

Working for Policy Change at Local Level



Working for Policy Change at Local Level

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This material is a part of a series developed in request for follow-up Units to the original Active Citizenship/Voter Education Programme. The other Units in the series are:

How We Are Governed - Margo Delaney C.H.F.

Your Community Your Role, Working for the Public Good - Mary Connaire D.C.

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Working for Policy Change at Local Level

Learning Task 1 - Clarifying The Issue.

Goal: To identify the issue, to pinpoint the precise problem and to get accurate information on the problem.

Learning Task 2 - Issues and Systems

Goal: To identify the cause of the problem and to link issues and problems with systems.

Learning Task 3 - Policies and Power

Goal: To relate systems and policies with issues and problems and to identify people who have power to make changes.

Learning Task 4 - Developing our Strategy

Goal: To explore various ways of dealing with the issue and identify the solution which is most likely to bring about change.

Learning Task 5 - Our Action Plan

**Goal: To complete a plan which identifies; What has to be done?
By whom? When and with What?**

Notes for Facilitators

This material offers an introductory strategy for working for policy change at local level. It seeks to make the connection between problems or issues, which concern people and the systems/policies which, are related to particular issues.

At the end of each Learning Task there is a list of materials required. However, attention is drawn to the two principal learning materials:

- a) Personal Issue Sheet which will be completed by each participant. This sheet is on page 8.
 - b) The large chart size copy of the Issue Sheet which is prepared in advance by the facilitator and is identical in content with the personal Issue Sheets.
- There are 13 sections on the Issue Sheet and each section is completed at a time specified in the different Learning Tasks.
 - In order to ensure that the Personal Issue Sheets are available for each session it is suggested that they be collected at the end of each session until the work has been completed.
 - In preparation for the completion of the different sections in the Issue Sheet some Learning Tasks may require that the responses to brainstorming sessions be recorded on large sheets for Flip Chart paper.

Time

An approx length of time is given for each Learning Task.

Working for Policy Change at Local Level - National Active Citizenship Network

Learning Task 1 - Clarifying the Issue - Goal: To identify the issue, to pinpoint the precise problem and to get accurate information on the problem

| Task | Learning Activity | Process |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Getting to the heart of the Issue (being able to explain the issue and how it could be changed for the better is at the core of working for change)</p> <p><i>Approx. 15 minutes</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each person describes the issue • Develop consensus Make into a statement - The Issue Is | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By using Illustrations in newspapers, own drawings or a written statement • Flip chart with prepared large Issue Sheet (<i>page 8</i>) • Print statement on chart. • Ask is this statement clear? Do we need to change it – to add to it? What part is the most persuasive in arguing for change? |
| <p>Discovering what we know about the Issues (to convince people that change is necessary we must use all the information that supports our case and be able to deal with arguments against it)</p> <p><i>Approx. 10 minutes</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share own experience <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Who is affected by this issue? ii. How are they affected? iii. Who are the other experts with knowledge of this issue? iv. Are there other facts and figures which would strengthen our position? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use large Issue Sheet and complete each section: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Who is affected by the issue? ii. How are they affected by the issue? iii. Who are the other experts? iv. Are there other facts and figures? Record points on large Issue Sheet sections 2-5. • Distribute personal Issue Sheets (<i>page 8</i>) Participants complete Section 1-5 on their personal Issue Sheets. |
| <p>Find out more about the Issue (to identify weaknesses in our case in order to strengthen our position)</p> <p><i>Approx. 10 minutes</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. weaknesses in our case ii. arguments for which more information is necessary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divide participants into 2 groups of ‘Devil’s Advocates’ Task - ask participants to make a list of all the weaknesses in our position. • In large groups decide how to deal with each weakness- eg is more information needed? who will get this information? |
| <p>Network with Others</p> <p><i>Approx. 5 minutes</i></p> | <p>Identify and contact relevant organisations and groups.</p> | <p>Brainstorm to discover other groups/organisation with similar concerns, arrange if necessary to contact them.</p> |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>To Sum Up</p> <p><i>Approx. 15 minutes</i></p> | <p>Review statement of the issue.</p> | <p>Participants divide into 2 groups – ask them to imagine they are going to talk informally about the issue to</p> <p>i) another group with an interest in the issue ii) a journalist.</p> <p>Ask volunteers to role-play tasks.</p> <p>a) explaining the issue b) seek support for issue.</p> |
| <p><i>Notes for Facilitator</i></p> | <p>i. It is important to draw the participants attention to the Issue Sheet pointing out that each section is completed at a time specified in the different learning tasks.</p> <p>ii. In order to ensure that the personal Issue Sheets are available for each session the facilitator requests the participants to write their names on their sheet and collects these Issue Sheets at the end of each work period.</p> <p>iii. The facilitator makes a large flip chart sheet version of the Issue Sheet and mounts it on the Flip Chart stand.</p> | |
| <p><i>Follow-up Task for Leader</i></p> | <p>Ensure that the decisions dealing with any outstanding requirements are implemented e.g. additional facts or figures – Whose responsibility? Networking with another group – Who initiates contact?</p> | |
| <p><i>Materials for Session</i></p> <p><i>Total Time - 55 minutes approx</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flip Chart • Markers, Blue Tack • Variety of newspapers, magazine pictures (if group has not agreed the issue) • Large sheets of paper for mounting responses • Copies of Issue Sheet (<i>Appendix 1 page 8</i>) for each participant • Large Flip Chart version of Issue Sheet for use by the facilitator | |

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Learning Task 2 - Issues and Systems - Goal: To identify the cause of the problem and to link issues and problems with systems and policies

| Task | Learning Activity | Process |
|--|--|--|
| <p>What Causes the Problem?</p> <p><i>Approx. 15 minutes</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the Issue statement and ask the question What or who causes this problem? • Place the causes in order of priority. • Describe the cause identified as the most important. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses to question record on ‘post-its’. Gather responses, collate those that are similar and mount on Flip Chart. • Participants give 5 dots – 3 dots for the cause viewed as most important, 2 dots = second choice and 1 dot = third choice • With the group, construct a statement capturing the main cause. Record this statement in section 6 on the large Issue Chart. Participants record this statement in section 6 on their personal Issue Sheets |
| <p>Problems and Systems (issues and problems generally have a cause in a system)</p> <p><i>Approx. 30 minutes</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link the problem with systems. • Identify the strengths and weaknesses of systems. Focusing in particular on system linked with issue. • Focus on systems related to ‘our issue’. Identify changes necessary in systems in order to solve the problem. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute Worksheet 2A - ‘Systems in Our Everyday Lives’ (<i>page 9</i>). In pairs complete matching exercise. Share responses. • Distribute Worksheet 2B – ‘Systems Some Important Points’ (<i>page 10</i>). Discuss content. Link our issue with relevant system. • Distribute slips on paper with the name of particular system e.g. health care, Worksheet 2C (<i>page 11</i>). Participants identify good and bad experiences of the system which is written on the slip of paper. Share responses. • Use flipchart to record relevant systems and the changes necessary to deal with problem (<i>Section, 7 page 8</i>) • Record the systems which are related to the issue on the large Issue Sheet and on the participants personal Issue Sheets, (<i>Section, 7 page 8</i>). |
| <p>Materials for Session</p> <p><i>Total Tim - 45 minutes approx.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flip Chart • Markers • Post – it notes • Worksheets 2A and 2B • Slip of paper with names of systems (<i>Worksheet 2C page 11</i>). | |

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Learning Task 3 - Policies and Power – Goal: To relate systems and policies with issues and problems and to identify people who have power to make changes

| Task | Learning Activity | Process |
|---|--|---|
| To Relate Systems and Policies <i>Approx. 10 minutes</i> | Identify some policies which affect our lives. | Case history 1. Policies in Everyday life (<i>page 12</i>) Discuss responses. |
| Connect Policies with Issues and Problems <i>Approx. 10 minutes</i> | Focus on Issue Statement and identify any related policy – or lack of policy. | Brainstorm and write responses on Flip Chart. Discuss. Reach a consensus. Record consensus in section 8 on large Issue Sheet and on personal Issue Sheets. |
| Getting to know the power holder <i>Approx. 10 minutes</i> | Identify some of the people who have power to make changes. | Make a chart. Power Holders (<i>page 13</i>) Participants are invited to draw pictures or write names of people who can change the situation – use Post It Notes. Discuss each Power Holder and distribute copies of Worksheet 3B (<i>page 13</i>) : give example of Power Holders e.g. “in the case history the park authorities had power to make policies”. Invite participants to respond to points on worksheet. Record consensus in section 9 of large Issue Sheet and on personal Issue Sheets. |
| Explore ways of persuading people to change their minds <i>Approx. 10 minutes</i> | Learn from successful campaigns. | Distribute Case Study “ <i>Working for Change</i> ” (<i>pages 14-15</i>), complete tasks and discuss in small groups. |
| <i>Approx. 10 minutes</i> | Using the Power Holder Chart decide on small number to be targeted. | Cluedo – sentence completion in small groups. We think we should target X and Y because? Return to Chart - Power Holders and mark with a ‘star’ people to be targeted. |
| Strengthen connection between issues, causes, systems and policies. <i>Approx. 10 minutes</i> | Recall and note connections between 1 - 9 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return to Large Issue Sheet and distribute personal Issue Sheets • Complete Section 9 (facilitator and participants) • Facilitator refers briefly to each sections 1-9 focusing on connections. |
| Materials <i>Total Time 60 minutes approx.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large Flip Chart size of Issue Sheet • Personal Issue Sheets • Flip Chart • Marker • Chart - Power Holders | |

Policy - National Active Citizenship Network

Learning Task 4 - Developing our Strategy – Goal: To explore various ways of dealing with the issue and identify the option which is most likely to bring about change

| Task | Learning Activity | Process |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Introduction</p> <p><i>“We know the issue and the cause”</i></p> <p><i>“We know the systems and policies connected with the issue”</i></p> <p><i>“We know the people whom we must try to influence”</i></p> <p><i>“So now we must look at possible solutions”</i></p> | | |
| <p>Identify options</p> <p>Explore options</p> <p>Prioritise options</p> <p><i>Approx. 40 minutes</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify 2 or 3 possible solutions/options • Explore all solutions/options • Prioritise solutions/options. • Record agreed solution/option (section 10) on large Issue Chart and on participants individual Issue Sheets. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorm and record responses on a Flip Chart. • Exploring each option: (<i>page 16</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To follow this option we will need to do (e.g write letters) - This option will require resources (e.g. people to write letters) - What we like about this option:e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ It is something everybody can do. - What we don’t like about this option: e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Letters can be ignored - Participants number options from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ those most likely to succeed ❖ to those least likely to succeed • Record agreed option in section 10 of large Issue Chart and on participants individual Issue Sheets. |
| <p><i>Focus on Progress to date</i></p> <p><i>Approx. 15 minutes</i></p> | <p>Integrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue • Causes • Systems/policies (related) • Power Holders • Solutions | <p>On large Issue Sheet and on personal Issue Sheets complete section 12 Role Play – Prime Time Programme 2 Participants are invited to give a progress report. They use the following headings:</p> <p>“Our issue is”</p> <p>“The problem is caused by”</p> <p>“The related systems and policies are”</p> <p>“The power Holders are”</p> <p>“Our solution is</p> |
| <p>Materials</p> <p><i>Total Time - 55 minutes approx.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flip Chart • Pens • Large Issue Sheet for Flip Chart • Personal Issue Sheets. | |

Policy - National Active Citizenship Network

Learning Task 5 - Our Action Plan - Goal: To complete a plan which identifies; What has to be done?

By whom? When and with What?

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Identify Factors which would contribute to – Success and Failure</p> <p><i>Approx. 15 minutes</i></p> | <p>Review preferred option agreed in previous session in terms of factors which will contribute to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Success b. Failure. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divide into 2 groups and consider 2 questions In order to succeed we must..... We will fail if we do not • List responses Decide which are within our control Decide which are outside our control Decide can we manage those outside our control. |
| <p>Complete Plan of Action for agreed solution.</p> <p>In the previous session we decided to deal with our issue by ----- ----- . Now we must develop our plan of action.</p> <p><i>Approx. 30 minutes</i></p> | <p>Complete each stage of an action plan</p> <p>What must we do (<i>page 17</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What must we do? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Step 1 ❖ Step 2 ❖ Step 3 ❖ Step 4 ➤ Who will do it? ➤ How will it be done? ➤ By when? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorm under each heading using Flip Chart • Record consensus for each stage of Action Plan on Flip Chart. • Record completed Action Plan on large Issue Sheet and on personal Issue Sheets, presented on Flip Chart (<i>page 18</i>) • Record Action Plan on large Issue Sheet and on personal Issue Sheets Section 12. |
| <p>Responsibility and Accountability</p> <p><i>Approx. 10 minutes</i></p> | <p>Develop consensus and commitment regarding Responsibility, Accountability and Monitoring. Facilitator emphasises the importance of persistence in presenting the Issue and of monitoring progress of each step.</p> | <p>Group decides on what, who, when, how and where, regarding the implementation and monitoring of plan.</p> <p>Complete Section 13 on large Issue Sheet and on Personal Issues Sheet.</p> |
| <p>Evaluation</p> <p><i>Approx. 10 minutes</i></p> | <p>Reflect on what was learned.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator and Participants review completed Issue Sheets. • Participants identify some of the skills/knowledge they have learned. |
| <p>Materials</p> <p><i>Total Time - 65 minutes approx.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flip Chart • Markers • Post Its • Model Action Plan • Large Issue Sheet • Personal Issues Sheets • Action Plan Chart. | |

Systems and Our Everyday Lives



A



B



C



D



E



F

Can you match the picture to the words below?

➤ Education System _____

➤ Health System _____

➤ Transport System _____

➤ Postal System _____

➤ Legal System _____

➤ Social Welfare System _____

➤ Banking System _____

➤ Housing System _____

Systems – Some Important Points

- **Systems were created by human beings to put some order in our world.**

Example: Schools were built to ensure that all children could be educated

- **Systems are built on values and beliefs.**

Example: People believed that all children, not just the rich, had a right to education. People valued education as a means of helping children to develop their knowledge, skills and talents.

- **Systems are put into practice as a way of doing things.**

Example: Young children are taught in primary school, teenagers are taught in secondary schools.

- **Systems can be passed on as a way of doing things from one generation to the next.**

Example: To-day's parents have gone to primary schools and secondary schools.

To-day's children also go primary and secondary schools.

- **Systems can change**

Example: It is no longer necessary to pay fees to attend secondary schools.

- **Systems are not perfect.**

Example: Because the school system is free all children can have an education. Large classes mean that all children do not have an equal chance to get a good education.

| | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Education System | Health System |
| Transport System | Postal System |
| Legal System | Social Welfare System |
| Banking System | Housing System |
| Education System | Health System |
| Transport System | Postal System |
| Legal System | Social Welfare System |
| Banking System | Housing System |

Learning Task 3A Working for Policy Change at Local Level - Case History

Policies in Everyday Life

Molly is the mother of two boys. She, her husband John and two children, Jack and Laura have just moved into their new home in Sunshine Valley. Mary is trying to get used to her new environment. On Monday she learned that the Park Authorities have banned all dogs from the park. Owners had allowed the dogs to run wild and three elderly people were knocked down by dogs chasing other dogs. So the park had a policy which stated “Dogs are not allowed in the Park”

When Molly brought her children to the Library she learned that children under 4 years of age could not borrow books from the Library. Laura, the 3 year old, already loves books. She is a quiet child and sits for hours turning the pages carefully. There was a different policy in the last Library to which the family belonged. Molly discovered that the school, in which Sean the 5 year old is very happy, has a policy clearly written on a chart fixed to the school door that says “Parents are asked not to enter the Classroom during school hours except by appointment or to attend home school meetings (parent - teacher meetings)”. When Sean forgot his lunch one day Mary had to leave it in the School Secretary’s office. As the school is large and the Secretary was very busy Molly worried throughout the day that Sean’s lunch might have been forgotten by the Secretary. The school has a healthy eating policy and parents are asked not to provide their children with items such as fizzy drinks, crisps, chocolates or sweets for their lunch. The healthy eating policy encourages fresh fruit, brown bread and cheese.

Laura attends the pre-school for a half day, so Molly thought she would like to volunteer in the local children’s hospital. The Director of Nursing explained that it was the Hospital’s policy to ask all volunteers to get Garda clearance before being accepted as a volunteer. Molly was happy to go to the Garda Station with the clearance form. However, when she went to the Garda Station she was informed that the station had a policy to deal with clearance requests on Fridays only.

In small Groups:

1. Identify the policies referred to the Case History
2. Name 2 or 3 policies which have impacted on your life.
3. Choose a particular policy and identify
 - a) A positive quality
 - b) A negative quality.



Learning Task 3B

Power Holders

(model for copying on to Flip Chart)

1.

Names

A.

B.

C.

D.

E.

F.

1. In pairs name as many Power Holders as you can who have power to do something about our issue.

2. Place a star on the two whom you regard as the most important.



Learning Task 3C - Case Study



Working for Change

Each year since 1999 different groups attending the Killinarden Family Resource Centre participated in the Active Citizenship Workshop. After the 2002 elections, the Killinarden Family Resource Centre Active Citizenship Group, consisting of 15 women, was formed with a view to getting action on two urgent issues:

- Road Safety (two children had been injured and one killed on a particular stretch of road)
- Wheel Chair Access (the lack of this caused considerable distress)

In November 2002, the group met on four occasions to draw up their position on these two issues, using a simple six step process which asked:

- Who are the people affected by this issue and how are they affected?
- Why is it happening? Who gains? Who loses?
- What systems and policies are connected with this problem?
- Who are the Power Holders?
- What would a just and caring society do about this issue?
- What do we want our elected representatives to do about this issue?

In February 2003, a letter was sent to the T.D.s and local representatives for the area. The two position papers were enclosed and a request was made to the County Manager to attend a meeting in March in the Family Resource Centre. In their preparatory work on systems, policies and power holders the group decided that road safety systems and policies on road safety were relevant to their issues. They also found out that responsibility for local roads was that of the County Council. The power holders were the County Councillors and officials. They had responsibility for policies and systems on both issues.

Two of the County Council staff met with three of the Citizenship Group and discussed the problems. During the meeting the group stated what the issue was, who was affected by the issue, how they were affected, the cause of the problem and their position on each issue. They also identified the steps that they wanted the Council to take. The County Council staff explained the policies and systems, which they try to implement. An undertaking was given to pursue both matters within a time frame. Local Authority engineers with two of the Citizenship Group went to the proposed sites for ramps and wheelchair access in order to become more familiar with the problem. Before the end of May, all the work on the wheelchair access (*signs and dishes*) was completed and by mid-June, the road ramps were in place. The group found their engagement with the County Council to be a very positive experience. The County Council officials had studied the position papers. Their courtesy, readiness to listen and openness was matched by the quiet confidence of the women who saw themselves as representing the 1,800 people who use the Killinarden Family Resource Centre. As one of the women said later: “We have seen the 3 Ps in action – **“Prepare, Present, Persist”**”.

Position Paper

The Killinarden Family Resource Centre Ltd.

Issue: Greater Footpath access for wheelchair users.

The people who are affected:

Wheelchair users and family members/carers who accompany them.
In particular wheelchair users who do not have motorised chairs.

They are affected in the following ways:

Because of inadequate access people are housebound, disempowered, stressed, isolated and have a poor quality of life.
Sometimes wheelchair users are obliged to use the roads and so break the law.

Why this is happening:

The needs of people with wheelchairs are not taken into consideration.
They are not consulted and their equality as citizens is not recognised. Their safety is not sufficiently valued.

Winners in the present situation:

- Drivers and able bodied people.

Losers in the present situation:

- Wheelchair users and family members/carers.

Related Systems, Policies and Power Holders

- The systems which are related to these issues are the local traffic systems and road safety systems. Policies on these systems are made by the local authorities. Local councillors and officials are the Power Holders in relation to these issues.

Our Position:

Wheelchair users, as citizens, have a right to be able to move freely and safely.

Steps we want to be taken by local authorities:

- 1. Footpaths to be made wheelchair accessible: e.g.**
 - improve 'dip' in road at Killinarden Park to Bridge
 - ensure that dips on both sides of road correspond (directly opposite each other)
 - create yellow box at exit Killinarden Way to Blessington Road. (Knockmore end).
- 2. Road signs for main routes to indicate wheelchair access points, so that access points are not blocked by drivers.**

Killinarden Family Resource Centre February 2003

| Option | To follow this option we will need to do | We will need these resources. | Option + <i>Positive</i> | Option – <i>Negative</i> |
|---------------|---|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. | | | | |
| 2. | | | | |
| 3. | | | | |
| 4. | | | | |

Complete each section for each option.

Task

Action Plan

Agreed Solution

What must be done:

Step 1

Step 2

Step 3

Step 4

Step

Who will do what has to be done

Who is/are the contact persons

How will the work be done

When will the work start

When will the work be finished



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