

The 'tax-pays-for' photo



The relation between tax and public services is explored through a photo action.

NB. This tool needs at least one camera or mobile phone that can take photos.

Objectives

- To link tax and public services
- To assess the situation of local public services

Steps in the process

1. Ask the group to think of a public service that they are personally grateful for in their area, or a time when an adequate public service did not exist locally, and they wish it did. The more personal it is, the better, for example “the time my wife got help to give birth safely” or “a good road for to me take my goods to market”.
2. Distribute sheets of paper and ask participants to write the words ‘tax pays for’ followed by just one public service that they have named as most important to them. Eg. Tax pays for a good road for me to take my goods to market”.
3. In groups, and making sure they have enough camera phones, the participants find a place that represents what they have written on their sheets (public road, street lighting, health clinics, schools, transport, agricultural produce, etc.).

4. Take a photo of each participant or group of participants, holding up their 'tax pays for ...' sheet with the background of the public service chosen.

Questions for discussion

- Is tax being used for public services in your area?
- How could you use the photo you have taken?

Action points

After hearing people's thoughts, the facilitator can give ideas for action:

- Photos can be printed and presented to district officials.
- They can also be displayed in public places like a market, or even exhibited in the capital city with invited decision makers. This can be linked to budget allocation consultations in the local and national budget planning cycle.
- If the group has access to the Internet, they may wish to upload the photos on Facebook, tweet them with hashtag, and/or email or SMS the photo to those that want it. Seeing your local community photos can help inspire solidarity actions from other supporters from around the world.

Note to facilitator: This exercise must be agreeable to the participants. Care should be taken to minimise risk and danger to the participants. Above all, any public action activity must be within the law.

Resources

- ActionAid's Tax Power Campaign Reflection-Action toolkit, ActionAid, December 2015.
- Tax power campaign training manual, 2015, ActionAid