

Introduction

This toolbox is based on materials developed for advocacy capacity-building in an ILC project entitled “Securing Women’s Access to Land: Linking Research and Action”, carried out in Eastern and Southern Africa from 2007-2010. The core of this project was action-oriented research carried out by project partners with a view to using research results in advocacy.

The capacity-building activities to support partners included workshops to develop advocacy strategies and plan for their implementation as well as identifying useful tools that can be used to implement such advocacy strategy. This toolbox is split into two sections: one on advocacy planning, and one on tools. In an attempt to facilitate advocacy for small organisations that have few resources for campaigning, the tools presented here do not require financial resources, but rather, focus on sensitising the media and lobbying.

We hope that you may find this toolbox useful and encourage you to give us your feedback and suggestions on how to improve it – including on which tools are most useful and which ones could be added to this toolbox in future.

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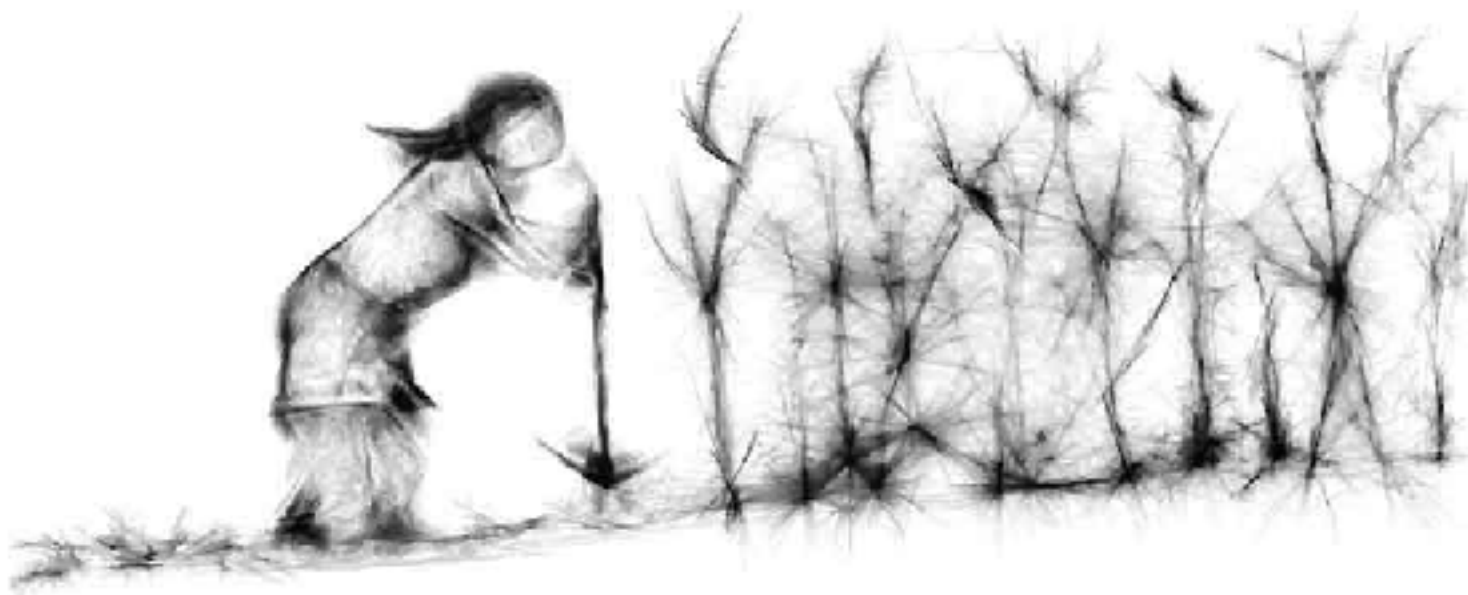
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Acknowledgements

The authors acknowledge use of Frank Smith's (formerly Regional Advocacy and Campaigns Manager for Oxfam Great Britain) matrices in the Lobbying section of the toolkit. In putting together this toolkit, information was also sourced and adapted from the Centre for Public Participation, Civicus and the resource "Advocacy: Theory and Practice for SADC Council of NGO" written by Frank Smith and Centre for Public Participation.



Understanding Advocacy

Defining Advocacy

What is advocacy?

Advocacy is the strategic use of information for the purpose of influencing policies, practices, attitudes and beliefs that affect the lives of people - particularly the lives of the disadvantaged. Advocacy is the key non-violent tool thanks to which marginalised voices and excluded agendas are heard.

How does advocacy relate to development work?

It is important to understand advocacy as the next step in development work. Development work confronts visible problems at the ground level. It provides vital and immediate

relief by meeting the basic needs of people. Advocacy looks deeper to consider the invisible causes of those problems. It asks us to think about human needs in relation to human rights. As such, advocacy strategies are interventions designed to address specific issues in political, economic and social systems. The ultimate aim of advocacy is not fire fighting, but long-term sustainable change to those deep structures which started the fire in the first place.

The following table can help us understand the relationship between perspectives of development and advocacy in more detail:

Figure A

Development Sees:	Advocacy Sees:
Problems	Issues
Basic needs	Basic rights
Symptoms	Systemic causes
Poverty and welfare	Unequal distribution of power
Projects	Strategies and actions
Mission	Vision for political change
Beneficiaries and clients	Citizens, constituencies and allies
Education and information	Consciousness-raising and organizing
Consultation and partnership	Joint decision-making, local leadership
Outputs	Political and social change to benefit the marginalized
Satisfaction	Transformation of power relations



Identifying the Advocacy Issue

In order to advocate effectively in a complex and changing environment, you need to clearly identify the issue to focus your advocacy on. To give an example, if you are advocating on the basis of research you have carried out, the following questions can help you identify the advocacy issue:

1. Let us look at your research question. Write it in the block below:

2. What was the underlying problem your research project was attempting to address?

3. Who are the people who have defined this issue as a problem?

4. Who are the people directly affected by this problem?

5. Are there any people who are not directly affected by the problem, but who have some interest in this issue?

6. What are some of your research findings at this point in your project?

7. What are you thinking of doing with your research once it is completed?

8. Look at the following matrix and identify where to place your issue on it.

- Placement of your issue on the matrix is determined by its relationship to policy or legislation.
- If policy or legislation exists on your issue, you should place it between Phases 5 and 6.
- If policy or legislation is being developed, then you should place your issue between Phases 3 and 4.
- If there is no policy or legislation in place or in development, then your issue lies between Phases 1 and 2.

Once you have identified where your issue lies, look at the second column to see what your strategic response should be. Note this response and we will return to it when we are looking at our approaches.

Phase	Strategic response
<p>Phase 1: This is a new demand or issue. Awareness among the public and decision makers is very low or non-existent.</p>	<p>The terms of the debate on the issue need changing. At this stage, advocacy involves raising awareness among the public, donors and other influential audiences, so that they change the way they talk and think about the issue (a recent example would be the responses of the environmental movement). Decision makers may not be interested in the issue at this stage.</p>
<p>Phase 2: There is rising awareness of and support for the issue among decision makers. The issue emerges in the media or in decision-making institutions, such as parliament.</p>	<p>Policy proposals are consolidated and alternatives presented that inform public debates. Alliances within civil society begin to consolidate.</p>
<p>Phase 3: The issue moves forward in principle. Solutions to the issue are developed.</p>	<p>Advocacy begins, groups start to approach decision makers directly and to negotiate support (technical or otherwise), that will allow the decision to move forward in principle.</p>
<p>Phase 4: The issue reaches a critical stage. Plans to resolve the issue are worked out, resources are allocated, and implementation might begin.</p>	<p>Advocacy begins to address the structural constraints to implementation (including the resource allocation) and to press decision makers on the resources and mechanisms for effective implementation of solutions.</p>
<p>Phase 5: The ideas are implemented, monitored and evaluated against set objectives or benchmarks.</p>	<p>Campaigning goes back to the grass roots in order to monitor the impact of the implemented solutions.</p>
<p>Phase 6: Further evaluation of implementation takes place to assess the impact of interventions.</p>	<p>Progress is assessed and the organisation reviews its strategic direction.</p>

What is required of the advocacy worker?

Advocacy work involves strategic thinking about the underlying roots of a problem and its solution. Strategic thinkers must be able to assess external opportunities and constraints as well as internal organisational resources for addressing the problem. Those who work in advocacy need to possess expertise about:

1. The issue
2. The political environment
3. The technical requirements needed to run an effective advocacy campaign

Advocacy is the process of bringing all three areas of expertise together to effect change.

Advocacy Planning: What is it and why do we need it?

What is advocacy planning?

Simply put, advocacy planning is a step-by-step process of analysis and debate that leads to the creation of an advocacy strategy plan and its implementation.

Advocacy planning involves the development of:

- **The overall strategy for change** – a long-term plan that embodies our vision. It reflects where we are, where we want to go, and how to get there.
- **The campaign** – a medium-term plan that includes activities aimed at influencing the policy environment as well as public opinion.
- **Tactics, actions and activities** – a short-term plan of activities that respond to specific opportunities and help to advance the overall strategy for change.
- **Impact assessment** – the continuous monitoring of the impact of the strategy, campaign and activities so that they can be adjusted as needed.

Why is advocacy planning necessary?

Strategic thinking for advocacy involves engagement with complex issues and changing environments. Unlike other forms of goal-oriented strategic planning, advocacy planning cannot aspire to clear and seamless patterns of achievement in relation to either short-term goals or long-term visions of social change. Instead, advocacy planning must remain flexible as it acknowledges the presence of unpredictability created by a variety of factors, including competing values and ideologies, hidden agendas, incomplete information and conflict. Careful choices have to be made and remade in response to these challenges. Furthermore, advocacy planning is necessary:

- To manage the use and leverage of limited resources (financial and human)
- To accomplish concrete results within limited time frames
- To be accountable to constituencies and partners
- To reduce conflict through the production of a clearly articulated common aim

Strategic planning for advocacy is always a work in progress. Assessment of the impact of advocacy frequently requires us to adapt our strategies and to adjust our goals as we plan for the next step.

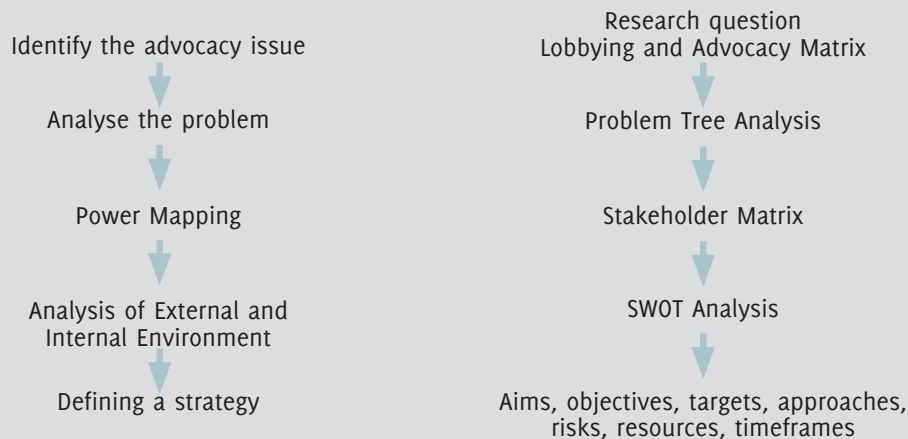
The benefit of advocacy planning is that a planning process helps you to:

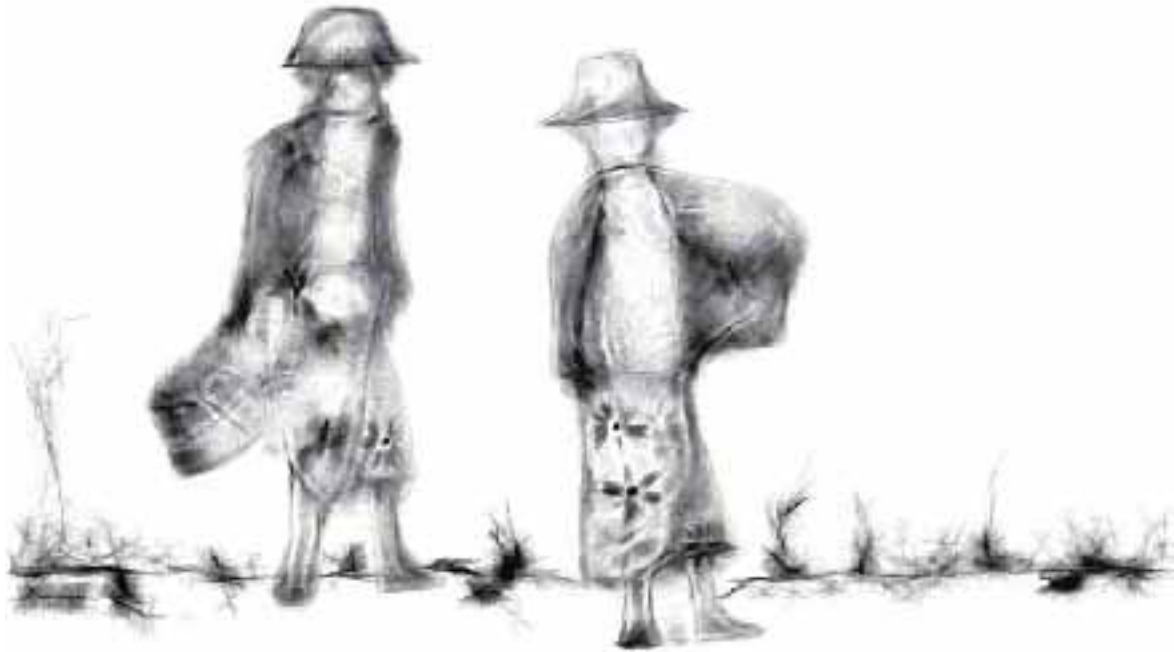
- **Clarify strategic directions and opportunities** within particular political and organisational contexts.
- **Strengthen organisations and build the commitment of people in them** as they share new ideas and information through dialogue, negotiation and analysis.
- **Empower the community** through participation that creates new knowledge, awareness, skills and confidence.

Figure B

Basic Steps in Advocacy Planning

An advocacy planning exercise should involve the following steps:





Analysing the Problem within its Context

Once you have identified your key advocacy issue – or problem to concentrate on, you need to understand its causes and effects, so that your campaign will focus on the implementation of specific changes.

Weak and strong problem analysis

A common mistake in many advocacy campaigns is ineffective problem analysis. Weak analysis results in advocacy campaigns that are inaccurately focused on either the effects of problems or on issues that are far too broad and complex. Advocacy campaigns are designed to implement specific solutions to specific problems.

Problem analysis, too, should provide a clear picture of policy and the political climate informing the problem. Project data, base line analysis or other forms of community analysis, therefore, have limited use in problem analysis because they do not address these underlying power structures. They can, however, provide useful information on the impact of the problem investigated.

Good problem analysis, therefore, reveals information that helps the team to focus its demands and to define its course of action, accurately. Research assists the advocacy team to set objectives and priorities. It also protects the advocacy campaign from possible attack. A successful advocacy campaign needs to answer all critics and to successfully persuade its target audience.

Identifying stakeholders and targets in problem analysis

Priority setting also involves analysis and negotiation between stakeholders. The following questions can help your team gauge stakeholder interests, which, in turn, identify the targets of the advocacy strategy.

1. **Who defines this issue as a problem?** Answers to this question can help you fine-tune how important this problem is either to potential supporters or opponents of an advocacy campaign. If those who suffer from the problem do not view it as a priority in their lives, they are unlikely to get involved in the advocacy. Moreover, as advocacy involves creating the will to change, it is important to understand who has that will.
2. **Who is directly affected by this problem?** The people who are most directly affected by a problem have the most to gain. They are often the most motivated to seek a solution to it, and they form the primary constituency of an advocacy campaign. They also give the advocacy campaign legitimacy in the eyes of policymakers.
3. **Who is not affected by the problem, but cares enough to support change?** People can also care deeply about issues that do not affect them directly. They may express solidarity because they believe in rights related to gender, race, class, religion or sexual orientation. This group could lend powerful support to an advocacy campaign.

Defining priorities

To define priorities your group needs clear criteria for ranking problems. There are some tools that assist with priority setting, including:

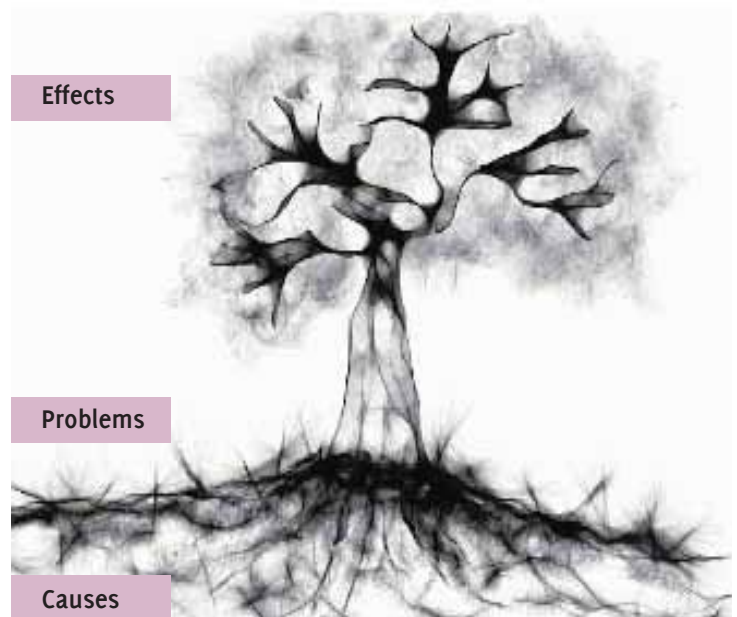
- Priority group analysis
- Causes, consequences and solutions exercises
- Problem Tree analysis

These tools help with priority setting because they identify:

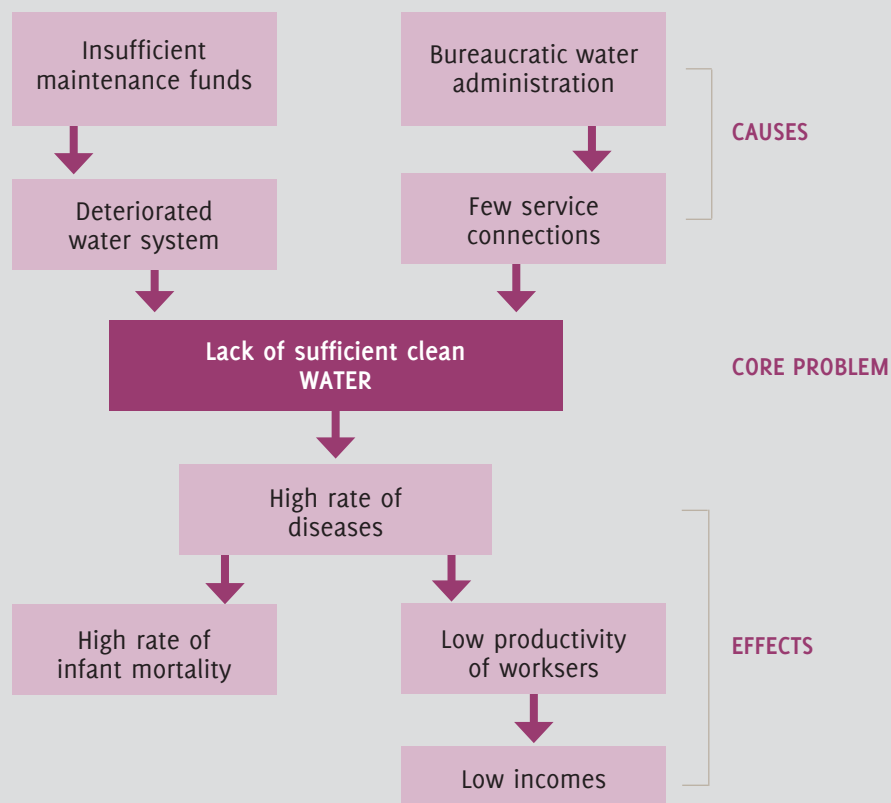
- The root causes of the problem
- The problem with the most serious consequences
- The problem that is the most important to address
- The problem that is easiest to address
- The problem that would attract sufficient interest and support in a campaign to generate change

Problem tree analysis

Problem tree analysis is one of the useful tools that can help your group to distinguish between your problem's causes and effects. In problem tree analysis, the group lists all possible problems associated with an issue and then maps them onto the problem tree. The tree trunk is the core problem; the roots are the causes of the problem (these are deep causes, such as inequality between men and women); and the branches are the effects of the problem (with secondary effects mapped as higher branches).



This kind of analysis can be represented using the following example from a water campaign:



To begin, let us try to identify the core problem, its causes and its consequences:

1. Look at the research question you posed in the previous exercise and the underlying problems you identified. Agree on one specific problem the group would like to tackle. Write the problem on the trunk of the tree.
2. Next, have all participants in the group list the primary causes of the problem. The Rapporteur must capture these causes in the form of "roots" of the tree. These causes can be depicted as either linked clusters of roots, or as random, individual roots. Causes can range from attitudes or behaviours to social, economic and political causes.

3. Next, repeat the same process in terms of consequences, capturing these as branches of the tree.
4. Discuss the nature of the consequences. Identify which are the most serious. Consider which would be easier and which more difficult to address. Consider which body can best intervene to address these causes and consequences: government, civil society or communities?
5. Prioritize your root causes. Determine which causes can be addressed within the time limits and resources available to you. From this list, select the top two causes and their corresponding consequences.

1. Core Problem

2. Root Causes

3. Consequences

Contextualising the problem

Once your organisation has identified priority causes and consequences of a problem, the focus and target of your advocacy campaign will begin to emerge. At this stage, you need to become aware of both internal and external political forces at play. Knowing your potential allies and opponents is important in order for strategic planning of your advocacy campaign. Tools like the SWOT analysis can be used to identify these forces and to assess their power.

SWOT stands for:

- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Opportunities
- Threats

Strengths and Weaknesses are internal to the organisation, while Opportunities and Threats are external to it.

A SWOT can be performed at different times for different reasons. It can help you plan the network's organisational strategy, a specific campaign or even a small event.

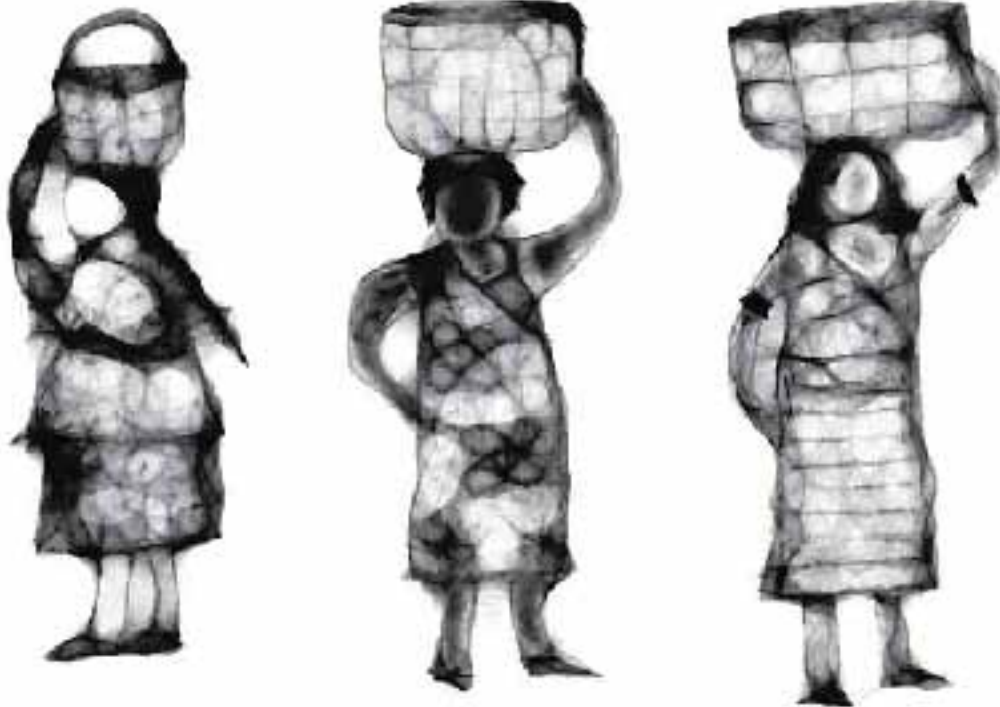
Analyse your own internal strengths and weaknesses and the external opportunities and threats that may present themselves during your advocacy campaign.

Strengths (internal)

Weaknesses (internal)

Opportunities (external)

Threats (external)



Developing an Advocacy Strategy

The key to the success of any campaign is a clearly articulated advocacy strategy that aims to:

- Solidify plans, relating activities to aims
- Gain approval and resources from potential donors, members and supporters
- Communicate plans to other allies and win potential supporters
- Be a reference point for campaign evaluation
- Be your road map for the campaign

Different advocacy strategies

Advocacy usually involves a combination of any of the following strategies:

1. **Model Programmes:** Where it is difficult to influence the public agenda, a successful model intervention can demonstrate to government a better way to solve a problem.
2. **Collaboration:** When there is compatibility and agreement between NGOs, grassroots groups, and government, civil society groups are likely to collaborate directly with government to design and/or implement legislation, or to provide the necessary services.
3. **Protest:** A demonstration or march relies on numbers and creative messages to gain attention and support. Timing is important. Boycotts are another form of protest often directed at companies. Vigils and hunger strikes are other, less confrontational, expressions of protest. Non-violent protest is sometimes a last resort when conventional strategies fail to open up a policy dialogue.
4. **Litigation:** A well-publicized court case can draw public attention to a problem, and sometimes leads to legal reform. While it is important to be alert to such opportunities to further their advocacy objectives, you should be aware of the limitations of court actions, which can be costly and lengthy and may not serve advocacy interests in terms of either timing or resources. Outcomes, too, are uncertain and highly variable. Furthermore, it is difficult to involve memberships of an organisation in the detailed planning of court action.
5. **Public Education:** Education and media strategies build public support and may influence policymakers. Strategies may include providing data, articles, and alternative policies to the media. Music, songs, videos, posters and pamphlets are also creative alternatives for delivering messages.
6. **Research:** Positions and proposals based on solid information increase the credibility of advocacy. Research provides the necessary information for planning, message development, policy alternatives and lobbying. Where information is hard to get, research efforts can evolve into “right to know advocacy” that focuses on transparency and public awareness.

7. **Persuasion:** Advocacy must be persuasive to a wide range of people. Persuasion has two main aspects:
 - Lobbying: involves attempts to meet face-to-face with decision-makers to persuade them to support an advocacy issue or proposal
 - Negotiation: involves bargaining to seek common ground or minimal disagreement with those in power.
8. **Constituency building:** The long-term nature of most advocacy efforts demands strong links with constituency groups. Effective advocacy requires alliances between organisations and individuals both for legitimacy and implementation. Organisation depends on effective decision-making, shared leadership, clear roles and communication. Members and staff must possess both analytical skills and confidence.
9. **Empowerment:** All advocacy strategies strive to strengthen people's confidence and understanding of power. Active citizens are created through their core awareness that they are leaders with rights and responsibilities to participate in and to transform political processes.

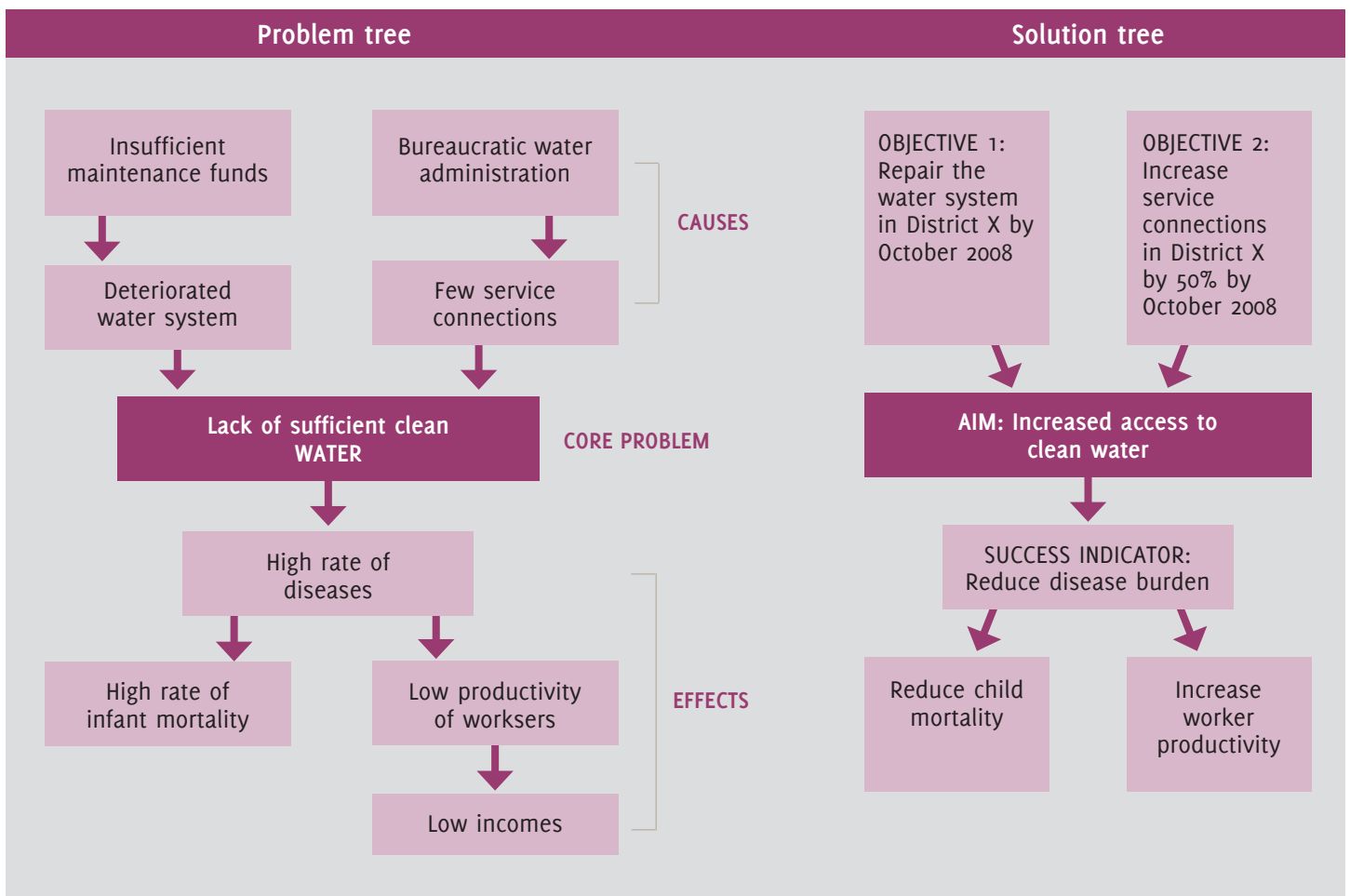
Which combination of strategies you choose to use depends on the context and key advocacy issue you have identified previously.

Putting together your advocacy strategy plan

An advocacy strategy should contain

1. **Aims:** The aim is the general declaration of intent, which guides the advocacy campaign. It is what the advocacy campaign seeks to achieve in the long run.
2. **Objectives:** The objectives are among the most important and difficult aspects of the campaign strategy. Objectives need to be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time bound)
3. **Targets:** These need to be individuals not institutions
4. **Main audiences:** These need to be influential with the target
5. **Approaches:** These need to be based on both the resources within the network and member access to different key audiences
6. **Action plans**
7. **Resources & budgets**
8. **Risks & Assumption**

You should start by identifying your aim and objective, converting your problem tree (see 3. Analysing the problem within its context) into a solution tree:

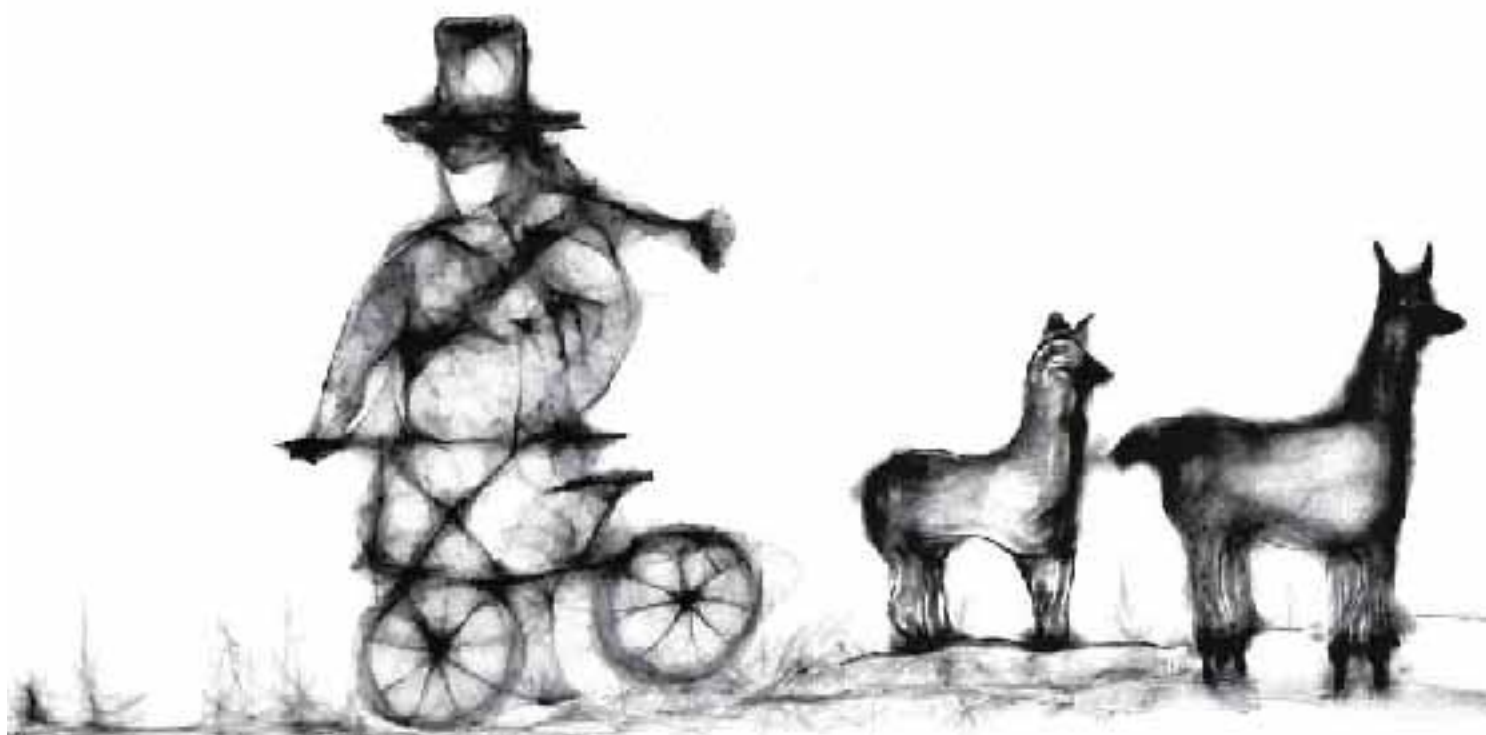


Take the core problem that you identified and convert this to the aim of your advocacy campaign, e.g. in the above example the core problem was identified as the lack of sufficient clean water; hence, the advocacy aim was to achieve an increase in access to clean water. Next, take the two causes you prioritized and convert these to SMART objectives. In the above example, the cause was a deteriorated water system; hence, the objective became “repair the water system in district X by October 2008.” At this point, ask yourself the following: If you achieve your objective will you be closer to your aim? The consequences in your problem tree convert to indicators of whether or not you have reached your objectives. They allow you to measure the success of your campaign.

1. Look at the first set of questions you asked when analysing the problem. Those questions helped you identify three sets of targets: people who identify this issue as a problem, people who are directly affected by it, and people who have an interest in your issue. List these people as your target groups. You should also include organisations and networks who can further your campaign, policy- and decision-makers, and any other interested or influential people.
2. To decide on your approaches relate each of the target groups to the SWOT analysis of your internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats (3.5). Then select the appropriate tools from the list of advocacy strategies (4.1) you can use in your campaign. Remember that advocacy is best done using a combination of approaches.
3. Now you need to consider your risks you may face. In your SWOT analysis you identified possible weaknesses (internally) as well as possible threats (externally). List these again and brainstorm how you plan to address them.

Once you have completed all of these steps, you need to write up your plans as follows:

- Research Question
- Core Advocacy Problem
- SWOT
- Aim of Advocacy Campaign
- Objectives of advocacy campaign
- Target groups
- Approaches
- Risks and Solutions.



Communication Strategy

The development of an effective communication plan is crucial to the success of any advocacy strategy. Internal organisational communication is a vital component inside the advocacy effort itself and is useful when building networks amongst allies.

Communication strategies must also be carefully planned to reach, educate and persuade external audiences – from policy makers to communities. Message development and delivery focuses on tailoring your message to those audiences for maximum impact.

Media advocacy is important to:

- Get your issue on the political agenda
- Make your issue visible and credible in policy debate
- Inform the public about your issue and proposed solutions
- Recruit allies
- Change public attitudes and behaviour
- Influence decision-makers
- Shape policies, programmes and the conduct of public and private agencies
- Raise money for your cause

Communication strategy development

Planning the communication strategy helps to identify:

- The Stakeholder/s: Who do you want to reach with the message?
- The Purpose of communication: How will it boost your advocacy effort?
- The Form of communication: How will you reach your audience and with what type of media?
- The Timing of communication: When will you send your messages?
- The Success of your Communication: How will you measure your effectiveness?

Communication strategy planning is similar to developing a logframe. In the matrix below, list the target groups, stakeholders and target audiences you identified in your advocacy strategy plan. Then, work your way through the horizontal and vertical columns in the same way you would fill in a logframe.

Message development

Your message conveys not just who you are, but what you choose to say about your issue and its solution. How you frame your issues and solutions, and tailor these for different audiences, is, therefore, one of the most critical factors in advocacy. Aggressive strategies tend to close rather than open doors. Look at ways to be engaging and build support for your cause through messages that are appealing and relevant to the lives of your audience. Use the most persuasive format, language and approach possible to inspire a positive response in terms of audience action on your issue.

Below are some basic principles of message development:

- Know your audience – Draw a power map to help you identify key stakeholders and targets, their position on your issue, and their influence. You should also identify those who clearly oppose and support your issue. In order to tailor your message to reach your audiences in an appealing way, you may need to sharpen your profile of them. Gather information about their interests, values and priorities.
- Know your political environment – Educate yourself about the contextual factors surrounding your issue, such as levels of political openness and public attitudes. This knowledge will help you make choices about how best to position and frame your message for maximum impact. Direct criticism might work in some instances; collaborative approaches, in others. You can also build the profile of your issue by linking it to another message that has public attention.
- Keep your message simple and brief – Make sure your message can be understood by anyone. Avoid jargon, technical terms and information overload.
- Be persuasive, not aggressive – Going on the attack closes doors. Beware of the effects of negative campaigning and avoid it. Instead, concentrate on how best to appeal to your audience through your knowledge of their interests.
- Use real life stories and quotations – The human element brings the issue to life and can touch audiences, including policy makers, in ways that pure facts and analysis often cannot. Direct quotations and personal stories draw immediate attention to the challenges of the problem
- Use clear facts and numbers creatively – Good, carefully selected and presented information will boost the credibility of your advocacy initiative. Generally, it is helpful to provide the following facts, which form the core message of your campaign:
 - a. What is the problem or issue?
 - b. What are the causes?
 - c. Who is directly affected, and how?
 - d. What are the financial and social costs?

- e. Who/What is responsible for the situation?
 - f. What is the solution?
 - g. What can the citizen or policy-maker do to help?
- Present a possible solution – Offer a simple solution to the problem, such as “new laws are needed to ensure women’s access, use and control of land.”

Message delivery

Message delivery involves careful attention to how the information will be delivered and by whom.

Multiple information strategies are needed if you have diverse audiences. Some of the many different options include:

- Person-to person – one-on-one meetings, lobbying visits, group or community meetings, seminars and workshops, public hearings, protests and public demonstrations
- Print – newspapers, journals, bulletins and newsletters, posters and leaflets, fliers and pamphlets, reports on studies, letters to decision-makers
- Electronic media – radio inserts and debates, television interviews, videos and films, e-mail circulars, website updates
- Drama – street theatre, songs and music, poetry, dance

Working with the media

Remember that journalists are interested in news, not in the promotion of specific organisations. Focus on making the issue newsworthy by linking it to topical issues or broader social, economic and political trends. Be aware of media deadlines and work within them. Create a database of media contacts and ensure that phone and fax numbers and email addresses are kept up-to-date. Always include your own contact details on any communications with members of the press for follow-up and send your message to as wide a selection of journalists as possible.

Media Tools

To generate publicity for your issue, choose from a range of mass media tools including:

- Press releases – to attract attention to an upcoming event or one that has just occurred. Headlines and first sentences must be compelling so that journalists notice the release and pick it up as something new and interesting. Keep it short and concise and make use of direct quotations, real-life examples and pertinent facts. Be sure to send your release to the appropriate journalist and follow up delivery by contacting them to see whether they require further information. Such exchanges draw attention to the release and build necessary relationships with the press.

- News conferences – to announce a news story to a number of journalists at once. Speakers usually make a presentation and field questions from journalists. Supplement news conferences with a press release and briefing materials.
- Letters to the editor – these are widely read and provide a good opportunity to promote a cause or debate issues. Letters should be short, to the point and end on a challenging note, with a call to action.
- Television or radio interviews – these are the most effective ways to reach the broadest audience. It is important to select a persuasive spokesperson who is knowledgeable, articulate and confident.

- Radio dialogues and educational features – these supplement initiatives to change attitudes and behaviour and can generate citizen dialogue and debate.

Press Releases

A typical press release looks at the “Five W’s,” namely, “Who,” “What,” “When,” “Where” and “Why.” It is also useful to include a “How.” Remember that the most important, attention-grabbing information must be written in the first paragraph. An easy way to remember this rule is by designing a press release like an inverted pyramid with the main points at the top and the less important information further down.

Figure 2:
Inverted Pyramid Press Release

HEADLINE

Include the main points of the story.
Remember to write an eye-catching headline

PARAGRAPH 1: INTRODUCTION

Use the 5 W’s and include as much information as possible in the fewest possible sentences. Strive to make it interesting to grab the attention of your readers.

PARAGRAPH 2: SOURCE

Here you can answer the question “How do I know?” You can cite your research, give some background information and quote the head of the organisation.

PARAGRAPH 3: ESSENTIALS

Why is this story significant?
Answer the questions:
Why? So what? and How?
Here, you can include some anecdotal information.

PARAGRAPH 4

Additional information of interest

NOTE TO EDITOR:

In this paragraph you should include information about where the journalist can get a copy of the research report or photographs

PARA 5
End

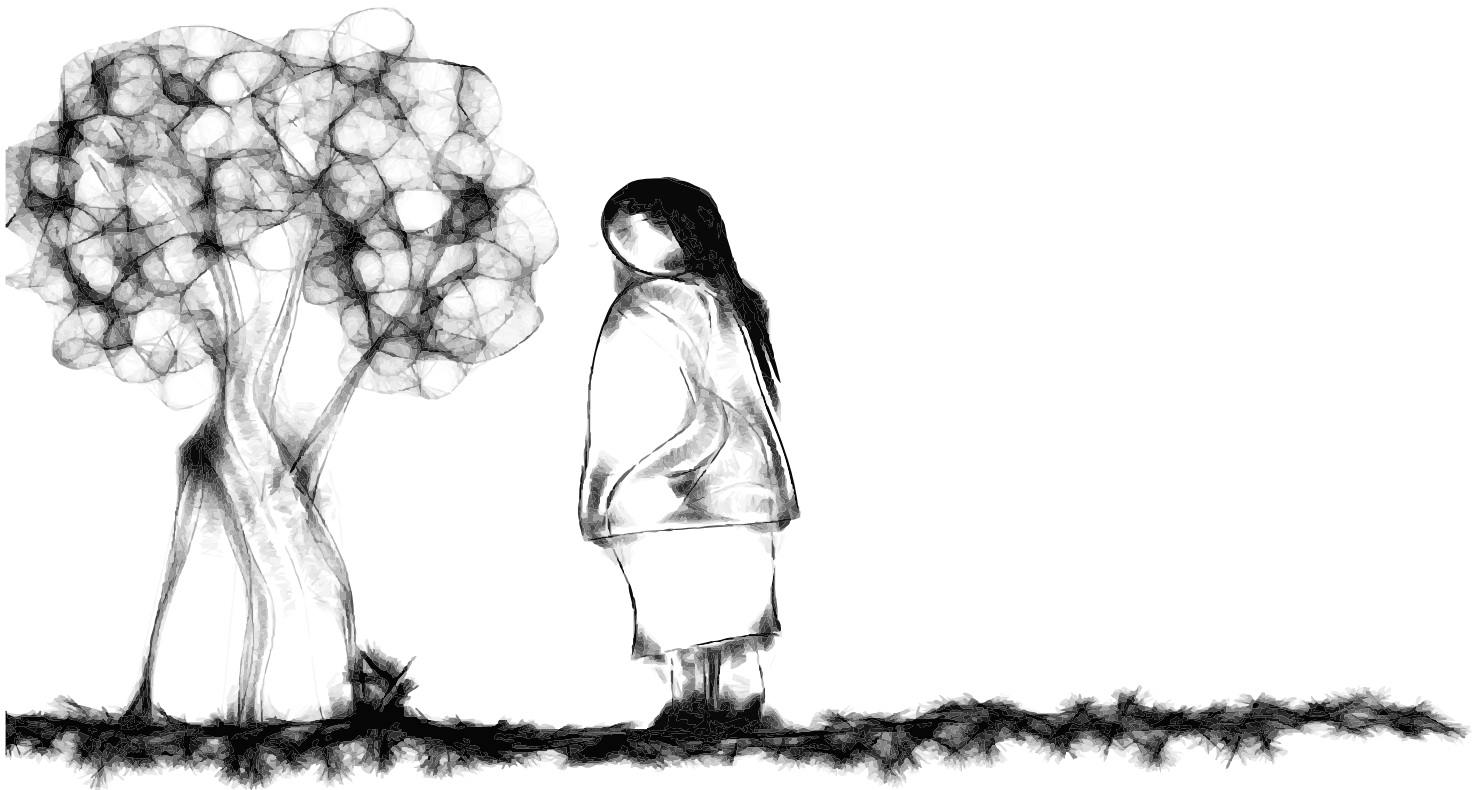
CONTACT INFO:

Name, telephone and email of contact people associated with the campaign. Include after- hours numbers.

Checklist for your press release¹:

- Did I use the right tense and keep it uniform throughout the press release?**
Write your press release in the active, not the passive voice. Instead of saying: “A meeting will be held on Monday night,” try using “The organisation will meet on Monday night.”
- Are my abbreviations, if used, correct?** Many organisations use acronyms, so the media have devised a way to employ these in their reporting. The general rule is to use the full name of the organisation in the initial reference, such as International Land Coalition (ILC), and the acronym only in all subsequent references.
- Have I capitalized proper nouns and brand names?** Always avoid capitalizing any words that do not require it. Use capitals for proper nouns, names, and recognizable regions.
- Are any numbers lower than 10 spelled out in word form?** One rule of thumb for numerical references is that very small and very large numbers are never written in figure format. The number 1 should be written as one, while 15,000, should appear as fifteen thousand.
- Have I excluded the use of any time-specific words, such as today or tomorrow?** The only time it is appropriate to use these references is when a media sector is speaking of something that has already happened.
- Have I succeeded in not using any words of fluff that would make my work appear to be biased to the public, such as “best,” or “wonderful”?** Avoid turning your press release into an advertisement. Rather than appealing to the public, such approaches will turn them off.
- Is my work addressed to the appropriate personnel, and is my own contact information accurate?** Do your research to ensure that your release has been sent to the right person. Update your database regularly.
- Have I used my spell-checker and properly proofread the document?**
Computerized spell-checkers do not guarantee correct word usage. If you wish to say, “For the next two years,” make sure the document does not read “Four the next two years.” Have another person proofread your press release before submitting it.

¹ Adapted from www.pressrelease-tips.co.za



Lobbying

Lobbying involves direct one-on-one communication with both decision-makers and those who influence decision-makers. It is aimed at persuading these people with power to support your agenda, so that they change policy or legislation. Lobbying is only one part of advocacy and should be used in combination with other tools such as a media campaign, policy submissions, networking and constituency building.

Like all other advocacy interventions, lobbying also requires strategic planning. You will increase the impact your organisation has on public policy if you are well prepared. When planning, you should consider three key questions:

1. What public policy goals do you want to influence and how do they relate to your advocacy issue?
2. How do these goals relate to your organisational goals and affect the people you serve?
3. How will your organisation carry out your lobbying work?

Power Mapping

The first step in lobbying is the identification of the target. The target can never be an institution, but is the person or group of persons who are the decision-makers responsible

for the desired change. The decision-maker is not always the figurehead of a particular government department or group of people. Sometimes decisions are made by advisors and approved by ministers. The target, in this case, would be the advisor (though protocol demands that the decision-approver be engaged in the campaign as a target, as well). When designing your lobbying strategy, it is important to fine-tune your understanding of who wields real power and who simply has the power of a rubber stamp.

Stakeholders: Targets, Allies and Opponents

A stakeholder is anyone who is affected or who has some influence (good or bad) over your issue. Stakeholders can be used to identify two key areas in your advocacy campaign:

- The most important audiences (those with the most influence over the main decision-maker who must be persuaded to support the campaign)
- The allies and opponents (those whose influence will need to be bolstered or undermined, respectively, by your messages)

Using these tools, you can classify targets, allies, and opponents:

a) **Targets:** Individual decision-makers with the power to respond to the advocacy demands. Secondary targets are individuals who do not have power to solve the problem, but who are close to, and can put pressure on, the primary target. It is important to gather information on the target, relating to their level of:

- Knowledge of the advocacy organisation or network and the cause
- Agreement with and support for the issue
- Mutual trust.

b) **Allies:** Influential individuals and institutions sympathetic to your cause and supportive of the advocacy campaign in different ways and degrees. Allies are usually prominent individuals who can be found in the civil society sector, but there may also be reformists within the government. They will play different roles in the strategy depending on their motivations. Do not make assumptions about the opinions of allies but:

- Meet with them
- Involve them strategically
- Be specific about what is expected of them in terms of what they should do and say
- Keep them informed of the progress and solicit their suggestions.

c) **Opponents:** Influential people and institutions who disagree with your advocacy position, ranging from outright opposition to mild dissent. As advocacy challenges power imbalances, there are likely to be powerful people who contest your advocacy aims because they may perceive the achievement of your aims as a loss for themselves. Especially when engaging on highly controversial topics, you should be aware of the diverse agendas and vested interests involved to avoid creating opposition and, where possible, propose solutions that are not perceived as a threat by your opponents.

Political assessment tools¹

An assessment of the strength of the political forces for and against your organisation’s advocacy campaign can help you to navigate the different power dynamics effectively. Tools which can help with this kind of assessment include:

- A stakeholder analysis
- Audience prioritization exercise
- Allies and opponents matrix

At this stage of planning there may be instances when members of the group disagree on a particular stakeholder’s influence or interest in the issue. In this case, further research must be done (ask others, or contact the stakeholder directly).

Stakeholder analysis

In the table below, in the first column, list all the stakeholders (targets, allies, opponents) that are associated with the problem you identified. Then circle their attitudes, importance and influence.

Stakeholder	Attitude of the stakeholder to your position	Importance of the issue to the stakeholder	Influence of the stakeholder over the issue
	VO O N P VP	L M H	L M H
	VO O N P VP	L M H	L M H
	VO O N P VP	L M H	L M H
	VO O N P VP	L M H	L M H
	VO O N P VP	L M H	L M H
	VO O N P VP	L M H	L M H
	VO O N P VP	L M H	L M H
	VO O N P VP	L M H	L M H
	VO O N P VP	L M H	L M H

VO = Very opposed O = Opposed N = Neutral P = Pro VP = Very pro L = Low M = Medium H = High

¹ The authors acknowledge use of Frank Smith’s (formerly Regional Advocacy and Campaigns Manager for Oxfam Great Britain) matrices in this section of the toolkit. Information feeding this Advocacy Toolbox was also sourced and adapted from the Centre for Public Participation, Civicus and the resource “Advocacy: Theory and Practice for SADC Council of NGO” written by Frank Smith and Centre for Public Participation.

The audience prioritization matrix

This tool allows you to identify an important audience for the campaign: those who cannot be ignored because they care about the issue and have influence over the decision makers. It may throw up some unsettling results. For example, an advocacy campaign on the rights of women to access, control

and use of land may reveal that the issue is very important for women, but that their influence is low. These kinds of results may require you to engage in a different advocacy intervention such as rights-based education and agency development.

Importance of the issue to the audience	High	Secondary audience	Priority audience	Priority audience
	Medium	Ignore	Secondary audience	Priority audience
	Low	Ignore	Ignore	Secondary audience
		Low	Medium	High
Influence of the audience over the issue				

The allies and opponents matrix

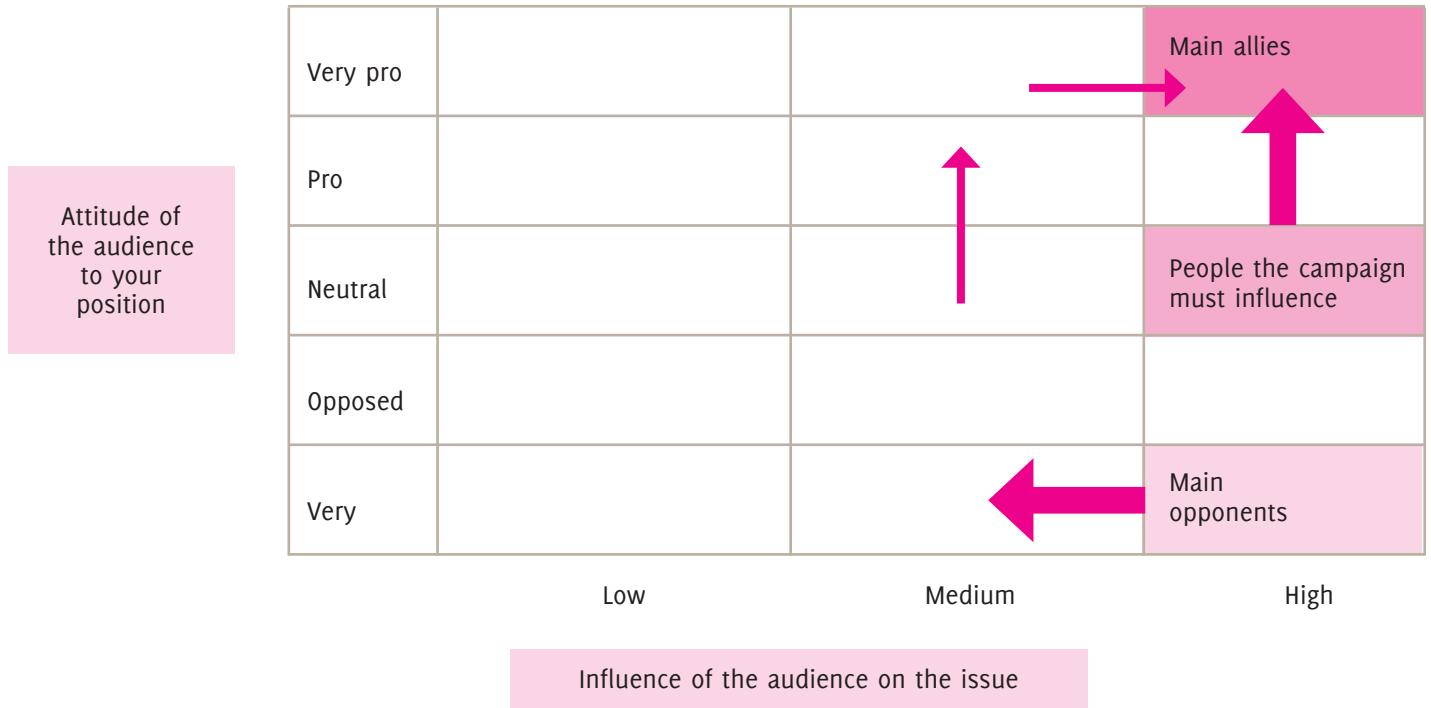
This tool allows you to identify who are the most important allies and opponents. It also can identify those whose support is worth winning: the undecided influential people. Throughout the duration of the campaign people's positions on this matrix

will shift. If the campaign is successful, influential neutrals will shift to become allies, allies with medium influence will gain more influence (over the organisation's target), and influential opponents will lose some of their influence with the target.

Attitude of the audience to your position	Very pro			Main allies
	Pro			
	Neutral			People the campaign must influence
	Opposed			
	Very			Main opponents
		Low	Medium	High
Influence of the audience on the issue				

Mapping the positions of your main allies and opponents and your main audience and stakeholders, will help you see who needs to shift. For example, people who are considered neutral to your position, but have a high influence over the issue need to shift to your side to become pro or very pro

your issue. Main opponents who are very opposed and have a high influence over your issue need to be shifted to a position where their influence is low. Allies who are very pro but have low influence need to be strengthened to have a higher influence on the issue.



How to shift the power balance with lobbying

There are two ways you can engage in lobbying, both of which have the aim of informing decision makers and building relationships of trust:

1. Formally, through visits to and briefings of decision-makers and others.
2. Informally, through conversations in corridors, at informal meetings, conferences, seminars or events that are not directly related to your advocacy.

Whatever the style of lobbying, you will gain the confidence of the decision-maker and those who influence them, if you are a reliable source of quality analysis and a representative of people's voices.

To lobby effectively you need to familiarize yourself with the corridors of power and how they work, and to understand the system your key players operate within, including its procedures, protocol, rules, processes, committees and timelines.

Classify the players and develop your strategies accordingly:

- Your stakeholder analysis is the first step in identifying those supporters, opponents and the undecided who surround your decision maker. In addition, most decision-makers have staff (aides, PA's and secretaries) who deal with documents, do research, and prepare briefings and programmes. Sometimes it is as important to influence

these people as their bosses. Build relationships with them and spend time explaining your issues to them. If they take you seriously, it will be easier to get access to, and attention from, the decision-maker.

- Analyse the opposition's position and develop counter-arguments to it. Remember that they may also be lobbying the same person.
- Support your allies by providing them with adequate information. Public officials expect honesty and full disclosure. It is part of the lobbyist's job to inform these allies about who opposes a position, who supports it, and why.
- Identify those people who can give you direct access to information that can be used to persuade your target. Finding these people involves keeping your finger on the pulse of what is happening with policy and legislation relating to your issue. Your arguments should always convey how the decision-maker can benefit from agreeing with you. Most decision-makers are more likely to be persuaded by proposals that are linked to their concerns.

Get attention and show your power by timing your media, outreach, and mobilization activities in such a way that decision-makers are aware of the support behind your proposals when they meet you one-on-one. You can make use of letters, campaigns, petitions, statements of support, marches and protest action.

Tools for lobbying

There are many ways of lobbying. You can use:

1. **Letters:** Letters are the easiest method of lobbying, but they are not always the most effective. Many people in positions of power have administrative staff that read their mail and summarize it for them; hence, the importance of building relationships with them. Make letters as personal as possible and avoid having your network of supporters send exactly the same letter.

TIPS

- Use the correct address and greeting.
- Type the letter.
- Use your own words and organisation's stationery. Personal letters hold more weight than form letters.
- Be brief and focused.
- Be specific about what action you want.
- Know the facts, double-check them and be sure you can back them up.
- Say thank you.
- Don't be negative, condescending, threatening or intimidating in your tone.

2. **Community Visits:** Invite decision-makers to come and visit communities affected by your issue. Such invitations sometimes generate publicity and attract press coverage. On such occasions, media relationships and partnerships will help you.
3. **Publicity:** Media attention is a powerful persuasive force, and the more publicity you can get for your issue the better. It always helps to make individual contact with a reporter who is prepared to follow the issue.
4. **Meetings:** Always request face-to-face meetings so that the decision-maker or policy-maker perceives your campaign in personal terms. Visit these people in their offices or invite them to attend a meeting in the community or with your organisation. Always state the importance of the meeting and provide a clear agenda with a list of possible outcomes from it. Remember to stress what is in it for the decision-maker.

TIPS

- Keep it short and simple.
- Get to the point and stick to it.
- Know why you are there and what you want.
- Have the facts straight.
- Be on time, polite and patient. Never be rude.
- Make the issue personal.
- Be a resource. Leave a one-page fact sheet with you contact details on it.
- Follow-up on the meeting and build the relationship.
- Provide opportunities for positive publicity – a photo opportunity, event or occasion.

5. **Petitions:** Petitions can be large in scale to demonstrate popular support for your issue or they can be focused to convey the support of key individuals or organisations. Internet petitions are popular for garnering international support. They need to be relevant and grab the attention of your reader, so that they do not end up in email trash. When framing a petition, do not exaggerate the issue; back it up with your research and show clearly how support for the petition will advance your cause.

SITES TO SET UP A PETITION

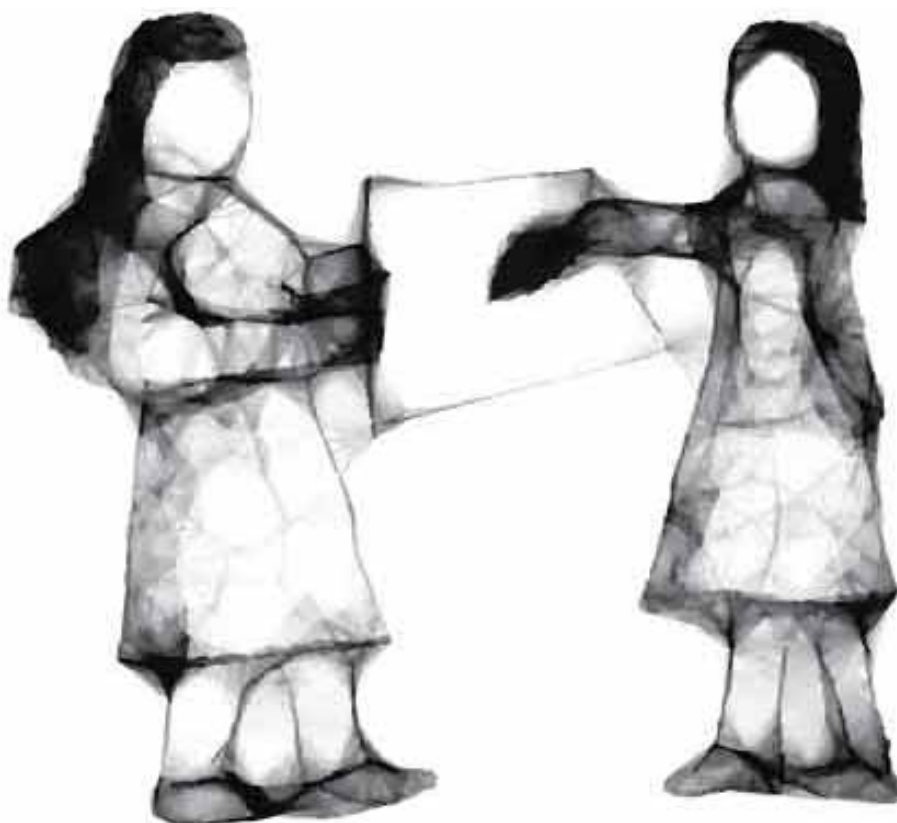
www.iPetitions.com
www.petitiononline.com
www.GoPetition.com
www.takeastand.co.za
www.e-petition.org

Points to remember when lobbying

Lobbying is an extremely beneficial intervention to make in advocacy. It is also a democratic tradition. It influences public policy, which improves people's lives and the places where they live. Lobbying allows civil society organisations to engage in public debate and provides a voice for people who may never have the opportunity to be heard in the centres of power. Lobbying requires dedicated participation both from within organisations and among alliances and networks. It takes a collective voice to make a difference in the policy arena.

Top points to remember to ensure effective lobbying:

- Make sure you hear what is said, not what you want to hear.
- Never take anything for granted and avoid making assumptions.
- Try to personalize the issue. Decision-makers are concerned about the impact on their constituency.
- Never use blackmail or bribery, or even gifts and favors to persuade someone; that is corruption, not lobbying.
- Keep very careful records of all your communications with the decision-makers, especially those involving promises and agreements.
- Maintain your relationship with decision-makers by sending them information, offering to help them, thanking them when they comment supportively on an issue and inviting them to events.
- Educate policy-makers about your issue through briefings.
- Use letters only when you cannot meet face-to-face with policy-makers.
- Treat staff members like the policymakers.
- Pop in to say 'hello', get to know personal interests and drop off related information.
- Dress and present yourself in a way that shows respect.
- Aim to establish a long-term relationship for the next advocacy battle, too.
- Do not give up on persuading anyone of your cause until you are absolutely sure he/she will never support you on anything.
- Lobby all political parties concerned with a particular issue, not just the ruling party.
- Attack with facts, not rhetoric.
- Remember that supporters and opponents may change over time, so it's worth engaging with everyone!



Policy Submissions

Public policy is the combination of goals, laws, rules and funding priorities set by public officials that determine how government meets needs, solves problems and spends public funds. Public policy is formally set by elected officials at different levels through the legislative process. Public policy objectives and programmatic goals are set in law. Arenas of influence are those places where public policy is decided. Lobbying is most often targeted at arenas of legislative activity and making a policy submission is one tool of lobbying.

Submissions are usually made to committees or chairpersons of committees in government. It is important to structure them in such a way that you get your points across powerfully. To engage in policy submissions it is important to know the structure of your government at national and local level and how policy and legislation is made. It is crucial to know what happens at each stage of the policy and legislative making processes and the different roles that are played by the various institutions within government, for example, the Portfolio Committee, and the Law Reform Commission. More importantly it is important to know at which stage of the process public submissions can be made. In most instances, government will release a call for submissions or comments on proposed policy or legislation that may be published in the national

newspapers and it is at this moment that a submission can be made.

Before you embark on writing a policy submission, inform yourself of the law making process in your country, highlighting at which stages civil society organisations can engage in advocacy which includes lobbying and making policy submissions.

Writing a policy submission

Policy submissions are particularly different to other proposals that you may write and this is because policy proposals are focused on policy development. Policy proposals seek to contribute to decisions about how government should proceed in relation to a specific policy concern. It therefore requires you to be aware of the policy environment (especially at which stage of the cycle your issue is at) and for your policy engagement to be focused, engaging and feasible. Before you sit down to write your policy submission it is important to do some background preparation. The following questions can help you do this:

- At which phase is the policy or legislation at?
- Which specific areas of the policy or legislation are you referring to?

- Does the section require an amendment or a complete rewrite?
- Who will be reading your submission (your audience)?

What makes a policy submission stand head and shoulders above others and has the ability to grab the attention of the reader? A submission that is well-written, well-structured and argued logically in a way that can hold the attention of the reader will be one that policy makers will take seriously. To achieve this, you should consider writing a submission where:

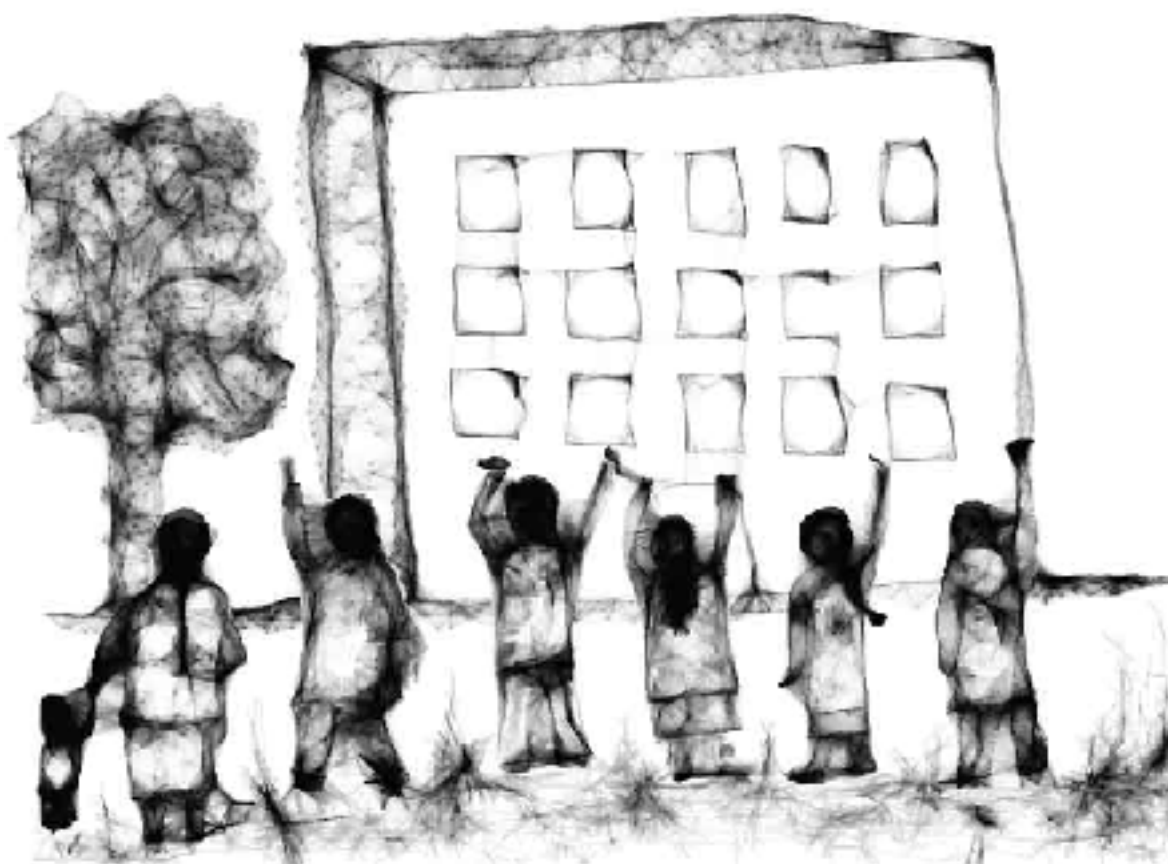
- Every sentence, paragraph and section is structured logically
- The submission is accessible with sub-headings that help to focus attention on the content
- The submission is free of technical jargon and rhetoric

A good submission is one that is grounded in evidence and logical arguments. Here the research that you have been engaging in forms the best hook upon which to hang your points in your submission. Make sure, though, that your research relates directly to the sections of the legislation or policy you are amending or proposing.

Most often when government is looking at submissions it is looking at it from a budget and expenses angle – how much is this going to cost and how will resources be allocated? For your submission to hold weight and be taken seriously you must ensure that you show a sound understanding of the issues affecting your community of concern and of the implications of your recommendations. Hence it is crucial that you use as many strong sources of evidence to show that your submission goes beyond ideology and rhetoric. Your research can be used to support your analysis and your recommendations. Try to use some of the anecdotal information you collected in your research thus showing the human element of the issue at the centre of the legislation.

OUTLINE OF A SUBMISSION

- The group or organisation you represent and contact details.
- The topic or issue relevant to your submission.
- Why your group is making the submission e.g. your concerns, how you are connected to the issue and your expertise or experience on the issue.
- The specific actions you would like the policy-makers to take.
- The reasons why you would like them to take this action. Here, give the facts and make your main points. Be as brief and accurate as possible.
- The reasons why the actions you recommend are desirable e.g. how they will improve quality of life, make a contribution to the welfare of the community, save money or be in the interests of the committee's support base/constituents.
- It is sometimes useful to outline briefly what would happen if no action were taken. Be careful not to sound as if you are threatening the decision-makers.
- Offer further information or face-to-face meetings on request.



Constituency Building

Advocacy is not just used to persuade policy-makers to address a problem (policy outcome) – an additional aim of your policy work can be to enhance the awareness and participation of citizens in policy-making.

Advocacy relies on a variety of leaders, activists and organisations with different skills and talents, as well as committed citizens willing to organise themselves to change their lives. Constituency-building refers to activities aimed at strengthening the involvement of those most affected by an issue in the design and leadership of advocacy to build their knowledge, capacity and agency so that they can effectively participate in public forums.

Why is constituency building critical for advocacy?

Building people's participation lends the power of informed numbers to a cause. In many cases NGOs engage in advocacy on behalf of communities and do not include them in these efforts, sometimes only mobilising them for use in a protest. Without the initial buy-in and inclusion of communities that you are working with, the legitimacy of your advocacy can be called into question. Constituency building means to build your advocacy on the voices of people, responding to their

concerns, and contributing to enhancing awareness of a group of citizens at the same time.

With the inclusion of communities in your advocacy initiatives the success of your advocacy will have longer termed success as communities will ensure that the success is implemented and realised. A citizen-centred or constituency approach transforms the role of 'beneficiary' from a passive recipient to an active agent of change.

The importance of participation in advocacy

There are many reasons why participation is critical for effective advocacy. Advocacy strategy planning is an opportunity for learning and decision-making amongst community stakeholders. Many initiatives claim to be participatory because they consult people while real decisions about strategy, plans and directions are made elsewhere – normally higher up in the organisation. True participation, i.e. involving a community in making important and strategic decisions, is key to empowerment and creates ownership of the initiative, generating commitment and creating shared ideals. Participation can also help to speed up advocacy and cope with conflicts and differences. Most

importantly, it builds agency at the community-level and thus helps to shift the power dynamics in the long-term.

Participation in advocacy, in addition, provides new community experiences and builds long term skills in areas such as:

- Analysing problems and solving them collectively
- Setting objectives
- Preparing budgets
- Leading meetings and speaking in public
- Organising campaigns

Different types of participation

Because participation can be time-consuming, as most democratic processes are, participation is sometimes tokenistic only. The below table explains how to recognise various types of participation and ensure that you engage in interactive participation.

Making participation work

Participation is empowering only when those who participate make decisions and choices. Active participation at all stages of advocacy results in lasting success, both in terms of empowerment as well as social change. The following are some points to consider in making participation work:

Build constituency capacity

This is a key intervention to building effective community participation. Rather than a “rubber stamp”-consultation, building the capacity of your constituency, so that they can articulate their needs and decide on their strategy, is a key to long-term success. Capacity building in your advocacy strategy can include teaching constituents about their rights,

political processes and about participation. There are many methods you can use to build the capacity of constituents including workshops using participatory action learning methods, producing popular booklets, comic strips or even making use of art and theatre.

Build the community

In the initial stages of advocacy planning, community capacity building is a key intervention to assist the community in setting up a structure of representation. Leadership skills, democratic governance and organising are key elements of such a structure, and it is extremely important that it includes women and youth and represents marginalised people in the community. Later on this structure can be used as the point from which to build further skills in the community.

Value diverse perspectives

Ideally everyone should have a voice in deciding the direction of the campaign, though at times a small group may need to work out details. Differences and disagreements may arise and may result in conflict. It is crucial to manage this process so that there is unity in diversity. For community members to have ownership over the advocacy means that their voices and opinions are heard and respected. Debating issues in a constructive way presents an opportunity for learning new things. Generating decent solutions requires a combination of practical know-how and theoretical expertise where different kinds of knowledge are considered and valued. Marginalized communities have the knowledge of firsthand experience, yet they often need more information to make good choices and formulate arguments. On the other hand, researcher advocates may have theoretical and factual knowledge, but they will not usually have the perspective or understanding of local problems that community people have. It is only through working together that this can be overcome.

Type	Characteristics
Token participation	People sit on official committees, but they have no real power.
Passive participation	People participate as recipients of information. They are told what has been decided or happened. Their responses are not listened to.
Participation for material gain	People participate by being consulted or answering questions. External agents define problems and information gathering processes and control the analysis. The agents are under no obligation to include people’s views.
Functional Participation	People participate at the request of external agencies to meet predetermined objectives.
Interactive Participation	People participate in joint analysis and development of action plans. Participation is seen as a right not just the means to achieve project goals. There is also shared decision-making.
Self Mobilization	People participate by initiating actions independently of external institutions. They develop contacts with external institutions for the resources and technical advice they need.

Use participatory needs assessments

Participatory community needs assessments and research enable grassroots groups to be involved in assessing their situation and choosing the issues and solutions to the problems that affect them. Because they live with the issues, they have better insights about why a problem exists and how to solve it. They also have the emotion and motivation to push for change.

Involve constituents

It is particularly important for constituents that is, those most affected by the problem, to be involved in choosing and analysing the issue, exploring strategies, leading meetings, speaking in public, and organizing events. This builds their confidence and skills and ensures greater ownership of the advocacy campaign. Also include community members in your internal organisational working groups. This is key to your organisation legitimately representing a community.

Build trust

Trust emerges through open communication and respect for different skills and perspectives. Some groups outline participants' responsibilities in a pact or agreement. In this pact, constituencies mandate leaders to act on their behalf during fast-paced moments of advocacy when full consultation is impossible.

Work in small groups

Whenever possible, try to work in small groups,. These smaller groups allow for each individual to speak more easily. Be conscious that gender, age, and other factors make it difficult for some people to voice their opinions. Come up with strategies that will address these dynamics and be fully participatory and inclusive.

Schedule time for planning

Allocate adequate time for planning moments for education, consciousness-raising and building organization.