How to monitor and promote
policy changes on
governance of tenure

Getting the message across

Text-only version

In this lesson

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of the lesson, learners should be able to:

- understand different objectives for advocacy and communications; and
- identify different target audiences.

INTRODUCTION

All monitoring needs to lead into some form of communication to be used to promote responsible governance on tenure. However, this communication can be broader than advocacy directed at policy-makers.

Policy change is the goal in all cases but **different kinds of communication** for different audiences may lead to this goal, including through capacity building, alliance building, public awareness, as well as targeted communication to policy-makers and within explicit policy development processes.

GROUNDING YOUR MONITORING INITIATIVE INTO A THEORY OF CHANGE

Therefore, it is important to ground your monitoring initiative - and the communications and advocacy component within it - in a **theory of change**.

Situation

To understand what a theory of change is, let's first read about Saif's experience...

We were aware that forced evictions of local populations from forest lands had created a difficult situation, relegating these populations to intolerable living conditions. We knew we could collect data on their situation, but we still had to define how this information could be used to change this existing policy.

How can a theory of change help in this case?

DEFINITION

A theory of change sets out the vision of the change desired from a particular intervention or set of interventions, and the steps that are assumed to be needed to achieve that end result or impact.

In a monitoring initiative, a theory of change is important to define **how the data collected can be used** in order to realize what change is needed and for whom. The steps envisioned for realizing a particular change will also define the communications and advocacy strategy of a particular initiative. In Saif's case as they grounded the monitoring initiative on a theory of change, they were able to define what steps could lead to the desired change, and how to communicate progress towards that end.

THE DIFFERENT COMMUNICATION GOALS OF MONITORING

Understanding the different interests that different audiences may have in the information generated by the monitoring is an initial step in defining the way to maximize the impact of the monitoring. Depending on the audience and on its interests, monitoring initiatives may have different communication goals. For example:

⇒ *create political pressure*

"The intent of our monitoring was to put strong political pressure on government to change the policies on evictions and resettlement..."

⇒ *promote empowerment*

"Thanks to this monitoring initiative, our community was given the opportunity to produce credible information on the conditions of indigenous peoples living on the edge of the forest."
"It was important for the data-gathering process to be inclusive, so as to give voice to marginalized people through our monitoring initiative."

From simply raising public awareness to building alliances and partnerships, there is a wide range of communication goals.

Public awareness	Inclusive monitoring processes that involve diverse stakeholders in the process of formulation, evaluation and validation of data can help **build partnerships amongst various organizations**, including NGOs, community-based organizations, academic institutions, intergovernmental organizations and governments, to raise awareness and create consensus to move towards particular changes on governance of tenure.
Political pressure	Participatory methods of data collection can **give voice to under-represented and non-represented groups**. The goal, in this case, is to provide an opportunity for participants to analyse their situations

	critically, to learn about the policy process and the role they can potentially play in it, and to build confidence and skills in interacting with other stakeholders.
Information for technical policy development	A census tends to take place every ten years, and may not always be the best available and up-to-date source of information, including for government-related tenure programmes. In such cases, expert civil society and research organizations can **provide user-friendly information** through their monitoring initiatives (including through participatory mapping and related GIS and satellite imagery) **to inform the technical aspects for policies**, such as those for resource allocation and use.
Capacity building and empowerment	In some cases, the monitoring initiative can be used to undertake concerted advocacy targeted towards change makers. Such communications can bring about the **political pressure** needed to realize change.
Alliance building	The goal of your monitoring initiative may simply be to **draw attention to a neglected issue**; for example, tenure-related violations faced by particular communities. Then, the communications and advocacy strategy is to present a clear and noticeable message on data gathered from your monitoring initiative, so that it is brought into the public agenda for due consideration by policy-makers.

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

A stakeholder analysis needs to be incorporated into a monitoring initiative to identify the key communications products and strategies of your monitoring initiative. There are different target groups to prioritize while designing your monitoring-related communications. They include:

- ➢ Government and related institutions
- ➢ Corporate sector
- ➢ Researchers
- ➢ Multiple stakeholders
- ➢ General public
- ➢ Media
- ➢ Local communities

A stakeholder analysis

The analysis should identify:

- the chief agent/agents of change;

- the most effective way to deliver the message - directly or indirectly to policy-makers; and

- political openness, freedom of expression, risk assessment for advocacy targeting a particular group of stakeholders.

THE DIFFERENT TARGETS OF MONITORING RELATED COMMUNICATIONS

How to develop your communication to each of these stakeholders

Government and related institutions

Communications targeting government institutions tend to be **concise targeted messages** on specific issues for realizing change in particular policies and governance issues. Over time, a monitoring initiative and/or organization can develop a reputation as a credible data source.

Examples of communications to government and related institutions include evidence-based policy papers and briefs, press releases, videos and visualizations to deliver specific key messages. The monitoring initiative can also develop and maintain publicly available databases or visualizations of data in online form for easy access by policy-makers, who can use this data to inform policy developments.

General public

Communications targeting the general public are usually **attention-grabbing** to direct focus on under-represented issues in order to raise awareness and create political pressure. Over time, the public can return to the data produced by the monitoring initiative as a credible source of information.

Examples include: visualizations, presentations of key statistical information, use of media and advertisements (print, radio, television, internet), and newsletters.

The monitoring initiative can also develop databases or visualizations of data in online form for easy access by all.

Corporate sector

Communications targeting corporations and big business interests are usually **advocacy campaigns** involving messages that are directed to corporations, interested stakeholders and the general public.

An example of such a campaign is **Oxfam's** Behind the Brands campaign that assesses the social and environmental policies of the world's ten largest food and beverage companies and calls on them to take the critical steps to create a just food system. (**www.behindthebrands.org/en-gb**).

Media

Communications targeting media involve the use of mechanisms such as **press releases**, **conferences and advertisements**. The monitoring initiative can also develop and maintain publicly available databases or visualizations of data in online form in order to enable easy access to verifiable and reliable data. This can be used to generate research to inform various media productions.

Researchers

Communications targeted to academic and policy researchers include materials such as **policy briefs**, academic and **research papers**, as well as provisions of access to **databases** and related visualizations of data.

The methodology of the data collection method needs to be clearly outlined, verifiable and credible in order to be utilized by researchers in their own research and recommendations.

Local communities

Communications for a monitoring initiative that is intended to empower the community by giving voice and a sense of ownership over their own data tend to be **inclusive processes**. Communication products should be easily and publicly available and can also be used by local communities to aid their own advocacy activities.

Examples of such communications include leaflets, advertisements, participatory maps and, even, word of mouth.

Multiple stakeholders

Communications can be targeted to generate consensus to develop political pressure for change through multi-stakeholder partnerships and dialogues with development partners, other civil society organizations, intergovernmental organizations and other groups. This kind of communication can take

the form of **various inclusive processes for data gathering**, **evaluation and validation**. Such participatory methodologies may be useful for alliance building and concerted advocacy.

Example: The situation we considered at the beginning of the lesson

Saif and his organization have a clear vision of the change desired from their monitoring initiative: They intend to provide a spotlight on the situation faced by rural and forest-dweller communities in order to indirectly and directly influence policy-makers. They aim to show the costs of eviction and want to advocate for their tenure recognition.

They are going to target their communication to policy-makers and to the general public. Saif has to choose how to communicate to his targeted stakeholders to achieve this goal.

What communications should Saif use for awareness raising to the general public?

He should use a short video documentary of a case or particular cases of forced evictions, with key messages and/or statistical information can be a powerful tool to communicate change, provided that the information is easily accessible and disseminated through various media to the general public.

Examples

The background

Maricel works for an NGO promoting legal recognition of subsistence fisherfolk to guarantee their access to fishing in local waters, as defined in the Fisheries Code. Because the post-disaster reconstruction policies failed to account for the resource use and access rights of fisherfolk adequately, her organization has plans to develop a monitoring initiative to address this issue.

In the previous lesson, we saw that Maricel and her colleague Kamal had completed their monitoring operations. Now, their organization needs to communicate those monitoring findings and outcomes to request government support of fisherfolks' tenure rights.

What is the most effective communication strategy for their monitoring?

Maricel and Kamal know that their communications are mainly directed to national government to bring about the political pressure needed to realize change in the conditions of fisherfolk, but they would like to involve the general public, as well.

"This will provide us with the opportunity to reach different targets such as policy-makers,

to put pressure on them, and the general public, to raise awareness about the violation of the tenure rights of fisherfolk following the recent natural disaster"—Maricel

"Our key message will be disseminated through media publications and channels. We will do this by organizing a press conference open to a wide range of media where we will present the most relevant data of our monitoring."—Kemal

"Then, we will have to diversify our messages on the basis of the target audience. For awareness raising of the general public, we could produce a short video documentary on the difficult living conditions of local fisherfolk following the natural disaster. "—Maricel

"A video containing a series of key messages and/or statistical information can be a powerful tool to communicate change, provided the information is accurate, well-edited and disseminated through various media to the general public."—Kemal

"To target policy-makers, we need to consider that a political window of opportunity to affect change is provided by international conventions and agreements. We can refer to the Voluntary Guidelines on Tenure Rights, as our government has ratified them. On the basis of data collected in our monitoring, we could develop a report on adherence to the Guidelines in our country for local populations and, in particular, for fisherfolk."--Maricel

"Through our report we will be able to draw attention to this particular issue and to promote government commitment to the goal being monitored. So, now we need to think about how to produce the report and the video, and how to organize the press conference."—Kemal

"The production of a professional video and the organization of a press conference will require technical competencies and associated costs. Let's go and talk with our organization about our plans."--Maricel

SUMMARY

A theory of change determines the vision of the change desired by a particular intervention or set of interventions, and helps set out the steps that are needed to achieve the end result or impact.

Although policy change may be broadly the goal in all cases, different kinds of communication to different kinds of audiences may lead to this goal. Communications may be aimed at creating political pressure or public awareness. They can promote empowerment and alliance building, or they can provide information for technical policy development.

In addition to different goals, different types of stakeholders should be considered while defining the priority target groups of monitoring-related communications. Communications may target government, the general public, the corporate sector, media, researchers, local communities and interested stakeholders.

More direct results are likely when relevant stakeholders, such as the government and the private sector, are committed to the norms or goals being monitored, and have a stake in the monitoring process.