

SOCIAL JUSTICE LAWYERING

Law Centres Network Conference 2018, Newcastle
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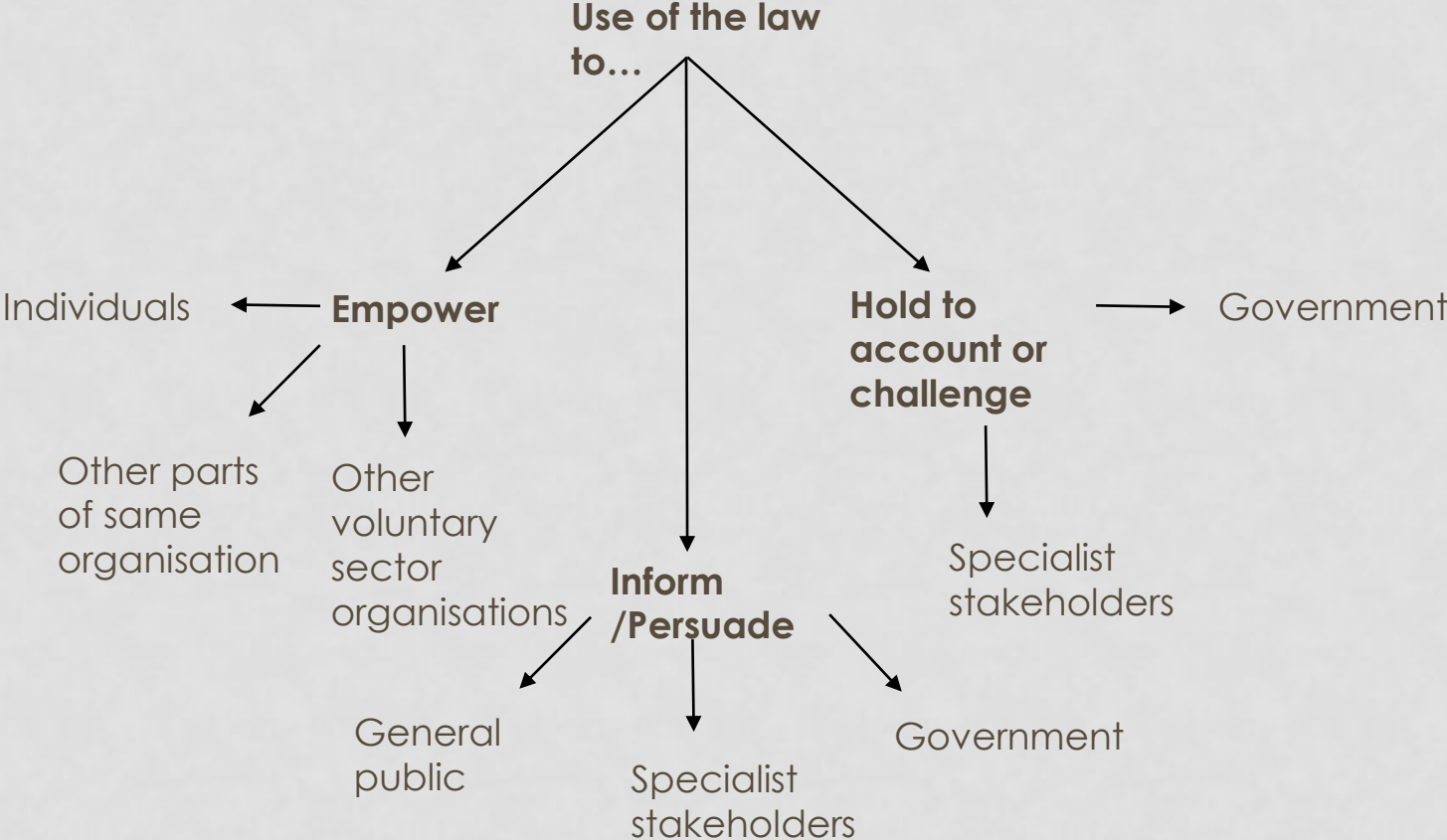
SOCIAL JUSTICE LAWYERING



A MOVEMENT FOR CHANGE

“Look what’s actually happened, look at the changes people have made over the centuries...it’s that kind of social justice movement...Everyday I’m excited by the community I work in. There’s all kinds of people who...I find them really inspiring and I enjoy the atmosphere, we’re all pushing for the same thing” (Ankita).

USE OF THE LAW...



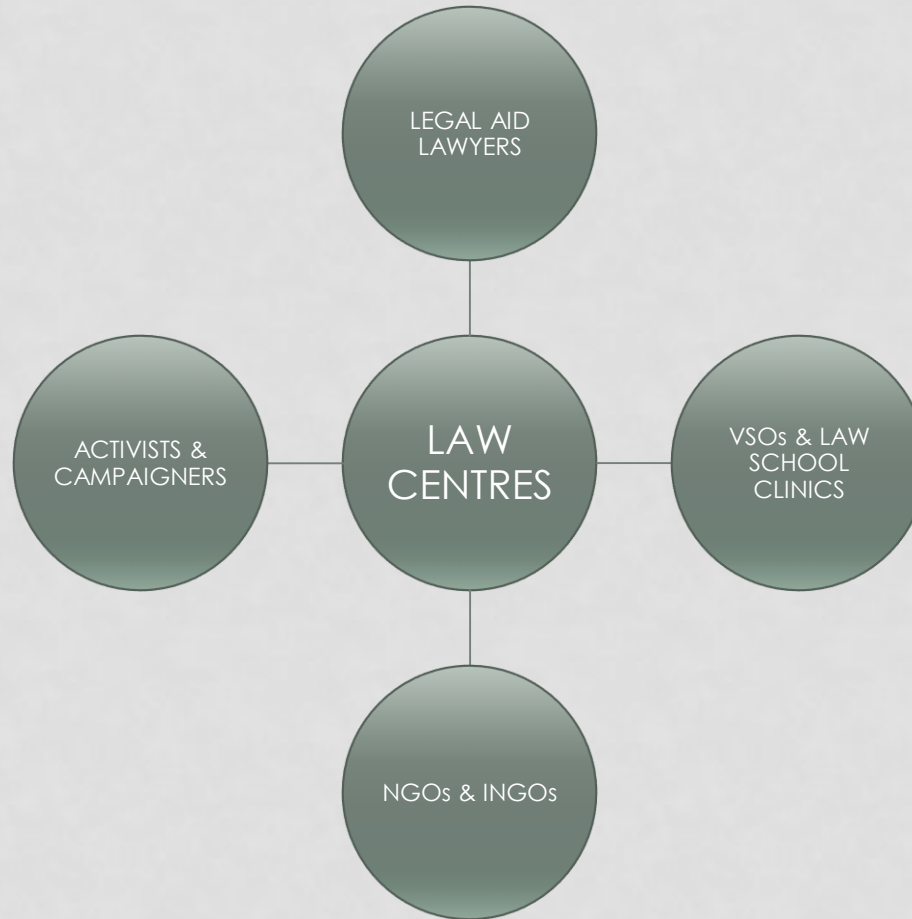
Source: Dr Lisa Vanhala, Framework for Better Use of Law by the Voluntary Sector, Working Paper No. 2, The Baring Foundation

A MOVEMENT FOR CHANGE

“You were a general practitioner on the frontline, protecting people who had absolutely no chance of protecting themselves...and effectively most people could get legal aid” (Phil).

*“We don’t rely solely on legal aid income. We’re not even able to rely on most of our legal aid income...the quality of work that you can do is too low. It’s inexcusably low. I think it’s unethical really...in terms of how effective we can be it’s important that we do strategic work”
(Kimberley).*

SOCIAL JUSTICE LAWYERING NETWORKS



BARING'S LANDSCAPE REVIEW

- **Context:** Spending cuts, Brexit and other political shifts pose challenges for using the law strategically. Structural factors within the legal system are also affecting what legal access charities have.
- **Laws charities use now:** the Human Rights Act (1998), Equality Legislation, a range of soft laws and international rights and norms are used now.
- **Resourcing:** Less statutory legal aid is available for charities, leading many to look elsewhere for funding e.g. crowdfunding.

BARING'S LANDSCAPE REVIEW

- **Collaboration:** Charities working together, or with state actors, has been shown to be very effective in certain cases. However, the success of both can depend a lot on the context and more work needs to be done to measure and define successful collaborative working.
- **Interaction with other tactics:** Many say that the use of law has to be in conjunction with other methods of social change, but there are no hard rules on this. Again, more work needs to be done on the impact of different tactics.
- **Backlash:** Finally, charities should be wary of a possible rise in counter-mobilization undermining their efforts using the law and human rights.

A MOVEMENT FOR CHANGE

“If there’s any chance I will keep going and, you know, the best wins take the longest and the best lawyers don’t give up” (Phil).

“This work needs to be done. But this work can only be done if you have a heart for it...the hours are long, the money isn’t lucrative but it’s really satisfying work. If an individual really has a passion for social justice and for making change that’s what we do. And the changes impact not a few but many” (Dominic).