



A Framework for
Partnerships between
Research Organizations
and Social Movements

IDinsight

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About IDinsight

IDinsight uses data and evidence to help leaders combat poverty worldwide. Our collaborations deploy a large analytical toolkit to help clients design better policies, rigorously test what works, and use evidence to implement effectively at scale. We place special emphasis on using the right tool for the right question and tailor our rigorous methods to the real-world constraints of decision-makers.

IDinsight works with governments, foundations, NGOs, multilaterals, and businesses across Africa and Asia. We work in all major sectors including health, education, agriculture, governance, digital ID, financial access, and sanitation.

We have offices in Dakar, Lusaka, Manila, Nairobi, New Delhi, Rabat, and Remote. Visit www.IDinsight.org and follow us on Twitter [@IDinsight](https://twitter.com/IDinsight) to learn more.

Executive Summary

Research organizations should work with social movements, in addition to their partnerships with nonprofits and governments. These collaborations can help create a more fair and equal society for many people around the world.

Social movements are networks of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups, and/or organizations, engaged in political or cultural conflicts, on the basis of shared collective identities (Diani 1992).

Our research shows that social movements are interested in working with research organizations, but the relationship must be designed to meet the unique needs of the social movement.

Just as research organizations have to adjust their approaches depending on whether they are serving academics, nonprofits or governments, a similar set of intentional alterations to relationships, ways of working, and service offerings will be needed to make the most of this opportunity.

Research partnerships focused on refining theories of change, estimating the burden of societal problems, building monitoring and management systems, audience and message research, and assessing policy options can be valuable. The right approach to partnership will vary depending on the theory of change adopted by social movements: those taking an 'inside game' policy influencing approach, or focused on 'community organizing' have great potential to digest evidence.

Across all such partnerships, research organizations must adapt to accommodate social movements' particular features. Social movements can be fragmented. Their value-driven worldview can bring risks of motivated reasoning. Some have strong preferences about the types of evidence that are right for them. All social movements have a strong need for sustained relationships of trust. Many have limited funds and limited professional staff time. The identities of those staff may be important, when there are cultural gaps with representatives of the research organization. In many places, social movements grapple with repressive governments and can only make much progress during brief and unpredictable windows of opportunity.

Flawed partnerships have often brought frustration to both sides. Yet both parties share a deep drive for impact and a spirit of inclusion. Both parties have their unique skills. Many of the advances of which our societies are proudest were won by social movements. The power of evidence, transmitted through the right partnerships, may help those movements to take the next uphill step towards human flourishing.

We developed this framework primarily for internal use at IDinsight, as we look to grow our portfolio of work with social movement organizations.

We believe other research organizations will also be able to use the framework to guide how they select and build partnerships with social movements that have a higher chance of social impact.

Box 1: The ideal social movement project

Partnerships between social movements and research organizations will have a higher chance of impact when they have many or all of the following features. We discuss the evidence and reasoning for these conclusions and some of the terms used in later sections.

Project features that are unusual and specific to social movements:

- Social movement is in a phase of coalescence or institutionalization, or a 'Spring' or 'Autumn' season of activity
- Social movement adopts an 'inside game' policy influencing, or 'community organizing' theory of change
- Social movement is tightly bound together through effective coalition structures, specific client organization within that movement is unusually well networked within the movement, or there is a clear plan to ensure evidence influences the wider movement
- The potential for conflict with other clients is considered - most notably whether this will damage relationships with governments with whom many research organizations also work

Project features that are common to all client-facing research projects but may be still more important in working with social movements:

- There is a shared commitment and vision around impact, inclusion, and dignity
- Relatively complex theories of change and pathways to impact are articulated
- Research organization has the relevant topic-based expertise, coupled with a commitment to learn from the practical experience of the social movement's activists
- Research organization's staff share life experiences and values with the client, and communicate with humility
- Project focuses on testing and improving specific programs or activities, not a straightforward evaluation of the whole of the movement
- Clear agreements in advance about research independence, authorship, public sharing, data ownership and intellectual property
- There is an agreement and mutual understanding about the methods to be used, how they will be interpreted, and the implications for the movement's work
- The project is one part of a long-term relationship, and the project plan includes flexibility
- Staff are trained in personal and digital security skills
- The most effective and impactful learnings to communicate are selected together by client and researchers
- There is a clear plan for disseminating evidence into policy, and back to the communities that the social movement represents
- As well as evidence, researchers provide skills transfer and help sustain a culture of evidence

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1. Introduction

Partnerships between social movement organizations and research organizations have the potential to be highly impactful. Both sides of those partnerships have key strengths that can be leveraged - but partnerships between these types of organizations have often been flawed and frustrating.

How and when should research organizations choose to partner with social movements? How can we build better partnerships for impact?

IDinsight is looking to grow its portfolio of projects that support the evidence needs of social movement organizations. In this report, we propose a framework that can guide IDinsight as well as other research organizations when engaging with social movement organizations.

The work primarily addresses research organizations, rather than social movements, though we hope it may be of value to the latter as well.

1.1 Approach

We began with a review of the published academic literature on social movements in theory, to which we added identified 'gray' literature on the lessons of partnerships between research organizations and social movements. We then supplemented this with a review of the academic literature on the Kenyan women's rights social movement.

To deepen and validate our findings, and to gain a specific understanding of our case study, we then conducted a series of key informant interviews with figures from the Kenyan women's rights movement. These informants are listed in the Appendix 3.4. They in turn recommended additional written sources, with an iterative analytical process used to build the report.

The development of this framework proceeded in parallel with a workstream engaging with and supporting the evidence needs of the Kenyan women's rights movement, including a specific partnership with Amplify Girls, a collective of community-driven organizations working to localize global development and invest in adolescent girls. We drew lessons from the practical experience of our work together under this partnership, and from the conversations that supported it.

The report then underwent both internal and external review by leaders in research organizations in Africa, and validation by thought leaders in women's social movements in Kenya, to check the practical value of its recommendations.

1.2 Defining social movements

The term social movements encompass a wide variety of groupings or organizations, usually associated with highly visible and disruptive actions to achieve the desired change. For the purposes of this document, we use the term social movements to refer to networks of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups, and/or organizations, engaged in political or cultural conflicts, on the basis of shared collective identities (Diani 1992).

Social movements have defining characteristics that are generalizable across the different types of social movements which focus on distinct social challenges. The key characteristics include:

- Plurality of actors with shared networks and interests (Rosenthal et al., 1985)
- Social justice-oriented, born out of dissatisfaction and frustration with the status quo of a particular social issue
- Initial informality in the organization as most social movements work outside the mainstream system, though they may later institutionalize
- Prolonged duration usually interspaced with short-term flash points of activities in response to a suitable window of opportunity.

Social movements have contributed to the key defining moments that have shaped the world as we know it today. For instance, the abolitionist movement garnered political, social and religious support to end slavery everywhere (Hochschild, 2006). Contemporary environmental movements have helped win legislation and other policies that have reduced air, water, and ground pollution (Kline, 2022). Revolutionary movements led by political leaders lead to the independence of once-colonized countries, and have gone on shaping those countries since (García-Ponce & Wantchékon, 2017).

Box 2: Lessons

Social movements have had huge impacts on the world. There is the possibility of vast impact if research organizations can find the right ways to support them.

To do so, they will have to adapt to the fragmentation of actors, at least tacitly share social movements' social justice goals, find their comfort level in working with informal actors and find ways to build long-term partnerships that can react to short-term windows of opportunity.

2 Proposed framework for partnerships between research organizations and social movements

2.1 Framework - applied

Over the course of this project, IDinsight has collaborated with Amplify Girls to provide training and support in building a culture of evidence. We employ this partnership as a test of the framework so far. This is not a retrospective judgment on the success or otherwise of this partnership, but rather an example to work through the prospective value of engaging in such a partnership in the future.

In later sections, we explore the differing lines of evidence that have led us to weighting these factors as important in selecting a social movement partnership.

Table 1. Framework - applied

Proposed Partnership:	Amplify Girls / IDinsight	Movement:	East African women's rights
RAID considerations:			
Breadth: High	Amplify Girls convenes and supports 26 small East African organizations supporting adolescent girls. There are about 37m girls in the four East African countries in which they work. The breadth of impact of future policy wins is therefore huge. The Kenyan women's rights movement has a history of winning major policy concessions every year or two.		
Depth: Medium	Many approaches are taken by Amplify Girls' 26 members - some can reasonably be expected to save lives (via reduced gender-based violence), some provide additional years of schooling (via campaigns and service provision for girls education), and some increase self-confidence, with a longer path to impact.		
Contribution: Low	IDinsight would be a major partner for Amplify Girls. However, the need to transmit benefits to Amplify Girls, who then transmit them to their 26 members, who then bring the benefits to girls, and who may collectively also impact policy, means this is a complex route in which many factors beyond IDinsight's work would be at play.		
Phase:		Theory of change:	
Institutionalization	Optimum time for research organizations to be involved.	Community organizing	This theory can make extensive use of evidence.
Relevant challenges and advantages:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fragmentation: AG is a convener in a well-networked movement. By the standards of social movements, fragmentation is low. We will additionally hold events to bring together a wider community of women's rights organizations. • Value-driven worldview and the risks of motivated reasoning: Our values are well-aligned in support of girls' education. • Specific epistemological beliefs and needs around evidence: In early meetings, AG showed a willingness to commit to evidence. The proposed work on evidence skills and theory of change do not require evidence sharing or threaten their work. • Sustained relationships: This is a new relationship. Patient investment will be required to build trust. We expect funding to be available to continue this relationship in some form in the future. • Fundraising: Funding is available for this work. • Resource limitations: AG is small. A partnership with a single small organization raises risks, and this weakens the case for proceeding. • Cultural & demographic identity: IDinsight is well-rooted in Nairobi, and can provide staff who sympathize with and share identities with those AG serves. • Closing civic space: The space of girls education is fairly welcomed by all relevant governments and we do not anticipate threats of repression to affect this work. • Drive for impact and a spirit of inclusion: All partners share a strong desire for impact. IDinsight will have to reassure the partner on its commitment to a spirit of inclusion. • Routes into policy: AG is committed to shaping the overall global development environment, while many of its partners make efforts to influence policy, but the primary theory of change is of community building for a healthy movement, which is not directly influencing policy. We propose to hold events to disseminate reflections and results to other actors including more policy-oriented women's rights organizations. • Critical junctures: it is unlikely that we are currently in a window of opportunity for major change. Preparatory, theoretical and systems building work of the type proposed here will be most useful. • Conflict of interest and brand threats: Though the feminist movement criticizes the Kenyan government, the conflict is not so intense as to damage IDinsight's efforts to build relationships with government. 			
Recommendation:	Proceed		

2.2 Framework - blank

Table 2. Framework - blank

Proposed Partnership:		Movement:	
RAID considerations:			
Breadth:			
Depth:			
Contribution:			
Phase:		Theory of change:	
Phase	Assessment	Theory	Assessment
Relevant challenges and advantages:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fragmentation: • Value-driven worldview and the risks of motivated reasoning: • Specific epistemological beliefs and needs around evidence: • Sustained relationships: • Fundraising: • Resource limitations: • Cultural & demographic identity: • Closing civic space: • Drive for impact and a spirit of inclusion: • Routes into policy: • Critical junctures: • Conflict of interest and brand threats: 			
Recommendation:			

2 Supporting conclusions about evidence partnerships

This section draws on the learnings from various sources: our experience at IDinsight, a case study of women's rights social movement in Kenya (Appendix 3.3) and the wider body of literature on social movements (Appendices 3.1 and 3.2) to propose a framework that can be used to guide the partnerships between social movements and research organizations.

We examine how partnerships might thrive according to the practical lessons shared by social movements, according to the life cycle of social movements, their chosen theories of change. We then synthesize lessons so far in a list of relevant challenges and advantages of partnerships with social movements, and look through the lens of IDinsight's 'RAID' rules for judging social impact.

2.1 Practical lessons from social movements

Greater and more deliberate use of research evidence by social movements has the potential to improve the social impact of their work (Folscher, 2021). However, partnerships between research organizations and social movements have often been challenging and led to frictions (Raising Voices, 2015). In a webinar to launch a guide reflecting on such partnerships, the leading one-word summaries by participants included 'challenging', 'enriching' and 'perseverance' (SVRI, accessed 9 November 2022). As such, there is interest in how evidence partnerships between social movements and research organizations can be more effective and mutually beneficial.

Social movements sharing their practical experience of these partnerships, and their anxieties about them, ask for three main things to be taken into account: 1) empathy for the unique limitations of social movement organizations; 2) early engagement and co-creation of evidence; and; 3) sustained engagement.

This practical experience of partnerships has significantly shaped the framework presented above. These conclusions are complemented by work presented in the appendices looking at the typologies and theories of social movements, and a case study examining the case of the use of evidence by the Kenyan women's rights movement.

Appetite for evidence

Pastor and Ortiz (2009) suggest that there are six key capacities required for social movements to succeed. The second of these is “The capacity to research, frame and communicate.”¹ Campaign groups express frustration at the difficulty of measuring some of the most important concepts in their work - such as power - and in how to determine the impact in their complex advocacy spaces. 95% of respondents to a Mobilisation Lab survey were collecting some sort of survey data, but about half expressed dissatisfaction at their current M&E, with many focusing on only the easiest-to-collect metrics (Rolfe-Redding, 2020).

Some movement theories of change are easier to measure than others, and many social movements find it very hard to demonstrate impact to funders - especially when their theory of change focuses on mass protest (Engler et al, 2018). Social movements may also be keen on collaboration; in a survey by the Global Fund for Women of 115 individuals working in the Ukrainian women's rights movement, the two highest priority areas to strengthen were collaboration and support infrastructure (Karbowska & Chen, 2018).

“Social movements always have an intellectual side in which problems are identified and strategies are explored. The conservative movement elevated this aspect of movement building to a new level with a series of think tanks that provided research, framing, and policy development alongside the organizing and mobilization on the ground...they have dealt with this by both building in-house research capacities and forging effective alliances with academics and intermediaries.” (Pastor & Ortiz, 2009).

When they do want evidence, social movement leaders have strong views about which research methods are most appropriate, sometimes diverging from the assessments of research organizations. Leaders from Twaweza in East Africa have reflected on their experiences of evidence, asserting forcefully its value for social change, but noting that it often needs a tighter link to action, and the essential work of being grounded in contexts and relationships to help that happen (Lipovsek & Eyakuze, 2018). Scholars working on these issues have made sharp criticisms of the use of simplistic quantitative indicators and blunt experimental designs that do not capture the full complexity of power relations and uncertain paths to impact (Fischer-Mackey & Fox, 2022). Participatory action research methods are often seen as more useful (Swiss Agency for Co-Operation and Development; OECD, 2012). There is a strong desire for research that is sensitive to hierarchies of power among researchers, social movements, research participants, in the society being studied and between Global North and South (Medie & Kang, 2019).

“Hierarchies of knowledge mean that practitioner knowledge and perspectives, together with deep understanding of socio-political context,

¹ The other five, which research might also support, are: the ability to organize a base constituency; the ability to strategically assess power; the capacity to manage large and growing organizations; the capability to engage and network with others; and the ability to refresh organizational vision and organizational leadership (Pastor & Ortiz, 2009).

are not always valued as compared to traditional academic research knowledge . . . Co-production of knowledge is a concept that is central to many research partnerships. Yet in reality there is often a disconnect between providing space for marginalized Southern voices, and the perception (in academia) of what constitutes rigorous, credible evidence.”
(Christian Aid & Rethinking Research Collaborative, 2018).

Empathy

Literature shows that evidence partnerships are more effective when there is empathy for the unique features of social movements, rather than engaging with them as one would an NGO. Many actors within the social movement sector have vast practice-based expertise, even if that has not been documented (The Prevention Collaborative, 2019). The individual organizations that make up social movements are usually small and resource constrained, with very limited capacity to conduct research or even digest evidence. The limited staff might also be overwhelmed, and it is common for one person to perform multiple functions (Raising Voices & Sexual Violence Research Initiative, 2020). In addition, conditions attached to funding might restrict the scope of activities or autonomy of the organization; many social movement organizations feel a tension in managing their relationships with donors. Research organizations need to avoid burdening the limited staff of social movement organizations with additional responsibilities related to the generation or use of data, thereby distracting them from their vital work, but should instead find simple and user-friendly systems (Williamson et al., 2019).

“Partnerships flourish when they are based on respect and nurtured through a commitment to relationship building, recognition and respect for the skill and expertise of each partner, open communication, equity, and kindness.”
(Raising Voices & Sexual Violence Research Initiative, 2020)

Co-creation

Early engagement and co-creation of evidence also improve partnerships between social movements and research organizations (Nicholas et al, 2019). Some scholars have even called for both parties to be open to an experience of “self-transformation” through the partnership (Dartnall & Gevers, 2017). Deep collaboration with key staff in the social movement organization helps research organizations to understand their evidence needs and develop a learning agenda collaboratively. Using participatory approaches also helps improve the research skills of the staff in the social movement organization, sustaining impact in the longer term (Raising Voices, 2015). A starting point of equality in the partnership is crucial, because such encounters have often felt hierarchical and extractive (Raising Voices & Sexual Violence Research Initiative, 2020).

Relationships

Proactively building and sustaining relationships beyond a single campaign or project has also been shown to build trust and increase the uptake of evidence. Research organizations should maintain lines of communication and demonstrate continued support and allyship with organizations or the wider community. In addition, the research organization can support the creation of sector or issue-specific communities of practice which can foster learning (Raising Voices, 2015). Partnerships between organizations rooted in the Global South, with lots of face-to-face time, may have a better chance of thriving (Dartnall & Gevers, 2017).

In forming these relationships, research organizations will need to recognize the potential difficulties that social movements' long term goals may present, since they do not fit neatly into program cycles. Similarly, they will also need to recognize the inherently political and often confrontational nature of social movements (Fernando; OECD, 2012).

Both of these go against the course of how research organizations generally work. Therefore, it is important to honestly and jointly set the principles of a partnership early in the process, separately from setting research objectives (Raising Voices & Sexual Violence Research Initiative, 2020). When things do go wrong, explicit processes to resolve conflicts are valuable (Larkan et al, 2016). These agreements must eventually be formalized in writing by the parties (Raising Voices & Sexual Violence Research Initiative, 2020) - another area where careful attention must be paid to power dynamics (Marais et al, 2013).

Box 3: Lessons

Evidence partnerships between social movements and research organizations foster impactful work, and there is demand for them from social movements. However, they also frequently bring frustration. For these partnerships to be effective, we recommend the following:

- The partnership should be guided by explicitly stated principles, later feeding into terms of reference that show the key responsibilities of each partner, rooted in an existing relationship of empathy, shared socio-political impact goals, and co-creation.
- Important changes to research organizations' standard approaches will be needed to accommodate the pressures and needs of social movements.
- An orientation towards service provision for impact is often more useful to social movements than a focus on academic learning.
- Relationships must be sustained between projects and over the long term.

2.2 Life cycles of social movements

When should we look to partner with social movements? The writings of Sidney Tarrow have been instrumental in understanding the phases of social movements. Social movements typically undergo four main phases: inception/emergency, coalescence, institutionalization, decline and rebirth (Tarrow, 1993).

Importantly, these phases should not be seen as linear or as happening only once. Social movements work in cyclical 'seasons' of activity within and moving between these phases (Saavedra, 2022a).

Table 3. Social movement phases and evidence needs

When to engage: stages of the social movements	Types of evidence that might be required	How to engage	Assessment
Emergence: initiation of a movement in response to a social issue.	<p>Estimating the burden of the problem: generating prevalence/incidence rates through epidemiological studies or rapid review of evidence.</p> <p>Lessons from other social movements.</p> <p>Basic theory of change.</p>	Individual advice, joining informal meetings as an ally. 'Trigger' conditional funding mechanisms to respond to new situations	<p>Research organizations are not major partners here. Avoid unless there are strong reasons for exceptions.</p> <p>No formal organizations to partner with. Fast-moving situation. Little or no resources available. Evidence takes more institutional capability to plan around and digest. In the particular clientelistic politics of many African states, few social movements can get beyond this stage without cooptation (de Waal & Ibreck, 2013).</p>

<p>Coalescence: growth of the movement, proactive recruitment of sympathizers through social networks (Sikkink 2003)</p>	<p>Message testing for recruitment - generating 'resonant collective action frames' that link material deprivation to system change (de Waal & Ibreck, 2013) and demonstrating their relevance to the daily lives of people (Folscher, 2021).</p> <p>Supporting building monitoring and management systems to allow the movement to grow.</p> <p>Refined theory of change.</p> <p>Advocacy statistics for specific campaigns.</p>	<p>Convenings of individual activists and nascent groups for training and reflection in learning and evidence skills</p>	<p>Research organizations can play a role here.</p> <p>They can provide spaces and introduce evidence, with the support of 'field-building' funders.</p>
<p>Institutionalization: increased interaction between the movement and the formal systems</p>	<p>Monitoring and evaluation of programs: provide support on what kind of data should be collected, when and how it should be collected.</p> <p>Longitudinal data on progress of an intervention: support setting up of systems for data collection and analysis</p> <p>Evidence of the cost and effectiveness of different policy options</p> <p>Message testing for public campaigns, managing networks of activists.</p>	<p>Research projects with small cohorts of organizations, supported with dissemination to a wider cohort and some skills transfer.</p>	<p>This is the optimum time for research organizations to be involved, with mature but lively movements. Research organizations should focus their efforts here.</p> <p>Social movements are often criticized for highlighting the problems really well, but not proposing feasible alternatives. Therefore, research organizations can help support the development of policy solutions that are feasible to implement, as well as thinking about how to support government/other actors in implementing these solutions.</p>
<p>Decline: Reduced intensity of the movement due to the goals being achieved or repression</p>	<p>Impact analysis of change that is implemented and scoping new areas that still require advocacy.</p>	<p>Research projects with individual mature organizations on more major questions.</p>	<p>Research organizations can engage where there are compelling opportunities.</p> <p>The optimum moment may have passed - but much good can still be done by these movements on individual issues. Partnerships with research organizations can be justified.</p>

Rebirth: Spin off of versions of the initial versions of movements due to cultural or cognitive influences	<i>See Emergence above.</i>
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Box 4: Lessons

Research organizations can provide the most support when social movements are in the coalescence and institutionalization phases. Outside of these, relationships remain valuable, but major collaborations through projects require additional justification.

2.3 Theories of change of social movements

Different social movements will employ different theories of change. Carlos Saavedra has described five such theories (Saavedra, 2022b). Each has implications for the relevance and value of evidence and partnerships with research organizations.

Helping social movements clarify their theory of change is an important evidence priority. Social movements that employ a mass protest theory of change find evidence particularly challenging (Engler et al, 2018).

“The more that groups are able to articulate their operative theory of change, locate themselves within a particular piece of the movement ecology, and figure out how to relate strategically to others, the more likely it is that a movement can advance transformative change.” (Engler et al, 2018)

Table 4. Theories of change

Theory	Description	Implications for research organization
Personal transformation	Individuals personally understand an injustice and their role in challenging it, in response to external stimuli.	<p>Limited role for research organizations.</p> <p>While this theory can make some use of evidence, research organizations like IDinsight are not well places to support the evidence needs because of the low likelihood of such movements impacting greater societal change?</p>
Development of alternatives	Small groups collaborate on a different way of being that implicitly challenges the dominant practices, demonstrating the possibility of an alternative and providing inspiration.	<p>Limited role for research organizations.</p> <p>This theory can make use of evidence that shows the credibility and impact of the different alternatives being considered. Projects focused on participatory learning about the experiences of these communities may be most relevant.</p>
Inside game	Allies and sympathizers with the movement, already holding roles within dominant structures, find ways to direct policy, funding, attention or other resources in the movement's preferred direction.	<p>Major role for research organizations.</p> <p>This theory can make extensive use of evidence. Projects focused on providing policy-relevant evidence may be most relevant.</p>
Community organizing	Activists work with communities facing injustice to build their understanding and allow them to make unified and sustained demands on political actors.	<p>Major role for research organizations.</p> <p>This theory can make extensive use of evidence. Projects focused on managing and building existing volunteers and activists may be most relevant. IDinsight can offer capacity building services to the movement.</p>
Mass protests	A wide constituency, going beyond those directly affected by an injustice, turn out for highly visible protests and put large but temporary pressure on political actors.	<p>Limited role for research organizations.</p> <p>There is a major conceptual gap in how to evaluate movements taking this approach, making research collaborations challenging. Considerable methodological innovations are needed to unlock the potential of evidence here. Given the rapid evolution of mass protests, research organizations might not provide timely evidence to support the cause and the partnership might not be useful.</p>

Box 5: Lessons

Research organizations can provide the most support when social movements take an 'inside game' and 'community organizing' approach. There is a considerable evidence gap around movements taking a mass protest approach. It is possible to imagine projects for other theories of change ('personal transformation' and 'development of alternatives' but the bar will be much higher to moving ahead with such work.

2.4 Challenges and advantages of partnering with social movements

In the table below, we explore some of the features of social movements and how they impact on partnerships with research organizations. These lessons were gathered through IDinsight's experience, interviews with social movements, and review of the literature. For each of these, we discuss the potential implications of this for future partnerships with research organizations.

Table 5. Some factors to grapple with in partnerships with social movements

Feature	Description	Implications for research organization
Fragmentation	Social movements are made up of many smaller organizations.	Social movements with umbrella committees or close interlinkages may be more promising for impact. Support to multiple actors at once and dissemination beyond the immediate client is very important. Partnerships with social movements that are not part of a umbrella organizations should be avoided as the are difficult to manage due to various factors including capacity limitation and low likelihood of impact

<p>Value-driven worldview and the risks of motivated reasoning</p>	<p>Activists strongly defend the value of what they do, and may wish to argue against evidence saying otherwise. All actors have a particular worldview, but social movements are more specific and public about this view and how it informs their work.</p>	<p>We always seek partners with due humility, but a focus on improving specific programs and campaigns - rather than evaluations of the overall efficacy of a movement - will always be easier to find common ground on, in working with social movements as with any other client. Clear agreements in advance will be necessary around research independence and public sharing, to allow us to make a decision about whether to proceed with a project.</p> <p>Research that begins with different assumptions and worldviews from the client will always struggle. We are generally a service-providing organization, and will work in support of the general worldview of our client so long as it is aligned with impact and our values. Where there are important differences in our worldview about what constitutes positive impact, we should try to surface these during the RAID process.</p>
<p>Specific epistemological beliefs and needs around evidence</p>	<p>Activists sometimes strongly critique quantitative and experimental methods. They may also find particular value in the single 'killer statistic' that summarizes the scale of a problem.</p>	<p>Qualitative methods may be easier to find common ground on. Where we are using quantitative and especially experimental methods, we should look out for these concerns, co-develop outcome measures to create buy-in and create room to debate worries early, well before results are available. Descriptive results are important to clients in this work. Research teams would need to work closely with clients to suggest statistics that are appropriately well-founded and justified by the research method.</p>
<p>Sustained relationships</p>	<p>Activists envision their work in multi-decade battles and with fast reactions to windows of opportunity. They favor long-term relationships, often continuing to work together over multiple projects.</p>	<p>Learning partnerships, which are both long-term and flexible, may work best for these types of clients. We are also looking to invest in longer partnerships. Staying in touch and providing occasional advice to clients in this sector can be of great value to them, in addition to specific projects. Research team members may need encouragement and funding to stay in regular touch with a client and offer small support in between more major collaborations.</p>
<p>Fundraising</p>	<p>Many social movements lack funding, and the funders that support social movements are not those who we have worked with most often.</p>	<p>We have strong relationships with some well aligned funders, such as Hewlett and BMGF. We will need to proactively develop relationships with other funders and support them on their evidence journey (e.g. Ford Foundation, Open Society Foundations, NoVo Foundation, African Women's Development Fund, Women's Fund Asia).</p>

Resource limitations	<p>Small organizations may have only one research-focused staff member, and high turnover is common.</p> <p>Activists are often hungry for training that will allow them to better navigate evidence</p> <p>Small organizations can often only focus on one issue at once and are not available during some periods.</p>	<p>A tight relationship with the most senior and longest tenure staff members can help ensure stability, combined with briefings to staff in a wide range of roles. This means budgeting for a higher proportion of (face-to-face) client management by the manager. Products like the Impact Measurement Guide, the Bootcamp, and other training and workshops are of great relevance to these clients.</p> <p>When the client organizations are small, it is ideal to design projects that engage with three to five organizations at once under the same project, so that a good number of organizations are able to focus on the project and the budget is not wasted through idle teams</p>
Cultural & demographic identity	<p>Identity-based social movements place a strong value on seeing representation of their groups.</p>	<p>Where we have qualified staff who are part of that group, we should try to assign them to these projects. Team members not from that group (especially more senior staff and those with more social privileges) have a particular duty to acknowledge this and communicate humbly. Explicit personal statements of shared political and social values are a vital tool for bridging these gaps.</p>
Closing civic space	<p>Many social movements act in opposition to governments, and repression, surveillance and rights abuses are common in some of the countries in which we work. Support from well-known organizations such as IDinsight can help protect activists, but connections to 'foreign' organizations can also create additional vulnerability.</p>	<p>Staff embarking on more sensitive projects where these are concerns should receive additional training and guidance on personal, travel and digital security. Directors and managers have a special duty to ensure security measures are maintained. Funders and clients should be consulted on appropriate safety measures and a clear policy should be agreed and maintained around public portrayal of the project.</p>
Drive for impact and a spirit of inclusion	<p>Social movements share a strong commitment to impact, and to pursuing impact in the right ways.</p> <p>Social movements are strongly committed to doing research in an inclusive, reflective way, that respects participants</p>	<p>We will be well placed to justify aspects of our work by emphasizing our shared desire to achieve impact on the world and to advance their cause.</p> <p>We are also trying to act as inclusively as we can, and to reduce power asymmetries. We can find common ground in this area, and collaborations with social movements will push us to keep doing better too.</p>
Routes into policy	<p>Social movements care deeply about getting their ideas into policy, and form relationships to do so.</p>	<p>Our chances of impact are increased when we work for partners who can convey evidence and ideas into government.</p>
Critical junctures	<p>Social movements often make great progress in brief windows of opportunity, and little progress in between (Green, 2016) - though effective mass protest movements can generate their own trigger events (Engler et al, 2018).</p>	<p>Research organizations should seek to prepare social movements between windows of opportunity for maximum impact when they arrive by helping them build systems and evidence. Critical junctures are not moments for reflective learning. If one arrives, research projects will mostly need to pause.</p>

<p>Conflict of interest and brand threats</p>	<p>Because social movements often oppose governments and advocate for politically charged or polarizing issues, research organizations may be caught in the middle when they need to work with the government but at the same time support the cause of a social movement</p>	<p>Research organizations should remain sympathetic to the cause of the social movement but careful not to risk the brand of the organization.</p> <p>A case by case approach will be necessary, and there will be issues where - even if the staff of the research organization are sympathetic to that cause - it is simply too dangerous or contentious an issue for the research organization to take up.</p> <p>This means that they have to be sensitive to the local norms and values of the country. Research organizations can find opportune times to engage, ideally away from flash points. When partnering with social movements on highly contentious issues, deliberate 'stop points' where activities are paused to allow tension to cool should be used.</p>
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Box 6: Lessons

Social movements are special. They are not just NGOs with a focus on advocacy. There are numerous specific features of social movements that research organizations must grapple with and accommodate in forming relationships and designing collaborations.

2.5 Impact considerations when evaluating a potential social movement partnership

IDinsight has developed the 'RAID' rules that guide client development decisions. One of our key values at IDinsight is maximizing social impact of interventions. Our RAID rules consider the impact estimates of, strategic importance and risks of a proposed opportunity. Given the nature of social movements, we propose careful consideration of the impact estimates and anticipated risks when evaluating an opportunity related to social movements. In the table below, we examine the range of breadth and depth partnerships with social movements can achieve, as well as the contribution research organizations can hope to make to this. We then briefly discuss risk.

While the RAID rules were developed for internal use at IDinsight, we believe that most research organizations focused on high social impact projects make similar considerations and therefore the recommendations in this section can apply in their work.

Table 6. Considering breadth, depth, and contribution in the context of social

movements

	Standard levels	Social movements
Breadth: Number of individuals affected by the client program	Low: 0-1000 Medium: 1000-100000 High: 100000+	Social movements can reach enormous breadths, affecting whole countries and segments of the population - but few individual organizations do so alone. To maximize breadth, proposed projects should consider working with influential and well-networked partners, and have a clear plan for building relationships with, serving the needs of, and disseminating results to the wider social movement.
Depth: Amount the program affects quality of life of individuals	Low: Small impact on quality of life Medium: Moderate impact on quality of life High: Significant impact on quality of life	Mass membership movements, often acting in the face of social and personal risks, represent a strong revealed preference that the improvements promised by social movements are important to the people seeking them. Their theory of change, especially for reformative movements, often implies a wider range of outcomes and a more uncertain path to reach them than in many development service provision programs, and we should account for this uncertainty.
Contribution: Extent to which IDinsight evidence and recommendation shaped the program	Zero: No influence on program Low: Minor influence on program Medium: Moderate influence on program High: Major influence on program	Small individual organizations often lack much access to evidence and have few other advisors. Therefore, well-run projects may have high influence on individual programs. Translating this into high influence on the programs of the wider movement requires allotting real time to spreading messages and building relationships across that movement. Social movements' commitment to influencing government raises a chance of at least some influence on national programs, policies and laws.

What is the risk to achieving this impact? We have detailed many of the ways such partnerships can go wrong in preceding sections. Governments can certainly react with strong repressive measures to counter social movements when they wish. We may also wish to reflect on our levels of confidence in these changes. In doing so, we may note estimates that 47% of nonviolent campaigns succeed (Chenoweth & Shay, 2020), and all campaigns that enlist 3.5% of the population succeed (Chenoweth & Stephan, 2012).

Box 7: Lessons

Collaborations with social movements can be exceedingly impactful, as measured by the breadth, depth, and contribution of a research organization to their work. To achieve this impact, projects must be designed to accommodate the specific features of social movements discussed above.

3 Appendices

In these appendices we examine: typologies of social movements, theoretical perspectives on social movements, present a case study of the women’s rights social movement in Kenya, as well as the informants and inputters to this work and our references.

Appendix 3.1 Typologies of social movements

The common categorization applied to social movements is according to the nature and extent of the change they seek. The main types of social movements under this typology are alternative, redemptive, reformative and revolutionary movements (Aberle, 1966).

Reformative movements seek to improve some aspect of a nation’s political, economic, or social systems within the current political regime e.g. women’s rights, gay rights, or environmental movements. Revolutionary movements seek a total change of political regime or political settlement. Redemptive social movements focus on inner and spiritual change among members. Alternative movements focus on limited changes to individual beliefs and behavior.

Figure 1. Types and extent of change sought

		<i>How much change?</i>	
		Limited	Radical
<i>Who is changed?</i>	Specific individuals	Alternative social movements	Redemptive social movements
	Everyone	Reformative social movements	Revolutionary social movements

Other attempts to classify social movements are less useful for informing research partnerships:

- **Social justice issue:** Human rights-based social movements have over the course of history pushed for improved access to civil or material goals e.g. voting, land ownership, freedom of movement, water, and healthcare for marginalized groups rights-based movements guided by the universal declaration of human rights. Environmental justice-based movements have sprung up in recent times with a focus on advocating for environmentally friendly policies that aim to reduce and undo the harm to the earth. We have not observed evidence in our work of how

the character of social movements may differ by the type of issue being addressed, and therefore cannot derive implications from this for potential research partnerships; an examination of this may be a valuable topic for future research.

- **Temporality:** Social movements have evolved through time. Classic class movements that were economically oriented and focused on the rights of working-class Americans were popular in the 1930s. More contemporary social movements of the 21st Century are less economically or politically oriented but tend to be related to non-materialistic and broader human-related issues such as peace, the environment, or inequalities related to gender, ethnicity, or sexuality. The new social movements are described in the literature as looking mainly to enhance the quality of life, individual self-realization, and enjoyment of human rights of their constituents. Three main generations of African social movements have been identified: the independence movements of the 1960s, the democracy movements of the 1990s, and the post-Arab Spring movements for freedom and material provision (de Waal & Ibreck, 2013). Research organizations should expect to encounter social movements with these focuses in considering potential partnerships.
- **Other attempts:** Attempts have also been made to classify social movements by their geographic range, methods of work, and whether they are progressive or conservative, though we do not see major implications for research organizations from these classification attempts, and do not discuss them further.

Box 8: Lessons

Research organizations will usually wish to partner with limited alternative or reformative social movements, since more radical approaches will breach the law and jeopardize research organizations' other work. Research organizations will naturally wish to support movements whose issues they are in sympathy with, but there is no single rule here; this emerges through ongoing debate and consensus.

Appendix 3.2 Theoretical perspectives on social movements

Different theories have been applied to explain how and why social movements arise and the conditions required for them to work. Two prominent (Blumer, 1969) theories are **resource mobilization theory** (McCarthy & Zald, 2001), and **collective learning theory** (Kilgore 1999). Resource mobilization theory asserts that social movements are born out of the need to mobilize resources to address a particular social ill by a group of people with similar interests. Collective learning examines the ways in which people conduct themselves in groups through collective action in response to a strain that disturbs the

equilibrium of the social system. These theories have implications for research around mobilization and messaging in support of social movements.

Theories of **agenda setting** in policy development from the field of political science are also applicable to understanding how social movements work. Social movements essentially work to shift the status quo and bring often marginalized issues onto the agenda of the governments. **Political opportunity theory** (Meyer & Minkoff, 2003) posits that movements coalesce and progress is made when there is a political opening. Kingdon's **multiple streams theory** for agenda setting (Kingdon, 1984) argues that social movements can be understood to be key policy actors that influence the framing of social problems, legitimization of policy options over others, and oftentimes contribute to the opening of windows of opportunity for policy reform. This theoretical approach has important implications for how research organizations can contribute during different phases of the policy cycle.

A third broad theoretical approach is the '**new**' **social movement theories**. These use a broader lens that includes culture and identity to explain newer forms of collective action achieved (Melucci, 1980). Melucci postulates that modern-day social movements reject the materialistic orientation of consumerism in capitalist societies by questioning the modern idea that links the pursuit of happiness and success closely to growth, progress, and increased productivity and by instead promoting alternative values and understandings in relation to the social world. Therefore it fits well with the social issues addressed by many of the social movements that research organizations might wish to work with. This theoretical approach has important implications for how research organizations should support work on motivation and theories of change of social movements.

Box 9: Lessons

Broad theoretical approaches can shed valuable light on the types of work that research organizations can best provide support on. Research organizations will want to be able to call upon different disciplinary expertises depending on the particular work at hand - economists and psychologists may have most to say about resources and collective behavior, political scientists may be best able to shed light on work under the banner of agenda setting, and anthropologists and sociologists will be important contributors to work around culture, identity and 'new' social movement theories.

However, there are important limitations to what we can learn about shaping partnerships from academic theories of social movements, and we must study the practical experiences of those partnerships.

Appendix 3.3 A case study of women's rights social movements in Kenya

By looking in depth at a particular social movement, we can gather lessons about the potential for collaborations with research organizations. The history of the Kenyan women's rights movement and its use of evidence illuminates and particularizes the general lessons discussed above.

Brief history of the Kenyan women's rights movement

Leaders and organizations

The Kenya women's movement has played a key role as a change agent in respect to advancement of women's rights, gender equality, social justice and engendering governance. Globally, Chenoweth and Marks show that women's leadership increases the chances of success for social movements of all kinds (Chenoweth & Marks, 2022). Kenya has been described as a patriarchal society with customary laws that reinforce gender inequalities. Women's rights movements have been active with the core objective of improving women's access and utilization of resources that will improve their livelihoods. A key focus area of movements has been to dismantle the customary laws that curtails women's rights and or reinforce practices that perpetuate gender inequalities. Some of the customary laws are rooted in colonial attempts to win the cooperation and loyalty of male traditional leaders by enshrining patriarchy within colonial law.

Women movements during precolonial times in what is now Kenya were largely organized at the community level. An example are the social and welfare groups (e.g. mumikanda) which administered justice to erring husbands in a community and were capable of instigating widespread civil disturbances when they found the interests of women compromised. Formalized evidence would not have been used, but experiences were still shared - as they have been throughout the history of this movement - through oral traditions and storytelling.

With the coming of colonial rule and Christian religion, some of these community groups were abolished, and others were formalized into modern "women's clubs" whose role was to "civilize" and "uplift" African women, usually by instilling Western European Ideologies. Such was the genesis of the National Council of Women of Kenya. Around this time, formal girls' education expanded, but it was largely delivered through missionary schools reinforcing colonial and patriarchal norms (Chege & Sifuna, 2006; Dubel, 1981). Evidence use at this time was limited to record-keeping necessary to administer the organization.

A handful of women took leadership positions in this period in moments of more active resistance to colonization - such as Wangu wa Makeri, Moraa Ngiti, Siotune wa Kathake

and Mekatilili wa Menza (Maloiy; Nyabola & Pommerolle, 2018) - but the bulk of the movement, such as it was, focused on community organizing. Also at this time, with onerous tax obligations forcing many men to migrate in search of waged labor, many women became de facto heads of households (Mwatha; Badri & Tripp, 2017).

Women were active participants of the revolutionary independence movements in Kenya. In 1922, Mary Nyanjiru was shot leading a protest to release political prisoners (Maloiy; Nyabola & Pommerolle, 2018). During the Mau-Mau uprisings of 1953 to 1960, women held the fort in the family homes as their husbands fought in the war, supplied material resources to sustain those involved in battle, and in some cases actively participated in combat (Gathogo, 2017). Women held leadership roles in the nationalist movements. For instance, Wagara Wainana and Muthoni wa Gachie were active members of the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) and the Kenya African Union (KAU) (Presley, 1988), while Field Marshal Muthoni led a Mau Mau unit.

By far the largest group was Maendeleo ya Wanawake. Originally formed as an anti-Mau Mau adjunct to the colonial state, it was transformed into a genuinely grassroots African women's society after independence. In 2017, it still claimed a membership of 4 million, organized in 25,000 chapters (Mwatha; Badri & Tripp, 2017). However, by the 1980s, it had been largely co-opted by Kenya's autocratic state. Even since the advent of democracy it has often offered very conservative positions on women's rights (Nyabola, 2018). Whether it constitutes an authentic part of a progressive women's rights movement is contested. At the same time as its co-optation, the National Council of Women of Kenya was designated anti-government and was repressed; though it still formally exists, it ceased to be an important player in women's rights organizing in Kenya (Mwatha; Badri & Tripp, 2017).

The post-independence period saw the women's rights movement actively champion for civil rights for Kenyan women, and especially pursuing a fair place in governance and decision-making in all aspects of public life. At the end of the colonial period, Priscilla Abwao and Jemima Gecaga were nominated to the Kenya legislative council, and immediately after independence, Ruth Habwe ran unsuccessfully for Parliament. Five years later, she was followed by Grace Onyango, the female mayor of Kisumu, the first female MP, and later deputy speaker of the national assembly (Maloiy; Nyabola & Pommerolle, 2018). In 1974, the first female minister was appointed, and in 1982 the first female high court judge (Maloiy; Nyabola & Pommerolle, 2018). Deep local knowledge of constituencies and shifting power inside institutional structures was necessary at this time, but this was largely not considered through the lens of 'evidence'.

The Kenya Women's Group helped organize the 1985 UN Conference on Women in Nairobi, in which African women brought issues of apartheid and national liberation to the fore. At around this time, Amnesty International was at its peak in Kenya, strongly encouraging the broader human rights movement to collect accurate reportage of abuses and express itself in a language of professional moral concern rather than class-based ideology (Pommerolle, 2010). In 1985, Grace Ogot was invited by women in Gem Constituency to run for a vacant seat there, and she mobilized a grassroots women's campaign which brought her election. In 1988, FEMNET was founded to

convene women's campaign groups across Kenya and later across Africa; compiling evidence was an important part of their early experiences. From 1989, Wangari Maathai began her protests, often using her own research as the first East African woman to gain a PhD in her communication. In 1992 a group of mothers began much-followed protests for the release of political prisoners (Maloiy; Nyabola & Pommerolle, 2018).

During this post-independence period, there was also grassroots women's organizing around cooperatives, joint investments, and small entrepreneurial efforts, under the motto of development and 'harambee'. Though these groups were not generally politically motivated and perhaps did not see themselves as part of a women's movement, they are important examples of female solidarity and collaboration (Mwatha; Badri & Tripp, 2017).

Some of these campaigners came together in a National Women's Convention in 1992, with speeches sharing experience and surveys of the situation, as well as some scholarship. This convention brokered an agreement to focus on political equity, and the women's movement has contributed to the steady progress that has been made toward gender equity in political leadership. For instance, the push to increase the number of female members of parliament which was started in 1996 by Charity Ngilu and the Women's Political Caucus yielded results when in 2010 in the Kenya constitution, providing a legal framework for gender equality and women's empowerment. Women's civil rights were also much improved under this constitution; women can now inherit property from their families and Kenyan women can now pass citizenship to their children, and to their husbands if they marry a foreigner. This campaign brought other major policy wins: a national gender commission (which funded some early research), a ministry in charge of women's affairs, children and social services, a new women's fund, and better protections under the new Sexual Offences Act (Kabira & Kimani, 2012). Fiercely misogynist norms in Kenyan politics, and extensive violence against women, have continued, even as progress in legal rights has been made (Berry et al, 2020).

Kabira and Kimani provide a useful list of major organizations at this time: "Mothers in Action, the creation of Women's Political Caucus (1997), Women's Political Alliance (2000), Coalition on Violence Against Women (COVAW) 1998, the constituting of the Committee on Affirmative Action in (1999), constituting of the National Women Negotiating Team (2007), the creation of the Women Lobby Team (1999/2000), creation of Women's Organisations Coordinating Committee for protecting women's gains (2009/2010), G10 group formation (2009), Caucus for Women's Leadership Regional Assemblies, even Warembona 'Yes' (2010)...the creation of Women Mobilisation Networks by the Collaborative Centre for Gender and Development (1999)" (Kabira & Kimani, 2012). Organizations like Maendeleo ya Wanawake had by the 1980s been co-opted by the autocratic government and played a much less prominent role in calling for change. Learning during this period is mainly characterized by mutual networks and experience-sharing, with research efforts in support of major legal cases.

The women's movement was one of many interlocking movements that helped bring about the changed constitution - and the splintering of those alliances in its wake restricted progress for the women's movement as for others (Mati, 2013). By 2021, 22% of national legislators were women - a steady rise from 3% in 1997, but still less than the

legally mandated one-third (Inter-Parliamentary Union, accessed 28 October 2022). In the 2022 election, for the first time, a major vice-presidential candidate was female², and women's representation inched up a little further. Maria Nzomo wrote in 2011 "the focus of Kenya's feminist struggle is still on the "hows" of attaining a critical mass, rather than on assessing the extent to which the few women in parliament and other political institutions are using their positions to advance the women's agenda" (Nzomo, 2011).

Kenya has been independent for only 59 years. Many of these struggles and phases have featured the same characters. For instance, Wambui Otieno was a descendant of Waiyaki wa Hinga, who resisted British colonialism in the early 1900s. Otieno fought in the Mau Mau struggle, led a major legal case for the rights of spouses in the 1980s, was a prominent candidate for electoral office through the 1970s and 80s, and was a founding leader of the struggle for multiparty democracy in the 1990s. In 2007, she founded her own party, though she never made it into parliament. She died in 2011 (Maloiy; Nyabola & Pommerolle, 2018). For some feminist leaders, experience over decades has taken the place of evidence.

Box 10: Lessons

Social movements have a long history of dedicated struggle, often in repressive environments and at considerable personal risk. Many trace their history to struggles against colonization. Along the way, they have won important policy victories for their constituencies.

Evidence is only a small and recent part of that struggle. Many evidence organizations are seen as coming from colonizing countries. The starting point for partnerships must be humility - about the part evidence has to play, and about the grasp of evidence organizations on contexts and cultures.

Campaign issues

The biggest focus on the Kenyan women's rights movement, especially since the 1990s, has been on ensuring political equality through political representation. Alongside this there have been extensive efforts to build a supportive legal and policy framework, and to found executive institutions within government to safeguard and advance that policy agenda.

Womens' movements have also been at the forefront of championing environmental issues affecting women. Wangari Maathai's Green Belt Movement, a non-profit organization that aimed to promote conservation of the environment and at the same time women's rights was formed in 1977. This movement worked with women to improve their livelihoods and increase their access to resources such as clean water and firewood for cooking as well as participating in good environmental stewardship by planting trees.

² Women had run for the presidency in 1997 and 2012, though without much chance of victory. Martha Karua's 2022 candidacy was notable because her Azimio ticket with Raila Odinga had a strong chance of winning - though in the end they did not.

Her radical politics were prompted in part by the use of the tools of the state and partially co-opted women's organizations such as Maendeleo ya Wanawake to deny her elected office or equity in her university career. She frequently made use of ecological evidence in her campaigning, reflecting her own research background.

Kenyan women's organization have actively advocated for girls and women's sexual and reproductive rights including ending the practice of female genital mutilation. During colonial times, the missionary churches pioneered the calls to abandon this harmful cultural practice, and eventually, in 1960, the colonial government outlawed the practice. Women's organizations such as Maendeleo ya Wanawake Organization have continued to champion initiatives, especially in areas where the practice is still prevalent using social change initiatives and alternative ritual practices. Female genital mutilation continues to persist in Kenya despite being outlawed by the government in 2011. This movement has not been led by evidence, but the flood of international research in Kenya in recent decades has vastly expanded the base of available evidence.

Since independence, there have been major efforts to promote the welfare of Kenyan women by increasing their access to education. Scholars trace the disparities in education to the introduction of formal education systems by Western missionaries that enforced claims of masculine superiority (Chege and Sifuna, 2006; Presbey, 2022). Access to education was tied to race, and the black natives were bottom of the tier. Even among the different races, females had fewer opportunities compared to males to access education. As a result, a key focus area for the Kenyan women's rights organizations post-independence was to advocate for equality in access to education as a way to empower women to effectively participate in leadership and development. Latterly, the focus of the advocacy and activism for improving girl's education have been towards removing the economic and cultural barriers that keeps girls out of school such as abolishing female genital mutilation, provision of free sanitary pads and making primary education free. Over the years, a number of affirmative policies that promote girls' access to education have been introduced by the government. These include reentry policy re-admission into the mainstream of formal education of adolescent mothers who had dropped out of school due to pregnancy in 1996 and the free basic education policy of 2003 and a gender policy in 2007 which included commitments to enhance access and gender equity in universities through affirmative action and provision of grants and loans (Republic of Kenya 2007, 26). These policy initiatives have contributed to Kenya being ranked 18th in the world on the girls education policy index. Women in higher education have played noteworthy roles in raucous student protests and challenges to political orthodoxies, often through the University of Nairobi (Anumo & Onyango; Okech, 2020). As we discuss below, advocacy statistics have been important in much of this more recent campaigning.

Box 11: Lessons

Movements are always learning, and evidence has been used by the Kenyan social movement when available, but it has rarely been a decisive factor in bringing change.

Social movement struggles are interconnected. A deep technocratic expertise in environment, education, or some other topic can be of great value to social movements seeking to advance within that issue. A continual focus of almost all social movements is politics, policy, and advocacy to government - something many research organizations have determined they must also improve in.

Tactics

Throughout the post-independence period, one common feature has been the pursuit of feminist goals via the state, through legislation, executive agencies, presidential directives, and election to the legislature. This approach to women's rights has often been characterized by careful positioning of women as otherwise traditional mother figures, to fend off sexist assaults. Alongside this has been a frequent use of court battles, which are a crucial part of how Kenya's sometimes sclerotic and executive-dominated democracy has been contested and advanced. Court battles and advocacy to the executive have often been a prompt for gathering specific types of evidence.

Messaging around this has focused on the promise of independence, and the failures to live up to those promises. In the period 2000-2010, that messaging sometimes focused on the gap between the promises of the Millennium Development Goals and Kenya's desire to meet those standards - with an increasing role for evidence in showing that quantified targets were being missed. From 2010, an increasing theme was the concrete promises of Kenya's progressive 2010 constitution, with evidence again used to point to gaps. We see this particularly in the campaigns for girls' education (Johannes, 2010; Njue, 2019). Messaging has rarely been formally tested, with campaigners iterating and building on experience.

Alongside these comparative messages has been the use of advocacy statistics, as for many social movements. For activists for free sanitary pads in schools often quote statistics like 'One year of secondary education for a girl in Kenya corresponds to over 25 percent increase in wages' and 'if girls were to finish their secondary education, child marriage would be reduced by at least 50 percent'. The extent of the problem was highlighted in quotes like '65 percent of women and girls in Kenya are unable to afford sanitary pads' or 'girls lose an average of four school days every month, translating to two weeks of learning each term'. The extent of the problem was highlighted in quotes like '65 percent of women and girls in Kenya are unable to afford sanitary pads' or 'girls lose an average of four school days every month, translating to two weeks of learning each term'. These statistics are often repeated, but the underlying evidence that supplied them is sometimes difficult to track down.

Social movements face challenges with accessing up-to-date evidence to inform their intervention. Informants noted that social movement organizations appreciate the need for evidence in their work as it helps maximize impact by guiding the choice of intervention and target population. However, some informants felt evidence especially on

the impacts of policy interventions was not readily available and organizations have to collect their own data to guide their programming. Sources for credible evidence such as population-based studies conducted by the Kenya Bureau of Statistics are done only periodically, usually at 5 year intervals.

The results of calling for a female focus in state processes have not always been satisfying; in a moment of great trauma following the violence of 2007-8, the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission put great effort into collecting evidence from and recording the experiences of women. Yet in doing so, it drew conclusions that replicated traditional gender norms, portraying Kenyan women as a homogenous group of agency-free suffering victims (Lynch, 2018).

Meanwhile, many African social movements are unusually focused on international approval, attention, and resources. In Kenya, this has led to the propelling of women to the forefront of many human rights organizations and allied nonprofits from which they had previously been largely absent, encouraged by the politics of international donors (Pommerolle, 2010). This has a complex relationship with the women's movement since the simultaneous professionalization of the NGO career path since 2000 has meant that many of these women leaders have displaced the feminist activists of the 1980s; many of these NGO leaders are professional women from more elite backgrounds, favoring more incrementalist politics and focused more on policy in capitals than on mass mobilization (Pommerolle, 2010). The rise of the use of formalized monitoring and quantitative evidence in these organizations has paralleled these developments.

Kenya's politically conscious urban population (Mati, 2013) has allowed some poorer women to play prominent roles in more radical dissent since 2017 in informal settlements. There has been a particular focus on combating extrajudicial killings by police and electoral violence. Figures such as Benna Buluma of the Mothers of Victims and Survivors Network are unusual in leading despite not being from Kenya's upper middle classes. Activist researchers like Dr. Wangui Kimari have supported the nascent Social Justice Centre movement to focus on participatory evidence in pursuing their causes. Prominent voices such as Rachel Mwikali have urged the Kenyan feminist movement to take a more radical, less professionalized political approach - sometimes with an implied resistance to the use of external evidence frames. In doing so, they build on a more radical feminist and anticolonial tradition in Kenya that has made extensive use of women's undressed bodies as tools to shock, curse, and shame oppressive patriarchal and state forces (Nyabola, 2018; Anumo & Onyango; Okech, 2020).

The Kenyan women's movement has recently made considerable use of new technologies. Though 'civic tech' has delivered far less than was once hoped (McGee et al, 2018), Kenya may be an unusual case due to its high levels of technological sophistication, and an unusually large number of such technologically mediated efforts (Thigo, 2013) in alliance with a politically conscious urban population (Mati, 2013). Hashtag campaigns like #MyDressMyChoice have been important spaces for younger feminists to articulate a more radical and confrontational approach to feminism. Those online protests have been notable, because online discontent led to political action in the real world, even in geographically remote counties where action would rarely be taken to

protect women from violence (Nyabola, 2018). However, these campaigns have encountered a lack of resources when needing to harness online energy in order to act in the real world, and a distance between them and the more decorous 'offline' women's organizations (Nyabola, 2018). These tactics have inspired study, in part because of the relative ease of collecting data online.

Despite the great gains, barriers to greater and more expeditious progress to achieving gender equity across various sectors and issues remain, including a highly patriarchal society and cultural norms that reinforce gender inequalities and low levels of civic and gender awareness to support women empowerment efforts.

Box 12: Lessons

Social movements are complex coalitions with many internal tensions; engaging with social movements means making alliances and providing support to some parts of that movement over others. Research organizations can at least be aware of the risks of this.

Research organizations must grapple with - but not become seduced by - the potential of online sources of data. Research can help make real-world progress and organizing tractable and raise up the immediate needs of those who would not normally be heard in the sometimes elite circles of social movement organizing.

Many social movements are forced to focus more on global than local priorities; partnerships with research organizations can assist with this, but must try not to exacerbate this trend.

Timeline - evidence use by Kenyan women's rights movement

The last two decades have seen an increase in the generation of evidence for decision making which has contributed to addressing the issue of the availability of credible evidence. The advances in evidence generation have included an increase in the funding and number of organizations conducting impact evaluation as well as innovation in the methodological approaches (Kaufman et al., 2022). As the table below shows, a global evidence movement has emerged in recent decades. The longstanding Kenyan women's rights movement has interacted with this in the past decade or so, building on its long years of struggle and own evolving attitudes to and use of evidence.

Table 7. Timelines of evidence and Kenyan women's rights movement

Time period	Global evidence movement (adapted from Kaufman et al, 2022)	Kenyan women's rights movement	Evidence use in the Kenyan women's rights movement
1940s and earlier		<p>Pre-colonial social and welfare organizations organize women in the community, later formalized by colonizers into organizations to 'civilize' native women.</p> <p>Individual women leaders play an important role in resisting colonialism.</p>	<p>Oral histories and storytelling remain important throughout in transmitting knowledge about women's resistance.</p>
1950s		<p>Women play leadership roles in the Mau Mau uprising.</p> <p>Maendeleo ya Wanawake formed by colonists to deter support to Mau Mau.</p>	
1960s		<p>Kenyan independence in 1963.</p> <p>Maendeleo ya Wanawake and National Council of Women of Kenya become important African women's organizations.</p> <p>Early attempts by women to run for office.</p>	<p>Around 800 students access tertiary education in the US as part of the 'Kennedy Airlift', including some women who would go on to become feminist leaders.</p>
1970s	RAND's Health Insurance Experiment begins.	<p>Women more successfully enter public and political life, but in an increasingly restricted democratic environment.</p> <p>Grassroots women's organization around self-help, savings and investments.</p>	<p>Wangari Mathaai becomes the first East African woman to receive a PhD. She frequently uses her research to support her campaigning.</p>
1980s		<p>1985 UN Conference on Women in Nairobi.</p> <p>More ideological women's movement begins to form, with FEMNET founded 1988, as Maendeleo ya Wanawake co-opted by the state and the National Council of Women of Kenya is suppressed.</p>	<p>The UN's 1985 Nairobi conference principally offers normative and expert assessments more than scholarly evidence.</p> <p>Structural adjustment budget cuts to universities and democratic restrictions reduce the freedom of researchers in Kenya.</p>
1990s	The results agenda takes the stage. PROGRESA kicks off more impact evaluations in	<p>Wangari Maathai and Mothers of Political Prisoners lead important anti-government</p>	<p>Appeals for international support and 'extraversion' of the women's rights movement</p>

	development.	<p>protests. Multiparty democracy is restored.</p> <p>The National Women's Convention focuses the movement on political equity and parliamentary representation. Formation of the Women's Political Caucus and many other groups.</p>	require some more careful evidence gathering, often of individual cases or in support of legal challenges.
2000s	<p>Dozens of new evaluation organizations are founded, helping create the evidence-based policymaking field. Growth of World Bank trust funds for impact evaluation. Proliferation of government-embedded evidence entities. 2006 sees the release of CGD's Evaluation Gap Working Group report: When Will We Ever Learn? International Initiative for Impact Evaluation established in 2008. Launch of US agency evaluation policies.</p>	<p>Ongoing campaigning for political equality. Post-electoral Violence of 2007 includes extensive assaults on women.</p> <p>Mounting focus on girls education, partially driven by donors.</p>	<p>Steady professionalization of the civil society and NGO class means more managerial focus and higher education levels.</p> <p>Advocacy statistics and reference to MDGs become an essential tool in campaigning for policy changes.</p> <p>Expansion of access to higher education and more freedom for scholarship.</p>
2010s	<p>New wave of evidence-to-policy organizations founded. Rise of evidence synthesis products. New impact investment and prize funds established. From 2013, What Works movement picks up in the UK and the US. In 2014, first Development Impact Bond launched. 2016 sees publication of the third edition of Millions Saved: New Cases of Proven Success in Global Health. From 2018 we see the rise of effective altruism. In 2019, Evidence Act approved in the US, the Nobel Prize is awarded for use of experimental evaluation in development economics, and the OECD DAC Network on Development Evaluation adopts new evaluation criteria.</p>	<p>New constitution promises one-third of parliamentary seats will go to women. This is not achieved, but women's representation inches up at each election.</p> <p>Numerous policies passed to support gender equity.</p> <p>Rising importance of a new and more radical generation of Kenyan feminists, often organizing online.</p>	<p>Global evidence picture on women's rights begins to be transformed. New evaluation organizations make Kenya a hub for global evidence. What Works to Prevent Violence formed in 2014.</p> <p>Initial partnerships between evidence organizations and women's rights organizations lead to good work, but also frustrations at the inflexibility of experimental evaluations.</p> <p>Evidence revolution starts to filter down to Kenyan women's rights organizations with routine M&E.</p>
2020s	<p>In 2020, the Global Evaluation Initiative is launched. In 2022, CGD launches the final report of its Working Group on New Evidence Tools for Policy Impact.</p>		<p>Stronger narratives of decolonization and ideological caution about internationalized and quantified evidence partnerships.</p> <p>Strengthening grassroots rights organizations in urban</p>

			Kenya begin to generate their own evidence.
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Generalizing about social movements

We should exercise some caution in generalizing from a single case. Large-scale surveys of factors associated with the emergence or success of social movements have struggled to find stable correlates (de Waal & Ibreck, 2013). African social movements have some specific characteristics. There is a particular risk of broad-based social movements being co-opted by the clientelistic patronage networks that underpin state power in many 'hybrid' African states; more formalized states in other parts of the world may have less ability to do this (de Waal & Ibreck, 2013). Many African social movements are characterized by an informal class politics (outside of conventional structures of unionization) in which middle-class political grievances sometimes coincide with extreme material deprivation among the working classes (Mueller, 2018; Mamdani & Wamba-dia-Wamba, 1995). Compared to movements elsewhere, African movements may be more reliant on international attention and alliances to win successes, since many African states are more reliant than those elsewhere on international aid flows, lending and investment (de Waal & Ibreck, 2013). In all cases, renewed study will be necessary to understand what the particular features of a social movement are, before forming a partnership with them.

Box 13: Lessons

A single global template for engaging with social movements is unlikely to serve us well. Decisions over which projects to take on should be driven by staff members from the society they are proposing to work to change.

Appendix 3.4 Informants and inputters

We have held discussions with, or received reviews from, the following individuals, in support of the Social Movements project at IDinsight, in addition to the informal conversations and lessons we have drawn from undertaking collaborations with organizations in the Kenyan women's rights movement.

We thank all informants and inputters for their time and thoughtful comments.

Table 8. Informants and inputters

Institution	Individual(s)
IDinsight	Ruth Levine, PhD Torben Fischer, PhD Natasha Siyumbwa Krishna Ramesh
Busara Center for Behavioral Economics	Gideon Too Salim Kombo
ActionAid	Judy Odour Collins Olang
Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE)	Stella Chege
Amplify Girls	Margaret Butler
Raising Voices	Tvisha Nevatia
FEMNET	Josephine Ireri
Independent	Ronald Abraham

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