

In Whose Name, and to What Effect? Accountability and Impact in Advocacy

**Duncan Green
Pushing Boundaries in
Advocacy for Inclusion conference
January 2020**

How does Oxfam do Advocacy?

- **Insider**
 - **Lobbying**
 - **Research & ‘killer facts’**
- **Outsider**
 - **online; media; celebrities;**
- **Critical Junctures**
 - **Global Financial Crisis, Climate Events**
- **Alliances**
 - **Climate Action Network, Fight Inequality Alliance**



Hang on, isn't that all a bit 20th C?

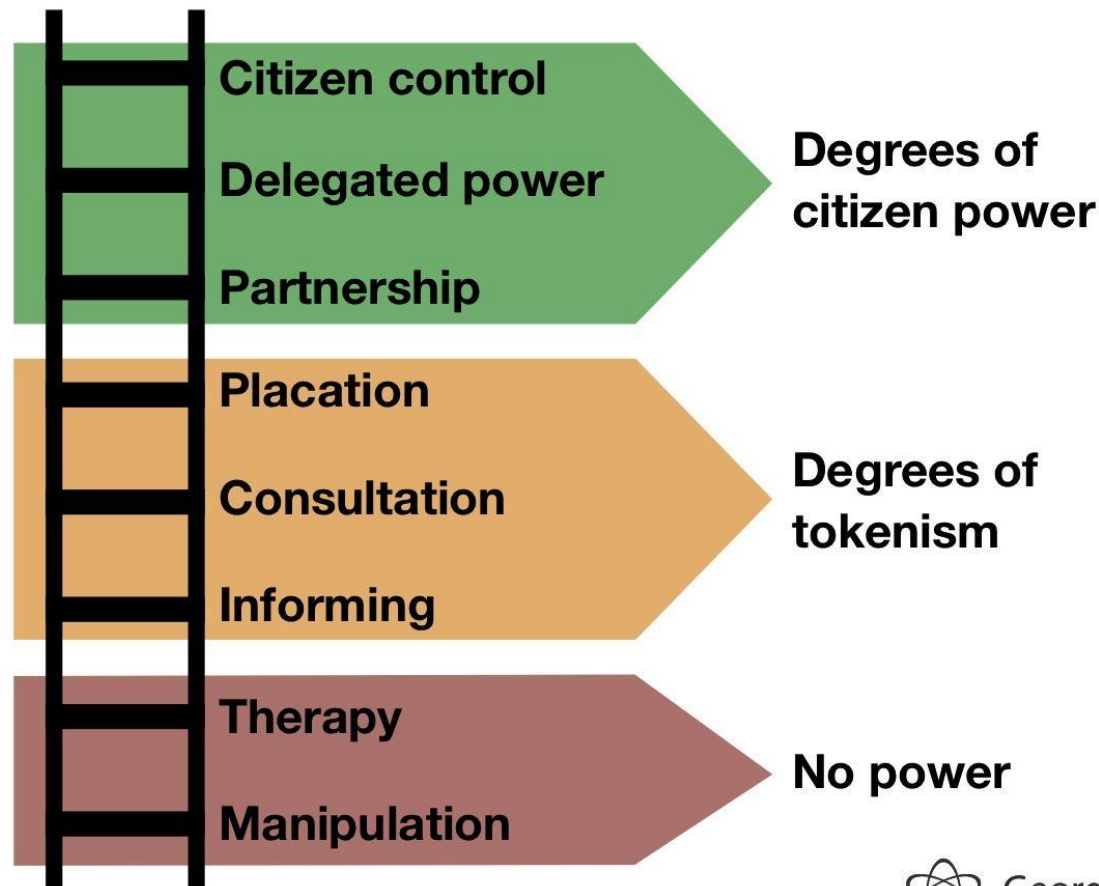
- **Who Elected Oxfam?**
- **Are we doing Advocacy**
 - **For**
 - **With or**
 - **By**
- **Each option has strengths and weaknesses**

‘Advocacy For’: Make Poverty History: Yours is the Generation?



'Advocacy With': sure, but who chooses, beware monoculture, + who's in charge?

Arnstein (1969) Ladder of citizen participation



‘Advocacy By’: OK but it’s hard + downsides

- **What happens when things go wrong?**
- **What if power lies outside the country?**
- **An example on Comms: #PowerShifts**
 - **Takes time and money**
 - **And accepting different ways of working (eg longer posts!)**
- **Slow progress on Research:**
 - **Not just racists, but systemic resistance: Why do white US researchers get more grant funding than black ones? (Akosua Adomako Ampofo)**

Some thoughts on Research for Impact



YEAH, RIGHT.....

8 Headlines from a recent Oxfam paper

- Using Evidence to Influence Policy: Oxfam's Experience
 - **Don't write a paper and then ask 'right, who do I send it to?'**
 - **Critical Junctures**
 - **Relationships**
 - **Research to fit stage of policy funnel**
 - **Power and context analysis => design**
 - **Targets and messengers**
 - **Big foundational piece; smaller follow ups**
 - **Wide range of comms tools**
 - **From World Bank [blog summary](#)**

How to engage targets?

- **BEFORE the research is published**
 - **Governance**
 - **Interviews and consultation**
 - **Review drafts**
- **Be accessible, adapt to their timetables; build relationships before you need them**
- **Who do they respect/listen to? Research partners and messengers as important as message**

How not to engage targets

- **Show off your knowledge**
- **Say/imply ‘everything is incredibly complex and context specific, so I spit on you and your generalizations’**
- **Treat all practitioners as idiots, thieves or both**
- **Reflex ‘Needs more Research’ tropes**

But there are trade offs

- **Pitfalls of ‘research for advocacy’**
- **What if you get the wrong answer?!**
- **Independence/credibility v taking sides**
- **Academic incentives v plain English**
- **Hostages to fortune**
 - **So go as far as is comfortable, and identify allies to take it from there**

And (back to inclusion) Decolonizing Academia has barely even started



Any Questions?

