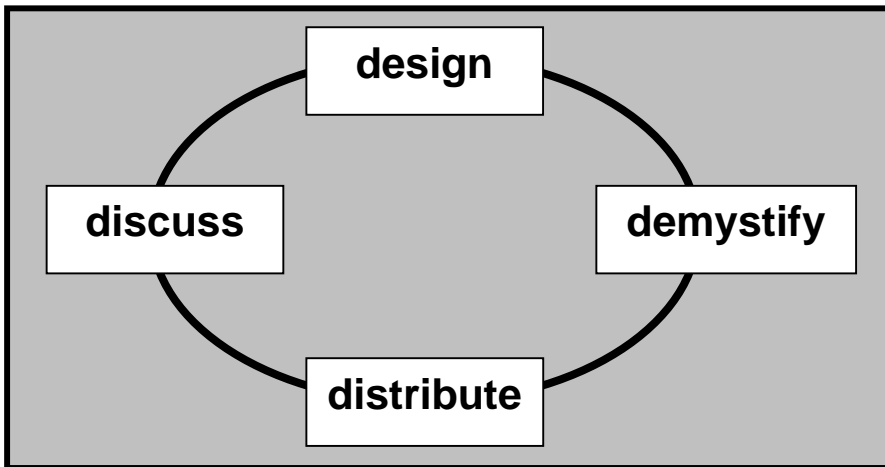


Popularising Policy – the 4D cycle approach

Source: Hakikazi Catalyst (August 2002) www.hakikazi.org



The feedback process means that *local developments* help to *design national policy*.

Design the Policy

- A nation-wide consultation process is organised. It asks a broad and representative range of individuals and groups to reflect on experience and prioritise their claims, concerns and issues.
- Using statistics, research findings and the results of the consultations a technical committee draws up an evidence-based policy document which includes specific *targets* with *activities* and *indicators* that can be used for monitoring.

Demystify the Policy

- Official policy documents are written to please many different interest groups and the ideas are often justified by statistics. In their original form they are therefore often thick and difficult for ordinary people to understand.
- The policy documents are translated into plain language and presented attractively so that ordinary people can understand them and therefore discuss them in an informed and meaningful way.

Distribute the Policy

- The goal is to make plain language information about the policies available to as many people as possible. They cannot participate if they do not know.
- The messages can be written but they can also be spoken, sung and/or acted either live or on radio and television. It is also true that a good picture (cartoon) is worth a thousand words.
- Ways are found to make sure that the information reaches all people in all parts of the country. Materials are channelled through existing organisations which have many branch offices.

Discuss the Policy

- Local level discussion groups are formed when the policy first appears so that the *local implications* can be worked out and *action plans* can be designed. (Putting flesh on the bones)
- Information, training and support are supplied to groups that need it.
- The local level discussion groups meet regularly to review progress on the action plans and to make changes where necessary. (Monitoring and evaluation)
- Where it seems useful records of discussions are used as feedback to the appropriate central policy makers who are easy to identify.
- This is how ordinary people help to develop policy at local and national levels.

Popularising Policy – focus on practicality

Source: www.hakikazi.org August 2002

It is easy for workshops to become too theoretical and thus not to lead to ‘actionable’ outcomes. One way to help prevent this is to consciously focus all sessions on two aspects of the change process:

| | Theoretical and professional aspects | Practical and organisational aspects |
|---|---|---|
| | Doing the right thing | Doing it right |
| | What, why and who? | When, where and how? |
| | The big picture | The costed action plan |
| | Mission and Strategy | Tactics and Operations |
| Design | | |
| Demystify | | |
| Distribute | | |
| Discuss | | |
| Action Research | | |
| Social Mobilisation | | |
| Creative Communication | | |
| Writing for Change | | |
| Advocacy and Inquiry | | |
| Controlling media & audience | | |

It is not enough to have good intentions. Effective social mobilisers must also be able to

1. systematically think through the practical details (including what resources (people, things and funds) they will need and where they are likely to get them)
2. draw up fundable project plans (action plan and business plan)
3. implement, monitor and manage the projects in a participatory and empowering manner.

Each workshop session should bear these practicalities in mind. If they are not covered in the initial presentation, they should be a topic of discussion so that we can draw up useful checklists of ‘practical things to think about’.

Popularising Policy – a multi-stakeholder process?

There are many stakeholders in Tanzania’s poverty reduction policy, plans, actions and evaluations. All stakeholders can have their concerns addressed in the present system of **representative democracy** (ie through their MP): but many people see a growing need for **more participatory forms of democracy**. These should allow for a free and fair exchange of views between all those with a stake in any particular issue. The phrase Multi-stakeholder Processes (MSP) has been invented as a label for this new way of doing things.

Stakeholders are those who have an interest in a particular decision, either as individuals or representatives of a group. This includes people who influence

The following table lists the main stakeholders in Tanzania’s poverty reduction strategy. Those with the biggest stake are the most poverty stricken but how much ‘voice’ do they have in designing the policies which affect their lives?

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Public sector | Elected Representatives Cabinet Ministers Party Officials Civil Servants at various levels (especially those in departments directly connected with the PRSP) Bilateral and Multilateral donors and lenders |
| Private Sector | Research and Consultancy Institutions Banks and financial institutions Small, medium and large enterprises Transnational corporations |
| Community Sector | Communities of place and/or interest (including faith based groups, trade unions etc)) Single issue advocacy and lobbying groups Formal and informal groups, networks and coalitions Local, national and international CSO/CBO/NGOs People living in poverty |

It is obviously impractical to have all stakeholders involved in every policy activity but it is possible to have more stakeholders involved (or represented?) than is common at present. It is generally believed that policies are more likely to be popular and implementable if those who are affected by them have a hand in designing them.

Participation breeds ownership, commitment and popularity

Representative validity is an important issue in participatory democracy. Who has authority to speak on behalf of whom? The importance of this issue, however, is less in multi-stakeholder processes where participants have **a voice rather than a vote**. The underlying thinking is that the most implementable policies are those which come from consensus based on free and fair discussion (where everybody wins) rather than from a majority vote system where ‘we win, you lose’.

The idea is to have discussions rather than debates. In a discussion you investigate any issue from as many perspectives as possible and work out solutions which are for the greatest good of the greatest number of people. In a debate you tend to see issues in terms of simple black and white and you want to be the winner who takes all rather than the loser who gets nothing.

Debate leads to win/lose

Discussion leads to win/win

Democracy begins with conversation. (John Dewey)

Article inspired by: Minu Hemmati (2002)
Multistakeholder processes for governance and sustainability – beyond deadlock and conflict:
<http://www.earthsummit2000.org/msp>