



CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION

1. STEP OF THE PASTORAL CIRCLE. SOCIAL ANALYSIS: WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?

The AIM of the analysis is to GO TO THE ROOT CAUSES of the trouble, to discover the hidden and invisible aspects that influence the situation and the problems that result. Without this, we cannot find the right solutions.

The first part of the work deals with what people are experiencing. We try to find out what is happening. In order to redress the situation and to overcome the injustice, we cannot remain at the emotional level. We need to move from the emotional to the intellectual level to discover what is actually going on. We need first to have an accurate description of the reality we seek to understand. The important question in doing an analysis is to ask the question: Why is this happening? Analysing the issue helps to understand why the issue exists and its root causes. Analysis develops critical awareness and long-term planning, essential steps needed for building solidarity in people's movements and for finding the right solutions.

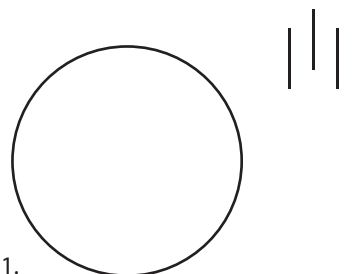
Social analysis is the 'rational' part of the Pastoral Circle (PC). It has many purposes: it finds and examines the root-causes of the problem, probes consequences, makes links, tries to understand how different experiences, problems and situations are interrelated and identifies the people involved (individuals, groups and organisations). It helps us see who is trying to keep the situation as it is and who is trying to change it. What is more, it does all this at different levels: economic, political, social, religious, cultural, environmental, technological, etc.

Do not forget to write down the main discoveries found in the Analysis, in order to makes the links when the analysis is complete.

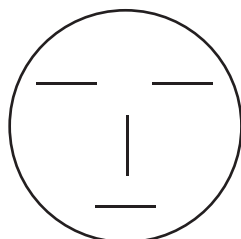
1.1. Exercise 1: What is the Meaning of this?

Copy picture 1. Ask the question: What is the meaning of this?

The answer is likely to be Nothing.



Drawing n. 1.



Now copy Drawing n. 2.

Ask what is this?

The lines and circle have no meaning until we put them together, in relation, like this. When the circle and lines are put in a certain order, they have a meaning. They represent a human face.

Social analysis helps to make sense of experiences by setting them in a broader picture and drawing the connections between them. It allows us to obtain a more complete picture of a social situation and to grasp the reality with which we are dealing.



1.2. A Story to Explain What Social Analysis is




Happy Village, Sad Village and Questioner


 Photocopy **ANNEX 2 : Happy Village, Sad Village** and the Questions.

Have the story read by somebody who puts a lot of expression into it.

At the end of the story ask the questions to the group.

Comments: Do we not sometimes have the attitude of Happy Village when faced with the situation? We are so busy answering the 'immediate' needs that we are unable to ask the right questions, to look at the causes of the problem and to free some people and resources to go 'up-river' to discover why those babies were falling into the water.

 Are we ready to start asking the question: WHY IS THIS HAPPENING? Are we ready to go 'up-river' to determine why so many children are falling and drowning in the river? Only when we know what is happening and what is the cause of the problem we are working on, can we start planning what to do and how best to initiate the necessary changes to transform the situation.

 Ask the following question: What does this story say to me, personally?

Allow two or three minutes for reflection and then invite people to share in groups of two or three.

Invite each group to share two aspects of what they have talked about.

 Together, as a group, answer the following question: What do we learn from this story ?

Write down the answers. Group them and note the main teaching of the story.

1.3. A Sketch to Help to Understand the Need for Social Analysis




At the hospital: the 'Headaches'

Ask four people to represent the sketch in Annex 3. The Headaches.

Ask some questions:

Both patients had the same symptoms. One was cured. The other died. Why?

The first doctor 'A' took time to analyse the sickness and only when he knew what the sickness was, did he give the appropriate treatment. Doctor 'B' believed 'he knew' what the sickness was. He did not send the patient for tests, so his diagnosis was wrong. The painkiller alleviated patient 2 for some time but it did not 'cure' the sickness. This patient had meningitis. One day's delay, some extra expenses for the test and the appropriate medicines would also have cured patient 2, who is now dead because of the lack of analysis.


 What is the difference in the attitude of the two doctors?

 Who had the right attitude?

 Do we too sometimes act like doctor "B"?

 What are the difficulties we experience when we act like Doctor "A"?

 What can we do to have the attitude of Doctor "A"? What should I change, personally, when I analyse situations?

 How should we act as a group?



1.4. Analysing our Perceptions – the ‘Glasses we Wear’

With which glasses do we view reality? Are we aware of the glasses we are wearing?

We don't look at the world in a completely free, objective fashion. There are historical, cultural, personal and psychological influences, such as whether we are pessimist or optimist, confident or anxious; and there are also many other social factors that influence our perceptions and determine our analysis.

The following are some of the 'glasses' we wear:

- o Our social status or class.
- o Our worldview, ideological orientation, faith, etc.
- o Our background and personal history.
- o Where we live.
- o The advantages we may enjoy.
- o Our culture.

1.5. The Iceberg

In any situation of injustice there are numerous issues we have to deal with. It is like an iceberg. Only a very small part of an iceberg is visible above the waterline while a much larger part under the waterline and is invisible from the surface. In any problem or situation, the same thing happens: only some aspects are observable, while others will only be detected after a thorough searching and a deeper analysis. Moreover, the less obvious sides of a story usually cover a much larger area. We will have to make a greater effort, therefore, to analyse and unravel these hidden elements.

 **Photocopy ANNEXE 4 – THE ICEBERG** and distribute it or draw a big iceberg on a board or wall paper.

Take any problem or situation and ask the participants to write on the iceberg the parts of it that are 'visible' and directly 'observable' and under the waterline some aspects of the problem that have been discovered only after a certain analysis has been done. If they do not know any 'under waterline' sides of the problem, give them some examples, so that they can see what is meant.

1.6. Different Ways of Answering Problems – Five Responses to Poverty

AIM of the exercise: a better understanding of the different answers given to situations of injustice and poverty. The way we orientate our action is important if we want to work for the transformation of society and to bring about the Kingdom of God. We cannot do any work, or use any methodology. The institutions and organizations with which we work have an orientation. Christians can give a different answer to problems and to needs.

Print **ANNEX No. 6: Five Responses to Poverty**. *If you have a projector, project it on the wall or screen. If you don't give a sheet of paper to each member of the group.*

If you want to see the applications to concrete injustices and the different answers given by Caritas, Development Agencies or groups, and Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) groups, the animator can look at the ANNEX No. 7 "Concrete Injustices and the different answers given."

You will then have a better understanding of the differences between the work of Caritas, of Development Agencies working on causes and of JPIC which goes to the root causes of the problems to transform society.

In the past, there has been good progress because Development NGOs and Caritas have understood the importance of working for the transformation of society partly by studying the causes of the problems, but also by lobbying. Still there is much to do to change mentalities so that more of the work of Church groups is directed towards this transformation.

In the sense that the work of JPIC groups aims to transform structures of death into life-giving ones, it is a 'political' commitment.



1.7. Steps of Analysis

Social Analysis is done in a group process over a long period of time on whatever ‘topic’ or ‘burning issue’ the group wants to address. Example of a topic: lack of access by the poor to health services in the local area. The JPIC group wants to find out what is happening and why this is happening in an attempt to do something about it.

Here are the steps to follow:

1. **History of the problem:** Use the following history line ... when health services were established in the area, when various government policies were implemented e.g. service fees, when there were cut-backs in the use of health services. What would be the situation in five years’ time?
2. **‘WHY’ method of analysis:** To find out the root causes and hidden structures of the problem and to help see the consequences.
3. **Structures:** What are the key structures influencing the situation? e.g. economic: resources such as government budget allocations, schedule of fees charged, wages of local people, transport to facilities, corruption, etc.; political: power e.g. Who participated in the decision to set up the fees? What are the policies? Social: relationships e.g. certain family members need to be consulted before going to the doctor; traditional approaches to medicine; cultural explanations for certain illnesses; gender: male-female patterns e.g. presence of male or female doctors or nurses; ecological; natural environment; Cultural: meaning; Religious: e.g. administration of the sacrament to the sick; prohibition of certain traditional practices, social teaching on community solidarity, the Social Teaching of the Church.
4. **Values.** *What are the key values influencing the situation?* Things people consider valuable, worth sacrificing for, e.g. norms, guidelines, expectations, motivations, incentives. What is acceptable or valuable? What are the positive and negative influences? What about sharing in the community, more tolerance and less selfishness?
5. **Interrelationships and links between history, structures and values, connections and consequences, networks.** Who makes decisions? Why? In whose interest? Who benefits from decisions? Why? How? Who bears the burdens of decisions? Why? How? e.g. the difficulty of access to health services by the poor came as a consequence of a new liberal economic model that imposed fees. The health centre for the community was badly situated. The place was chosen to serve the interests of a local politician who was seeking re-election in his sparsely populated area.
6. **Conclusions:** After all this work, *what are the major conclusions to be drawn regarding the most important influences on the situation?*

Identification of root causes. Answers to the continually-repeated question: Why? But why?

Ranking or prioritizing the key elements according to the importance of their influence.

Drawing conclusions. The conclusions will not always provide answers to the question “What do we do?” but they provide the bases for the responses.

2. METHODS OF ANALYSIS TO DISCOVER THE ROOT CAUSE OF THE PROBLEM

Describe the problem as clearly as you can. Bring in all the information gathered in Step 1: Knowing the situation. You will need it for the different analyses. If you are to continue your analysis, you may need more information on what is going on at the different levels: economic, social, political, environmental, etc. Some members of the team can gather the new information needed while others go on doing the analysis.

2.1. History of the Problem



Historical analysis helps us to understand the present through the past and to look at the future. Look at WHAT happened at the different stages of the situation, the turning points, the people, the institutions, the groups and the movements of significance.



2.2. The Time-Line

Year	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	20
→													
ECONOMY: What has happened during this time at the level of the economy of the stakeholders e.g. people, company, government, those concerned? Write each event under the time-line.													
→													
SOCIAL: What has happened at the social level because of the problem?													
→													
INSTITUTIONS: How have the different institutions had an impact on the problem?													
→													
LEGISLATION: What legislation affects the problem?													
→													
RELIGION: what impact has religion on the problem?													
→													
TECHNOLOGY: Did new technologies have an impact on the problem?													
→													
CULTURAL: What are the cultural aspects that help or hinder the solution of the problem?													
→													
ECOLOGY: What is the impact of ecology on the problem? How does the problem affect the ecology?													
→													
CLIMATE CHANGE: How does the problem impact on climate change? How does climate change affect the problem?													
→													
COMPANIES: What are the interventions of companies that affect the problem?													
→													

The time-line allows us to see the changes experienced in the situation over a number of years. What human beings have created, can be changed. Take a minimum period of ten years for the time-line.

Start doing this exercise with the whole group. Take a large sheet of paper. Draw a horizontal line that will represent the time-line. In the other direction (vertical) put the different points you want to look at: economic, social, political, cultural, legislative, etc... Leave space to write.

At different levels, look at the significant events that affected the problem over a number of years e.g. political, social, human, economic, scientific, technological, cultural, juridical, legislative, etc. Look at the immorality sustaining this injustice at those different levels.

Examine three or four events. Show the group how to work and then send them to work in small groups.



2.2.1. Work in the Big Group

Ask the group to look at a concrete problem or situation, at the events that brought certain changes in the situation, at the efforts made by the people, or other actors...

Every person in the group mentions an EVENT that impacted the situation and the date when it occurred. Go around the group until all the events they have thought of have been mentioned.

Put them in order of date. It may be that you will need more information to get the true picture. In this case go and look for those who know more, among the older people and among the experts.

When you have done some work together, you can then ask each group to work on one or two points that, when completed will be shared in the larger group. You will mention the date of the event, the event itself and the change this event brought in the situation.

2.2.2. Work in Small Groups

You can work in groups of three or four. Each group looks at an aspect and builds the time-line regarding that aspect.

Give each group a sheet of paper with the time-line and the name of the event they want to look at. Give a sheet for each event and another one for the links they will discover while doing the work.

Ask them to look at the history of the problem and the main events that influenced the situation. Trace the origins: How did it start? When did it start? Who was involved in it? What caused it? When did we become aware that it was a serious problem? What brought it to our attention? How was it formerly? What happened to made it change? What change did this bring to the situation? What was the people's situation at the beginning of the problem? And now?

What changes have occurred in the past years since the problem started or when it became more acute? What have been the most important events? What will things be like in ten years if nothing happens? Why?

Look at the time-line and all that is in it. What do you see? Going through this exercise, what has become clearer or more striking? What are the calls you receive? What questions does this exercise raise?

Ask the groups not to discuss, but just to mention the event, the date and the impact. Write them down. If they find that the event, law, intervention, etc... influences other aspects tell them to write it down on the link page. Give thirty minutes to one hour to work in small groups.

To end this time-line you can, like the prophets, make a future projection: In ten years from now what will be the long-term consequences? What if nothing has changed? Prophetic visions of doom!

Project a dream / vision / ideal image. How do we want our society/ community to be in ten years time?

Biblical utopias: the kingdom of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, paradise, a classless society.

2.2.3. Sharing of the Working Groups

Each group shares what they have written. Take an issue of the time: e.g. economy, culture or another. When the group has finished, ask the members if they have found links with other events.

The group completes each aspect. This will allow the group to see the history of the problem from different angles. This will enable them to see the problem, its consequences and the changes at different levels.

The facilitator can also provide examples known to him/her.



2.2.4. Open Discussion

For the main events we can ask the question: What opportunities did this event open up? Look at the concrete consequences for the people and for others. Who are the winners in this situation? How are they the winners? What did they get? Who are the losers? Make links between the different aspects and the different events. What do you see? Justify your answers. Remember we are at the analysis and we have to 'reason' our answers.

2.2.5. Make Connections and Links

Look at the events and dates. Make connections with what has happened. This will help you to see how the events are related to each other. Check out what's going on 'below,' and what is hidden ... the issue they are working on.

3. ROOTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE PROBLEM

This is a simple analysis that can open to bigger and hidden problems. The first part is to look at the ROOT-CAUSES of the problems on the left-hand side of the sheet. The second part looks at the CONSEQUENCES of the problem on the right-hand side of the sheet.

3.1. The WHY CHAIN METHOD (*Why Does this Problem Exist?*)



State the problem you want to analyse clearly and simply, or help the group to do so. Then take a large sheet of paper. Make a circle (not too big) in the middle of the paper. Represent the problem with a simple drawing in this circle, or state the problem in two or three words.

Ask the Question "Why is this Happening?"

The members of the group reflect, first in silence, and then they write down the answers to the question.

Each person gives one reason why this is happening. The answer will always start with BECAUSE...

The animator writes the answer in two or three words in a circle on the left. He/she draws an arrow from the problem to the cause. Write down a certain number of causes in circles surrounding the central one. Then take ONE of these circles and again ask *Why is this happening?*

Put each answer in a circle on the left and draw an arrow to the one from where it comes. Each circle can have many different answers. Go on asking the same question on any given answer. Make links between the different answers. If there are similar answers, don't repeat them.

By uniting the circles that are connected with an arrow, you are making a chain of causes, each time going to a deeper level. The longer the line, the deeper you go in searching for the root causes. Be short, concrete and specific in your answers. Avoid abstract words.

You can do this exercise at different times following one of two chains, in order to go deeper into the root causes. The longer the chain, the deeper you go into the root cause of the injustice.

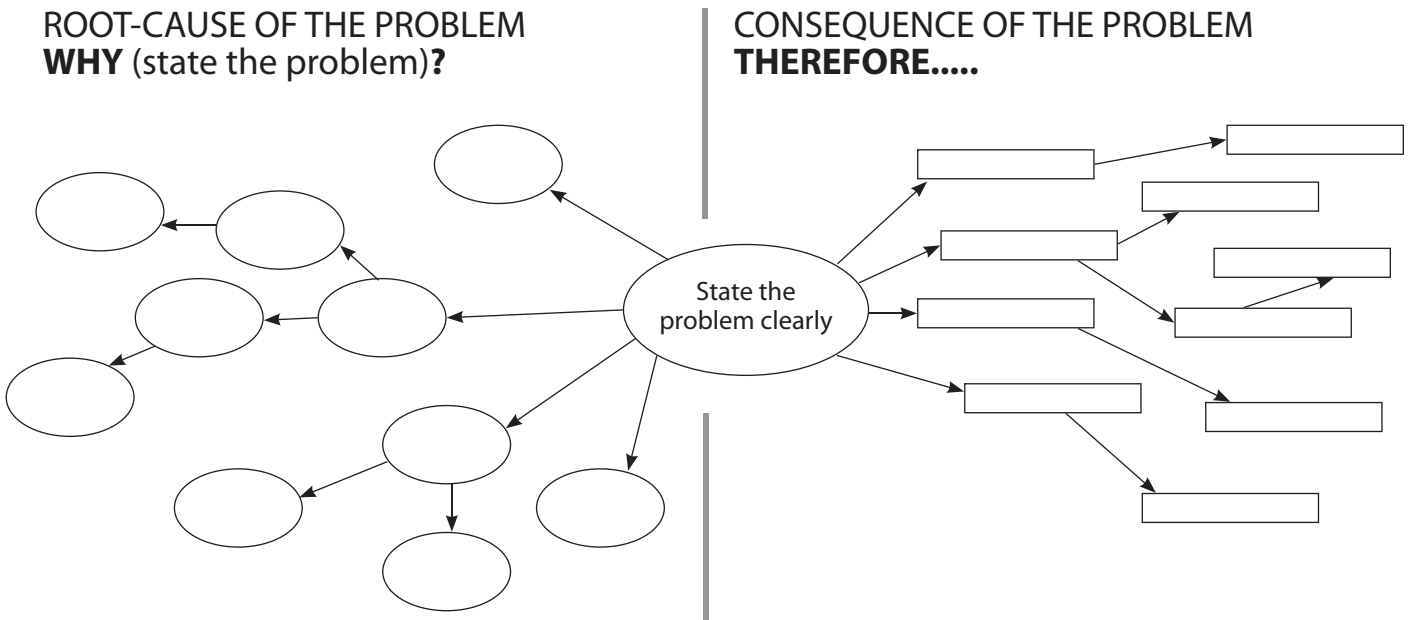
E.g. the problem is the bad quality of drinking water in the village well. Why is the water of poor quality?

Answer A- 1. Because animals dirty the well. *Why do animals dirty the well?* Answer A-2. Because it is not well protected. Because the shepherds do not care. Because...

Answer B-1. Because ESSO didn't clean the oil spilled in the next village. *Why Esso...?* Answer B-2. Because the government doesn't have control. *Why the government...?* Because there is no representative for the ministry of the environment....



WHY is this happening?



Once you have established the chain of the root causes, you may see that the community, the group or some individuals are already doing something to break the chain. The further away from the centre that we organize some action to break the chain, the deeper the effect it will have on the problem. The deeper we break the chain, the closer we will get to a solution.

When we look at the causes, we should also look at the social, economic, cultural, religious and political aspects. The further we go into each one of them, the better we will understand the problem and what lies beneath it.

3.1.1. The Chain of Consequences


After you have done an analysis of the problem itself, you can do a similar exercise on the consequences of this problem. What are the consequences and effects of this situation on the community?


BECAUSE (state the problem) Therefore

Repeat the 'Why?' exercise you did earlier, but this time asking about the consequences ... Therefore...

3.1.2. Group Reflection on the Whole Picture

If you are a group of religious or Church people, you can compare the right-hand side and the left-hand side, the ROOT CAUSES and the CONSEQUENCES. Where are you or your group going to break the chain? At what level does your congregation, your church or your group work? Break the chain with a line.

 When you look at this picture and see where you, your congregation or your Church cut the chain, what strikes you?

 If we do not work to break the chain on the left, we are behaving like the doctor who gave painkillers for the meningitis. Whose responsibility is it to break the chain?

We will find that most Church groups and congregations work at the level of the consequences, alleviating the suffering. This is necessary but it does not help to transform the situation. We will soon realize that only a few work at the level of the root causes of the problems.



This exercise can help to create awareness among religious and Church members of the need to put more personnel and means towards eliminating the root causes of the problems and not just helping to cope with the consequences. On that personal, congregational and Church commitment will depend the transformation of the situation. As a body, Church or congregation we need to see both causes and consequences. We cannot limit ourselves anymore to alleviating the consequences of the problem. We have to change the root causes, if we are to transform the society.

3.2. Difficulty of Working at the Root Causes of the Problem

The short analysis we have done may have raised the question as to why so few are dedicated to work at the root causes of problems.

As has already been said, working to change society is a “political commitment.” It means collaborating with believers and non-believers who share the aim of allowing all people to have a dignified life, to take their future in their own hands and to participate in decisions that affect them. But working for a change of structures (root-causes) presents certain difficulties:

- o The difficulty of seeing the results and impact of our work.
- o If there are results, they will be long-term.
- o Work that needs knowledge, analysis and reflection is can seem dull.

Nevertheless, God’s desire for us to be co-creators in transforming society is a wonderful calling!

4. THE ‘STOREY BUILDING’ ANALYSIS



We can look at each problem from different angles, so we need to examine it under different headings:

4.1. How the Issue Impacts on Ordinary Life

ECONOMIC and SOCIAL: How does the problem affect the local economic situation? Look at all the aspects affecting the concrete situation. How do they affect the means of production? Who owns the means of production? Who works? Who controls the distribution of goods and resources? How do they do it? What about housing, the drinking water supply, the environment and the health of the people? How do they affect access to resources, natural resources etc.?

SAFETY: How does the problem affect the security of the people, the security of resources, the health of the people, employment, working conditions? How does it affect services to the community and to individuals?

RELATIONSHIPS: How does the issue affect relationships within the family, in the village/town, with the neighbouring villages or towns? How does it affect family life, relationships between men and women, young and old?

POLITICS & DECISION-MAKING: Every society develops laws and ways of enforcing these laws, through councils, government, courts, police, army and prisons. The group that becomes dominant at the social and economic level controls decisions at this level. Who makes the decisions regarding your chosen issue? Who has the power to make decisions at community level, at family level, at government level, at the level of the company? Who makes the laws? For whose benefit are they made? How are the laws enforced? Who has influence on this?

CULTURAL: How does the problem affect the culture, the self-esteem and the confidence of the people, of the community, respect for others and openness to others?

ETHICAL-MORAL: How does the issue affect ethics and morality, creativity, acceptance of facts? How does the problem facilitate or make more difficult the empowering of the people?

Ask the group to study and fill in a copy of the diagram in ANNEX No. 8 The ‘STOREY BUILDING’ ANALYSIS.

Ask them to fill in the first level, to share one aspect per person, to give practical examples about the situation they know best, so that everybody understands.



4.1. Chart for the Storey Building Analysis

Fill in all the levels that you think appropriate. You can add other levels, choose and add questions according to the situation.

Economic & Social	
Safety	
Relationship	
Political & Decision-making	
Cultural	
Ethical-moral	



Photocopy this Chart on ANNEX N. 8 – The Storey Building Analysis.

5. VALUES & BELIEFS

Values and beliefs are expressed and passed on through the education system, radios, newspapers, traditions and customs. They justify the society and enable it to have respect for itself.

This reflection can help us CLARIFY THE VALUES and THE VISION of the situation. Are the ‘expressed values’ and the ‘actual values’ the same? Who promotes ‘official’ values? How?

How do PEOPLE explain their situation? Is there a traditional belief influencing the situation? Are there values that are absent or present that influence the situation? What are these values or beliefs? Who maintains them? Who benefits from them? How do they influence the attitude of the people? Who is currently attempting to bring about change? What are the chief values affecting the issue?

Look at values or things that the different actors in the situation hold as being very important in their lives. What are the most important traditions of the people regarding this situation?

In what way do I contribute to that injustice, or at least facilitate its continuation?

Look at the different values or beliefs that maintain the situation or make it change.

At political-organizational level: How are values used to justify the political situation? What changes are made through schools, media, etc. that affect values and their transmission?

At economic level: How do the values justify the existing economic structure?

Political and economic level: How do the laws affect the process of production, ownership of land, factories, etc.? How do those who control production affect the political process? What does the society believe about itself?

Economy and values: How do the economic structure and the changes, brought about by the issue, affect values and culture? You do not need to look at all the questions, but at those that are more relevant to the situation and the issue you are dealing with. Ask the group to reflect on their answers, and write them down.



Look also at the values that are operative in the situation and contrast them with the Gospel. By doing so, you run the risk of showing up contradictions between the values sought and those that are truly lived out, for example injustice in the way we pay our staff, reduced democratic participation and over-emphasis on production...

5.1. Making Links

Making links is one essential part of analysis. The links allow us to see what is hidden in the situation.

5.1.1. Interrelationships Between History, Structures, Values

There are close connections between structures. For example, the control of resources determines who has the power; the organization influences relationships, etc.

To make a serious analysis you have to get used to making links.

1. What links do you see between the different levels?

We suggest some questions to help the group to make links:

- a. How does the economic situation influence the legal and political level?
- b. How does it influence the ethical level?
- c. How do the real values and the expressed values of the people influence the political and the economic levels?
- d. How do the laws (organisation, political) affect the process of production, ownership of land, factories, etc?
- e. What laws are made that affect values and their transmission through schools, media, etc?
- f. How does the economic structure affect values and culture?
- g. How do the values justify the existing economic structures?
- h. How are values used to justify the political situation?
- i. How do those who control production affect the Political Process?

Take a new sheet of paper and draw an arrow for each link identified by the group.

6. CONCLUSION : FINDINGS OF THE ANALYSIS

Take the most significant discoveries found during the analysis. Write down your concrete discoveries and the main links you have made.

What are the most significant conclusions about your issue and the situation to be drawn from the complete analysis? Identify the causes and the roots of the current situation.

Write them down and keep them for reference. You will need to refer to them quite often.

