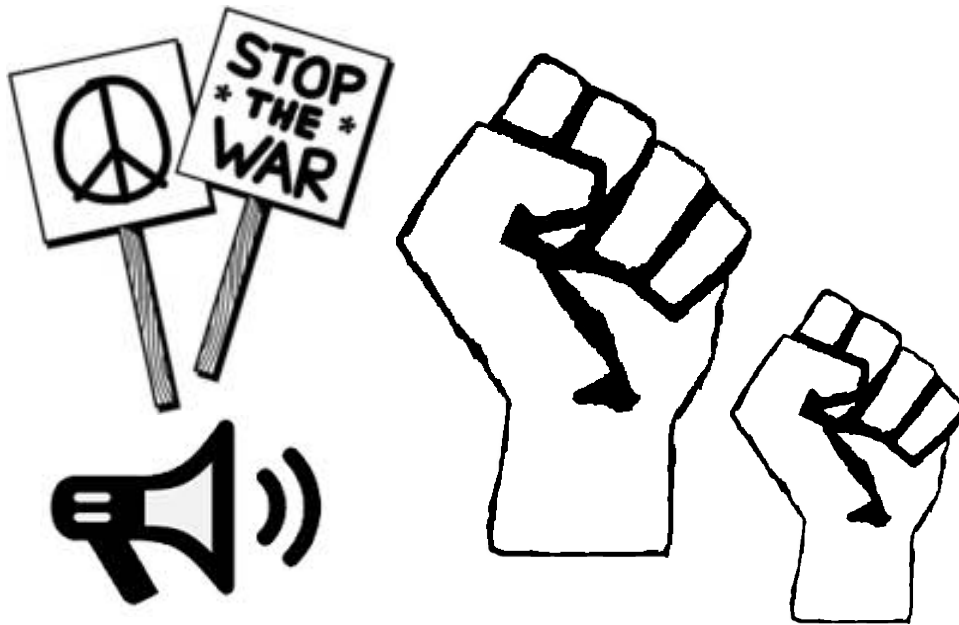


# ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

Gathered from the International Training and Research Centre

Advocacy and Campaigning Course Toolkit



**“Put simply, advocacy means fighting for our rights. Advocacy includes figuring out how bureaucracies and systems work, and fighting decisions that deny us things we are legally entitled to – protection from discrimination, access to social assistance and healthcare, fair treatment by the justice system, etc. Advocacy also includes lobbying organizations, institutions, and various levels of government to change their rules and regulations that deny people the full economic, political, and legal rights set on the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights. “**

*(Transcend – Transgender Support and Education Society)*

## **Problem and Issue Analysis – the “but why” technique**

### **What are "root causes?"**

Root causes are the basic reasons behind the problem or issue you are seeing. It helps you to focus on the causes instead of the symptoms of problems. Trying to work out why the problem exists is an essential part of finding the right solution and helps to guarantee the right responses.

### **What is the "but why?" technique?**

The "But why?" technique is one method used to identify underlying reasons or root causes that affect an issue. The "But why?" technique examines a problem by asking questions to find out what caused it. Each time an answer is given, a follow-up "But why?" is asked. For example, if you say that people in poor communities don't have access to clean drinking water, you might ask yourself "but why?" Once you come up with an answer to that question, probe the answer with another "but why?" question, until you reach the root of the problem, the root cause. For example, does the problem start with lack of hygiene education resulting in people not caring about clean water, or is it because they don't know how to dig safe drinking water wells? Or is it a result of government's failure to implement well digging programs? If it is a government failure, why is this happening? Is it because of lack of money? Why is there a lack of money for drinking water wells? Etc.

### **How does the "but why" technique work?**

#### **Example:**

*The immediate problem*

Children are not going to school.

*Ask why?*

They keep falling ill. Possible response: provide medicines

*Ask why?*

They drink bad water. Possible response: dig a well

*Ask why?*

The well is too far from the school

Possible response: put in a pipe

*Ask why?*

The local government said it would dig a new well last year but it hasn't.

Possible response: dig a well or lobby local government to provide the well

*Ask why?*

Central government has not released the funds they promised

Possible response: dig a well/put in a pipe or lobby central government to release the funds

*Ask why?*

The bilateral donors haven't released the pledged aid funds

Possible response: dig a well/put in a pipe or lobby bilateral donors

Many causes and solutions may apply to your problem, so it is up to you to find the ones that seem most important and that your organization has the capacity to work with. The "But why?" analysis by itself doesn't lead automatically to the area you should choose for your work but it does highlight the different causes of the problem and the different paths you may take to solve it.

### **Why should you identify root causes?**

Identifying genuine solutions to a problem means knowing what the real causes of the problem are. Taking action without identifying what factors contribute to the problem can result in misdirected efforts. This wastes time and resources. It will uncover multiple solutions for a certain problem and allow the user to see alternatives that he or she might not have seen before. It increases the chances of choosing the right solution, because many aspects of the problem are explored during the "But why?" exercise.

### **When should you identify root causes?**

When there is support for a "solution" that does not seem to get at the real causes of the problem. For example, if there's hunger in community, let's distribute free meals. When there is ignorance or denial of why a community problem exists or whenever you are planning advocacy on an issue. Of course, the "But why?" technique is not perfect but it is an efficient way of exploring a variety of solutions to a problem. And it is a quick and inexpensive technique that can be used by anyone, at anytime, anywhere.

### **Complementing "but why"**

Once you have identified root causes, and to ensure broader involvement in your advocacy, you will need to complement your initial problem analysis with consultations with the people affected, and with desk research into policies and case studies.

*(Adapted by Hilary Coulby for INTRAC from the Community Tool Box)*

## Stakeholder analysis

**Targets:** decision-makers; people who have the power to make the necessary changes; people with influence over decision-makers

**Constituents:** the people you work with and for; those who are expected benefit from your advocacy

**Allies:** those who share your aims and can help to influence or put pressure on the decision-makers

**Opponents:** those who are opposed to what you want to achieve and will try to block the changes you want to see

## What is Lobbying?

**A Lobby:** A group, organization or association engaged in trying to influence legislators or other public officials in favor of a specific cause. Originally the term referred to persons frequenting the lobbies or corridors of government buildings in order to speak to lawmakers.

**Lobbying:** The definition of the activity of lobbying is a matter of differing interpretation. Mostly, lobbying is limited to describing direct attempts to influence policy makers, public officials or other decision makers through personal interviews and persuasion. However, some people use the term interchangeably with advocacy and for them it covers all attempts to influence directly or indirectly any policy, practice or government activity, and includes any attempt to influence legislators, their staff, civil servants, and members of regulatory agencies

**Lobbyist:** The person or entity that does the work of lobbying

## Making the first approach to lobby targets

When you begin work on a new advocacy initiative, there is always a moment when you need to arrange a lobby meeting with a person or institution that you don't know. This is not as difficult as it may seem.

### Step One

Find out who is the right person in the organization or institution by: searching institutional websites, or asking alliance or network partners, or speak to advocacy colleagues in other agencies, or asking relevant friends and relatives

### Step Two

Call them or their administrator/secretary/PA and:

- say briefly who you are, what your organization does and why you would like to arrange a meeting with the decision-maker
- the person will tell you whether you have approached the right person. If not, ask them to give you the name and contact of the person you should speak to
- use the opportunity of the phone call to check the spelling of person's name, and their job title
- be friendly and respectful whoever you are talking to – this person may be the key to getting access to higher level decision makers
- if you are given the appointment straight away congratulate yourself and prepare for the meeting.

### **Step Three**

If you are not able to arrange an appointment on the phone – this is common because people usually want evidence that you are who you say you are write a brief letter (not an email) to the person outlining

- basic information about your organization or alliance
- basic information about your advocacy issue and main concerns
- stating you would welcome a meeting to find out more about the decision-makers/institutions policy/thinking on the issue and discuss your concerns
- saying you would be pleased to invite them to your office, or to go to theirs

Wait two weeks. If you haven't heard anything, follow up with a phone call, politely asking whether they have received your letter and whether an appointment would be possible, or if not, if there is someone else in the institution you could speak with.

*(Hilary Coulby for INTRAC)*

## The Campaigning Toolkit

- ☐ Leaflets and other materials for public distribution
- ☐ Posters or advertisements
- ☐ Public meetings
- ☐ Media work – newspapers, radio or TV
- ☐ ‘Stunts’ or events to attract media attention
- ☐ Using celebrities to support your cause
- ☐ Letter writing campaigns
- ☐ Petitions
- ☐ Competitions
- ☐ Mass lobbies, demonstrations
- ☐ Mass events - fasts, cycle rides, street theatre etc.
- ☐ Running an active website

### Developing a Public Campaign

- STEP ONE:** Ask yourselves why you need to have a campaign  
What are you concerned about? What needs to change?  
Why hasn't change happened already?  
How would communicating with a wider public help?
- STEP TWO:** Decide on your target audience(s) for the campaign – be specific  
Who is most likely to respond to the issue? Who do you want to be involved?  
You must know your target audience really well.  
What media do they read/watch/listen to?  
What are they enthusiastic about?  
What styles and approaches would they respond to?  
What would alienate them?
- STEP THREE:** Develop your message  
Remember this is a campaign not an exercise in education. Communicate one message only. Be straightforward and simple.  
Start from where your audience is, don't assume they know anything about the issue.  
All issues are complex but your campaign must not be. Complexity demotivates people, makes them confused and reduces their willingness to listen to what you are saying.  
A good picture is worth a thousand words.
- STEP FOUR:** Design, plan, and timetable and budget for your campaign activities.  
You need to have clear objectives and know exactly what you are going to do from the start.  
Are there any volunteers who could help you with campaign activities? Would any businesses sponsor you by providing services?
- STEP FIVE:** Before you launch your campaign, inform other NGOs and civil groups about it.  
Ask them if they would like to join.
- STEP SIX:** Establish a way of recording the names and addresses of campaign supporters.  
If resources permit, provide them with feedback as the campaign progresses – this will maintain their enthusiasm and interest and allow you to call on them for further support in the future.

## **Building a Strong Alliance**

### **FORMATION STAGE**

- Establish a clear purpose or mission
- Involve individuals and organizations that share the mission
- Build a commitment to participatory process and collaboration

### **MAINTENANCE/GROWTH STAGE**

#### **Organization**

- Define clear, specialized roles
- Establish a loose or fluid organizational structure; vertical, hierarchical structures don't build stronger networks
- Compile a skills inventory including the skills/expertise of individual members and institutional resources (fax, internet, meeting space, etc.)
- Prepare to fill expertise gaps by recruiting new members
- Establish a communication system (i.e. telephone tree)
- Create an NGO member database (name, address, organization's mission, type and focus of organization, etc.)

#### **Leadership**

- Share leadership functions (i.e., rotating coordinating committee)
- Set realistic goals and objectives
- Divide into sub-groups/task forces to take on specific tasks according to expertise
- Spread responsibilities across all members to avoid burnout
- Promote participatory planning and decision-making
- Foster trust and collaboration among members
- Keep members motivated by acknowledging their contributions

#### **Meetings/Documentation**

- Meet only when necessary
- Set a specific agenda and circulate it ahead of time
- Follow the agenda and keep meetings brief; finish meetings on time
- Rotate meetings and facilitation roles
- Keep attendance list and record meeting minutes to disseminate afterwards
- Use members' facilitation skills to help the network reach consensus and resolve conflict
- Discuss difficult issues openly during meetings
- Maintain a network notebook to document network activities, decisions, etc.

*Adapted from Networking for Policy Change: An Advocacy Training Manual, The Policy Project/USAID*

## Setting the Scene For Advocacy

- ✓ Analyse the problem. Break down the issue into component parts and select the most strategic issue by exploring how the issue effects the people you are working with – what changes do they want or need?
- ✓ Clearly define what it is you want to see change. What solutions are being proposed by you and others?
- ✓ Understand policy making processes. How do issues get onto the policy making agenda. At what stages can effective interventions be made?
- ✓ Analyse the decision-making space. Which institutions can make decisions regarding the issue? Who decides and when? Identify primary and secondary 'targets' for advocacy and policy influencing – those who can make the decision and those who can influence these decision makers
- ✓ Think about the opportunities that exist to influence the issue?
- ✓ Who are your potential allies for this work? Prioritise amongst allies and begin networking
- ✓ Who are your potential opponents? What arguments will they make, how can these arguments be dealt with?
- ✓ Analyse your institutional capacity to undertake the advocacy, alongside the capacity of allies. Who will do what? When will human and financial resources be needed? Brainstorm solutions to address any weaknesses.
- ✓ Develop a strategy for influencing the primary and secondary targets, using components from the advocacy toolbox – lobby meetings, seminars and conferences, policy briefings and research documentation, exposure visits, media coverage, campaigning, etc.
- ✓ Estimate the costs involved and make a budget
- ✓ Plan and implement all specific activities and individual responsibilities
- ✓ Periodically stop to reflect on any changes in the local context, successes or failures of specific initiatives and overall advocacy strategy and make adjustments as necessary
- ✓ And think about.....When will your advocacy strategy be over? What happens if you have a success in changing policy? Will you engage in developing and implementing the policy with government or stay away in case you are coopted? What will be the impact on Southern partners think if you stop work on the issue?

*(Created by Hilary Coulby –with inputs from Civicus and the Central American Advocacy Training Project of WOLA*



## Example of a Roadmap for Advocacy

YEAR ONE: Assessment of the issue carried out > advocacy strategy developed (stakeholder analysis, policy analysis, etc.) > advocacy aims and objectives established > plan of action developed > further research and analysis > alliances built

YEAR TWO: > dialogue with decision-makers and other key stakeholders begins > relationships built with key stakeholders > publications, media work, seminars to raise awareness > issue is part of public agenda for debate > more communications work and campaigning to highlight the issue > more research to provide evidence policy makers require > lobbying of key influencers > lobbying of decision-makers

YEAR THREE: > lobbying continues > major stakeholder seminar convened > decision makers begin to change their opinions > more research carried out regarding the issue and potential solutions > draft policies produced

YEAR FOUR: > new policies agreed > new policies resourced and implemented > positive change in people's lives

*(Hillary Coulby for Oxfam Hong Kong)*

## Setting Objectives for Advocacy

### Primary Objectives for Advocacy

- Changes in laws and policies
- Implementation of laws and policies
- Reform of Institutions
- Changes in attitudes and behaviors
- Increasing democratic space- legitimacy of civil groups, freedom of information and space to speak out
- Civil society gains- increased cooperation, solidarity

### Secondary Objectives for Advocacy

- Getting the issue on the agenda for public debate
- Increasing support and active membership
- Fundraising
- Developing the profile and reputation of your organization

## THINKING ABOUT WHAT YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE

Aim	The overall purpose of the advocacy initiative: <i>To improve poor people's health by increasing access to medicines</i>
Objectives	Specific things to be achieved in the short and medium term on the way to achieving the aim: <i>To increase the budget for primary health care centres; generic drugs policy introduced</i>
Activities	What will be done: <i>research into the issue; lobbying decision-makers; running a public campaign; organising a seminar, etc.</i>
Outputs	What will be produced and happen as a result of activities: <i>2 briefing papers – published and distributed; 7 meetings with decision makers; 1 mass cycle ride and 2 public meetings; seminar attended by 70 people</i>
Outcomes	What you believe will happen as a result of your advocacy. It is useful to divide these into: SHORT TERM: <i>The issue has become part of national debate and politicians are asking for an increase in next year's budget.</i>  MEDIUM TERM: <i>Increase in the budget is agreed; generic health policy in place</i>  LONG TERM: <i>More medicines available in rural health clinics; child mortality decreased; loss of income through illness decreased</i>

*(Hilary Coulby for Oxfam Hong Kong)*

## FOCUSING ON OUTCOMES

In addition to setting advocacy objectives, it is important to focus right from the start on *what outcomes you want to see*, for the following reasons:

- Outcomes reduce the danger of being too activity-focused, ie objectives can sometimes become a list of `things we intend to do'. This can lead to an M+E process that only looks at `whether we did the things we said we'd do'.
- If you are `outcome-focused' you are much more likely to look at the *impact* of the activities, rather than the activities themselves.

It is useful to compare actual outcomes against the anticipated outcomes – changes are not always predictable.

Focus on more than *policy* outcomes or other main change aim of your initiative. Since large scale change is rarely immediate and very difficult to achieve, you need to identify significant shorter term achievements. Important outcomes that can be monitored include, for example, the extent to which an advocacy initiative *has built the capacity of the organisations involved*. Strong civil society organisations will be needed to monitor any policy gains and to hold governments accountable for policy implementation. Capacity built today could mean policy gains tomorrow.

### **Outcomes: some factors to measure:**

- Policy gains: Specific changes in policy, practice and/or institutional reforms
- Implementational gains: the extent to which stated policies are implemented and how these have changed and what impact (or lack of impact) the change has had on the people and communities expected to benefit
- Political and democratic gains: civil groups gain increasing recognition as legitimate actors, the democratic space within which NGOs and other civil groups can work increases, access to governments and other institutions improves, increased respect for human rights including the rights of women, disabled, children, etc., greater freedom of information
- Civil Society gains: the degree to which the capacity of CSOs/NGOs is strengthened; improved cooperation between civil groups; CSOs/NGOs can manage constructively the existence of different perspectives and positions amongst civil groups; CSOs/NGOs have the skills needed to successfully hold governments and international organisations to account
- Partnership gains: advocacy leads to the formation of regional and international networks that can effectively address international institutions and issues of globalization; strong relationships built between groups in the global South and North that erode traditional inequalities and dependencies and form the basis for long term cooperative action
- Organisational gains: increased profile, respect as a credible source of information, increased funding

*(Hillary Coulby with thanks to Helen Collinson, Jane Covey, IDR and CIIR)*