

ACTIVITY 10:

Inside–outside strategies

Materials: Handout – either Xinka indigenous people’s inside–outside strategies or COPINH: Guardians of the River in Honduras.

Plenary: Moving an agenda forward often demands a combination of engagement with formal decision-making and pressure created by mass mobilisation and other forms of resistance and protest. Referred to as inside-outside or ‘sandwich strategies’¹⁸, they demand careful coordination and planning between different types of organisations and leaders with different orientations and capacities.

Invite people to reflect on their experience with advocacy. Ask:

- What does it take to be heard and get to the table of decision-making or have your demands considered? And – more specifically:
- What kinds of actions and steps were essential, in order to be taken seriously by decision makers?
- What skills, resources, and alliances did that take?
- What were some of the biggest challenges?
- What tensions existed between groups working inside the halls of power and groups mobilising outside? What are some of the ways to overcome them?

Small groups: Read the case study and discuss:

- What do you learn about visible power and engagement strategies from this example?
- What are the main distinctions between the legal strategies and the mobilisation strategies? How are they interdependent?
- What are the limitations and success factors involved?
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Plenary: Groups share their insights from the short case. Points to note:

- The importance of gaining formal recognition of rights as leverage and the limits of those rights when power is intent on its agenda.
- The mix of alliances – including outside expertise in service to the community – as a critical dimension of defending rights in the visible arena.
- Political organising and a shared sense of identity and history as the foundation for a long-term strategy and mobilising and sustaining a struggle that has many layers.
- Gathering information and analysis as a strategy for organising and leadership development for the community, not only the domain of outside professionals.
- The recognition over time and through conversation of political differences, unique roles, and interdependence between groups that focus on lobbying inside the halls of power and those that mobilise outside.

Draw from your own experience to emphasise the importance of aligning inside and outside strategies.

¹ For an explanation of ‘sandwich strategies’ see Jonathan Fox and the Accountability Research Centre.