1. CLASP Principles

"Who do you represent, how many are you, and how do I know that you tell the truth – or are you just voicing your own personal ideas?"

Mr Pascal Lamy
(DG Trade High Commissioner 2003, Cancun WTO)

1.1 Theoretical background

The first question with respect to Principles in general is: *why do we need principles for Mobilising Support?*

Mobilising Support is about influencing the behaviour of representatives in government, business or civil society organizations – with decision-making power. If they take decisions, these decisions have an impact on larger groups or society as a whole. If you influence these decisions, you become co-responsible to a certain extent.

Decision makers – on the other hand – require reliable information. Most decision-makers apply a set of principles – consciously or unconsciously – in order to define if they have to take the person or organisation seriously.

The questions that have to be answered by these principles for both, you as support-mobilisers and policy influencers, and your targeted decision-makers from government, private sector or civil society organisations and beneficiaries, are:
- Why would people trust you?
- Who or what gives you the right to interfere?
- How can you be transparent towards decision-makers, back donors, constituency, and beneficiaries alike? (upward and downward accountability)
- How are you being helpful, and do you focus on win-win solutions?
- What is your power base and how do you use it?

The answers to these questions are translated into five Principles, abbreviated in the acronym CLASP that stands for:

C   = Credibility
L   = Legitimacy
A   = Accountability
S   = Service - orientedness
P   = Power based

In this chapter we will look at *what it is* and *how we can prove* to be CLASP-proof in our mobilising support actions.

1.2 Credibility: why would people trust you?

Credibility refers to the *objective* and *subjective* components of the believability of a source or message, also referred to as *evidence-based advocacy.* Credibility is about trustworthiness of your organisation in other people's eyes and may relate to the information and data you use. It has become an important topic since the mid-1990s, as internet has increasingly become an information resource though which not all information is reliable. You can distinguish two key components:

1. *Trustworthiness* is based more on subjective factors, but can include objective measurements such as established reliability.
2. *Expertise* can be similarly subjectively perceived, but also includes relatively objective characteristics of the source or message (e.g. credentials, certification or information quality).

Secondary components of credibility include *source dynamism* (*charisma*) and *physical attractiveness*. (see also Power in CLASP)

You can increase your credibility by doing proper *fact finding and research on the issue.* In addition, you as a person believing in your message (based on facts and conviction) while bringing the message across is an important component of your credibility.

Indicators of Credibility (how do you do it?)
• Constituency participation in fact finding and research;
• Create availability of data on your constituency;
• Provide evidence and fact finding in a scientific way;
• Do research on policy and effects on your constituency;
• Budgeting for Credibility.

1.3 Legitimacy: who or what gives you the right to interfere?

Legitimacy in political science
The general definition of legitimacy is the popular acceptance of a governing regime or law as an authority. Legitimacy is used when describing a <u>system</u> *of government, private sector and society* itself.

An organisation or an intervention acquires *legitimacy* when it gets a certain form of approval. Issues of legitimacy are linked to those of consent (the provision of approval or assent, particularly and especially after thoughtful consideration). For example, an institution is perceived as legitimate, if approval for that institution is general among those people subject to its authority.

Legitimacy is considered a basic condition for rule, arguing that without at least a *minimal amount* of legitimacy, a government will lead to frequent deadlocks or collapse in the long run. In other words the government is not legitimate unless it is carried on with the *consent of the governed*.

Legitimate policy influencing seeks to *change the behaviour of stakeholders which are* in you sphere of influence, meaning stakeholders using representativeness, mandate or consent of at least a significant group of citizens.

In policy influencing *legitimacy* looks at how legitimate or representative you are or your organisation is in taking a certain position. It also looks at if and how you have involved the people on behalf of whom you – are allowed to – speak. Governments and the commercial sector increasingly pay attention to the legitimacy of lobbyists and campaigners.

In order for your organisation to be legitimate, you should set up the policy influencing process in such a way that it is done:

- **By** the beneficiaries and marginalized groups;
- **With** the beneficiaries and marginalized groups;
- **For** the beneficiaries and marginalized groups, guaranteeing previous involvement in defining the policy position, and giving feed-back on the achieved results.

This means involving beneficiaries from the start of the process (the planning). We would recommend that beneficiaries are throughout your intervention increasingly made responsible for (parts of) the mobilising support/policy influencing process.

Indicators of Legitimacy (how do you do it?)

- Involvement of your constituency (in planning and implementation, but also in monitoring and evaluation);
- Involvement of beneficiaries (in planning and implementation, but also in monitoring and evaluation);
- Joint positioning;
- Meetings for preparation and feed-back (could be referred to as awareness-raising);
- Budgeting for legitimacy.

1.4 Accountability: how can you be transparent towards stakeholders?

Accountability is a concept in ethics and governance with several meanings. It is often used as a synonym for concepts as responsibility, transparency, answerability, blameworthiness, liability, and other terms associated with expectations of account-giving. It is thus the way you *prove* to all stakeholders that you are reliable as an organization or a person. This proof must be made accessible to your stakeholders.

As an aspect of *governance,* accountability has been central to discussions related to problems in the public sector, non-profit and private (corporate) worlds.

In *leadership* roles, it stands for the personal acknowledgment and assumption of responsibility for actions and its resulting consequences. This covers products, decisions, and policies including the administration, governance, and implementation within the scope of the role encompassing the obligation to report.

In general people distinguish between backward and forward accountability:

o **Backward accountability** takes into account the consultation and involvement of your constituency, beneficiaries, members and board or alliance. In order to realize that you will have to organize meetings at different levels, in order to get a mandate, prepare policy influencing positions and feedback on results of interventions.

o **Forward accountability** is about being transparent about your constituency, board, relations with other stakeholders outside your organization, network or alliance, thus outside your direct control, such as your political targets or donors. This accountability reaches also to those persons and organizations that you seek to influence to change their behaviour. It has to be supported by publishing verifiable data, obtaining objective certification, transparency on membership and budgets and spending, accessible for the world outside your organization or network. A way to achieve this is to provide to all in an open access space (e.g. website):

- – facts & figures
- – reports and research
- – financial data and audit reports

Indicators of Accountability (how do you do it?)
- your credibility can be proven by public statements that can be supported by verifiable data, fact sheets and research reports;
- your legitimacy can be proven by information on beneficiaries, constituencies and boards;
- involvement of beneficiaries can be proven by related activities which are public;
- your financial data are public, sound and transparent;
- you are budgeting for accountability.

1.5   Service orientedness

Service orientedness is more than just delivering a service, it is also your attitude when you plan and undertake mobilising support activities , representing your beneficiaries. On the one hand, Service Orientedness is about you taking up the role of a leader. On the other hand, it also has to do with your attitude towards your political targets, an attitude of respect of their personal integrity and geared at fulfilling (part of) their needs.

Service orientedness therefore finds its origin in theories on *servant leadership* in which the leader has a serving attitude in serving its followers for the sake of a 'greater good'.

> *"The servant leader is servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. (S)he is sharply different from the person who is leader first... The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served."* (Greenleaf, 1970)

When *providing services* towards all stakeholders involved – beneficiaries, volunteers, constituencies, political targets, companies, donor community etc. it is crucial that you do not disappoint them, simply by following some rules of politeness. These are culturally sensitive and can differ between countries or even regions within countries, social classes, or social groups, age and gender.

In general, it means at least that you show that you 'do as you promise'. That your information and research contains the added value that you promised – you should neither exaggerate, nor make yourself smaller than you are. Be careful to provide your promised products on time, so that your contacts can still do something with the information. Otherwise they will ignore it, and your reputation is damaged.

Indicators of service orientedness (how do you do it?)
Attitude indicators:
- Serve your constituency, beneficiaries or citizens you represent;
- Do not treat your targets as your enemies;
- Leave your pride at home – be a servant leader;

Performance indicators:
- "Do as you promise": deliver promised facts, details, information, reports, and answers to questions that are *relevant* to your constituency and political targets;
- Make your deliverables of *high quality;*
- Deliver the information *in time¸* so that your beneficiaries can still respond, and your political targets are able to reflect and use the information.

1.6   Power based

"Power can be defined as the ability to achieve a purpose: whether it is good or bad depends on how you deal with the powers you have."
Martin Luther King

Power is an integral part of life, yet power turns out to be a difficult topic to address and to work with. Power is at play in relations between people, between organisations, in friendships and relations, in marriage, in networks and alliances, in political parties – and certainly, power dimensions are all around in the dynamics of politics.

Power can seem especially monolithic and impenetrable for people who have lived under regimes that deny or repress citizen participation. Our experience has shown that people engaging in politics for the first time, and even more seasoned activists, often see power as sinister and unchanging. Such a one dimensional perspective can paralyze effective analysis and action.
In reality, power is both dynamic and multidimensional, changing according to context, circumstance and interest. Its expressions and forms can range from domination and resistance to collaboration and transformation.

However, programs promoting policy influencing too rarely incorporate an understanding of underlying power relationships and interests despite the importance that analysts place on these dynamics. *The failure to deal with the complexities of power can lead to missed opportunities and poor strategic choices*. Worse, it can be risky and counterproductive not only for advocates, but also for donors and others promoting development and democracy. Experts and practitioners in the fields of conflict resolution and democracy-building increasingly stress the importance of incorporating power into their analysis and actions.

Demystifying and revealing the many faces of power will give you the chance to *deal with power* in a conscious and responsible way. We look at power as an individual, collective, and political force that can either undermine or empower citizens and their organizations. It is a force that alternatively can facilitate, hasten, or halt the process of change promoted through policy influencing.

Power-based means that you have to prove how strongyou are, how many people you represent and how confident you are with regards to your policy influencing issue. It is helpful to analyse power by looking at 4 levels of power (based on Gandhi's teachings):

Power Over The most commonly recognized form of power, *power over,* has many negative associations for people, such as repression, force, coercion, discrimination, corruption, and abuse. Power in this sense, is seen as a win-lose kind of relationship. Having power involves taking it from someone else, and then using it to dominate and prevent others from gaining it. In politics, those who control resources and decision-making have *power over* those without (the powerless).
When people are denied access to important resources like land, healthcare, and jobs *power over* perpetuates inequality, injustice, and poverty. In the absence of alternative models and relationships, people repeat the *power over* pattern in their personal relationships, communities, and institutions. This is also true of people who come from a marginalized or "powerless" group. When they gain power in leadership positions, they sometimes "imitate the oppressor." For this reason, advocates cannot expect that the experience of being excluded prepares people to become democratic leaders. New forms

of leadership and decision-making must be explicitly defined, taught, and rewarded in order to promote more democratic forms of power. Practitioners and academics have searched for more collaborative ways of exercising and using power.

Simultaneously, we see and express power over in our daily life within accepted hierarchical relationships and without negative association. For example, the CEO has power over his staff by deciding about their salary, but also parents have power over their children by setting their curfew. Everybody has power over in certain settings or hierarchies.

There are three alternatives to the power over: the *power with; the power to;* and the *power within;* these alternatives offer positive ways of using power in a creative and effective way to empower groups, and build stronger relationships, and reach changes:

Power with: refers to finding common ground among different interests and building collective strength. Based on mutual support, solidarity, and collaboration, *power with* multiplies individual talents and knowledge. *Power with* can help build bridges across different interests to transform or reduce social conflict and promote equitable relations. Advocacy groups seek allies and build coalitions drawing on the notion of *power with.*

Power to: refers to the unique potential of every person to shape his or her life and world. When based on mutual support, it opens up the possibilities of joint action, or *power with*. Citizen education and leadership development for policy influencing are based on the belief that each individual has the *power to* make a difference.

Power within: refers to a person's sense of self-awareness and self-knowledge. It includes an ability to recognize individual differences while respecting others. *Power within* is the capacity to imagine and have hope. It affirms the common human search for dignity and fulfilment.

Indicators for Power based PI (how do you do it?)
- *Power over*: – the position you have in society, an organisation or in politics (most commonly referred to as the only power base). Increase and maintain the image of your organisation and its relation with its constituency and beneficiaries / citizens;
- *Power with*: – your beneficiaries and allies (together in joined and concerted action is stronger than doing all by yourself). Participate in or collaborate with networks and alliances on your PI issues;
- *Power to*: – your knowledge on the policy topic (increasingly shared conviction). Develop evidence based research with beneficiary involvement.
- *Power within*: – your attitude, reliability and self-confidence (sincerity) (be aware that you can hardly fool people – they can feel it and will treat you similarly). Have a servant leadership style of working as a networker and as a policy influencer
- Budgeting for preparing and strengthening your power base (e.g. costs for networking and alliance building, communication and transparency on websites, research etc).

Recapitulation

CLASP principles are not only ethical principles for mobilising support/policy influencing. They are practical tools that make your policy interventions more effective and

sustainable. It is also the final check of all your PI activities in planning, delivering, monitoring and evaluation.

TIPS for practical application and facilitation

Looking at the different cases, it becomes clear that most organisations use some CLASP principles *implicitly* (unconsciously capable or incapable)*.* This brief helps you to become *aware* which principles you use, so that you can use them *explicitly* (consciously capa*ble)* and which you still have to work on*.* By analysing your ways of working based on CLASP you will improve the quality of your mobilising support/policy influencing effectiveness immediately.

Using the principles of CLASP in **all the planning and in all steps of your action** will make you well prepared in most situations. CLASP must be part of your preparation when you get ready for for a lobby conversation, media exposure or expert meeting in the outside world. Opponents always try to tackle you on a weak point, so be prepared.

Budgeting for CLASP principles may also be important for an effective and CLASP-based mobilising support/policy influencing action. Lots of times organisations simply forget to budget for all the aspects to support CLASP-based policy influencing.