account and allowing young people access to big data to drive change.

DfID Malawi articulates the challenge for INGOs in evidence gathering as follows:

*'NGOs need to get better at finding practical ways of using evidence gathered at local level for national level advocacy. They need to understand the national and provincial advocacy context – what the main entry points are and who the key people are to engage with in order to have an effect'.*

#### **Communities influencing health services in Uganda**

World Vision's 'Citizen, Voice & Action' (CVA) systematic approach to social accountability provides participatory tools for communities to monitor local services and compare demonstrable progress with political rhetoric.

In Uganda, World Vision supports a broad network of CVA programmes. By collecting community-level data, health practitioners have been able to influence national-level policy.

In 2013, CVA practitioners analysed the data gathered from dozens of health clinics in Kiboga district. Working with partners, they were able to document serious gaps in clinic personnel, using this evidence to lobby their elected representatives.

During one political meeting brokered by World Vision, a Member of Parliament, Honourable Sylvia Namabidde stated, *'Given the evidence on the ground, as legislators, we are going to block the budget until more money is allocated to the health sector'*. Namabidde, working alongside other representatives, persuaded the Ugandan parliament to address the funding gap.

Two weeks later an additional €14 million was allocated to the health sector for recruitment of health workers and enhancement of medical workers' salary packages. The Prime Minister's office publicly committed to hiring 6,000 new health workers. World Vision Uganda estimated this advocacy work cost €2,900 (aside from staff costs).<sup>9</sup>

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## Children's hearings voice service concerns in India

World Vision India's 'Nine is Mine' campaign seeks to hold the Indian government to its promise of dedicating 9% of the budget to child-centred services until 2014. All children under 18 are invited to sign a pledge linking budgetary allocation to Millennium Development Goal 1 (halving absolute poverty). Where a child can't write, thumb impressions are taken, and all cards are handed to the child's school for advocacy purposes.

Related campaign awareness activity included taking a group of youth activists (aged 12 to 16 years) from Shillong in North East India to New Delhi, arriving on Universal Children's Day 2012. En route they held a series of 'Children's Hearings' in nine states on child rights in India, particularly to hear from the vulnerable minorities such as the Dalit community. Children were invited to speak at each hearing and their experiences formed the basis of a written submission to India's Universal Periodic Review (a mechanism to ensure the implementation of UN human rights commitments).

## Youth data drives accountability in Tanzania, Nepal, and Ghana

One organisation has expanded the idea of youth-led social accountability into a multi-country big data initiative, advocating for active youth participation in the post-2015 development agenda.

In numerous consultations on the new post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals, young people have identified accountability and governance as top priorities. Restless Development's 'Big Idea' programme developed this focus into the simple idea of young people accessing data and using it to influence policy on issues they care about, believing '*if you give young people data, they'll drive it to deliver change*'.

Across Tanzania, Nepal and Ghana, young people will generate and interrogate data on issues that matter to them. As with focus countries identified by other organisations, these countries presented a set of common features that suggest a greater propensity to '*respond*' to a youth-focussed advocacy programme. Restless Development has an existing active presence in both Nepal and Tanzania, whilst a strong partner organisation has been identified to collaborate with in Ghana. Additionally in South Africa, young people will capture data on youth participation to urge greater youth involvement in the South African Development Community.

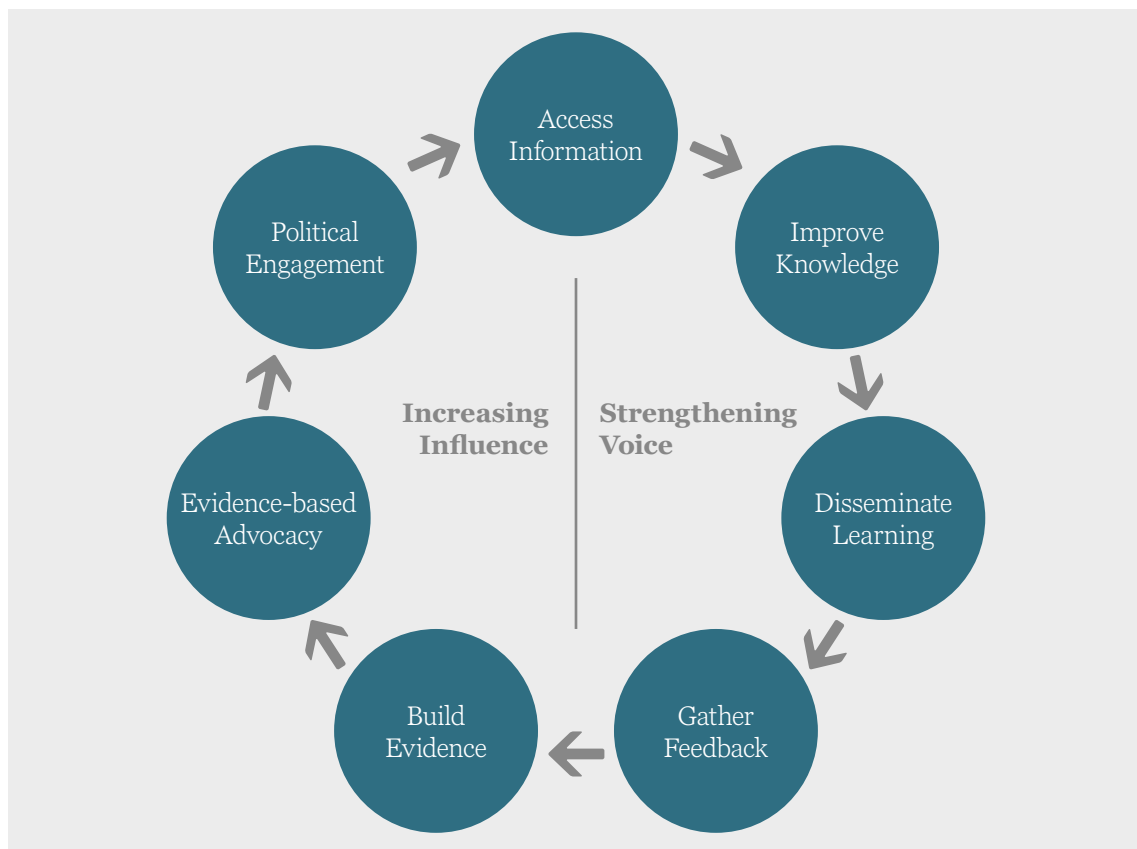
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<sup>10</sup> Taken from Restless Development's 'Big Idea: a model for youth-led accountability'

Restless Development's key approach is for young people to be a '*critical friend*' to policy makers. It invests in innovative non-state organisations and plans to recruit 15 youth leaders from 15 countries to advocate for greater youth participation in the development agenda, nationally and regionally. A global youth-led framework will track the progress of the new post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals through a youth lens and produce outputs including live youth auditing and an annual progress report.

### Restless Development's Seven Steps to the Big Idea<sup>10</sup>

The 'Big Idea' strategy empowers young people to strengthen their voice and increase their influence, taking them through building an advocacy case and engaging politically. These steps result in increased action, which, in turn, generates more data as a basis for further action.





## 5.3

### Changing societal behaviour

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Targeted strategies for changing people's behaviour have been promoted by: Girl Hub Ethiopia, through its teen brand aimed at getting more adolescent girls to participate in governance initiatives; CARE, through its work in engaging men and boys as part of its violence prevention strategy in the Balkans; and Plan, through its youth-led programme campaigning against child marriage in Bangladesh.

#### **Girl 'agents of change' in Ethiopia**

The Girl Hub in Ethiopia aims to '*ignite & inspire*' three million adolescent girls aged between 10 and 19 years old. It aims to improve the lives of the most vulnerable girls through decreasing societal tolerance to gender-based violence, early marriage and the number of girls who give birth before they reach 18 years.

The 'Every Last Girl' strategy evidences how girls are '*agents of change*' and how the best approach to eradicating poverty involves focussing on those girls who are at greatest risk of being vulnerable or excluded. It operates a three-stage approach including girl-led research, high-level advocacy aimed at influencing policy and practice change and most controversially, behavioural change through a branded social communications platform, Yegna.

Yegna (meaning 'Ours' in Amharic) is Ethiopia's first teen brand for girls. It comprises a radio drama, talk show and music, and delivers behaviour change messages through five very different girl characters whose key message is that they are stronger when they act together as a group, rather than as individuals. Yegna is '*starting a conversation on issues affecting girls*' which is broadcast to a regular audience across the capital and Amhara region. The power of this approach is that people '*don't realise it's a development programme with a girls' empowerment purpose*' and '*lots of people in Ethiopia come knocking on the door*' wanting an association, '*even men and boys*'. Early results show that 65% of all listeners say the radio show has made them think differently about girls' issues. 84% of girl listeners say Yegna has helped them become more confident, and 76% say it has inspired them to continue their education.

This ambitious project hasn't been without its challenges, including that of irregular radio reach due to the erratic electricity supply; expense of batteries and impact of high mountains on coverage, and cultural sensitivities where girls were not allowed control over radio. Girl Hub's solutions include creating thousands of regular '*listening groups*', and arranging for school children to listen to Yegna in their break times (on a radio channel paid for by Ethiopia's Ministry of Education).

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### **Changing men & boys’ behaviour in the Balkans**

Another strategy for achieving social change is to involve marginalised groups in designing and implementing advocacy strategies. CARE developed an ‘engaging men and boys’ behavioural change campaign to tackle gender-based violence in the Balkans. Young men in violence prevention measures were directly targeted through activities such as school-based workshops and the ‘Be a Man’ behavioural change campaign to encourage young men to reflect on the reasons behind their own violence towards women.

### **Youth action to end child marriage in Bangladesh**

‘Wedding Busters’ in Bangladesh is a youth-led initiative supported by Plan Bangladesh (viewed as a national rather than a global organisation which has opened doors for advocacy engagement). It works with local government and community-based organisations to establish ‘child marriage’ free zones. Once they hear of a potential marriage involving a girl under the age of 18, the wedding buster team meet with the girl’s family and their community to explain the negative social and economic impacts of marrying at an early age.

Now, the average age of marriage for girls in ‘child marriage free zones’ has increased to 17 years old from the national average of 15 years old. ‘Girl Watch Dog’ groups in Bangladesh are also visible and vocal in speaking to parents of girls at risk of child marriage and notifying community leaders. Their collective action gives the groups confidence and authority to speak out against a widely accepted cultural practice.



*Another strategy for achieving social change is to involve marginalised groups in designing and implementing advocacy strategies.*

# 6

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## Looking ahead

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Interviews with INGOs identified a number of strategic trends and future opportunities which are outlined here.

**Below** Women in Pakistan celebrate Oxfam's Raising Her Voice project to gain power over their lives and overcome the barriers that keep them in poverty.

Irina Werning/Oxfam



## 6.1 A key moment for girls' rights

**Below** Young people campaigning in the UK as part of a solidarity day for Youth Justice In Action.

Y CARE International

Several organisations believe that this is a key moment for advocating on girls' rights. The Girl Effect initiative says it's time to shift from *'making the case about girls, to taking action'*. The Girl Declaration (based on insights from adolescent girls across 14 countries) is seen as a key channel for *'getting girls onto the post-2015 agenda in a meaningful way'*. Amnesty suggests the *'tipping point is coming'* on girls rights, citing the global interest in 'wives for jihadis' and Boko Haram as evidence.

## 6.2 Post 2015 opportunities for young people

The new post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals present an opportunity for civil society organisations to set the agenda, particularly around youth engagement. Restless Development believes that *'now is a really unique moment where the youth voice can be heard'*. Both Save the Children and Restless Development highlight the potential importance of action/2015 – a movement where *'young people can be leaders as well as beneficiaries'*.



### 6.3

## Changing shape of INGOs

The emerging geo-political trends suggest that to make a difference, INGOs should seek to become *'influencing networks'*. Tearfund has replaced its advocacy department (comprising policy, campaigns and media functions) with a new 'Horizon' team working predominantly in middle-income countries with an emphasis on building movements.

### 6.4

## Digital communications as a new way of organising

Oxfam is seeking to build a global virtual hub as a support and organising tool for national advocacy. It sees more room for future working with global digital platforms like Avaaz and 350.org, recognising their value in *'getting people involved for the first time, giving them one-off opportunities to act when they're time poor'*. Such platforms could potentially do more speaking out on vanguard issues where INGOs as service delivery organisations are more restricted.



*INGOs see the future of advocacy as 'empowered and accountable countries, with headquarters becoming enablers, consolidators and centres of expertise'.*

# 7

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## Conclusion

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The INGO sector has identified the need to be 'closer to the ground' to make real change happen, with advocacy targeted at national and provincial governments.

The key findings from our research on how best to scale up in-country advocacy and campaigning are drawn from the practical experience and knowledge of small, medium and large INGOs, particularly those that work with young people in the Global South. The broad consensus is that there is no single recognised model for delivering strong in-country advocacy.

Most INGOs start with a structured global 'top down' approach to initiate activity and move incrementally toward a national 'country up' approach with strong governance and accountability, underpinned by grassroots social monitoring to gather evidence on which issues matter to people the most.

Most organisations currently combine aspects of these approaches through a 'participatory advocacy' approach which is 'strong on central command with a flexible local approach'. This approach to advocacy requires a fundamental shift where countries become 'empowered and accountable' and global headquarters act as 'enablers, consolidators and centres of expertise'.

INGOs have identified the following stages (not ranked here in priority order) in developing an in-country advocacy programme:

- Create an organisational appetite for in-country advocacy through initiating some 'quick wins' including using youth advocates at global advocacy moments and piloting campaigns through an initial series of focus countries.
- Use evidence of impact above as proof of concept for the need for further investment for in-country advocacy.



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- Develop organisational buy-in through activities at all levels. These could include identifying a series of advocacy champions (representing different levels and geographical locations), setting up a goal-orientated cross-organisational steering committee, and integrating advocacy into an organisation-wide strategic plan with an explicit Theory of Change.
  - Develop an adaptive framework for advocacy delivery, which addresses internal and external resource challenges. Activities could include adopting multi-country funding approaches, increasing specialist staff recruitment as the programme grows and working in broad thematic coalitions for greater impact.
  - Underpin this with an authentic systematic evidence-based approach whereby children and young people are engaged in collecting grassroots data on issues they care about to hold decision makers to account.

The theme of flexibility comes out strongly across all areas of organisational structure and in identifying appropriate advocacy approaches – from ‘convenor’ to ‘critical friend’. To do this effectively, INGOs need to become smarter political actors, with a shared understanding of the power structures and circles of influence that they want to engage with.

Working in broader coalitions and partnerships is both welcomed by donors and seen as an efficient approach to achieving impact. This can play out through thematically linked coalitions or carrying out peer learning across several countries with a common theme or context.

Active citizenship is widely endorsed as a vital part of national advocacy, with emphasis on the early involvement of communities in designing, implementing and monitoring programmes.

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# List of interviewees

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**Alice Allan**

Head of Global Advocacy, CARE International

**Nahashon Alwoka**

Child Health Now, Regional Coordinator for East Africa, World Vision International, Kenya

**Mathieu Andrew**

Campaign Integration Manager, Global Campaigns, Child Health Now, World Vision International

**Savio Carvalho**

Senior Advisor, Campaigning on International Development and Human Rights, Amnesty International

**France Charlet**

Head of International Advocacy, Save the Children

**Kate Critchley**

Head of Communications, Girl Effect

**Marie Deery**

Brand Manager, Girl Hub Ethiopia, Girl Effect/Nike Foundation

**Jo Dempster**

Global Youth Engagement Officer, Plan International

**Richard English**

National Influencing Advisor, Oxfam

**Steve Haines**

Campaign Mobilisation Director, Save the Children

**Alphonsine Kabagabo**

Regional Director, Africa Region, World Associations for Girl Guides and Girl Scouts

**Harriet Knox**

Africa Programme Manager, Y Care International

**Hannah Lownsborough**

Independent Consultant

**Steadman Noble**

Governance and Advocacy Capacity Building Officer, Plan UK

**Mark Nowotny**

Director of Policy and Practice, Restless Development



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**Angelique Orr**

Head of Food and Climate Change,  
Oxfam

**Kate Redgewood**

Director, Girl Hub Rwanda, Girl Effect

**Jenny Ross**

Independent Consultant, INTRAC

**Kerry Smith**

Head of Advocacy, Campaigns and  
Research, Plan UK

**Lone Sorensen**

Government and Security Team Leader,  
DfID Malawi

**Rachel Stokes**

Head of Global Advocacy and Research,  
VSO

**Joanna Watson**

Senior Advocacy Officer, Tearfund

Bond member organisations present at  
the 'strengthening in-country advocacy'  
seminar on 23 April 2015 included:

Able Child Africa, ActionAid UK,  
Article 19, Bond, CAFOD, CARE  
International, Christian Aid, Girl Hub,  
KwaAfrica, Plan International, Plan UK,  
RESULTS UK, Saferworld, Sightsavers,  
Save the Children, Scottish Catholic  
International Aid Fund, Tearfund,  
VSO, Women for Women International,  
World Vision International, World  
Vision UK and Y Care International.

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# About the authors

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## **Marcia Walker**

Marcia Walker has 18 years of advocacy and campaigning experience in the international development sector. At Oxfam GB, she developed influencing strategies in the UK, and for Oxfam's global programmes in West Africa and South Asia. Marcia is a campaign coach for the Sheila McKechnie Trust and has an academic background in gender, anthropology and development, recently co-writing (with Kathleen Christie) CARE International's 2014 Global Impact Report: Challenging Gender-Based Violence Worldwide.

## **Kathleen Christie**

Kathleen Christie is a consultant for INGOs and charities, specialising in influencing, research and reviews. She works with Amnesty, Bond, CARE, Christian Aid, Development Initiatives & Plan UK. Recent work includes evaluating Bond's three-year 'More & Better Aid' programme funded by The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and co-authoring a global review of Christian Aid's climate justice coalition campaigning 2010-14.

Plan UK originally commissioned the review that led to this report. We'd like to thank them for agreeing to share it.



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# Eden Stanley

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**Eden Stanley** is an integrated communications, fundraising and campaigns agency for the non-profit sector. We provide insight, strategy and creative services to UK non profits, charities, INGOs, and arts and culture organisations. All of our project leaders have backgrounds in senior management for third sector organisations.

This report is one of an ad hoc series of publications we've developed on subjects that interest us, and that we think will interest our clients. Others include:

**Make it Matter**, a book published in partnership with CharityComms, which offers a practical guide to developing a communications strategy in the non-profit sector

**Change the Record**, a major Gates-funded research study, developed in partnership with Bond, in which we explore current media narratives around international poverty, how they affect public attitudes, and what strategies could be deployed to change them.

