Sexuality and Social Justice: A Toolkit

Strategies for making sexuality rights real

Web of Poverty

Activity

While the links between sexuality and poverty might be evident to you in your work, it can be difficult to prove this to others. This group activity is one way to think through and demonstrate the complex links between poverty and sexuality and can be used to support strategic planning and resource allocation activities.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this activity participants will be able to:

- Identify the different types of disadvantage experienced by clients/service users
- Explain how and why the different types of disadvantage are linked
- Identify strengths and weakenesses in the organisations current allocation of resources.

Group Size/Type: 3+, service users and/or organisation members

Materials: Paper and pens

Time: 1-3 hours

Notes for the Facilitator: This exercise is designed to draw on the knowledge and experience of the participants. It is a good opportunity for discussion and participants should be encouraged to share their experiences but also to consider how their knowledge can be used to stregnthen the work of the organisation.
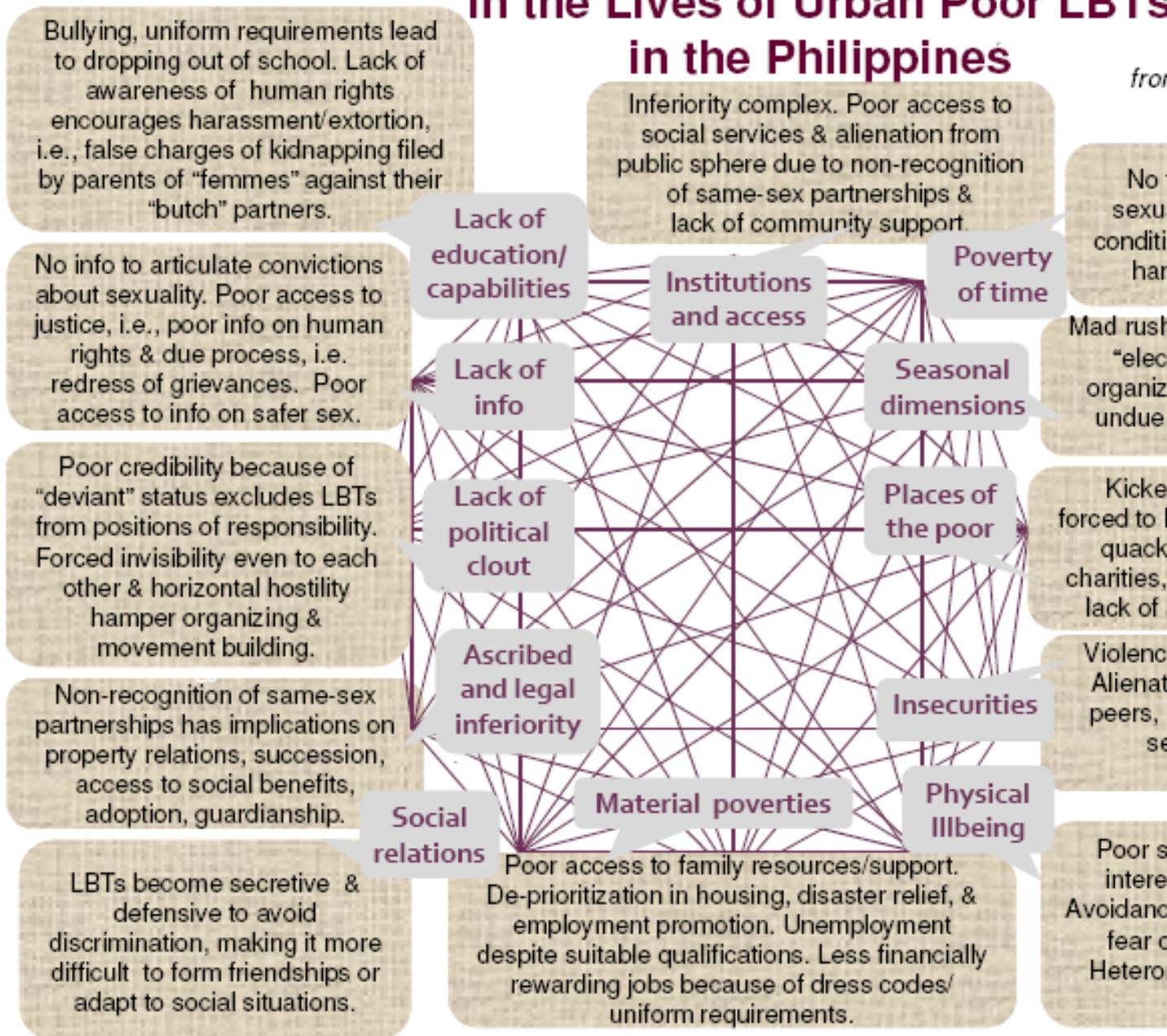
The Web of Poverty

Background

In his research on participatory approaches to development, Robert Chambers found that poverty was experienced not only in terms of material disadvantage, but also in terms of other interrelated factors such as exclusion, ill-being, and restrictions on capacities and freedoms. Chambers described the multidimensional and interrelated aspects of poverty in terms of a 'Web of Poverty's Disadvantages'. Chamber's Web of Poverty has been adapted by Jolly (2006) and Oosterhoff, Waldman and Olerenshaw (2014) as a tool to illustrate the different ways that sexuality and poverty are linked. Chambers' model has also been adapted by scholars looking specifically at transgender people in Peru (Campuzano, 2009), and sex workers in Uganda (Leiper, 2009).

Chambers' Web of Poverty can be used quite practically with the people you work with to separate out and see more clearly the dimensions of disadvantage that affect their wellbeing and access to basic services and resources. Here is an example produced by GALANG as part of their work with urban lesbian, bisexual and transgender women in the Philippines.

Web of Poverty's Disadvantages in the Lives of Urban Poor LBTs in the Philippines

Activity

Based on Chamber's work, twelve areas of disadvantage have been identified to illustrate how poverty and sexuality are linked. These are:

- Institutions and access
- Poverty of time
-

- Seasonal dimensions
- Places of the poor
- Insecurity
- Physical illbeing
- Material poverties
- Social relations
- Ascribed and legal inferiority
- Lack of political clout
- Lack of information
- Lack of education/capabilities

In your group:

1. **Write** each of the areas on a separate piece of paper leaving plenty of room for notes. Spread these out in a circle on a table or on the floor

1. **Reflect** on each area in turn and decide whether this area of disadvantage applies to the people you work with, and if so, how. Record the suggestions on the appropriate piece of paper. If there is an area that does not apply, you can discard it. Equally, if you find that there is an area missing, you can create a new title page. This is an opportunity for discussion and this part of the task can go on for as long as you want or until all of the title pages are complete.

1. **Explore** connections across the web by focusing on each area of disadvantage and seeing how it links with other areas. For example, if your members experience poverty of time, how does this link to their employment opportunities or social relations? How does it impact on their opportunity to engage in political activity or other forms of community activity?

Once you have identified the key areas of disadvantage and agreed on how they are linked, you might want to focus on some of the following questions:

- How do the areas identified relate to the priority areas in your work at the moment?
- Are there places you should be targeting resources?
- Are there any aspects of the exercise that surprised you?
- How can you use this evidence in your work?

Further reading:

Jolly, S. (2010). Poverty and Sexuality: What are the connections? An overview of the literature. [2] Sida

Oosterhoff, P., L. Waldman, & D. Olerenshaw. (2014 - forthcoming). Literature Review on Sexuality and Poverty. Britain: IDS

Campuzano, G. (2008). Building Identity While Managing Disadvantage:Peruvian Transgender Issues. [3] IDS Working Paper 310. Britain: IDS

Source URL: http://spl.ids.ac.uk/sexuality-and-social-justice-toolkit/4-practical-tools/web-poverty

Links
[1] http://spl.ids.ac.uk/file/webofpovertygalangpng-1
[2] http://www.sxpolitics.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/sida-study-of-poverty-and-sexuality1.pdf
[3] http://www.ids.ac.uk/files/Wp310.pdf