

CITIZENS MONITORING AND ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE



TRÓCAIRE'S CITIZEN MONITORING AND ADVOCACY FRAMEWORK



Area Development Committee members from Dowa, Malawi get an update from the headmaster of Chivula school on the construction of new classrooms. The Committee monitor whether local development projects and services in their area are delivered as budgeted and planned. The Committee were also instrumental in mobilising the community to assist in building the foundation and walls. Photo: Leigh Brady

1. PURPOSE OF THE FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this framework is to provide guidance to programme staff and partners on integrating **citizen monitoring and advocacy (CMA)** into country programmes to achieve Goals 1-4 of Trócaire's Strategic Plan 2016-2020. The document defines the key concepts and principles that underpin Trócaire's approach to CMA and provides an overview of the range of intervention strategies involved. It highlights some common approaches and tools, references Trócaire's experience of working in this area, and signposts key resources, including Trócaire's *Citizen Monitoring and Advocacy, Step by Step Guide to Developing your Strategy* and accompanying *Tools Booklet (CMA Strategy Guide and Tools)*. Additional tools, case studies, training materials and ideas for further reading are available in the *CMA Resources Folder on Box*.

The primary audience for this framework is **Programme Officers** and **Programme Managers** in Trócaire country offices together with partner organisations. A secondary audience is other Trócaire staff (such as technical & policy advisors, Heads of Region, Country Directors, and monitoring and evaluation, institutional funding and communications officers) and donors.

2. BACKGROUND

Embedded in the 'theory of change' that underpins Trócaire's Strategic Plan 2016-2020 is the belief that sustainable development requires the active **participation** of **empowered** citizens (rights-holders) in decision-making by those in authority (duty-bearers) in relation to laws, policies, development plans, resourcing and practices. It also requires States to be responsive, and to be **held accountable to citizens**. Through these processes, the **power imbalance that lies at the heart of structural poverty and injustice** can be challenged. In other words, participatory and accountable governance—from the highest to the lowest locus of power—is critical to achieving just and sustainable development outcomes.

Trócaire's 'theory of change' sees **just and accountable institutions** as an essential component of achieving its strategic goals. Institutions not only include government bodies, but also customary authorities, major corporations, multi-lateral organisations and other powerful entities, such as large religious organisations and non-state actors exercising *de facto* authority over communities. These non-state institutions have a duty to respect the rights of citizens—whether expressed through national or international laws and standards—and can be held to account for the impact of their institutional policies and practice. Civil society actors themselves, including Trócaire, must also be accountable to the communities where they work, including, in particular, when they take on the role of providing humanitarian aid or basic services in the absence of functioning State authorities.

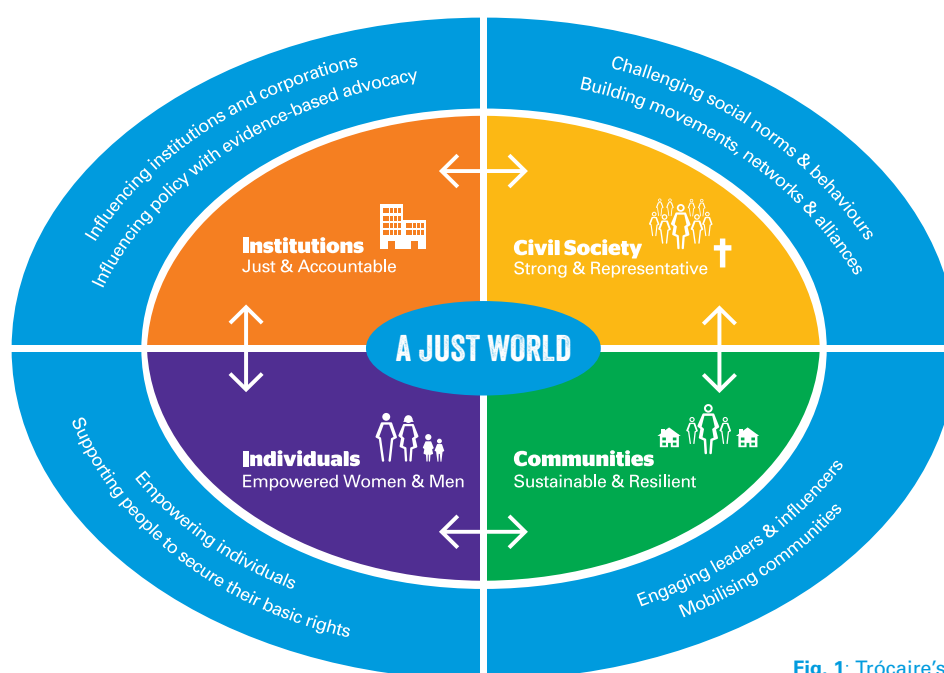
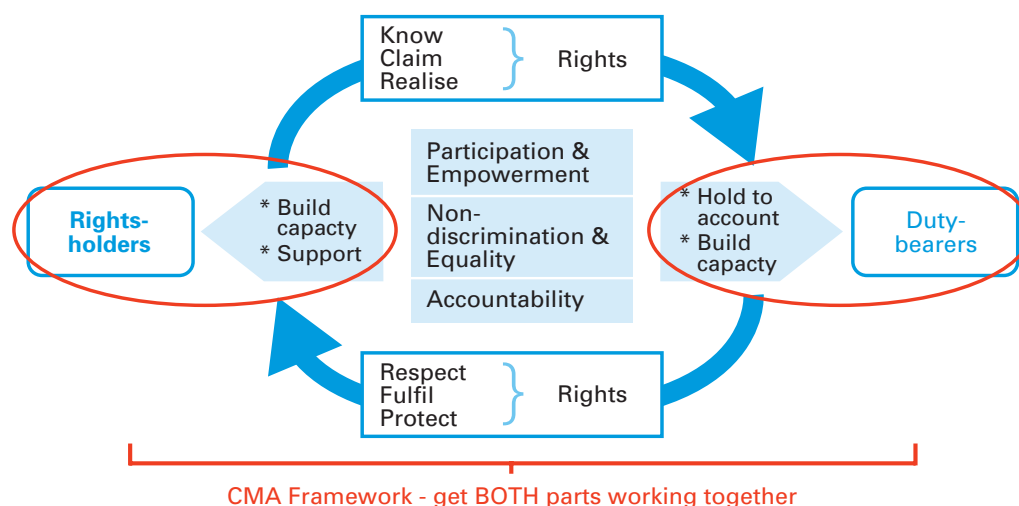


Fig. 1: Trócaire's Theory of Change



Trócaire is committed to embodying a **rights based approach to development** and **mainstreaming protection** in humanitarian programming.¹ Support for citizen monitoring and advocacy activities in both humanitarian and development programming puts the principles of a rights-based approach into practice. These activities empower citizens (rights-holders) to know their rights, analyse the challenges, and identify the responsibilities of duty-bearers. Gaining confidence, knowledge and skills, citizens develop and implement strategies to effectively claim and realise these rights, including through monitoring institutional practice, influencing decision-making, and holding duty-bearers to account.

Since its inception, Trócaire has been assisting citizen groups to engage effectively with governments and other power-holders to demand respect and accountability for their human rights. In 2016, Trócaire took the decision to integrate this approach throughout all its programmes using CMA. Examples of recent and ongoing work includes:

Goal 1 The human rights of marginalised women and men are respected and democratic space is protected. In Honduras, Trócaire and its partners are monitoring the operation of a national inter-ministerial system set up to protect human rights defenders and are using the evidence they gather to advocate for improvements in the mechanism. To date over 900 human rights defenders have joined the monitoring and verification process.

Goal 2 People living in poverty, particularly women, exercise their right to access and control natural resources and benefit from the sustainable use and management of those resources. In Rwanda, Trócaire is supporting partners to monitor the implementation of agriculture policies and programmes to ensure that they address the priorities of citizens, especially women. Further to community accountability meetings with district officials, authorities have agreed to increase and decentralise the number of agricultural input stations to cell level.

Goal 3 Goal: Women are empowered to exercise greater control over decisions that affect their lives. In Uganda, Trócaire supports community advocates to monitor how practices and policies related to sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) response are implemented locally and to conduct accountability meetings with sub-county and district level duty bearers. With the process only a few months' old, new approaches are being adopted by local authorities, from the allocation of dedicated budget lines, to discussion on how to improve the effectiveness of police investigations and judicial decision-making.

Goal 4 Lives are saved, suffering is reduced and human dignity is maintained and protected in humanitarian crises resulting from natural disasters and conflict situations. In Sierra Leone, Trócaire created a two-way information-access initiative with communities during the Ebola (2014-2016) crisis and the 2017 mudslide and floods humanitarian response. The kiosks helped bridge the gap between citizens and service providers and contributed to holding the latter accountable. One outcome of advocacy in 2017 was the reopening of the beneficiary registration process, which facilitated previously excluded community members to receive crucial supports.

To support Trócaire's partners to continue to infuse the principles and practice of empowerment, participation and accountability in their work, Trócaire has developed the **Citizen Monitoring and Advocacy (CMA)** framework.

¹ See Trócaire, Rights Based Approach: A Summary Guide for Country Strategy and Programme Development, available on Box.

3. CITIZEN MONITORING AND ADVOCACY (CMA)

Trócaire uses the term CMA to refer to targeted actions by **groups of organised citizens** at any level to **monitor** and **advocate** for change in state and non-state institutional policies and practices, in order to realise their rights and entitlements and **hold** duty-bearers **to account**.

Typically, CMA addresses problems related to:

- Absence of policies, laws, budgets, services or practices which effectively ensure people's rights or entitlements;
- Harmful or inadequate policies, laws, budgets, services or practices, as a result of which people's rights are undermined or ineffectively protected or resourced;
- Inadequate implementation of existing policies, laws, budgets, services or practices;
- Incoherent policies and laws, where rights may be enshrined in one provision, but undermined by another part of the legal or policy framework.

CMA initiatives involve the following elements:

- Carried out by, with or for a group or groups of organised **citizens**;
- Informal or formal **monitoring** and information gathering with respect to a policy, institutional practice or other relevant context in **order to generate evidence and analysis on** which to base recommendations to relevant duty-bearers in state or non-state institutions;
- **Advocacy** in support of the recommended action(s) by engaging with **duty-bearers**, including **holding them to account** for the implementation of existing standards and commitments, whether through constructive persuasion or more confrontational strategies, such as legal action.

CMA can be done **by, with or for** (on behalf of), the people who are most affected by the problem. CMA initiatives will generally include a combination of the three approaches, at different stages of the cycle.

- **By:** Activities are conducted by those who are the intended beneficiaries of the initiative, with the focus on supporting people affected by an issue to engage directly.
- **With:** Those most affected by the problem join with others who bring additional skills, knowledge or levels of access to duty bearers to strengthen the efforts.

- **For:** Activities are conducted on behalf of people most affected by an issue who may not be in a position to engage themselves, whether due to protection concerns, time constraints or lack of access to duty bearers.

CMA frequently requires a team effort. For example, a farmers' cooperative might collect information how an irrigation service is working but then join **with** a local civil society organisation (CSO) to analyse the policies and standards that apply. Both groups will then work together to prepare a report and engage decision makers, in collaboration with other allies.

CITIZEN MONITORING AND ADVOCACY IS ACTION BY CITIZENS AT ANY LEVEL TO MONITOR AND ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE.

There are often situations where CMA is carried out **for** (on behalf of) those affected because it may not be safe or feasible for them to do it directly eg. survivors of SGBV or communities caught in the midst of armed conflict. When Trócaire or partners engage in monitoring and advocacy on behalf of communities, these activities must be rooted in, and informed by, their lived experiences. Trócaire's [Accountability in Practice](#) Framework requires that communities are involved in decision making processes, have access to accurate and timely information on activities and outcomes, and that approaches and strategies are adjusted based on their feedback. The safety and wellbeing of communities under threat must be a paramount consideration in designing CMA activities in these contexts.

Key concepts

Citizen: The essence of nationality or citizenship is the legal bond between a person and a state or other controlling authority. National laws across the world define the citizen bond in multiple different ways. In the CMA context, “citizen” is a synonym for **rights-holder**, referring to all human beings whose rights are at issue in a particular context, including refugees, stateless persons, and undocumented immigrants.²

Groups of organised citizens: The term encompasses all kinds of groups, from those at the grassroots to those who have formed professionalised non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and all other expressions of civil society in between. Citizen groups belong to one of two general categories: (1) those comprising people **mostly directly affected** by the issue; and (2) those primarily comprising people **indirectly affected** by the issue, including people working in solidarity with those directly affected, or addressing more macro-level policy issues. Those directly affected by the issue are the preferred target group for interventions, in line with Trócaire’s theory of change. Citizen groups can be informal or formally constituted and include:

- Informal citizen collectives such as farmers’ collectives, women’s advocacy groups, social movements, activist-led campaign collectives, etc;
- Government-endorsed community structures eg., Village Development Committees, School Monitoring Committees, etc;
- Established CSOs at any level (e.g. village, municipal, district, national) such as community based organisations, district-level advocacy NGOs, think-tanks, Church organisations, etc;
- CSO networks at any level;
- Multi-stakeholder coalitions/alliances of civil society actors from different levels (grassroots and professional; sub-national, national and international) together with other stakeholders (councillors, MPs, service-providers, government officials, business owners, academics, media actors, etc.)

State and non-state institutions: State institutions include all branches of government and associated entities (eg. security and health services) at all levels from national to local. Non-state institutions include customary authorities, multilateral organisations (e.g. the United Nations, the African Union, the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, etc.), other powerful institutions such as large religious and financial entities (eg. corporations) and non-State actors (especially when they become the de facto authority). Non-state institutions also encompass NGOs and UN agencies providing protection and basic services to communities in need, including where the state or local authority is unable or unwilling to protect.

Duty-bearers: A duty bearer is an individual or entity that has the capacity or obligation to give effect to a right or other commitment. The CMA framework employs a broad understanding of ‘duty-bearers’ as both state and non-state actors in decision-making positions and/or positions of power.

In terms of human rights, States are generally the **primary duty bearers**. States commit to protect civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights by ratifying international agreements and enacting national legislation. States must not only refrain from violating human rights, but protect people from human rights abuse by others, and take positive action to facilitate the enjoyment of human rights by all. States therefore also regulate the actions of other duty-bearers to ensure that they in turn respect and protect human rights.

Non-state actors—such as private companies, religious institutions, local leaders, civil society organisations, international organisations, and, in principle, every individual—are **secondary human rights duty bearers**.³ Multilateral agencies such as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, for example, are mandated by States to protect refugees and displaced persons. Private mining companies must abide by laws governing protection of the environment and the right to health. Under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, parents, guardians and care-givers have obligations as duty bearers towards children.

² Although human rights are enjoyed by all, the scope of the particular right at issue and the authority against which it can be asserted, will vary, depending on the status of the members of the community (eg., citizen, resident, refugee, interned person) and the context eg. a situation of armed conflict.

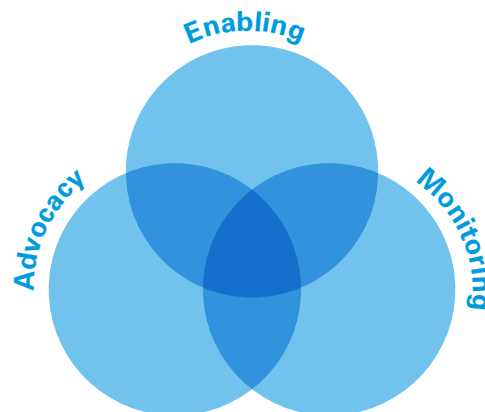
³ The question of duty bearers in human rights legal theory is complex and undergoing rapid evolution. Some non-state actors, for example, can be considered primary human rights duty bearers in certain circumstances, eg, multilateral organisations with human rights jurisdiction, or non-state armed actors in the context of applicable law in conflict situations. Non-state actors are sometimes described as “moral duty bearers”: this does not mean that they do not also have legal obligations to give effect to human right guarantees.

Policy: A policy is a **set of rules, commitments, standards or courses of action**, authorised by government or non-state institutions, to achieve certain goals. In addition to commitments explicitly described as “policy”, policy can refer to laws, strategies, programmes, plans, budgets, standards, and other written and verbal commitments by duty bearers. An official speech by a Minister, for example, can contain commitments to a course of action for which citizens can later hold the government accountable. Similarly, citizens can demand that the World Bank consider feedback from communities affected by Bank-financed projects as described in the Bank’s policy document, Strategic Framework for Mainstreaming Citizen Engagement (2014).

Monitoring: In the CMA context, monitoring refers to activities that **observe, assess and interpret** how a specific law, policy, practice, service or budget—or its absence—is experienced on the ground. Monitoring can be done in a number of ways, informally and formally, but is essentially about gathering and interpreting information in an organised and consistent way. Monitoring can enhance understanding of a problem and provide evidence to develop advocacy recommendations. The monitoring process itself can also create opportunities to forge new relationships which can influence change eg. engaging with government officials at scorecard meetings.

Advocacy: Advocacy is the act or process of making your voice heard. In the CMA context, it is about influencing those in power to make a desired change in behaviour, practice or policy. Advocacy is usually based on a clear strategy that identifies **what, who and how** to influence, given the particular context and the changes being sought.

4. CMA INTERVENTIONS



There are three interlinked spheres of intervention in Trócaire’s approach to CMA:

- **Enabling:** citizens know their rights and entitlements, grow the knowledge, skills and confidence to conduct monitoring and advocacy activities safely and effectively, and embark upon a CMA process;
- **Monitoring:** citizens collect and/or generate the information and evidence needed to analyse a problem, develop recommendations for change, and identify power holders and duty bearers; and
- **Advocacy:** citizens influence and hold to account those who have the power to effect the desired change, whether through persuasion or constructive confrontation.

Throughout the three spheres of intervention, different support strategies and activities are employed.

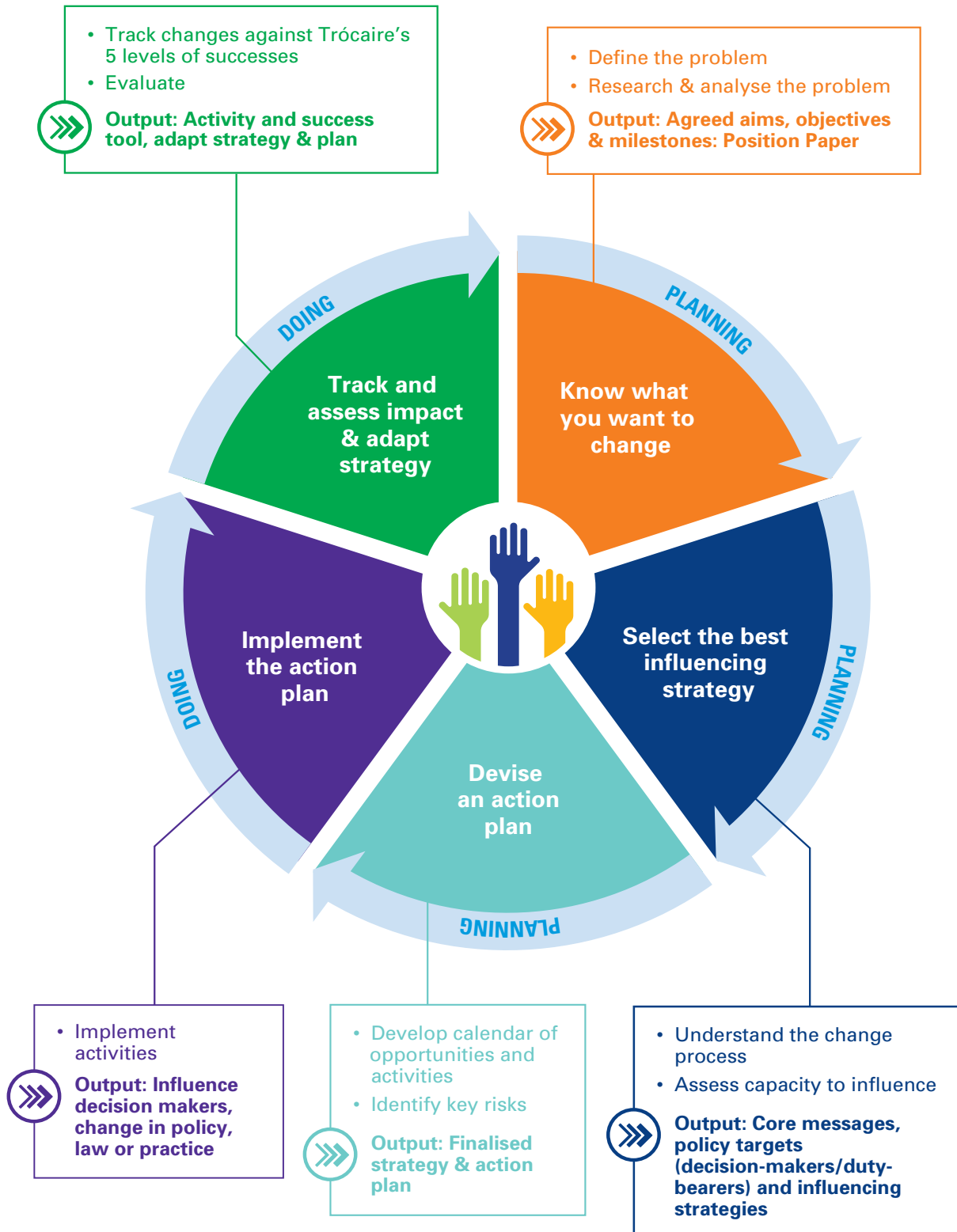
Enabling strategies focus on empowering and capacitating individuals and citizen groups to undertake monitoring, analysis and advocacy safely and effectively.

Direct citizen monitoring and advocacy strategies are the approaches, tactics and tools employed during the monitoring and advocacy activities themselves.

Each CMA initiative—large or small—will involve a combination of activities within the three spheres of CMA intervention: **enabling, monitoring and advocacy**. In some contexts there will be a strong focus on enabling interventions, in others the main focus of activities will be in the advocacy and monitoring/analysis spheres: the key to a successful initiative is to develop a *tailored strategy* which considers the potential of engaging in all three areas of intervention.

Trócaire's Citizen Monitoring and Advocacy, Step by Step Guide to Developing your Strategy and Tools

Booklet contain detailed guidance for Trócaire staff and partners on supporting citizen groups to: identify what they want to change; collect and analyse information; understand the context; conduct monitoring activities safely; identify the best influencing strategy; devise an action plan; track and assess progress; and adapt their CMA strategy as required.





Women's Empowerment: Gender inequality is a significant driver of poverty and exclusion. In order to challenge unequal power relations, Trócaire integrates women empowerment throughout its all programmes. CMA interventions should therefore apply a gender lens, recognising the differentiated needs and ambitions of women and men, and addressing the specific barriers faced by women in claiming their human rights and influencing decision-making. For example, supporting women to participate meaningfully in community meetings may require provision for basic costs (e.g. child care, transport, meals, etc). Trócaire's Women's Empowerment Framework provides guidance on integrating women's empowerment as an approach in programme design and implementation.

Planning a CMA initiative

During the CMA planning phase, citizen groups are supported to engage in **problem and context analysis** in order to decide whether a CMA intervention is likely to help with the particular challenge they face.

The Problem Tree is a visual mapping tool for analysing the roots of a problem through understanding the problem's causes and effects. It can also identify where more information is needed through research or monitoring ([CMA Strategy Guide and Tools](#)).

Once the problem is better understood, the wider context falls for examination. Questions might include:

- What is the political context in which the CMA initiative will be carried out? What is the state of stability/fragility, the governance system (statutory and/or customary), the official vs. the unwritten "rules of the game" (who really holds power), the quality of respect for the rule of law and for democratic and civic space?
- Who are the stakeholders in the problem and what are their interests and motivations e.g., duty-bearers, decision-makers, decision-influencers, affected citizens and allies?

Where possible, context analysis activities should be designed to support building community skills and knowledge. Participatory policy analysis, for example, involves engaging citizen groups in reading and interpreting a policy, understanding what it means for

their rights and entitlements, and assessing how it is being implemented on the ground.

Activities during the planning phase reflect the first steps in the advocacy intervention (see below).

Risk Mitigation and Protection Strategies: In planning a CMA intervention, early assessment of the likelihood and severity of adverse consequences of activities is vital in order that appropriate risk mitigation and protection strategies are put in place. These might include a range of tactics from building media relationships, to aligning with influential donors and duty bearers, developing security plans for citizen monitors and establishing referral pathways to emergency protection services. As circumstances change, risk assessments should be kept under constant review.

Enabling strategies

CMA enabling strategies include:

- *Raising awareness of rights and entitlements:* Awareness-raising enables people to assess their current situation, understand their rights and entitlements, and identify pathways for claiming their rights. Tactics should be adapted to level of literacy of the group and tailored to focus on the most relevant rights.
- *Building the confidence and agency of affected women and men:* Awareness is often not enough to motivate women and men to claim their rights and entitlements. A process must also take place to enable each individual to attain the "power within" to take ownership of their rights and believe in their ability to speak up and take action.
- *Literacy support:* In order to ensure meaningful participation from a broad range of citizens, functional literacy support may be required. Digital literacy training might also be considered, depending on the focus of the monitoring and advocacy initiative.
- *Community mobilisation/community organising:* Individuals who come together organically in the same community to address a common problem may need accompaniment and support to become fully effective. This can take the form of helping to strengthen organisational processes, or enhancing leadership and facilitation skills. Community organising may also involve assisting the development of formal structures linked to decentralised governance systems, e.g. Village Development Committees or Natural Resource Management Committees. Trócaire's technical paper on [Community Mobilisation](#) describes

some of the key features of, and strategies for, successful community mobilisation.

- ***Movement-Building:*** A social problem that cannot be solved by the efforts of one or two organisations alone may require a collective movement of citizens who can share the responsibility of advocating for change. Movement or constituency building is similar to community mobilisation but larger in scale, with different organising principles. Contributing to movement-building is time and resource-intensive but a critical strategy in many contexts.
- ***Capacity building for direct CMA activities:*** Development of skills and knowledge in areas such as research and documentation, public speaking, policy change processes, power analysis, advocacy strategy design and negotiation, equips citizen groups to engage effectively in monitoring and advocacy activities.

Monitoring

In order to develop an effective CMA plan of action, additional information will often be required. Not all initiatives will require the collection of primary data. Information can be gathered through **desk-based research, requests for official data, or by relying on case studies** which have been already conducted.

Where primary data gathering is needed, **activities that observe, assess and interpret how a specific law, policy, practice, service or budget—or its absence—is experienced on the ground can be considered.** This is called monitoring. From court monitoring to tracking hospital supplies, monitoring should be intentional, with information consistently collected and recorded in order to identify gaps, trends or patterns.

Primary data gathering does not require knowledge of complex techniques. Basic approaches include:

- ***Observation:*** Observations are gathered through conduct of planned inspections (captured in writing, videos, or photographs) or by eliciting spontaneous reflection/observations at a community meeting.
- ***Checklists:*** Citizens note the quality, presence or quantity of something (e.g. amount of medical supplies in a hospital, number of latrines built), using a checklist in written or pictorial format.
- ***Case reporting:*** Affected community members self-report, or designated community members document, incidents and cases (e.g. requests for bribes, gender-motivated attacks)
- ***Surveys:*** Experiences of a service or situation (hospital, police station) are documented using

a standardised set of questions, administered either in person or electronically.

Trócaire's Global Digital Data Advisor can advise on the safe use and resourcing of digital technology for recording and collating information through citizen monitoring.

There are a range of specialised tools and techniques which have been developed by Trócaire and its partners to support community monitoring and analysis of service delivery, budgets and policies. These include: community score cards; social audits; citizen report cards; public expenditure tracking (PET) surveys and participatory budget clubs. For an overview of these tools and supporting resources, see the [CMA Strategy Guide and Tools](#) and [CMA Resources folder](#) on Box.

Designing a tailored citizen monitoring strategy will include consideration of the following factors:

- **what** type of additional information and evidence is required to better understand the problem and influence decision-makers;
- **where** will the monitoring take place;
- **who** will be involved in collecting, managing, analysing and interpreting the data; and
- **how** the safety of the monitors and the community is ensured and data protection assured, particularly where personal information is being collected.

Monitoring of a particular issue may take place at the beginning of an initiative in order to found the basis for developing recommendations for advocacy: it can also be designed as an ongoing activity which feeds into advocacy as the strategy evolves and adapts.

Trócaire's Guidance on Personal Data Collection document is applicable to all situations where personal data is collected, including ensuring compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).⁴ Trócaire's Data Protection Officer (dpo@trocaire.org) can offer additional guidance on data collection, storage and analysis.

⁴ The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is an EU Directive which came into force on 25th May 2018. As an organisation headquartered within the EU, we are obliged to adhere to this Directive, regardless in which country the data might be collected.

Trócaire supports **monitoring and investigating of serious human rights violations** in contexts where human rights violations and abuses are particularly acute. This type of monitoring can involve considerable risks to the monitors, victims/survivors and witnesses. In addition to the specialised techniques and approaches required for this work, risk management, protection of interlocutors, and protection of any personal data collected, will be critical considerations.

Analysing the data

Once the data is collected, facilitated community discussions or other participatory exercises can help make sense of the findings and identify trends/changes, in order to inform advocacy and accountability efforts.

Advocacy

Building on the information generated during the monitoring and analysis phase, an advocacy strategy can be developed.

Trócaire's approach to advocacy involves a five-phase cycle:

- Phase 1 Know what you want to change (agree aims and objectives)
- Phase 2 Select the best influencing strategy (develop messages/targets/approach)
- Phase 3 Devise advocacy action plan (decide who does what and when and assess risks)
- Phase 4 Implement the plan (conduct activities)
- Phase 5 Track progress and adapt (collect evidence of impact and review the strategy)

Advocacy can be carried out in multiple ways, using a combination of tactics. The choice of tactics will depend upon what will have most influence on the targeted duty-bearers, and what is most appropriate to the situation. In order to be effective, activities should be conceived as part of a **clearly defined strategy** which is **context specific** and where each action **builds momentum towards achieving the change sought**.

Various approaches can be considered, including:

Public/citizen participation: Creating opportunities for citizens to raise their voice directly with duty-bearers and/or decision-influencers can be both empowering for individuals and communities, and a powerful advocacy strategy. Citizens can be supported to either participate in government-convened consultations (*invited spaces*) or to create and host their own consultations where they set their own agenda and directly present findings and recommendations to duty bearers (*created spaces*).

Relationship-building with, and capacity-building of, decision-makers and decision-influencers: Engagement with duty-bearers is part of all CMA initiatives. In some situations, however, duty-bearers may lack either the capacity to engage, and/or the willingness to respond to citizens' demands. Ensuring that key targets are involved early on, including in the design of the project, can reduce hostility towards an intervention and increase the likelihood of a positive reception. Not all CMA strategies need be confrontational and antagonistic: they can be collaborative and use informal, or behind the scenes, spaces.

Legal advocacy, including litigation: In contexts where it is difficult to engage directly with duty-bearers and hold them to account, legal advocacy and litigation may be an option. Depending on the context, different combinations of international and national laws, policies and standards will determine the source, nature and scope of the legal obligations of particular duty-bearers—and the range of national, regional, international jurisdictions that can be considered. Developing a successful legal strategy requires specialist expertise.

Rapid Response Advocacy: Rapid response advocacy is conducted when immediate action by duty-bearers is required to protect citizens, eg. where human rights defenders or civilians in conflict-settings are under threat. This tends to take the form of advocacy **for** those affected by the issue at hand.

Examples of advocacy activities include:

- Accountability sessions;
- Policy submissions to target duty-bearers;
- Presentations and dialogue with duty-bearers/decision-makers/decision-influencers;
- Participation in government-convened working groups;
- Hosting public debates, including inviting duty-bearers to participate;
- Engagement with traditional media: e.g. facilitating trips, pitching case studies, providing information and advocacy material, suggesting draft op-eds; and encouraging coverage for demonstrations and public advocacy events;
- Use of social media to influence duty-bearers;
- Organisation of petitions;
- Arranging demonstrations, sit-ins and other forms of protest.

5. LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

Embedding CMA in programme strategy and activities requires significant institutional groundwork, including careful assessment of the external context.

The external context

In some countries where Trócaire operates, the political climate is hostile towards citizens seeking to monitor and advocate for change. In others, there are ongoing armed conflicts or State institutions are weak or non-existent. At the family or community level there may also be barriers to meaningful participation in CMA activities, whether in terms of access to basic needs, the burden of care for children and elderly, and fear of loss of livelihood.

Even in the most fragile and challenging situations, however, it is possible to carry out some form of political and social action towards citizen empowerment and increased accountability of power-holders—what changes is the approach and strategies used. If the social contract between citizens and State is weak, for example, citizen empowerment, community mobilisation and movement-building strategies can be a starting point. In a repressive context, developing a deeper understanding of duty-bearers' motivations and identifying entry points to build relationships with civil servant reformers/champions can be beneficial.

Trócaire's commitment to protecting human rights and to "Do no Harm" means that CMA initiatives must be informed by appropriate advice and practical support on issues of safety and protection. Many of the approaches and principles set out in Trócaire's [Partners at Risk Guidelines](#) are also applicable to community groups or individuals who may be exposed to risk as a result of participating in a CMA initiative.

Designing a CMA initiative

Integrating CMA

The [CMA Resources Folder on Box](#) contains examples of how CMA approaches can be conceptualised and implemented within Goal 1, 2, 3 and 4 programming.

CMA initiatives can be effective in the humanitarian context through appropriate enabling, monitoring and advocacy interventions and close attention to risk. In Somalia, for example, Trócaire's support for citizen management, monitoring of, and advocacy around, health services in Gedo has ensured a continuity of medical care for the community through two decades of protracted crisis. CMA can also contribute to ensuring equality of access to humanitarian aid where entitlements are not clear, exploitation is taking place, or humanitarian principles are ignored. Guidance on advocacy in crisis settings and as a core component of protection mainstreaming in **humanitarian programming** is available in Trócaire's Humanitarian Handbook and protection mainstreaming framework:⁵ for additional information contact a programme or policy advisor at head office.

Budget considerations

The type of CMA interventions that can be realistically considered—and the resources needed—will be determined by the particular circumstances of the citizen groups targeted in the programme (e.g. levels of poverty, literacy, education and women's empowerment). Citizen groups facing multiple challenges in disempowering environments (e.g. high social inequality) may require **close accompaniment, skilled facilitation and special measures** to address barriers to meaningful participation. These additional capacity and resource implications will need to be taken into consideration during budgeting.

Staff and partner capacity

Successful CMA initiatives will require access to specialist expertise by Trócaire staff and partners. They are also likely to involve sustained commitment to communities and citizen groups dedicated to pursuing a specific change, perhaps even over the lifetime of multiple programmes.

Programme design and support

Drawing on Trócaire's long experience of supporting participatory and accountable governance work, the [CMA Resources Folder on Box](#) contains checklists of issues to consider when embarking on CMA programming—or indeed reviewing programming to assess CMA elements. It also includes training materials for staff and partners, and case studies of successful interventions.

⁵ Chapter 11, Trócaire Humanitarian Handbook.; Part 8, Coordination and Advocacy in Trócaire, CAFOD, CRS, Caritas Australia, Protection mainstreaming framework

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