Rights, advocacy and participation – what's working?

by JETHRO PETTIT and SAMMY MUSYOKI

Introduction

All of the authors in this edition have touched, in one way or another, upon the potential of participatory methods for transforming both individuals and society. Cutting across our global experiences with diverse actors and issues, we all share a fundamental concern with the use of participatory methods, not only to deliver better programmes, but also to transform the root causes of poverty and social exclusion. Our common ground is therefore in two distinct but potentially interconnected areas: **participation** and **transformation**. How can these processes be brought together to shift the deeply embedded forces of power and exclusion in our societies? What can the language and practices of **rights** and **advocacy** contribute to this effort? How can practitioners best engage with rights-based approaches to development?

This article explores the idea of participatory approaches to rights and advocacy, and the challenge of bringing rights and advocacy perspectives into participatory work. We look at the ways in which these elements converge or diverge in practice, sharing lessons from recent action research. Since 2001, the Participation Group at IDS has worked closely on these concerns with ActionAid, Just Associates and a number of innovative NGOs and activists in Africa, Asia and the Americas. Our collective aim has been to understand strategies for participatory advocacy and citizenship, and for enabling people to realise their rights. *PLA Notes* 43 on *Advocacy and citizen participation* (February 2002) was inspired by an exploratory workshop involving activists and researchers from around the world. Here we draw upon lessons and examples from this and more recent action research with Just Associates, ActionAid and others to explore the links between rights and participation, and the role of participatory methods in rights and empowerment processes[1].

We begin with a brief background note on the emergence of rights, advocacy and citizen participation as official development strategies, and the ways in which these concepts support or diverge from traditions of participatory learning and action. What are the underlying assumptions and interests behind these trends? Do they lend themselves to processes of change that are participatory and transformative? What risks and opportunities are inherent in these discourses? We then turn to lessons learnt from participatory advocacy and rights initiatives and methodologies, illustrated by quotes and examples from around the world; and

we conclude by offering some key challenges we all face for future work in this area. A selection of key sources and resources, to which we are indebted, is included below.

Why rights and advocacy?

We now know, all too well, that many well-intended efforts to bring about change have not been very participatory, even where so labelled, and have fallen short. We also know that many participatory efforts have not led to fundamental change, even where so intended. Following decades of donor discourses, policies, trainings and mainstreamings, the two core principles we noted above – **participation** and **transformation** – have often failed to converge. Participatory development has often been limited to the community or project levels, or has been treated rather too instrumentally or technically, to effect deeper social change. In response, there have been vigorous efforts to bring participation to scale, elevating it to arenas of policy-making, governance and institutional change. In practice, however, such spaces have proven resilient to change, and participatory processes have often been overcome by the systems and power relations they were expected to transform.

Yet, on the positive side, we also know from experience that there are examples of real instances in which participation and transformation have been 'interconnected' and have helped to bring about empowering changes in individuals and society. *Participatory Learning and Action* has documented many such examples in diverse areas of practice over the years, including this issue. What can we learn about the effective use of participatory approaches for enabling genuine and lasting change? What can we learn about the risks of cooption? What strategies will help us to increase the chances of success? What might be learnt from the emerging interest in rights and advocacy, and what can we offer to these approaches?

The language of rights and rights-based approaches has entered the mainstream of development, taking on various meanings within the policies of development agencies. Because there is so much variation, we prefer to use the plural form of 'rights-based approaches' (Eyben, 2003; Nyamu-Musembi and Cornwall, 2004; Veneklasen *et al.*, 2004). In essence, rights-based approaches can be understood as both a means and an end: if development is ultimately about making sure that everyone's basic human rights are met, development can also best be achieved by enabling people to better secure and fulfil their rights:

A rights-based approach to development is both a vision and a set of tools; human rights can be the means, the

Participants prepare a timeline or historical profile of the estates and the tenants struggle, Mzizima

Photo: Sammy Musyoki

ends, the mechanism of evaluation, and the central focus of sustainable human development (Symington, 2002).

Having said this, however, there are many interpretations and starting points for pursuing rights-based approaches in practice. On the one hand, the framing of development goals in terms of universal human rights, as defined in international conventions and in constitutions and laws, has been a powerful tool for leveraging changes in favour of poor people, women, children, indigenous people and others whose dignity and rights are denied in many contexts. There is no denying that the emphasis on legal rights opens up opportunities for advocacy, education and legislative action that can potentially be transformative.

On the other hand, the domain of rights can be dominated by professional knowledge and top-down notions of delivery, which can easily overlook important contextual and historical expressions of rights and priorities. It can also miss the embedded cultural and power relations, which often **prevent** legally enshrined rights from being realised. We do not suggest venturing onto the thin ice of 'cultural relativism' here – rather, we want to suggest that power-sensitive, participatory approaches can allow people to develop their own awareness and knowledge as a basis for their empowered action to name and claim rights. This may not always coincide with mainstreamed rights priorities or methods, or for that matter, mainstream ideas of participation.

We've learnt from the encounter of indigenous and expert knowledge in areas such as health, agriculture and natural resource management, that if power and knowledge differences are addressed, there can be scope for empowerment, negotiation and choice from below. Without being sensitive to the underlying dimensions of power and values, however, participatory methods to elevate 'local' knowledge

Box 1: Advocacy and citizen participation for what?

Advocacy and citizen participation are now widely accepted by civil society, donor and government institutions as means of ensuring greater transparency and accountability. Yet in practice, much of what is done in the name of both advocacy and participation is quite shallow. Advocacy is often seen as a systematic and technical exercise that assumes an open and pluralist environment relatively devoid of conflict, risk and power abuses. Citizen participation, likewise, is regularly woven into existing procedures and policy making as a limited form of public consultation. In both cases, there has been a tendency to reinforce, rather than change, the models of development and governance advanced by the International Financial Institutions, donor agencies or unresponsive state elite. (Clark *et al*., 2002).

Box 2: Inquiring into power, participation and rights

As part of the *Linking Rights and Participation* project, ActionAid Brazil did questionnaires, interviews and workshops with local and national NGOs and social movements. Their aim was to inquire into the meanings of participation, rights and power in Brazilian society and in their social change work. They used various methods to explore each of these terms, and to look at how they connect in practice. Table 1 shows the way in which participants said that they put these concepts into practice, and when analysed, there was a striking convergence of methods and practices under each concept:

It is interesting to see how, in general, the concrete actions are extremely similar, principally in reference to participation and power. For the majority of the organisations that participated in the research, these three concepts must be worked in an articulated form because they are already part of a process of 'promoting citizenship'. What might vary, depending on the context, is the weight given to each of these dimensions, but it was stressed that we must not dissociate them. The interviews clearly show the difficulty participants had in isolating experiences of rights, participation and power. They often used the term 'fight for rights' in giving examples that were used interchangeably for rights or transforming power relations. It was easier for some actors to give isolated examples of participation. (Júnior, Atune and Romano, 2004).

may also stand in the way of change – an important lesson learnt from gender analysis and women's empowerment efforts. Official approaches to rights can miss important opportunities to hear real voices, but participatory approaches can evade the more universal dimensions of rights. Hence, there are lessons to learn from examples of power-sensitive, participatory approaches to realising rights. While some are rooted in human rights concepts and language, others do not necessarily use the language of rights and precede the official advent of 'the rights-based approach'.

In a similar way, mainstreamed ideas about advocacy and citizen participation have been a mixed blessing. They have invited new spaces for citizen engagement in policy processes and governance, but with the risk that such spaces and processes will be confining – that prevailing relations of power and exclusion will limit the potential for real participation and change, even while participation is claimed to be present (Box 2).

Our position therefore, with both rights-based approaches and with advocacy and citizen participation, is that we need to explore the lessons that can be learnt from practice. Are there examples of the ways in which in these approaches have, or have not, helped to shift deeper relations of power and exclusion? How have participatory methods and approaches contributed to these change strategies? And what can participatory practices learn from other traditions, including approaches to rights and advocacy that may fall outside the 'participation' universe?

Lessons from participatory rights and advocacy work
This is a summary of some key insights emerging from the collective efforts of many people and organisations, as noted above. These lessons may be helpful for those working at various levels, from grassroots leaders to front-line activists

and project workers, to members of intermediary, donor and research organisations.

Understanding power, exclusion and social change
Perhaps the most important lesson to emerge is the value of taking time to analyse and understand the way power and exclusion operate within each particular context, and to develop appropriate strategies to address these realities. This also requires a clear conception of what social change means in a given situation, and of the meanings of terms and practices such as participation, advocacy, rights and citizenship. As these words are mainstreamed in such different ways it is all the more important to be clear about their purpose within a vision of social change. This process requires time for reflection and learning, and the use of conceptual tools, which can help sharpen analysis and improve action. Yet time for reflection is notoriously difficult to find for busy activists and organisations; it is not always valued by donors; and the tools for conceptual thinking are often lacking. So we fall into the culture of 'doing' and miss chances to really focus our efforts. A key lesson here is that critical reflection and analysis is time well spent! There is wisdom in the old management slogan: 'work smarter, not harder'. And tools and methods are available that can help to facilitate and deepen critical thinking at all levels. Very good examples can be found in the chapters of *PLA Notes* 43 by Lisa VeneKlasen and Valerie Miller, taken

Table 1: Putting rights, participation and power into practice (Brazil)		
How does your entity put these concepts into practice?		
Rights	**Participation**	**Power**
• constructing collective identities • campaigns (local, regional, national) • participating in civil society networks and forums • pressure/lobby to create laws and public policies • conducting alternative actions of public politics • participating in councils • legal advisement • democratising information about already existing rights • capacitation and formation (workshops, seminars, courses, etc.) • community educator • income-generating projects • community radio	• motivating protagonism in the community • mobilising new leaders • capacitation and formation (workshops, seminars, courses, etc.) • capacitation in practice (meetings, actions, councils, etc.) • community educator • joint effort groups • participatory management of the entity and its projects • participatory methodologies of evaluation and projects • participating in civil society networks and forums • participating in councils and other organs of social control • participating in participatory budgeting • presenting their actions	• participating in civil society networks and forums • mobilising new leaders • motivating protagonism in the community • democratising information • participating in councils and other organs of social control • participatory methodologies such as reflect-action • participatory methodologies of evaluation and projects • participatory management of the entity and its projects • community educator • capacitation and formation (workshops, seminars, courses, etc.) • income generating projects • rotating fund for community development
Source: Júnior, Atune and Romano, 2004		

from their action guide: *A New Weave of Power, People and Politics* (2001).

Think strategy and vision before methods and tools

Successful rights and advocacy initiatives use participatory methods and tools within the context of longer-term strategies for change. The fascination with participatory tools and methods can sometimes distract from the larger process: we think that there is some magic inherent in the methods – and that strategy will take care of itself (see also Cornwall and Guijt, section 17, this issue). It is true that participatory approaches should be flexible and emergent, building upon the knowledge and priorities that are generated. But there is also a need for inclusive processes for developing longer-term visions of change, and to locate the use of tools and methods within strategies that are sensitive to the context of power. Time and again, we have heard practitioners caution that there is no such thing as a 'rights-based method': it is the particular use of a method for realising rights within a change-oriented strategy and vision that is important. The central point here is that tools and methods are not sufficient in the absence of a clear vision and strategy.

Drawing from diverse traditions

Participatory appraisal methods from the PRA/PLA tradition are strong for needs assessment and planning, and for recog-

Box 3: Guatemala: participation for whom?

In Guatemala, a 'Popular Consultation' was held in 1999 to consider reforms to the constitution, in order to provide a legal basis for implementing the recent Peace Accords that had brought a formal end to decades of civil conflict. Surprisingly for many, and despite intensive campaigning, the reforms were rejected by voters, including the country's majority of indigenous and poor people. This raises questions about the nature of citizen participation in national-scale processes when there are deep divisions in society, in this case along lines of wealth, race and culture.

In a country with a long history of conflict, with sharp economic, social, cultural and linguistic differences, and low levels of literacy, it is perhaps not surprising that 'participation' was flawed… From the most localised efforts of political involvement to processes of participation in negotiations before and after the war, it is therefore vital to have a long-term vision of collaboration in creating a different society, and a shorter-term vision of the concrete changes that the people want to achieve. (Ardon, 2002, in *PLA Notes* 43).

Box 4: Brazil: participation and empowerment

Participation is seen as the soul of organised civil society. It is considered fundamental to the process of empowerment. In the Brazilian case, the need to distinguish and qualify participation is emphasised. That is, to distinguish a participation seen as a mere legitimisation of programs, projects and public policies – frequently including various instrumental forms that assume participatory methodologies – from a participation that is a process of constructing collective citizenship, renovating leadership and empowerment. (Júnior, Atune and Romano, 2004).

Box 5: 'Rooting rights' in Kenya

The Kenya Human Rights Commission is undergoing a self-transformation from professional advocacy of civil and political rights to recognition of social and economic rights, through a focus on 'rooting rights' in community priorities. This has entailed many changes in organisational vision, structure and methodology. One strategy has been the training of community-based 'Human Rights Defenders' and the setting up of 'Friends of KHRC' as rights educators and animators within communities. The methodology of KHRC's training has undergone major changes as a result:

The Programme Officer went on a course on management of community development programmes. He has introduced a more flexible approach to planning, to allow for meaningful community input into the shape of the training… the focus is on 'experiential learning' rather than top-down transmission of knowledge – for example, the use of role-plays is emphasised. The KHRC has gone through a lot of 'growing pains' in internalising this new approach, and they admit that there was a lot of frustration at first. (Musyoki, Nyamu-Musembi, Mwasaru and Mtsami, 2004).

Box 6: Needs, rights and citizenship in Brazil

I believe that in the Brazilian context it is not possible to have an exclusive vision in the sense of going to work only with a focus on rights or only a focus on emergency assistance. You must work in two forms. It is a very hard reality, very cruel, and you must also give immediate responses to the people. But you are only going to guarantee real structural changes if along with these immediate responses you engage in a work that is strictly focused on the question of rights and that is going to construct a base for a more solid change in the future. Without the field of rights you cannot form citizenship. Without forming citizenship you cannot have transformative action. (Taciana Gouveia, SOS Corpo, Brazil, in Júnior, Atunes and Romano, 2004).

Box 7: Convergence of rights and needs in Kenya

The Kenya Women Workers' Organisation (KEWO) is a membership organisation with 12,000 women members in 36 local branches in urban and rural areas. KEWO's rights advocacy agenda originates from the branches and therefore is informed by and reflects the diverse concerns of its members.

In response to a rural-based branch in Yatta (an arid area) KEWO got involved in helping to fundraise for equipment for a water project. KEWO's role quickly turned into one of supporting the community to challenge the corrupt practices that accompany the granting of Water Extraction Permits from the Ministry of Water, which in itself presented an opportunity to build the community's awareness of their entitlements and their power to hold officials accountable.

…There is an emerging convergence in views, between perception of rights being about meeting basic needs and rights as being about long-term transformation of governance structures. This convergence reflects a closing up of the gap between the position ascribed to groups in community development on the one hand (who are largely perceived as being concerned only with basic needs and being pre-occupied with the micro level context of projects) and human rights and advocacy groups on the other hand (who are perceived as engaging only at the macro political level without any touch with concrete needs).

nising local and indigenous knowledge, but they do not always address the full range of activities arising in advocacy and rights processes. Methods and strategies derived from diverse traditions may be needed at various stages of a social and political change process, and much has been gained where lessons and tactics have been woven from the traditions of community organising, participatory action research, popular education, adult and non-formal education, legal rights education, women's rights advocacy, community organising, and popular communication, in addition to PRA/PLA (VeneKlasen *et al*, 2004). Many of these traditions are rooted in emancipatory learning and social movement experiences, and are more explicit about analysing and addressing power relations. The Reflect approaches (see Archer, this issue) have gone to great lengths to test the potential of interweaving transformative and participatory approaches. Much human rights and advocacy work has been over-professional and top-down in nature, and can learn from reflective and process-oriented community work that seeks to identify and build upon local priorities, knowledge and leadership.

Integrating work on human rights and development needs

Many organisations, NGOs in particular, struggle with the tension between their long-term development, capacity building and service delivery work, and the realisation that they need to be addressing rights and empowerment issues as a basis for change. This is more than a question of drawing methods from diverse traditions – it is a question of strategies

that recognise and build upon the links between immediate needs and longer-term social change. While every context is unique (and there are certainly cases where change is long overdue in the style of development assistance), rights and development can be seen as continuous and complementary, rather than as distinct approaches requiring radically different activities. Again, it is a question of strategy, linkages and intentions, and how one dimension builds upon the other. This realisation is coming both from the human rights sector, as it recognises the need to root rights in needs, and from the participatory development sector, as it recognises the need to confront the political and power dimensions of poverty.

Box 8: Awareness for change in Indonesia

In Indonesia, the women's NGO PPSW has carried out a campaign that links women's empowerment with broader community-based advocacy. Building on entry-level work around literacy, health and economic activities, which includes gender analysis and awareness, the campaign moves to a visioning process at the community level:

Through intensive discussion during formal and informal meetings with the community, field workers facilitate a critical analysis of their social, political and cultural condition, and help them to see their position and status in the system. This process has helped communities understand the power that influences their lives directly and indirectly. Based on this analysis, the facilitators help them to develop their own vision and mission to develop a better society (Zulminarni, 2002).

The campaign builds from there to include training, education and capacity-building; local organisational development; leadership development; networking and alliances; and hearings and policy dialogues with decision-makers and members of parliament.

Box 9: Networking and alliance

Networking widens the outreach and helps to build up a multiplier effect in terms of impact and public discourse. Advocacy seeks to integrate the power of knowledge and the power of networking. Advocacy is also a process of negotiating with various institutions, including institutions of governance. Such a process requires a long-term commitment and optimal institutional and financial resources. Networking is an important means to synergise the strengths of both institutions and individuals that identify with the advocacy cause (Samuel, 2002).

Building knowledge and awareness

The denial of rights and the exclusion of people from decision-making and access to resources are usually reinforced by deeply embedded social and cultural relations of power. Changing such power relations is a long-term, many-staged process, and often begins with processes of transformative learning with the less powerful in order to build awareness, legitimise alternative sources of knowledge and values, and strengthen self-confidence. Traditions of women's empowerment have demonstrated the importance of investing in this process before moving into active campaigning. For facilitators there can be a fine line between imposing an ideological agenda and enabling people to define their own reality and priorities. Popular education and action research methods such as PAR and Reflect, sensitively used, can do this. A key lesson from the work in both Brazil and Indonesia is that awareness-raising is both an individual and a collective process. Yet the individual level, whether with community members or field workers, is often not given enough attention.

Box 10: Social audits for government accountability in India

Poor and highly marginalized villages in Bolangir district in the state of Orissa, India, carried out a participatory social audit of their less-than-transparent local government (*panchayat*) with support from the Indian grassroots organisation MKSS and from ActionAid. The process involved a progression of activities, from awareness-raising and street plays to information collection, demanding of government records on public works, analysis of the information, verification in the villages, and preparatory meetings with local officials. The day of the social audit brought 2,500 people together for hearings and questions about the findings, in which many irregularities in the use of public funds were identified.

A social audit is a process in which details of the resources, both financial and non-financial, used by public agencies for development initiatives are shared with the people, often through a public forum. Social audits allow people to enforce accountability and transparency, providing the ultimate users of services to scrutinise development initiatives. It is a form of citizen advocacy based on the power of knowledge and grounded in the right to information (ActionAid India, Bolangir Team, 2002).

A subsequent social audit process in Juba *Panchayat* of Bepada block, also in Bolangir district, sparked controversy when the *panchayat* secretary committed suicide when pressured to deliver government records. Local civil society activists were recently (March 2004) arrested and charged with abetting the suicide.

Working with multiple actors

By its very nature, advocacy and rights campaigning are multi-stakeholder processes in which alliances must be actively forged and cultivated, and collaborative ways of working developed among diverse actors who may have varying interests. In all of the examples we learnt about, networking played a key role in achieving results. In the Bolangir social audit, a network of 19 NGOs and CBOs from all over the district lent support to the villagers involved (ActionAid India, Bolangir Team, 2002). In Kenya, human rights groups and development organisations are trying to build on one another's strengths and areas of expertise, and to build broader, more representative advocacy campaigns with a strong grassroots base (Musyoki *et al.,* 2004). This is not always easy as the interests of different groups and sectors do not always coincide, and there can be high transaction costs and risks, as well as benefits.

State obligations and accountability

One of the key dimensions of rights and advocacy work is recognition of the central role of the state both as a development actor and as a guarantor of rights. This can be seen as a shift from the relatively isolated work of many NGOs,

Box 11: State responsibility

The state's political and moral responsibility is to guarantee all human rights to all human beings; particularly the right to live with dignity. Hence people have the right to demand that the state ensures equitable social change and distributive justice. Citizens are the owners of the state. Hence, the state should be transparent and accountable to citizens and defend human rights. (Samuel, 2002)

Box 12: Process vs. donor expectations

in Brazil…
When we work with rights, participation and power we are dealing with complex political processes, which are very often slow, that don't always quickly arrive at the resulting objectives. This can create tension in the process, as much as in the community/beneficiaries, as in the donors who don't want to wait to see the results (Júnior, Atunes and Romano, 2004).

… and Kenya
There is a need to take an approach which is more long-term and open-ended, as opposed to a fixed-term project approach. This has implications for planning and fund-raising, since the focus shifts to supporting processes, as opposed to carrying out a defined project to its pre-designed conclusion. When it comes to supporting a process, the 'completion schedule' is not clear, indicators are difficult to set, though the goals must be clear… and there is a need to find donors who are willing to be flexible in their funding (Musyoki, Nyamu-Musembi, Mwasaru and Mtsami, 2004).

often carried out in parallel to (or even in competition with) weak state services. Rights approaches seek to make the state's roles and responsibilities more explicit, to raise public awareness of these obligations, and to demand responsiveness, accountability and transparency. Participatory approaches, from diverse traditions, have been effective in amplifying unheard voices and engaging the state at different levels, through participatory advocacy, policy processes, and systems of democracy and governance.
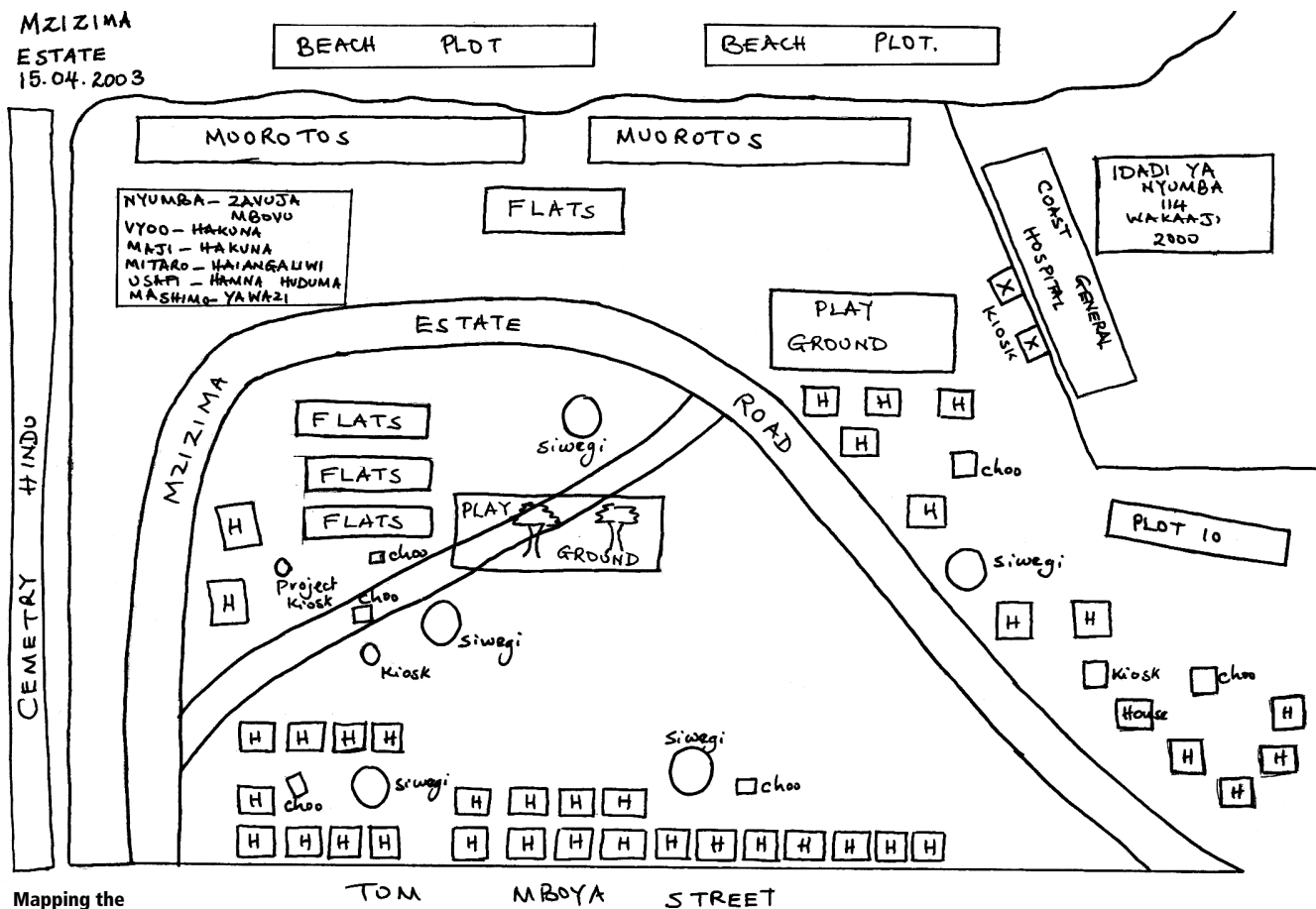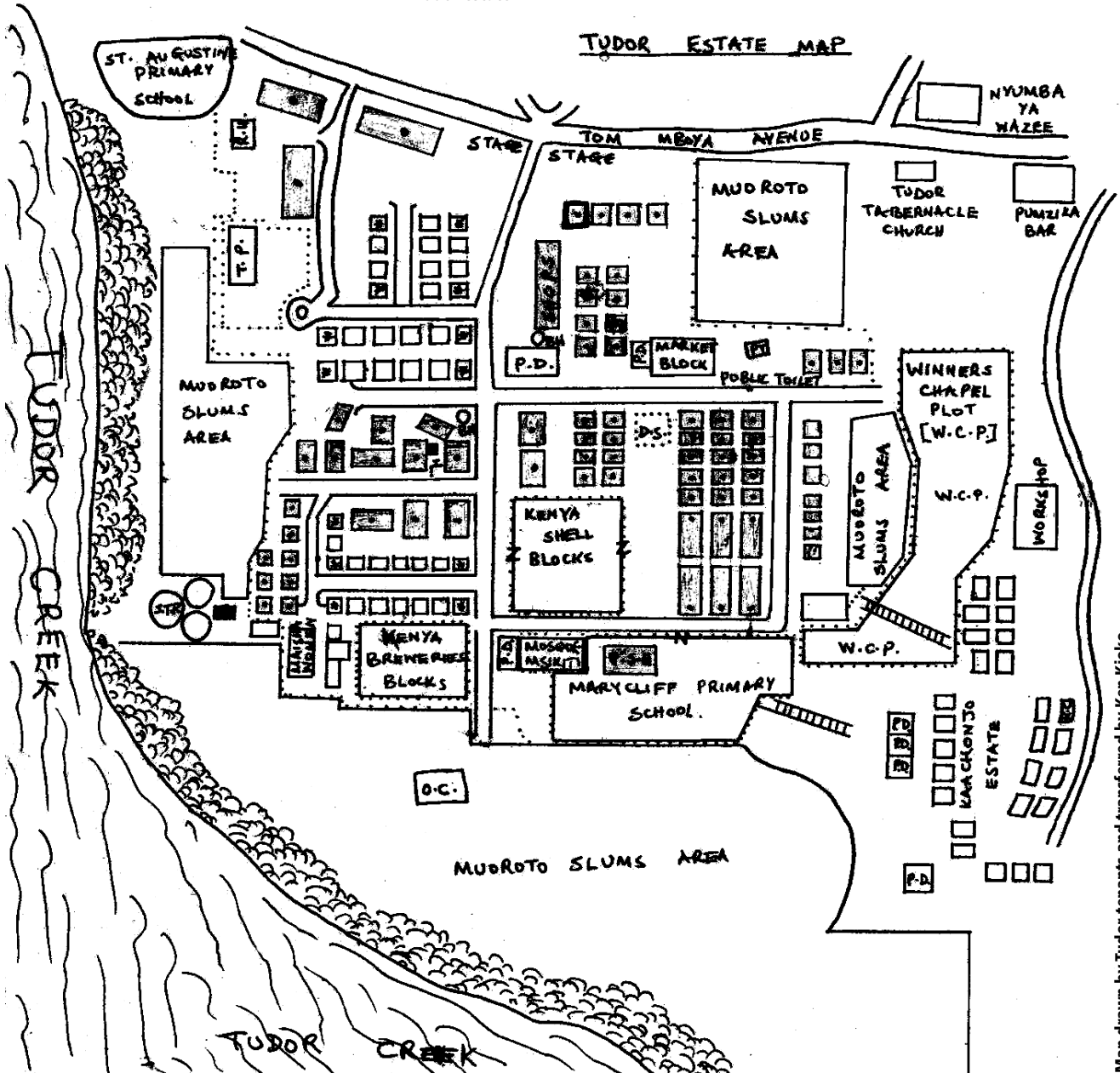
Many such examples of state-society engagement have been documented in *Participatory Learning and Action*.

Issue 40 on *Deliberative democracy and citizen empowerment* captures a range of experiences with active citizen-

Mapping the Mzizma Estates

Map drawn by Mzizma tenants and transferred by Ken Kioko

**Mapping the
Tudor estate**

Map drawn by Tudor tenants and transferred by Ken Kioko

ship; issue 46, *Participatory processes for policy change*, documents the methods and controversy surrounding a Citizens' Jury in Andhra Pradesh, India; issue 49 documents experiences of *Decentralisation and community-based planning* in Africa and elsewhere. It would be impossible to summarise the lessons from these many examples, but a core theme is the idea of a 'two way street', requiring both active citizenship and government capacity in shaping a new society. Issue 43, on *Advocacy and citizen participation* sums up this challenge as follows: 'The challenge of the politics of the new century is to build strong, responsive states combined with strong, responsive civil societies.'

It all takes time and patience
All of the examples point to the slow and complex processes at work, and the difficulty of fitting these into conventional project frameworks, timelines, means of measurement, or donor expectations. One lesson from this is that donors who

are committed to rights-based approaches and active citizenship will need to reconsider their funding guidelines, procedures and evaluation systems. A good summary of the monitoring and evaluation challenges for rights and advocacy work is provided in *PLA Notes* 43 by Chapman (2002).

The challenges ahead

The growing size and sophistication of civil society, combined with the rethinking of key institutions of the state and governance, and (too rarely discussed) the increasing power of the private sector, all combine to produce a very dynamic backdrop to the linking of participatory approaches with rights-based approaches and advocacy. On the one hand, the learning and innovation has only just begun. On the other hand, we need to be careful about putting new labels on old wine. Power and exclusion have been around for a very long time, and so have creative and courageous efforts to transform societies, going back to ancient and mythical times in human history.

It has been said that 'there is nothing new under the sun', and so we need to see what we can learn from archetypal and historical efforts to challenge power and secure rights. Many of the most important lessons have been learnt and relearnt over the years, but are cleverly hidden by trendy new language and buzzwords. We think we need the very latest concepts, methods or tools to do the job, when the age-old wisdom we really need may be right before our eyes. Much wisdom can be found in the diverse traditions and movements for liberation and rights of the 19th and 20th centuries (for a good survey of these, see VeneKlasen *et al.*, 2004). Nor should we always look abroad for green pastures; every society has its own traditions, histories and experiences of liberation from which to draw inspiration.

In drawing on this wisdom and experience, we do see a few key challenges for participatory rights and advocacy work to reflect upon:

Instrumental and non-reflective uses of participatory methods

Always a challenge, with any methodology, but already a well-documented weakness with PRA/PLA methods when it comes to analysing and addressing power. There is a challenge to develop further concepts and methods for addressing power and rights in all of their dimensions.

Professional dominance and legitimacy

The role and power of genuine membership organisations is still weak in many regions, and intermediaries tend to act on behalf of others without genuine representation. Professional

> **"In essence, rights-based approaches can be understood as both a means and an end: if development is ultimately about making sure that everyone's basic human rights are met, development can also best be achieved by enabling people to better secure and fulfil their rights"**

and intermediary groups need to know when to stand back, be inclusive and play a responsive and supporting role rather than taking the lead.

Strengthening of community-based organisations and leadership

Related to the above, this is a vital priority even if it means that things may move more slowly and intermediary organisations get less of the credit or funding. Efforts should respect the organic and emergent nature of CBOs and resist imposing models of professionalism from the development-donor nexus.

Beyond the local and beyond the public sector

Globalisation means that many rights must be negotiated at super super-national levels and with private sector actors, and the global governance structures to do this are still very weak. A major challenge for both civil society and governments is to forge effective micro-macro linkages, and new systems of global corporate accountability, while remaining legitimate and representative.

Donor dependency and outdated project cycles

Donors have an urgent responsibility to redesign their procedures and accountability systems if they are serious about supporting rights and advocacy. New forms of relationship, partnership, solidarity and learning are needed which can meet the complex needs of multiple actors and directions of accountability.

The dimension of individual learning and change

We are easily caught up in trying to change structures and institutions, without reflecting on our own personal values, behaviour and attitudes. We need to make the time and explore the most effective methods for deeper reflection and learning, going beyond the conceptual and verbal levels and tapping into our experiential and lived knowledge, our sense of values and purpose.

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