

## On-site Workshop/Cluster Meeting Prague, CZ: ‘Agents of Change’ 3rd – 4th December 2015

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### **This paper ...**

... provides an overview of work done at the European Commission sponsored workshop meeting held in Prague and hosted by People in Need, CZ.

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### **Purpose, participants and programme of the workshop**

The workshop brought together 18 staff members and 4 participants from five EC co-funded DEAR projects, together with a European Commission DEAR sector Task Manager. The meeting, which was run as a workshop, considered:

- project experiences of engaging (potential) agents of change/multipliers in DEAR projects;
- assessment approaches to find out what change agents /multipliers do as a result of their engagement.

On the basis of that consideration the workshop then drew out

- recommendations that might be useful for DEAR projects in general.

Projects represented at the workshop meeting were invited because their work closely related to the intentions of the workshop, i.e. projects concerned with engaging people so they become change agents/multipliers for DEAR:

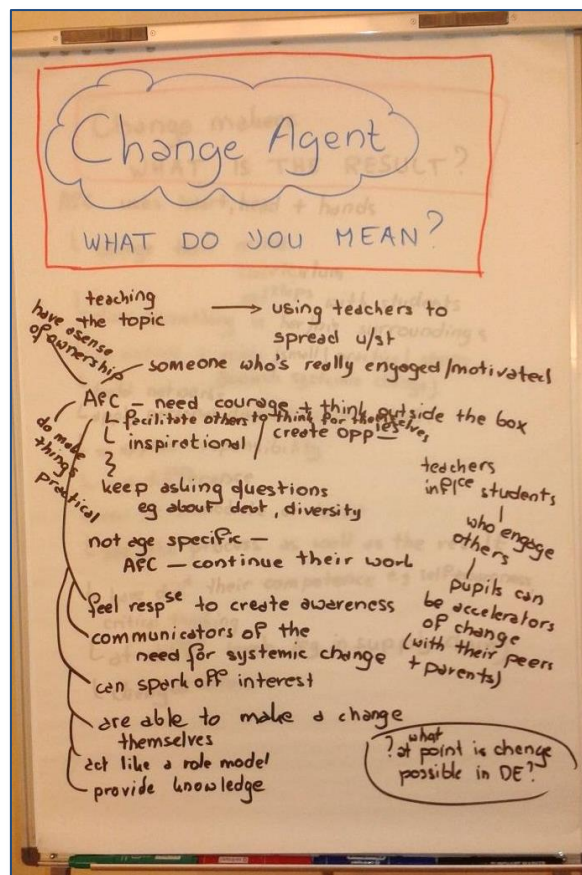
- Teachers: Agents of Change: a project managed by People in Need (CZ) and also involving Institute of Global Responsibility - IGO (PL), Liverpool One World Centre (UK) and World University Service (AT)
- Creating Change Agents in the European Garment Industry: managed by the Fair Wear Foundation (NL) and involving four EU partner organisations
- Teach Global Ambassadors: a project managed by the International Development Education Association of Scotland (UK) and also involving one partner organisation elsewhere in the EU
- Global Fairness – schools as agents for change: managed by BGZ Berliner Gesellschaft für international Zusammenarbeit (DE) and involving nine EU partners
- Trinet Global: a project managed by Berlin City (DE) and involving ten EU partners

#### OUTLINE PROGRAMME

1. Introduction to the represented projects outlining the *intended audiences/participants* and the *change* worked towards by each project;
2. *Developing questions* that can be asked of DEAR projects:
  - a. to find out about *processes* used in developing change agents/multipliers,
  - b. to find out about *what change agents/multipliers do* as a result of participating in the project;
3. *Application of selected questions* to the five projects represented at the On-site Cluster Meeting;
4. Drawing conclusions from investigations to establish '*what works*' and what might be recommended as *general principles* to bear in mind by DEAR projects.

#### 1. Change agents: what do we mean and what do they do?

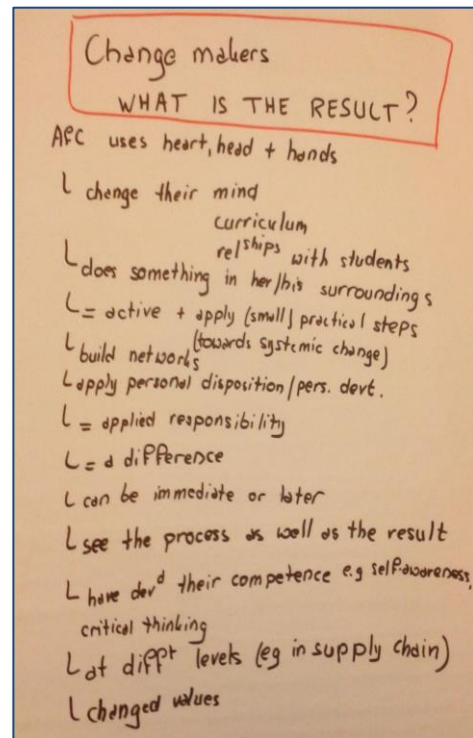
Given the key issue to be explored at the workshop, participants were asked to suggest what they understood by the term 'change agents'. The following suggestions were noted:



Discussion highlighted that change agents/multipliers are particularly able to engage others, able to spark off interest in something/are inspirational, are highly engaged with and motivated about the issues and approaches, and use their hands, heart and head in doing their work.

As a result of engagement in a DEAR project change agents/multipliers:

- do something in their own surroundings:
  - taking (small) practical steps that assist in creating systemic change;
- are able to change
  - their mind,
  - (aspects of the school) curriculum, or local policies and practices,
  - relationships (e.g. with their pupils or within their community)
- build networks of people who together create further change;
- are able to see relationships between processes and outcomes;
- have developed their own competences, e.g. in relation to self-awareness or critical thinking.

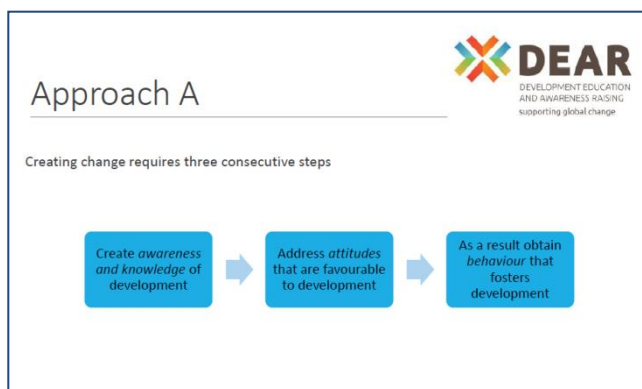


## 2. Questions to ask

Before investigating the five projects, participants were divided into six groups with three groups each designing questions that could be asked:

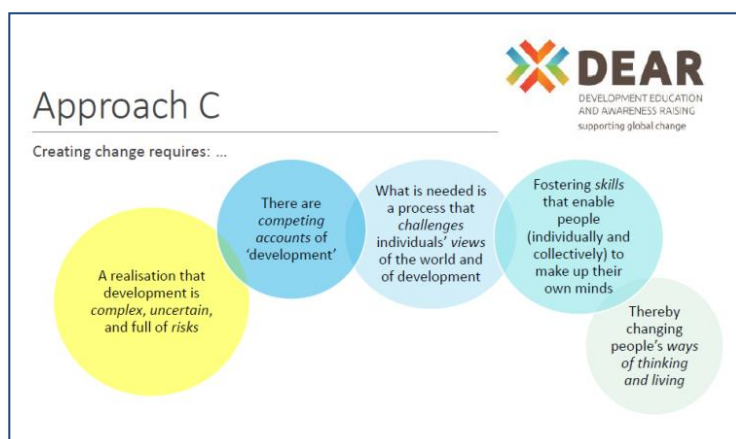
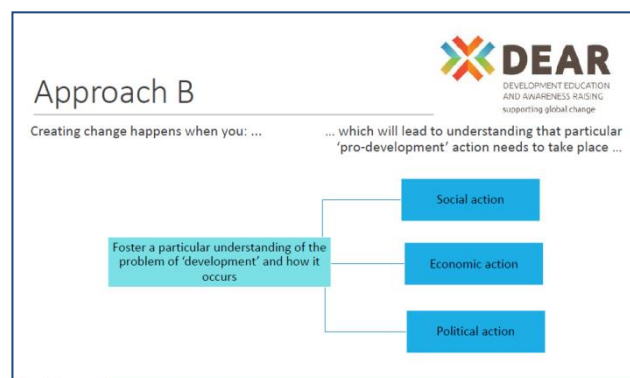
1. about the process of creating change agents amongst participants/audiences;
2. about ways of identifying what change agents do with their participation in a project.

As a stimulus participants were reminded of the key characteristics of change agents/multipliers identified earlier (see above) and then introduced to three (summarised/simplified/stereotyped) approaches to how the creation of change can be -and often has been- seen. Each of these approaches may give ideas about different questions that can be asked in respect of the two issues mentioned.



The first approach assumes that by educating the public about development issues (by means of creating understanding and 'pro-development' attitudes) behaviour will automatically be changed.

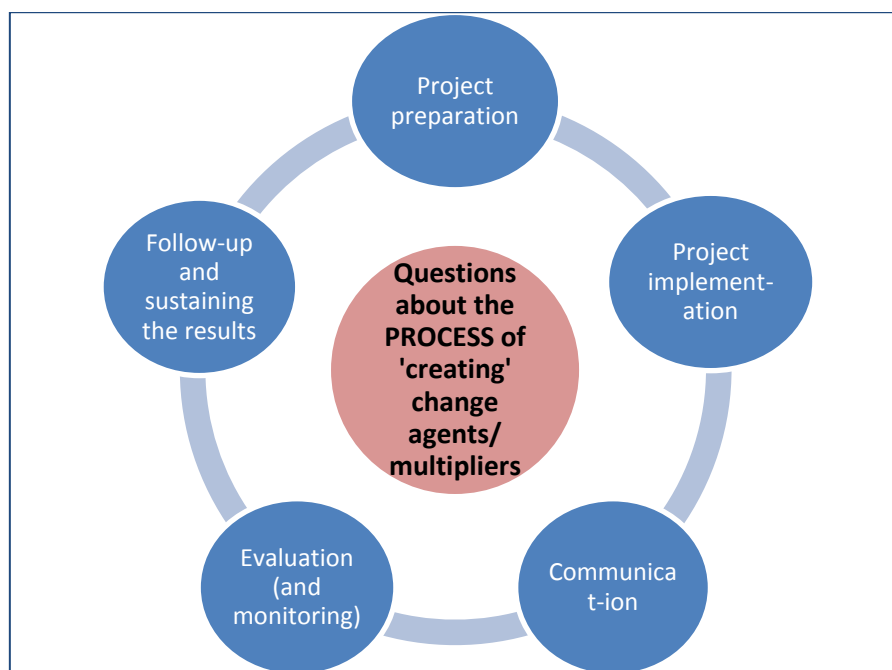
The second approach explains and understands problems of 'development' from a particular (political, social, economic, environmental, educational, communication) perspective. As long as an understanding is developed based on this perspective the assumption is that the public can and will support appropriate actions to overcome the problems.

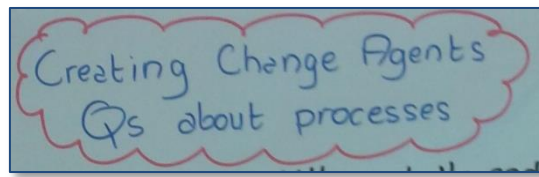


The third approach starts from the point of view that our understanding of the problem of development (and what prevents and promotes it) is limited and that explanations of this are contested. For the public's contribution to development to succeed it needs individual and collective re-thinking and discussion of existing and new perspectives, enabling people to make up their own minds about what is needed to promote (global and local) development.

Depending on the approach used different questions are likely to be asked when considering the processes of DEAR or its results amongst participants or audiences.

### 3. Asking questions .... about process





The three groups that designed questions about this came up with a range of questions which can be grouped into the following categories:

#### **PROJECT PREPARATION**

- What is the problem the project wants to address?
- How will you (a) identify and (b) recruit participants/potential change agents?
  - Why them and not other potential change agents?
- What is the context/what are the circumstances within which your intended change agents will have to work?
- What role do your intended participants/change agents have in the design of the project?
- What will the intended change agents do during the project (how will they learn, etc.)?

#### **PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION**

- How much time and other resources have you available to implement the project (in particular to support the intended change agents)?
- How does the project empower the change agents?
- How does the project motivate the change agents?
- Who is giving the project external support – and how? (Who will speak up for the importance of your project?)
- What support will the project give to change agents – e.g. to overcome their isolation?
- How will the project deal with the different contexts in which change agents work (e.g. in different countries, with different audiences/schools/communities)?

#### **COMMUNICATION**

- How does the project ensure two-way communication (between the project/staff and the participants/change agents)?
- How does the project make sure that different expectations (of the project, of participants, of those the change agents work with) are shared between the different stakeholders?
- How are project successes and shortcomings shared (amongst the participants and externally)?

#### **EVALUATION AND MONITORING**

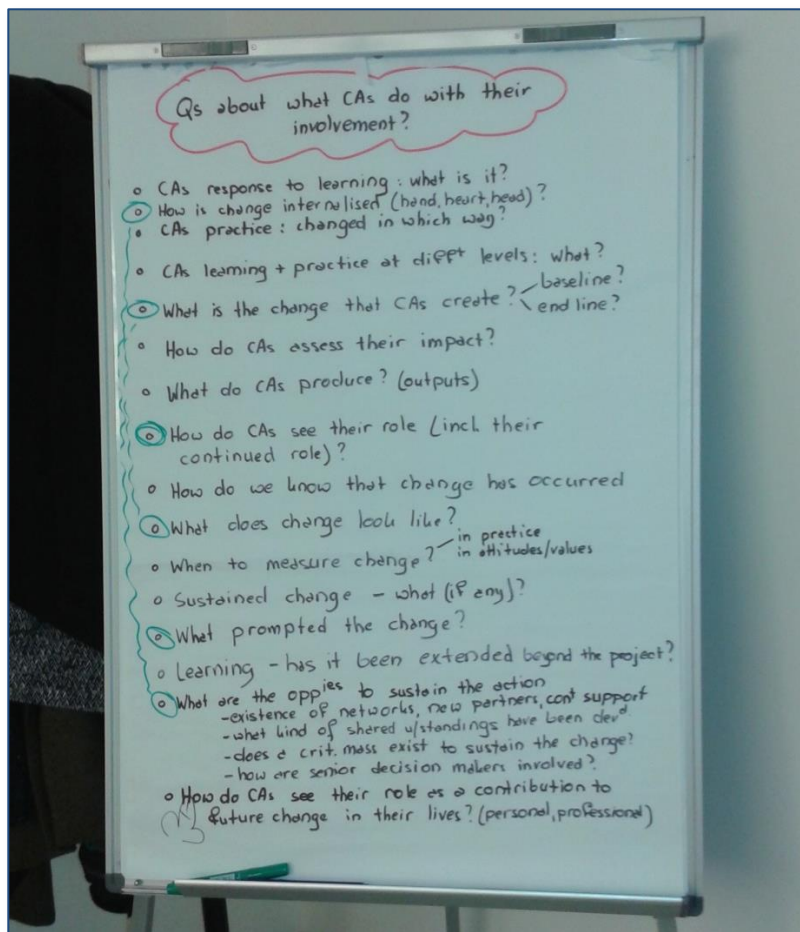
- How does the project learn from the change agents?
- How do change agents get to 'own' the learning and development of the project?
- How does the project (a) identify and (b) respond to unexpected consequences?
- How does the project incorporate new learning?

#### **FOLLOW-UP AND SUSTAINING RESULTS**

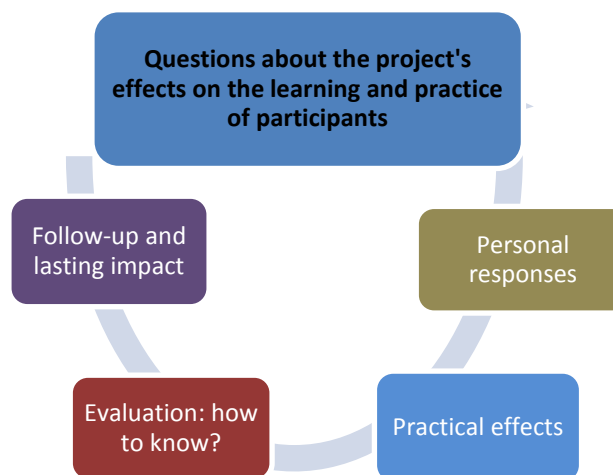
- How does the project support change agents to multiply their effect?
- How will change agents obtain support once the project is completed?



#### 4. Asking questions .... about identifying what change agents do



Three other groups focussed on developing questions that would help to identify what change agents do as a result of their involvement in the project. Their suggestions are shown on the next page [grouped under four headings]:



##### PERSONAL RESPONSES

- What changes has the project contributed to for participating change agents?
- In what way has the practice of participants been affected by the project? In what way has it changed as a result of the project?
- How do participant change agents internalise their learning (using heart, head and hands)?
- How do participants see their current and future role as change agents?

#### PRACTICAL EFFECTS

- Has learning from and through the project been extended beyond the project?
- What have change agents produced (outputs)?
- What has changed in the change agents own (professional or community) environment as a result of their work?

#### EVALUATION

- How do the change agents assess the results of their work and their impact?
- How do they know that change has occurred? 'What does change look like?'
- When are the opportune moments to assess change (e.g. in understanding, attitudes, practice) amongst those the change agents work with?
- What prompted the change(s) amongst those the change agents work with?

#### FOLLOW-UP AND LASTING IMPACT

- What are the opportunities in the change agents' environments to sustain the change?
  - For instance which (new) networks have been created/improved?
  - Which (new) partnerships have been developed?
- Does a critical mass appear to exist to sustain the change in the change agents' environments?
- How are senior decision makers involved in sustaining the change?

## 5. Obtaining answers

From the lists identified above participants selected a set to be asked of each of the represented projects. The following sections provide a very short summary of the answers that were obtained to some of these questions.

**The 'Teachers: Agents of Change' project** aims to introduce courses in development education in the area of teacher education at selected universities in the Czech Republic and Poland

The problem	As part of interdisciplinary studies, including in Global Education, teachers struggle with identifying issues and introducing them to children & young people in a way that will engage and motivate them. An additional problem was how to change attitudes about teaching and learning processes (from one where 'chalk-and talk' dominate to one which involves more participatory teaching and learning processes and the development of critical thinking approaches and skills.
Recruiting participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inviting teachers to promotional meetings, giving a flavour of the intentions of the project and its relevance to teachers' work</li><li>• Distributing promotional information to tutors in Initial Teacher Education (ITE), particularly those engaged in 'Philosophy for Children' (P4C), to teachers involved in the social sciences, and in primary education</li></ul>
The role of participants in project planning	Ensuring that project themes and issues met (national) curriculum requirements and the contexts of the institutions and schools in which participants worked
Empowering and motivating participants	By giving attention to both the practical and the theoretical aspects of global development education, drawing on ideas, articles, researches including from Austria and the UK. ITE tutors were particularly interested in the academic aspects. They were particularly interested in the project helping them to take on a leadership/innovative role within their institutions. The project's support to participants in trying out new approaches and dealing with sometimes difficult or controversial issues, as well as taking part in study tours to see what other colleagues do, was important in motivating and empowering participants.
The main changes brought about	The results are more evident in the work of individual teachers than in the institutions as a whole. Tutors embraced their role in the project and internalised the learning. Teachers accepted the project well and used/developed practical ideas. There was an increased demand for GE courses. There was good dissemination beyond the target audience, including internationally.

**The ‘Creating Change Agents in the European Garment Industry/WELLMADE’ project** focuses on holding supply chain awareness (SCA) sessions for employees of European clothing companies and procurement officers in organisations that buy large amounts of clothing.

The problem	Workers in industries that supply the European clothing industry with goods face economic and welfare problems that are in part caused by procurement policies of the EU fashion industry
The role of the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>raising awareness of the issues in relevant EU based companies</li> <li>recruiting participants to courses and events that raise the issue within the EU fashion industry, in particular designers and procurement officers</li> <li>providing ongoing support and information to course participants and others within the fashion industry to tackle relevant labour issues within their own companies</li> </ul>
Engaging and motivating change agents	<p>The project is (at the time writing) still developing its strategy of how to offer long term support including by means of an interactive network and further training courses. At this stage support is offered by means of e-mail contacts.</p> <p>The intention of the project is to develop change agents’ competences in particular in respect of their ability to identify and implement improvements in an individual’s span of influence, by means of for instance discussing supply chain improvements with colleagues and managers, and aligning supply chain improvements actions with existing CSR policies</p>

**The ‘Teach Global Ambassadors’ project** aims to establish networks of ‘ambassadors’ promoting DE as fundamental to effective education for the development of active and informed global citizens in Europe and actively supporting schools and local authorities to develop strategies which embed DE within secondary school curricula in Scotland and Lithuania.

Recruitment	Recruitment was particularly problematic in those areas where the initiating organisations had few contacts: “it takes more than e-mails to get teachers to take part”. Starting with schools where contacts already exist was seen as the best way in. An initial focus on recruiting English language teachers was later broadened out to other subject areas. The absence of explicit attention to global education in the formal curriculum in Lithuania made initial engagement of teachers there problematic.
Engagement of participants	The project envisaged three levels of engagement: (1) focussed on classroom work, (2) focussed on influencing school curriculum and practice, and (3) focussed on affecting local authority engagement
Challenges	Apart from recruitment a major challenge was in meeting the needs and interests of different participants
Results and spin-off	Classroom based work led to a better understanding and empathy of pupils with global development and international relations issues. Involvement of teachers led to further teachers being recruited (through them) in the project – particularly in Lithuania.

**The ‘Global Fairness – Schools as Agents for Change’ project** aims to develop ‘ambassadors’ for educational change so that school curricula give more attention to the integration of global issues in the curriculum and school programmes, improved competencies of teachers and increased commitment from children and young people as ‘Agents for Change’.

The problem	The lack of current ability of schools to give attention to global relations and how they affect – and are affected by – local/national/EU issues and concerns
The project	Aimed to make schools themselves agents of change: developing teachers’, pupils’ local authorities’ skills and understanding of global issues and local-global relationships
Approaches that worked well	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students (in their role as agents of change) organising e.g. Fairtrade workshops</li> <li>Using Fairtrade – with which many people are familiar - as a way into discussing other global development issues</li> </ul>



**‘TRINET Global’** aims to develop and support networks of local authorities, university staff, civil society and the business sector in advocating and implementing sustainable development projects and programmes

The problem	to include development issues into business discussions (how to involve the business sector in the issue of responsibility, how to combine profit with development)
The starting point	The existence of ‘Fairtrade towns’, corporate social responsibility statements, international business weeks and conferences
Engaging and supporting (potential) change agents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• creation of a consumer app with details of locally available FT outlets and products</li> <li>• face-to-face contact with municipalities and universities</li> <li>• supporting participants by developing their understanding on trade and Fairtrade</li> <li>• NGOs together with opinion leaders involve more citizens in reaching the goal of becoming a Fair trade town</li> <li>• Study visits to Southern Countries (e.g. Ghana) can raise awareness and incentivise Fair Trade business opportunities</li> </ul>
The effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiplier effect to the other towns (e.g. Berlin is a Fair Trade city, so also other cities are willing to engage to get that certificate; Prague 7 got the certificate so Prague 8 also interested; etc.)</li> </ul>

## 6. Key problems encountered

In discussing some of the major problems the projects had to overcome the following were mentioned:

- The importance – but also the problem – of working with a wide range of stakeholders, each with their own interests, ‘hobby horses’, and needs, while still meeting the key concern and objectives of the project
  - As possible solutions to this problem the following were suggested:
    - using a multi-stakeholder approach in which all stakeholders agree on common principles and are aware of each other’s interests and needs
    - as project lead acting as a facilitating partner in the discussion rather than as a party advocating a particular ‘line’ to take (however, without ignoring or being silent about on your values on which your particular expertise and role is based)
- Working with disparate audiences, i.e. those that do not necessarily meet
  - A solution to this might be the creation of a virtual ‘academy’ or network in which audience members can develop contacts, exchange ideas, and obtain support
- The problem of creating clearly identifiable and notable results
  - Cluster meeting participants suggested that identifying ‘small steps’ was usually possible: creating change takes time (and usually longer time than EC supported projects give you). Identifying the small changes as a step towards a longer term goal is important.

## 7. Conclusions - Questions to ask about DEAR projects seeking to motivate and empower ‘change agents’

In drawing all this work together participants suggested that the following questions were particularly pertinent to ask about any DEAR project engaged in working with change agents. Participants suggested that consideration of these questions would be helpful during the planning as well as the implementation and evaluation processes of a project:

