

ACTIVITY 7:

Who are 'we' and what do we bring?

Here, we take stock of who 'we' are – as individual activists and as collectives – where we are positioned in the wider ecosystem of actors, and what our contribution might be.

Materials: Flip chart paper, markers, dot stickers or the virtual equivalent

Step 1: Locating ourselves and our organisations

Plenary: Introduce the purpose and process.

First, invite personal reflection. Ask:

- What motivates you to be involved in efforts for social change in your context?
- What kind of social change work do you participate in individually and with what kind of group or organisation are you active? (There may be more than one.)

Together, list the kinds of groups and organisations represented in the room. Note the categories on a flip chart.

Next, ask people to identify others that are not represented here. Use the list below, and add others, to expand the range of actors that might be involved in a wider movement ecosystem.

- Movement
- Informal association
- Alliance or collaborative
- Local service NGO
- Research group
- National advocacy NGO or non-profit
- Legal or policy support group
- Campaign
- Media group
- International NGO
- Funder
- Grassroots group
- Movement support
- Other (specify)

Give each person three dot stickers and ask them to place these stickers next to the names of groups or organisations that they are most active in or connected to. Look at the results together and reflect:

- Where is our activism and change work located?
- Are there types of groups or organisations that we don't have much connection with? Why or why not?
- What, if anything, do we miss by not having those relationships in our change work?

Small groups: Clustered according to the categories of groups or organisations represented, discuss the questions together. Write your individual or collective responses on six different colours of sticky notes or coloured cards, two for each question:

1. When you consider your group or organisation, what individual words describe what you stand for?
2. What characteristics distinguish your group or organisation? Examples might be area of focus, staffing, membership, level of commitment to struggle, location/ scope of operations (community/local, national, international), leadership and accountability structures, funding sources, etc. Name three.
3. What are the key contributions and strengths that you offer within a wider movement ecosystem, in terms of capacities, connections, reputation, or other resources? Name three.

Plenary: Place three flip charts on the wall, one for each of the questions. Each group presents and places their cards on the flip chart. Compare and review them. Then ask:

- What does this tell us about the diversity of groups that make up (or that contribute to) a successful social movement?
- What kinds of strengths or contributions do we bring to the wider movement ecosystem?
- What gaps are we filling, or could we fill?
- What are some of the bridges and connections we might want to strengthen to increase our capacity and build our social change infrastructure?

Draw out commonalities and differences. Ask:

- What might these imply for our contributions to movement building, individually and in the groups we belong to?
- What changes might be needed in our roles, strengths, and contributions?

Step 2: Where are we situated in the broader movement ecosystem?

Small groups: To identify other actors in this ecosystem, discuss:

- Who are your allies and friends? How closely do you work with them?
- Who is in your inner circle?
- Who are the other players or communities whose work and activism are adjacent, similar, or aligned to yours?
- How do they see you?

Pick three key insights and someone to report back.

Plenary: Each group shares their three key insights. Point out and discuss any significant differences or disagreements. Ask:

- What new or strengthened relationships would deepen and expand your impact and community? What connections would help strengthen movement power?
- What challenges arise between NGOs and other formations such as movements?

How do, or could you, deal with them? (Refer to the quotation at the start of this Theme.)

- What can your group, organisation, or movement do to be a better colleague and ally?
- How do others in the ecosystem view you? What do they say about you? What might this mean for movement building and strategy?
- What might this mean to your ability to build relations and power? What challenges do these reflections highlight for you and your organisation?
- Have you any new insights about movements, relating your own experience to our activities on visioning and pathways?