

Session 2: Power to change the rules

Organizing to change policies and systems

Session Goals

1. Share a common framework for **how inequality works**
2. Understand the idea of system's having a **blueprint** that can be changed
3. Reflect on the **power of organizing** for changing policies and systems
4. Practical tools for understanding systems and designing **campaigns** to change them

Agenda

- 1. Welcome + purpose**
- 2. Faith reflection**
- 3. Sharing 1:1**
- 4. Content: How inequality works, the idea of blueprints, and the value of organizing**
- 5. Role play**
- 6. Debrief and Next Steps – Next training is April 16**

Nehemiah 2:4-8

4 The king said to me, “What is it you want?”

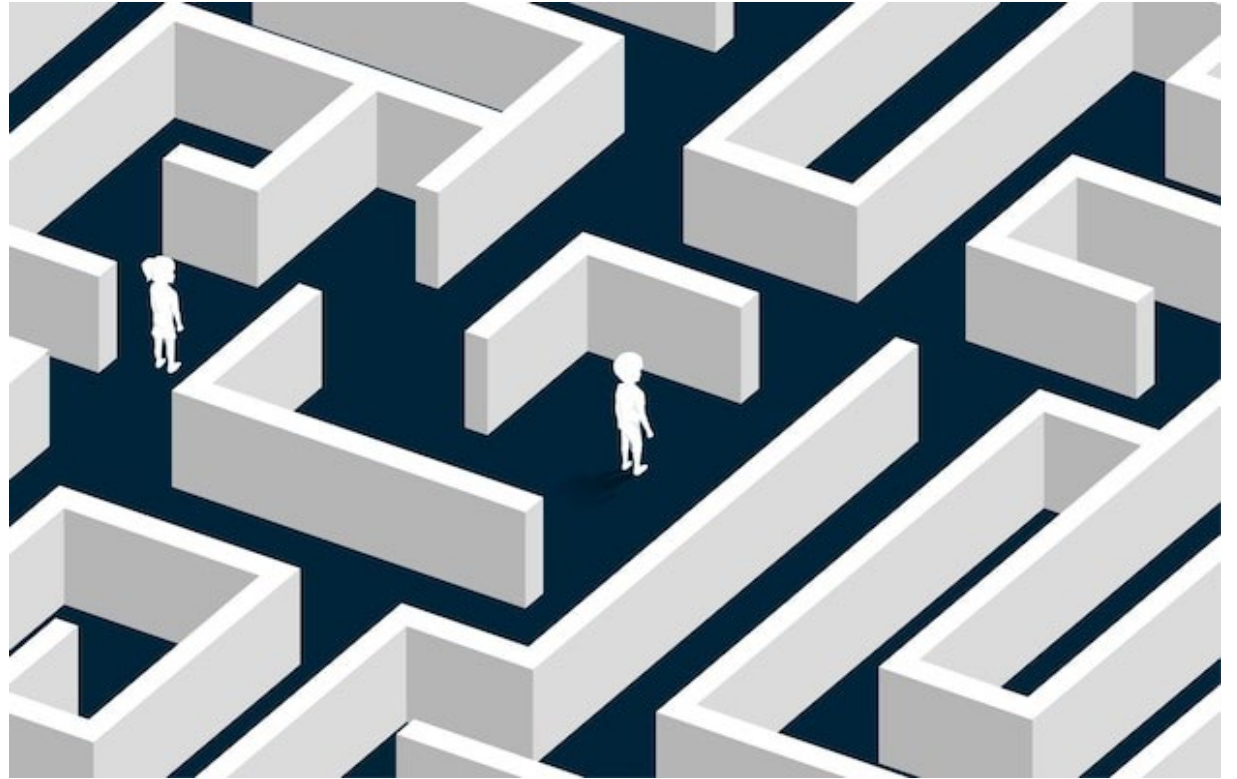
Then I prayed to the God of heaven, 5 and I answered the king, “If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my ancestors are buried so that I can rebuild it.”

6 Then the king, with the queen sitting beside him, asked me, “How long will your journey take, and when will you get back?” It pleased the king to send me; so I set a time.

7 I also said to him, “If it pleases the king, may I have letters to the governors of Trans-Euphrates, so that they will provide me safe-conduct until I arrive in Judah? 8 And may I have a letter to Asaph, keeper of the royal park, so he will give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel by the temple and for the city wall and for the residence I will occupy?” And because the gracious hand of my God was on me, the king granted my requests.

Personal Reflection

Share an experience of feeling stuck in a maze, when you faced a system that you had difficulty navigating. How did you feel?



How Inequality Works

Inequality is not inevitable

All societies have some inequality
but the amount varies dramatically.

Some have large gaps in wealth, power and opportunity
but others are relatively equal and peaceful.

Because social systems are created by people
they can be changed by people.

How Inequality Functions

All societies sort people into groups – based on *visible* physical characteristics and/or *invisible* social factors – often at birth



Categorize

Examples: Race, gender, immigration status, language, birthplace, social class...

How Inequality Functions

Societies then rank groups, creating a hierarchy of human value – which is false, but can feel real.

Categorize

Rank

Examples: Racism, patriarchy, classism, discrimination against migrants...

How Inequality Functions

Institutions then distribute resources and opportunities based on social categories.

Categorize

Rank

Hoarding

Examples of Opportunity Hoarding:

- Low spending on health and education
- Excluding young people from formal jobs
- Lack of access to land titles

How Inequality Functions

Exploitation is when one group takes the resources of another group or the value they produce.



Examples of Exploitation:

- Low wages
- High-interest rate loans – “loan sharking”
- Farmers receive a fraction of value they produce

Why Organizing is an Antidote to Inequality



Blueprints

A system may seem natural and unchangeable - but it always has an underlying blueprint = laws, rules, protocols, practices, norms, stories, and hidden assumptions – especially rules about how people are categorized into groups and how resources are distributed.

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To change the system's blueprint:

- #1 Understand how it works – follow the money/research the rules/find out who benefits?
- #2 Imagine what could be different <> create space for leaders to think together.
- #3 Build alliances with organizations that share interest in changing the blueprint.

Small group discussion questions

How does the hierarchy of human value operate where you organizer?

Choose a system – agriculture, land rights, development, etc. – what do you know about the blueprint?

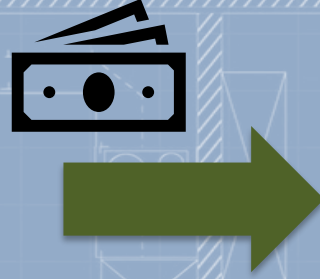
CASE STUDY: Smallholder Farmers in Haiti

What farmers need:

- Water
- Quality Seeds
- Tools
- Credit
- Crop insurance
- Land
- Roads
- Konbit – working together



Haiti Agriculture Policy Blueprint



Selected Randomly

voucher 

**Technical assistance
and seeds – 1 year**

Haiti Agriculture Blueprint

Small group strategy questions:

- What is the pain people experience?
- What choices cause that pain?
- Who is benefiting?
- Can we imagine a different blueprint?
- Who else could benefit from changing the blueprint?

Reflection and Next Steps

- **What was most useful from this training?**
- **What was difficult or challenging?**
- **Next steps:**
 - **A 1:1 to better understand the Blueprint in your context**
 - **Next training on April 16**

