

TESTIMONIAL

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From a Non-Descript Trade Advocate to a Strong Voice on Trade Issues

I first came in contact with CUTS in the early 1990's, and have seen it grow from a non-descript trade advocate to a strong voice on trade issues. CUTS role is that of a catalyst and a facilitator and an advocacy strategy is essential as it works with multiple partners – nationally, at state level, bi and multilateral and community groups. Some of the key elements should look at political advocacy, promoting public private partnerships, multisectoral approaches and community mobilisation. One of the key challenges for CUTS, as for numerous other NGOs, is building quality research teams in-house.

Multisectoral collaborations require partnerships with diverse sectors facilitated by best practices and technical assistance. In this context, building relationships with other actors, especially the government, is one of the challenges.

Community mobilisation and advocacy through a process of decentralisation ensures ownership of programmes and participation, enabling the effective planning and implementation of programmes. Increasing the spread effects of such programmes is a major challenge for CUTS.

Overall, knowledge management through dissemination of strategic information, innovative programmes, issue based programming (such as TRIPs) and best practices provide tools for an effective advocacy strategy. The biggest challenge for a body such as CUTS would be one of being a credible voice to be counted in policy advocacy both within and outside the country.