



Policy Development and Policy Advocacy Course Materials

Shannon O'Connell

**Policy Development
and Policy Advocacy**
Course Materials

The National Democratic Institute (NDI) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nongovernmental organization that responds to the aspirations of people around the world to live in democratic societies that recognize and promote basic human rights.

Since its founding in 1983, NDI and its local partners have worked to support and strengthen democratic institutions and practices by strengthening political parties, civic organizations and parliaments, safeguarding elections, and promoting citizen participation, openness and accountability in government.

With staff members and volunteer political practitioners from more than 100 nations, NDI brings together individuals and groups to share ideas, knowledge, experiences and expertise. Partners receive broad exposure to best practices in international democratic development that can be adapted to the needs of their own countries. NDI's multinational approach reinforces the message that while there is no single democratic model, certain core principles are shared by all democracies.

The Institute's work upholds the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It also promotes the development of institutionalized channels of communications among citizens, political institutions and elected officials, and strengthens their ability to improve the quality of life for all citizens. For more information about NDI, please visit www.ndi.org.

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The National Democratic Institute (NDI), Arab Center for Development (ACD), MARCH and Women in Front (WIF) welcome you to the 'Sure, she can' program.

We are organizing this program because we believe that women's active political participation can have a direct positive impact on Lebanon's development and progress. Women engaged in politics play a significant role in improving citizens' lives by tackling the issues that matter most to them. As advocates for policies they believe in, women's contributions are essential to building a strong and vibrant democratic society.

Whether you are part of an established organization or association, an aspiring politician, an individual with a passion to make change, this program is designed to provide you with the tools necessary to start taking action and influencing policy on the issues that matter most to you.

This program is for women leaders, designed and led by women leaders. Together, we will focus on building well-researched plans for policy change, helping you assess how best to apply your limited resources (time, money and people) and enhancing your networks of allies and other advocates.

As a woman who wants to make a difference where it matters, you are part of a broader, global community striving to improve your world in both small and big ways. Can a Lebanese woman contribute to positive change for her family, her community, and her country? Sure, she can!

Nicole Rowsell
Country Director, Lebanon
National Democratic Institute

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Part One

The Foundations of Policy Advocacy

Section 1.1: What is Policy? What is Policy Advocacy?



1. Think about your own perceptions of policy, or the words that come to mind when you hear this term. Write them down in the space below.

At its core, politics and governing are meant to be a competition of ideas:

- How should the **country** be run?
- How should **finances** be managed?
- How should the **economy** be developed?
- What should **spending priorities** be?
- How should **relations with other countries** be managed?
- What should the state of **health care** be?
- What should the **education** system look like?
- What should the **rights and responsibilities** of citizens be?
- What **quality of life** should citizens expect?
- How should the **infrastructure** perform?



In order for ideas to come to life, they must be translated into **policy**.

Policies are clear plans about how a social, political or economic vision will be achieved and how ideas will be implemented as actions.

What is Policy Advocacy?



2. Many people have heard of advocacy, but may not have heard the ‘policy advocacy.’ What is your understanding or what are your perceptions of what the term means? In the space below, write down whatever comes to mind when you hear the phrase, ‘policy advocacy.’

Defining Policy Advocacy

Policy advocacy is a form of advocacy, but it’s a little different from the most familiar forms of advocacy. Generally speaking, there are three types of advocacy. (Different wording may be used in different countries or settings, but the goals and outcomes are essentially the same.)

QUICK FACT: Advocacy and the word “advocate,” come from ancient Roman law. The term was used to describe those who were called to the aid of someone, or who took the role of champion on behalf of others, such as lawyers and barristers in the legal system. The term has also been used to describe protectors or champions.

Source: Etymonline.com

Case Advocacy → Case advocacy (often called casework) attempts to solve one person’s, one family’s, or one community’s problem at a time. For example, if Abu Maher’s family does not have potable water in their home, we work with the local authorities to address this problem for his family and his home.

Issue Advocacy → Issue advocacy is about raising awareness around a broader problem or issue. For example, if a local community does not have access to potable water or if domestic violence is not being taken seriously

by the local police, we launch a publicity and activism campaign about these problems to draw attention to them and, ideally, create change as a result.

Policy Advocacy → Policy advocacy is solution-based. Instead of solving a problem for one person at a time, or simply raising awareness about a problem, in policy advocacy we analyze the causes of a problem and develop policy-based solutions to address these in a manner that creates sustainable and enduring change. Formal policy mechanisms, such as laws or government regulations, are a key part of policy advocacy as this type of work often seeks to alter the way that official institutions address or spend money on the issue.

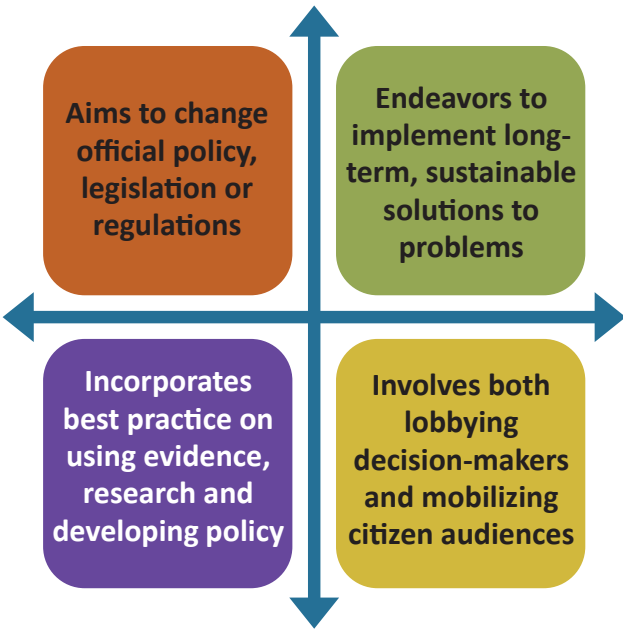
Policy advocacy refers to organized initiatives that seek to change official policy or legislation, or the manner in which these regulations are applied. Policy advocacy efforts typically try to establish new policies, improve existing policies or challenge the development of policies that

create a difficulty or an injustice for specific groups in society, particularly more vulnerable or disadvantaged groups.

To be engaged in policy advocacy, organizations and individuals need to know not only how to identify problems, but how to isolate causes, analyze evidence, work with research, develop sound, viable policy options and understand how to cost these (i.e., measure what it would cost to implement the policy).

Because it involves altering legislative mechanisms, policy advocacy often seeks to influence policy at the decision-making level, such as public officials, civil servants, elected officials and legislators. But to be truly effective, policy advocacy must also involve citizen participation, so that local communities have the opportunity to actively participate in making the policy change happen.

To summarize, policy advocacy:



Why is Policy Advocacy Important?



3. While there may be a long history of casework and issue advocacy, policy advocacy is a newer development in many societies. Why do you think this form of advocacy has emerged? What is different and possibly important about policy advocacy? Write your thoughts below.

Policy advocacy is important because:

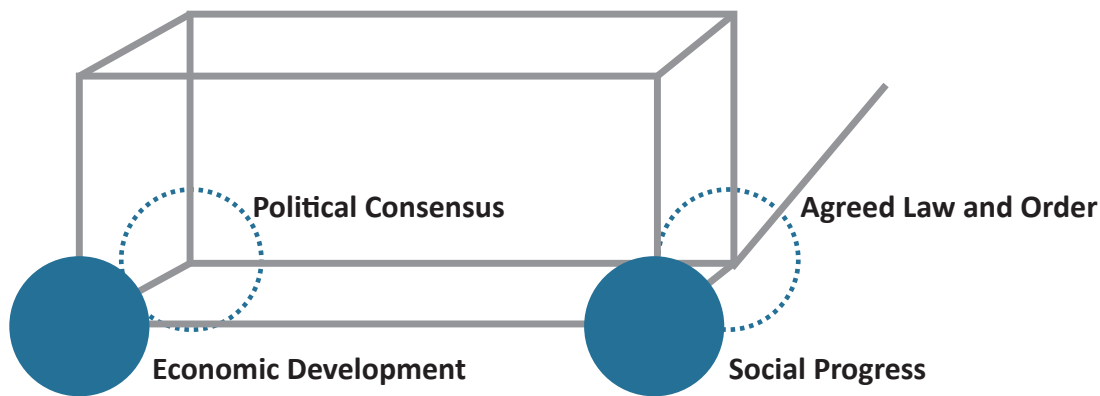


Policy Advocacy and Countries in Transition



4. Policy advocacy is particularly vital in countries going through a significant transition, such as those trying to progress out of a period of violence or instability, or trying to end high levels of poverty, or trying to rebuild after a major disaster. Why do you think this is? Write your thoughts below.

A society that is undergoing a major social, political or economic transition is like a four-wheeled wagon. In order for stability to be achieved, progress has to be made in four key areas. Otherwise, the wagon – like the society – cannot move forward. These four areas are outlined in the figure below.¹



¹ The wagon, “Dimensions of Peace,” is the work of Brendan McAllister, a Senior Associate of mediatEUr, the European Forum for International Mediation and Dialogue and a Senior Mediation Advisor with the United Nations’ Department of Political Affairs. It has been used in this manual with his permission.

Political Consensus

Efforts must be made to achieve some form of agreement on how the society will be governed and what the standards and qualifications for governance will be. For example, do all parties aspiring to govern have to commit to solely peaceful and democratic means? Do all groups competing in elections have to be registered political parties? Can anyone stand for office, no matter his or her background and possible role in conflict? How will decisions be made and implemented? Who will do this?

Agreed Law and Order

Law and order emerges when rules of behaviour within a society are agreed, when these rules are largely enforced and respected, and when the bodies responsible for enforcing these rules are respected.

Economic Development

Economic development refers to investments that support a society's economic growth and bring jobs and income to its population. These can include: the construction of roads, bridges and other infrastructure projects; expanding access to the internet and increasing internet speeds; improving sewerage and access to clean water and sanitation; upgrading structures for delivering reliable electricity and other power sources; building schools and other community facilities, etc.

Social Progress

Social progress has to do with the capacity of a society to meet the basic human needs of its citizens. This can include health care, housing, education, play and leisure facilities, the expression of cultural traditions, healthy community life, opportunities for young people, equality of opportunities for all citizens, including women and other traditionally-disadvantaged groups, etc.

Policy is what puts air in the tires of the wagon. Policy is the fuel that gives the wagon momentum to move forward. Without policy, these four key areas remain vague, without agreement, and without progress, like a busted wagon that can't move.

Policy Doesn't Belong Just to Politicians

Political parties, political leaders and elected officials play an important role in policy development and implementation. As mechanisms for organizing ideas and building consensus, political organizations should be a key player in initiating both the proposals and the public debates that can lead to sound policy outcomes for a society.

However, in many societies, and particularly those in transition, this isn't always possible. Political parties newer to governing may not yet have acquired the capacity to develop policy proposals, or they might be hesitant to invite broader public consultation on their ideas.

Additionally, many countries undergoing transition enter into a form of power-sharing in the early stages. Power-sharing can be an ideal way to bring violent conflict, political instability or power disputes to an end, but it does not always engender an environment that supports the development of robust policy ideas. Too often, power-sharing is about distributing resources in

a way that keeps the parties in a dispute satisfied long enough to make some form of progress. In this arrangement, the needs of the biggest or loudest party can take precedent over what is best for the society as a whole. It is difficult for better policy outcomes to become a priority in this atmosphere.

Therefore, it is vital that civil society, community leaders, and individual citizens play an active role in advancing policy proposals through advocacy as, without their engagement, vigorous policy proposals are unlikely to be part of the debate. Additional reasons are outlined in the Fact Box below.

QUICK FACTS: In times of transition, the involvement of civil society organizations (CSOs), community leaders and individual citizens in policy development and advocacy is particularly important:

- Civil society organizations often have a high degree of technical and specific issue expertise. This can even exceed that of legislators and other decision-makers and means that their input into policy proposals is vital.
 - Civil society organizations and community leaders frequently have more direct interaction with citizens than elected officials. Therefore, they may have a better sense of the needs and problems of local communities, and what might actually work in practice.
 - In every society, citizen intervention plays a vital role in ensuring a healthy political, economic and social life, but this is even more important in countries undergoing a major transition. The more citizens are involved in developing transition plans and policies, the more likely they are to work.
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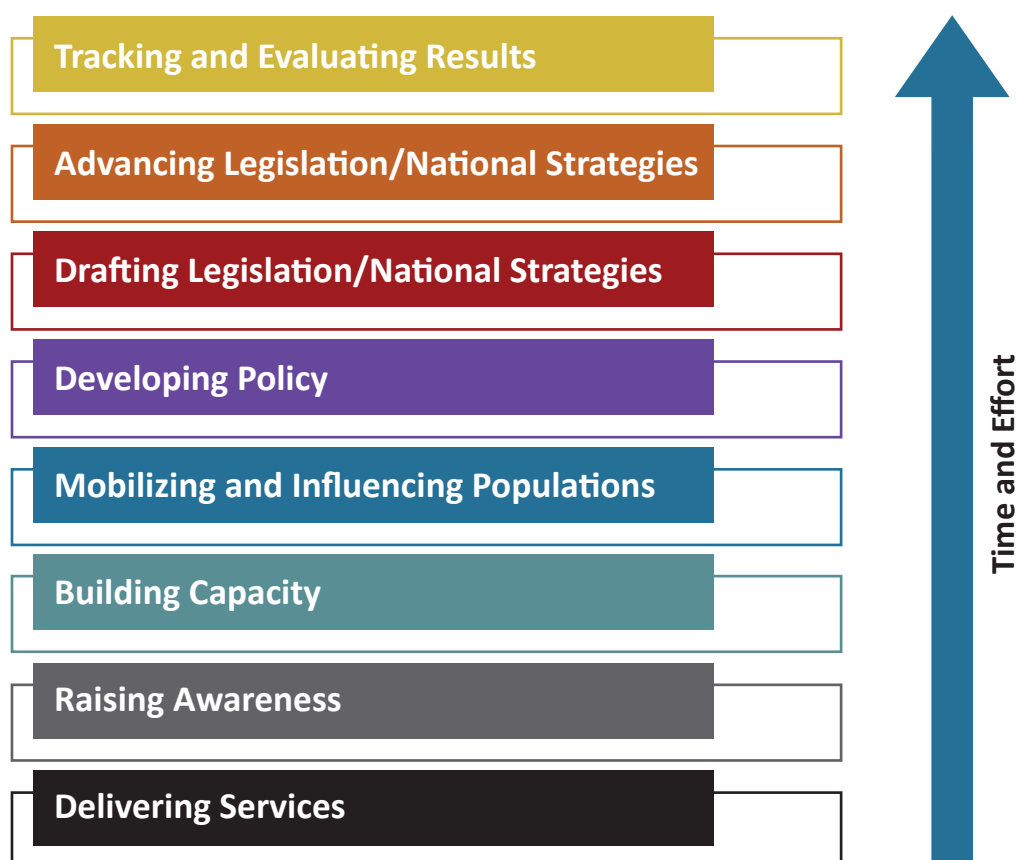


5. Can you think of other reasons why it is important for CSOs, community leaders and individual citizens to be involved in policy development, particularly in times of transition? Write your answers below.

Section 1.2: Core Components of Policy Advocacy

Capacities for Effective Policy Advocacy

Many political and civil society organizations develop along a ladder that looks like the one below, starting at the bottom and progressing to the top:



At the bottom of the ladder are service delivery, raising awareness and building capacity. These are the areas in which many CSOs focus their core functions. They focus on local communities, playing a key role in delivering different types of services, building awareness around certain issues and building capacity in the communities they serve. This is what they start doing when they are established and they frequently get very good at this.

It's not just CSOs that do this. Quite a few political organizations dabble in these activities as well. Some political parties began as organizations trying to perform the same tasks, and even those parties with strictly political origins often have a wing or a division focused on service-based activities.

However, in order for a society to progress and for the wheels on that wagon of stability (see Section 1) to get some air in them, CSOs and political organizations have to develop the internal capacities to move up the ladder. This means, critically, cultivating the ability to develop, communicate, implement, and track policy as legislation or regulations.

These are advanced skills and require organizations to develop a number of professional capacities, including conducting research and analysis, knowing how to work with evidence, being able to engage and mobilize both decision-makers and grassroots audiences, and understanding how to create change through policy interventions.



6. If you are part of a civil society organization or political party, where do you think your organization currently sits on this ladder? What internal capacities have you develop? Have these been tested yet, and proved successful? Write your answers below.

Organizational Capacities for Policy Advocacy

One way to assess your level of preparedness for policy advocacy is to conduct a capacities assessment. Consider the inventory list of key capacities for policy advocacy below. Review each category and the accompanying questions.

A. Credibility	• Can I/our organization legitimately speak on behalf of those affected by this issue? • Am I/Is our organization perceived as objective and trustworthy? Could we be perceived as politically partisan? • Am I/Is our organization known and respected by decision-makers?
B. Issue Identification	• Do I/Does our organization have the capacity to conduct an issue identification exercise, such as a survey, community assessment, focus groups, or other form of research, using standards for best practice? • If I/we cannot conduct my/our own issue identification exercise, do I/we have access to sound research or data from other sources?

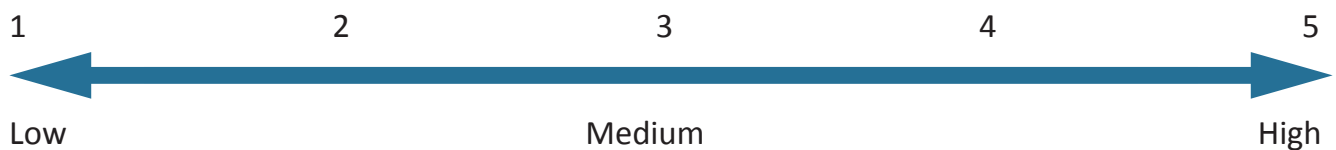
C. Research, Analysis and Policy Development	• Do I/Does our organization fully understand the issue identified for advocacy? Would I/we be considered issue experts? • Do I/Does our organization have the capacity to collect and analyze data or conduct original research on an issue identified for advocacy? • If not, do I/we have access to other forms of reliable data and the ability to apply findings to this issue? • Do I/Does our organization have the capacity to analyze information in such a way that allows me/us to come up with legitimate policy alternatives or issue solutions? • If not, do I/we have partners that can provide this capacity? • Do I/Does our organization have the skills to costs out a policy proposal and identify revenue streams for implementation? • If not, do I/we have partners that can provide this capacity?
D. Community Outreach and Grassroots Organizing	• Am I/Is our organization known and respected by local communities affected by this issue? • Do I/we have strong relationships with community leaders in the area? • Do I/we know and understand how targeted audiences in the area get their information? • Do I/we have the resources and skill capacity to organize outreach and mobilization activities in the area? • What are the main constituency groups that I/we service now? How are they connected to this issue?
E. Relationships with Decision-Makers	• Am I/Is our organization known and respected by those with the authority to make decisions on this issue? • Do I/Does our organization have the relationships necessary to secure meetings and other forms of engagement with decision-makers on this issue? • If I/we do not have the appropriate direct relationships with decision-makers, can I/we partner with other organizations or individuals who do?
F. Understanding the Decision-Making Process	• Do I/Does our organization understand how and when decisions are made on this issue? • Do I/Does our organization have access to the meetings or other formats during which decisions are made on this issue?

G. External Communication	• Do I/we have the capacity to transform language from research and policy into short, clear messages for targeted audiences? • Do I/we have the ability to identify key audiences for mobilization? Do I/we know how to find out where these audiences get their information and what means of communication will be most effective with them?
H. Internal Communication for CSOs and Coalitions	• Is there strong leadership in the organization for policy development and advocacy? • Does everyone in the organization understand their roles and responsibilities in terms of policy development and advocacy? • Are mechanisms in place for all staff to be aware of our priorities and messages?
I. Ability to Form Networks and Coalitions	• Am I/Is our organization a member of any professional networks, coalitions or partnerships? • Do I/Does our organization have good working relationships with others working on this issue, including civil society organizations, community leaders and government departments? • Am I/Are we in a position to maximize the impact of our policy advocacy effort by building partnerships with other organizations and individuals which carry different strengths and assets from our own?
J. Resource Management	• Do I/we have sufficient human resources to achieve our policy advocacy goals? • Do I/we have the capacity to recruit and train volunteers within the timeline of our policy advocacy campaign? • Do I/we have sufficient financial resources to achieve our policy advocacy goals? • Am I/Are we managing our time well enough to achieve our advocacy goals? Are priority actions and achievements given enough time and resources? • Are there other human or material resources that I/we need to bring to this campaign?

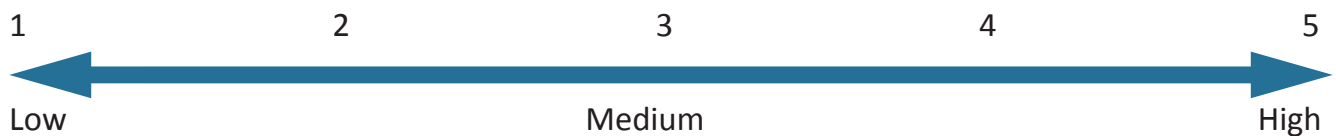


7. Based on your review of the policy advocacy functions outlined above, rate your own or your organization's capacity to perform in each of these areas. Assess your strength for each category on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being a low level of skill, ability and experience and 5 being a very high level of skill, ability and experience. Please be prepared to discuss your answers.

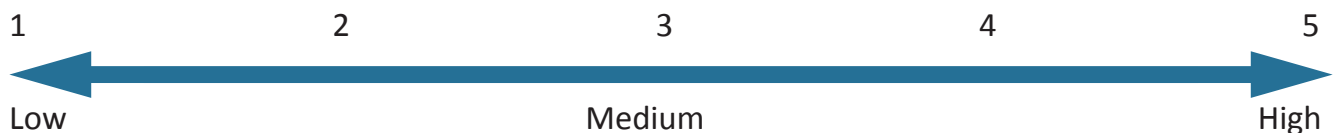
A. Credibility



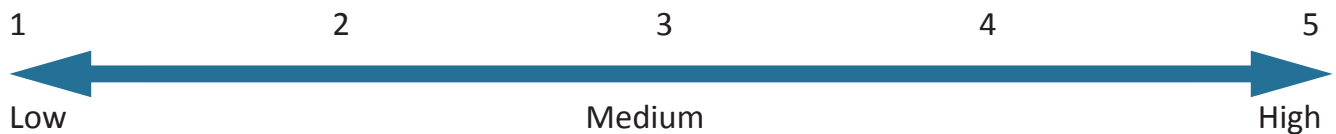
B. Issue Identification



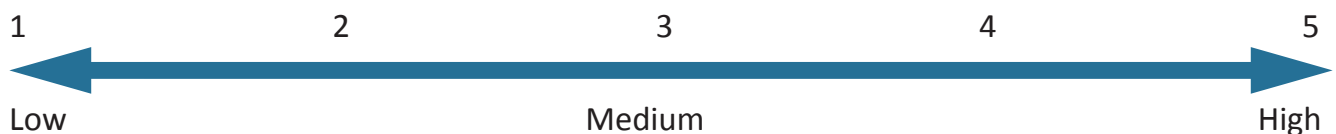
C. Research, Analysis and Policy Development



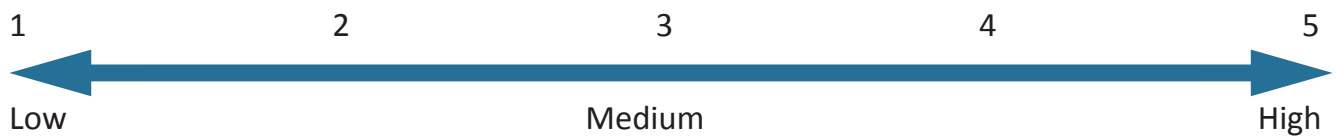
D. Community Outreach and Grassroots Organizing



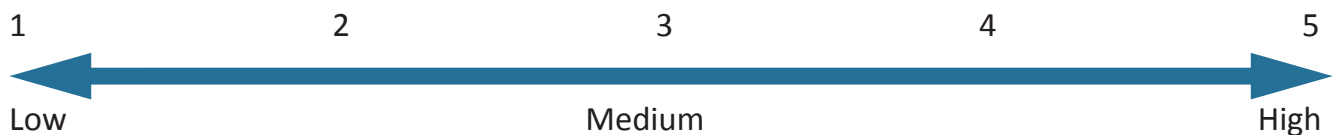
E. Relationships with Decision-Makers



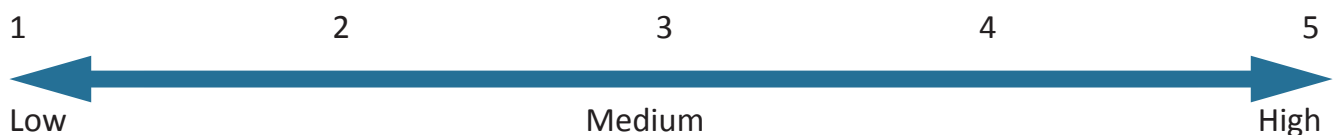
F. Understanding the Decision-Making Process



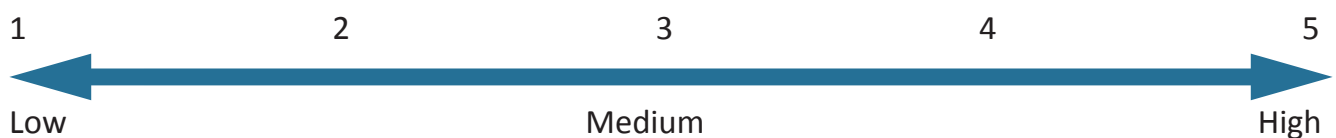
G. External Communication



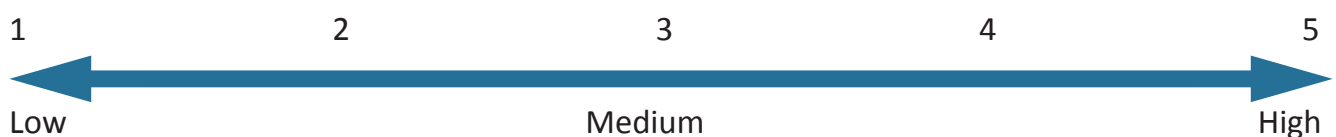
H. Internal Communication



I. Ability to Form Networks and Coalitions



J. Resource Management

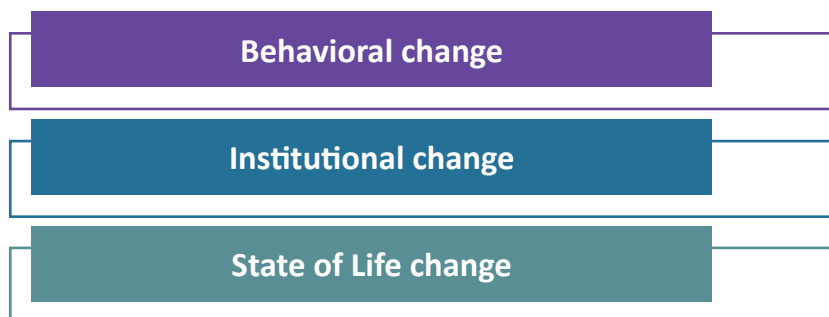


8. How would you assess your own or your organization's overall readiness to conduct an effective policy advocacy campaign? What strengths do you bring to the effort? What areas may require assistance or support, possibly from other organizations? What areas would you like to focus on in particular as part of this course?

Section 1.3: How Policy Works

Where Can Change Happen?

The purpose of policy advocacy is to **create change**. Policy generally endeavors to create change in three main areas:



Behavioral change involves changes in the behavior, relationships, activities, or actions of the people, groups or organizations targeted by the policy. Examples include:

- Changes in attitudes towards domestic violence
- Reduced willingness to pay bribes to public officials
- Lower tolerance of human rights abuses by security forces
- Greater value placed on the participation of youth in society
- Reductions in smoking or other unhealthy behaviors



9. Can you think of other examples of behavioral change through policy? Write them below.

Institutional change involves shifts in the function or a behavior of an official body or organization. New bodies can be created or existing bodies can be modified or given new powers or resources. Examples include:

- Passing a new law mandating free, universal primary education to be implemented by the Ministry of Education
- Creating an independent oversight body to monitor the delivery and pricing of public utilities
- Establishing a competitive and transparent system for the manner in which government contracts are awarded, which is overseen by a public ombudsman

- Shifting spending to fund basic health services for children in an initiative implemented by both the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education
- Creating a civic forum to give civil society a voice in parliament



10. Can you think of other examples of institutional change through policy?
Write them below.

State of Life change involves changes in the quality of people's daily lives and the way they live those lives. Examples include:

- Cleaner water and effective sewerage and sanitation
- Good roads and reliable transportation systems
- Reductions in crime or political instability, resulting in safer streets
- Reliable electricity, internet access and other elements of infrastructure
- Access to quality education and health care



11. Can you think of other examples of state of life change through policy?
Write them below.

Policy proposals can, and frequently do, seek to influence all three of these areas. The important starting point for activists is to understand the difference between *policies* and *activities*. These two things are easily confused as they can be inter-linked, but they are never the same. Consider the descriptions below.

Policy Proposals	Activities
• Address the issue for the long-term • Have official and often permanent status • Alter the way official institutions deal with the issue • Change laws, regulations and/or their implementation and enforcement • Change the way money is spent on the issue	• Short-term or fleeting • Bring temporary attention to the issue • May alter relationships but do not change official policy • Are part of achieving a policy solution, but are not a solution per se

12. Review the list below. Identify which are policy-based solutions and which are activities. Ask, does this effort endeavor to address a problem in the long-term (policy), or to raise awareness in the immediate or short-term (activity).

	Policy or Activity?
Town hall meeting	
Draft law on maternal health	
National public transportation development program	
Press conference	
Workshop on health care issues	
Government-run small business investment program	
Demonstration	
Petition-signing campaign	
Recruitment program for teachers to work in rural areas run by the Ministry of Education	
Government-run vocational training program for young people	
Constructing criminal penalties for sexual harassment or discrimination	

Stages of Policy Development

All policy advocacy starts with the actual development and/or adoption of a policy-based solution to a problem or issue. This means that policy advocates either have to work to create a new policy response to a situation, or to identify the policies that are currently available and choose from among these. There are several ways to approach this, but most efforts will incorporate the elements of the policy development cycle outlined below.

Each of these themes represents an important element of successful policy development. In practice, however, they don't always occur in neat, distinct phases; they frequently overlap and the length of time spent on each area will depend on a number of factors, including the political environment and the complexity of the issue being addressed.

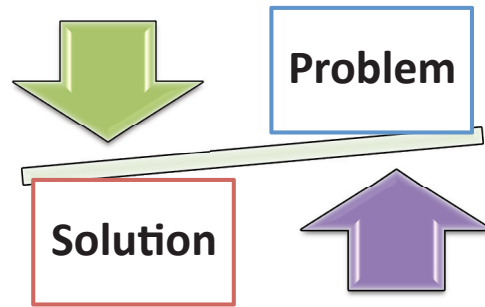
For example, research and analysis may be part of identifying issues or problems, discovering possible solutions and defining objectives. Implementation may occur well after efforts to map the decision-making process and build a communication and outreach strategy have taken place.

Additionally, the order in which these steps are taken may be affected by the particular issue or available resources. Some policy efforts, for example, may require extensive time spent on research to come up with a clear policy-based solution, while for others there is already



substantial research with which to work and a potential policy response may be more readily identifiable.

The key is to find the balance between the **Problem-Solution** relationship. Effective policy takes the time to clearly identify the fundamental causes of a problem or issue, and to gather solid research and evidence on which to base viable solutions.



Policy development therefore is not just about identifying problems. It is much more about coming up with solid solutions to address these problems and deliver better outcomes for citizens and for society as a whole. Policy advocates do not just raise the alarm about a problem; they come equipped with the answers as well.

The next sections of this manual will walk through the key stages of the policy development process in detail.

Part Two

Issue Verification, Research and Developing Policy

Section 2.1: Best Practice for Issue Verification



13. As a participant in this course, you are probably well-aware of some of the problems facing your local community. If you were going to select an issue to work on as part of a policy advocacy effort, what would it be?



14. Why would you select this as an issue for policy advocacy?



15. Describe which demographic and/or geographic groups are affected by this issue.

Issue Verification Research Techniques

When we first start to look at problems that may require an advocacy response, we often make assumptions about what they are and how they are experienced by affected populations. However, to ensure that the policy solution we propose is accurate, we have to move beyond assumptions and verify the issue further through research. **Essentially, we have to prove that it is a problem and clarify the form in which it exists.**

There are many tools and techniques that can be employed to verify and clarify problems and issues. To select the right assessment technique for your policy advocacy effort, consider the

type of information you need to collect, the dynamics around the issue and how it tends to affect people, the resources you are able to commit to this, local social and cultural arrangements and whether safety or security issues are a factor. Examples of methods for problem verification include:

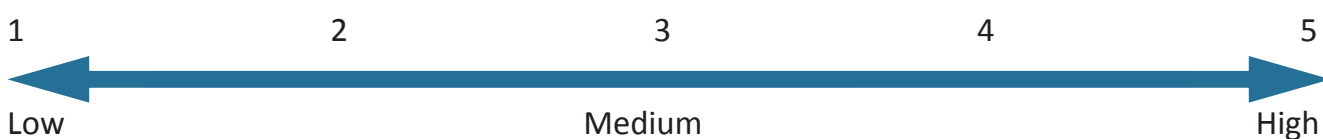
- **Community Leader Interviews.** These are interviews with prominent members of the local community who have influence over others. These include religious leaders, civil leaders, academics and heads of schools, chiefs of strong families or tribes, respected elected officials, cultural figures, etc. The interviews are used to garner their opinions about key issues for the local community and begin to build relationships for advocacy.
- **Focus Groups.** Focus groups are structured discussions with select groups to probe issues and ideas at a deeper level. Participants in these groups should be homogenous to ensure an open and honest discussion, and the moderators of the discussion should fit the same profile if possible. Focus group discussions use open-ended questions to offer qualitative insights into how different communities feel about an issue or problem. If surveys answer the question, “how big is the problem?” focus groups answer the question, “how is the problem perceived?”
- **Surveys.** Surveys involve the questioning or canvassing of persons selected at random or by quota to obtain information or opinions. Each person surveyed must be asked an identical set of questions, and a sufficient number of people must be canvassed in order for the results to be statistically reliable. It takes a fair amount of internal capacity for an organization to use demographic data to come up with a survey sample, construct a sound questionnaire, and train and field enough volunteers for the results to be fully useful. Organizations without sufficient resources to conduct such activities can partner with other organizations, create a joint survey, or simply use the results published by other credible groups or agencies.
- **Community Meetings.** Community meetings are an opportunity to canvass issues that are important to local residents. These events can be good ways to build relationships with members of the community as well, and to begin to build grassroots support for your advocacy effort.
- **Time Maps or Daily Activities Schedules.** Time maps and activities schedules are audits or inventories of how members of a community spend their time. These tools can provide valuable information on local needs, what services are working and when, and how quality of life is affected and how communities are disrupted by poor services or policies. These approaches also offer insights on how, when and where to reach people within the community.
- **Neighborhood Canvass.** Walk around the community or area you are planning to work with and visit with people who may be available. Ask their opinions on issues using a single, standard questionnaire. Station a table with information and the questionnaire in an area with high foot traffic. If the local community would be comfortable with this, send canvassing teams to talk to people in their homes. Canvasses are generally less formal mechanisms for research than surveys, but the results can be just as useful for advocacy campaigns.

- **Community Asset Mapping/Inventories.** There are various ways to conduct Community Asset Mapping, but all forms of this method seek to create an inventory of the strengths and assets of a particular community or the people who make up a community. The objective is to reveal what positive potential already exists within a community in order to maximize and build on those forces. This also helps to highlight the essential services that would make the community stronger if they functioned better.
- **Community Cafes.** Community cafes are local events which seek to attract all types of people from a community to share their ideas and opinions in a more social environment, for example over coffee, tea or sweets.

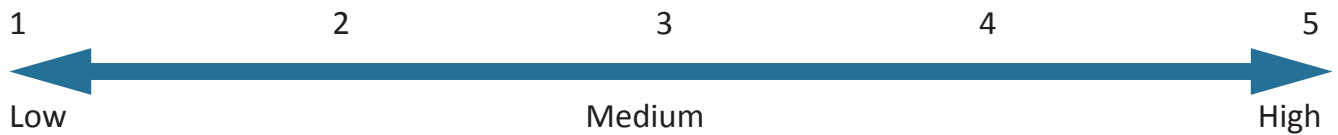
Essentially, issue identification efforts must help prove that the issue exists as a *problem*, and begin to quantify its size and impact.

Another option for measuring the impact of a particular problem or issue within the context of policy advocacy is to see where the issue falls with an assessment framework like the one below. Even with a framework like this, you will need to use some form of evidence base or research to verify your answers.

A. Size of population: the issue affects many people

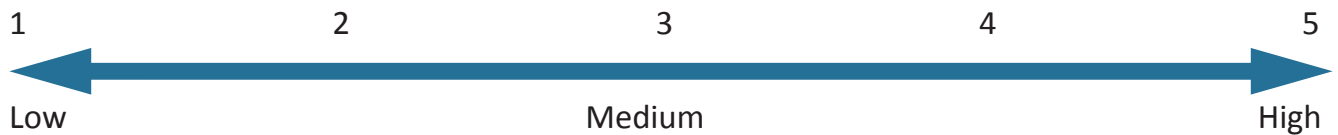


How significant is the impact? Can you measure it? Does it result in a real disadvantage or harm? If so, is it enduring or fleeting?



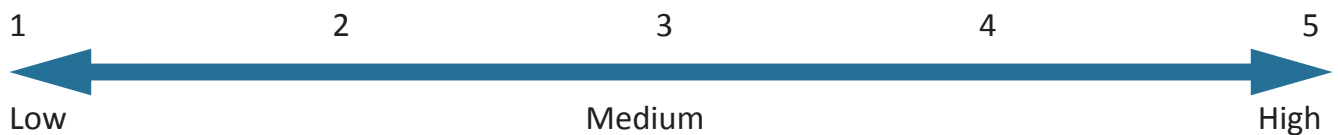
C. Improvement: addressing this issue would lead to better outcomes for the population

What proof do you have that things would get better? What exactly would get better?



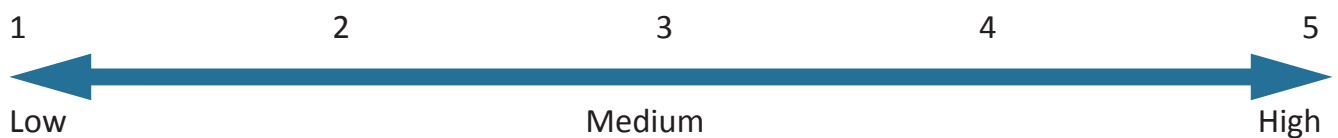
D. Values: the issue is consistent with my/our organization's mission and values

What is the connection between this issue and your values and mission?



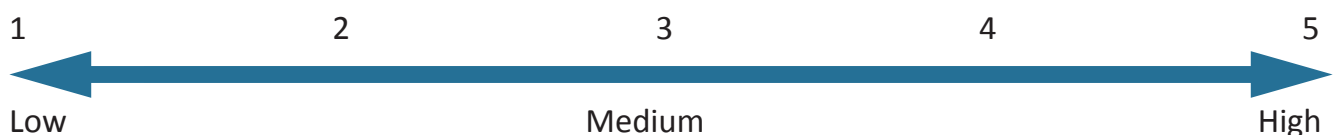
E. Appropriate for intervention: the issue is amenable to a policy intervention

What proof do you have that policy would make a difference in this case? Do you have case studies of policy interventions working in similar situations? Are you certain that acting is better than doing nothing?



F. Mobilizing: the issue can mobilize a large number of interested partners and other stakeholders

Would this issue produce enough interest to engender the necessary interest and support?



Write down the score you gave for each question below, then total them.

1. Size of population _____
2. Impact _____
3. Improvement _____
4. Values _____
5. Appropriate for intervention _____
6. Mobilizing _____

Total _____

Higher scores suggest a stronger campaign. **If your total score is less than 18, you may need to reconsider the issue you have chosen or how you are defining it.**



17. Go back to your answer to question 13. Based on our discussions on issue identification and verification, would you make any problems to the way you have described this topic or problem in your answer? If so, please make those adjustments in the space below.

Section 2.2: Frameworks for Problem Analysis

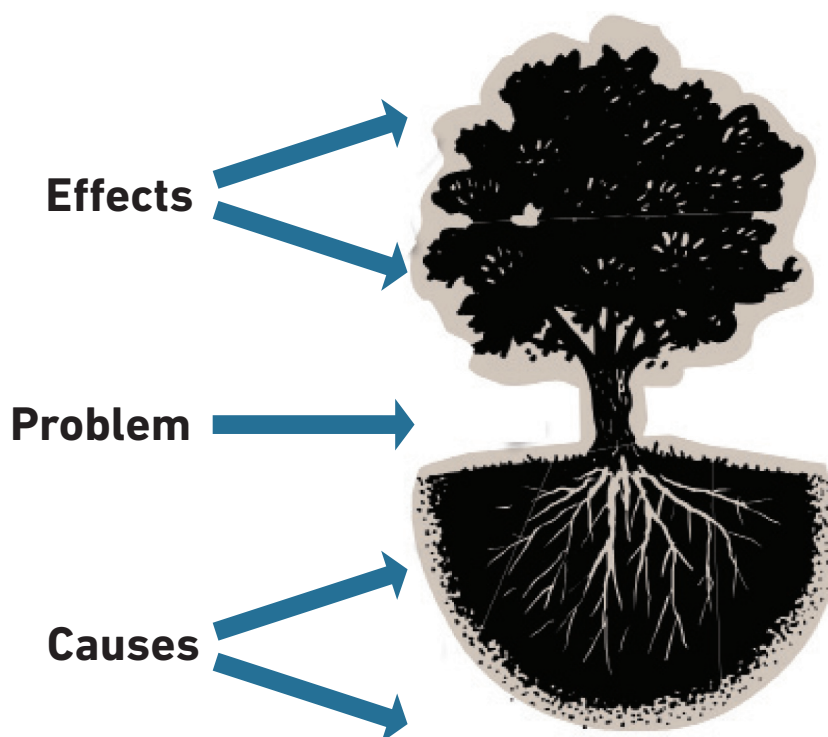
When identifying an issue for advocacy, it is important to ensure that you have identified the causes of a problem and not simply its symptoms. Social and economic problems are often complex, and frequently have more than one cause. As a result, the symptoms or effects of a problem can sometimes appear to be causes.

Dissecting a problem through analysis helps to ensure that root causes are identified and isolated, which also means that proposed solutions are more likely to be both relevant and effective.

One method for doing this is the Problem Tree Analysis. This structure maps out the anatomy of cause and effect around a particular issue or problem and allows larger problems to be broken down into management and definable pieces. The Problem Tree helps untangle varied perspectives and isolate root causes. It is a simple tool that is easily accessible.

In the **Problem Tree Analysis** model:

- the problem or issue to be addressed is the trunk of the tree;
- the effects, results or symptoms of the problem are the branches as leaves (the part that is most visible); and,
- the causes or sources of the problem are the roots (the part that is most difficult to see or most deeply embedded).



To conduct the Problem Tree Analysis, start from the trunk of the tree, move down and then up:

1. Write down the problem or issue to be analyzed, as you currently understand it.
2. Write down what you consider the causes or sources of the focal problem to be.
3. Write down the consequences, effects or outcomes.



18. Use the blank Problem Tree below to conduct this analysis, based on the problem or issue you have identified.



Effects:

Problem:

Causes:



19. Now, review what you have written. Is the problem as you have currently defined it really at the core of the causes and effects you have identified? Do you need to refine the problem more, break it down into smaller pieces or use more specific language? What research or evidence do you need to bring in to help you understand the issue better?

Once you are sure that you have an accurate analysis of the problem, it is time to isolate the causes you are going to address in your policy response.

- Policy is meant to address the **causes** of a problem.
- Most problems are so complex, it is not possible to address all of their causes in a single policy advocacy campaign. Therefore, it is important to **identify which specific causes your policy is going to tackle**.



20. Review the causes outlined in your problem tree. Which specific cause or causes are going to be the focus of your policy response? List them below.

Section 2.3: Creating Policy Goals and Vision Statements

Now that you have clarified the problem or issue you want to address and isolated the causes your policy will target, there is one more step you must take before you can actually begin to construct a policy proposal: you need to define your vision.

If you know what the problem is and what the causes to the problem are, what will it actually look like when these are addressed? What is your vision for what life will look like for your society once your policy is successfully implemented? The problem you have identified is something you are trying to move *away* from, but before you can make that move you need to know where you are moving *towards*. This is your vision.

There are a few techniques that can be helpful in defining this vision. One is simply drawing a picture of what life will be like once this issue is addressed. Visual images can be a useful source of inspiration when trying to construct a response to a problem. However, at some point you are going to have to offer more detail than what can be included in a single image, and the two methods outlined below offer systems to help do this.

Defining Goals and Objectives

Like any good plan, putting together a strong policy advocacy campaign starts with thinking through what it is you want or need to achieve. This is a policy advocacy effort's goal, its overall aim. Without this, little is likely to be accomplished.

Goal ⇒ A policy advocacy campaign generally has one goal, tied to the problem or issue it seeks to address. The goal is the broader vision for the change the campaign is trying to achieve, its overall aim or purpose for the long-term. It is written using general language. An advocacy campaign goal often refers to the benefit that will be offered to those affected by the issue.

Here are some examples of policy advocacy campaign goals, focused on different issues:

- Reduce childhood malnutrition to improve children's health.
- Improve access to reliable, quality sanitation so that local residents experience a higher quality of life and a lower level of illness.

To figure out your policy advocacy goal, ask yourself:

- How will we know if the policy has been successful? What will it look like?
- If a newspaper were to write a headline on the success of the policy, what would it say?
- What are those people affected by the issue expecting to see?

- Build the capacity and legitimacy of the judiciary so that vital human rights regulations are implemented and protected through the courts.

Once the goal is defined, objectives can be set. Objectives are the incremental and achievable steps that will be taken in order to reach a goal. In policy advocacy, objectives often describe the changes in funding, institutions, behavior, or practice that will be necessary in order to achieve the campaign's goal.

Objectives ⇒ Objectives define the incremental and realistic steps that can be taken towards achieving the policy goal. They are more specific than the goal and, within the context of policy advocacy, frequently focus on the desired change to the official policies, programs or positions of decision-making bodies that will be necessary in order for the advocacy goal to be achieved.

To define objectives, ask:

- What preconditions must be met in order for my goal to be reached?

Policy advocacy campaigns can have more than one objective to reach a goal. Below are some examples of policy advocacy campaign objectives which are connected to the goals listed earlier in this section:

- In the next 18 months, the education, social welfare and agricultural ministries implement a child nutrition program through pre-schools and primary schools, based on best practice.
- Increase funding for sanitation provision in the five poorest districts by 50%, within 18 months.
- Repeal the city ordinance that prevents the water utility from connecting households in slum areas to its service within the next two years.
- By June 2015, the Ministry of the Environment will approve a comprehensive environmental policy that effectively controls the disposal of waste in rivers by private companies.
- In the next 12 months, implement an accredited training program for court judges and judicial clerks on key human rights legislation and compliance with judicial reforms.
- Transform the judicial selection process in the next three years to ensure independent, non-political selection of judges at the constitutional, criminal and appeals court levels.

Objectives should fit the SMART criteria. That is, they should be:

Specific

- described in precise or detailed terms

Measurable

- progress and achievement can be assessed and quantified

Achievable

- it can actually be accomplished with the time and resources available

Realistic

- it is sensible and practical to try to achieve this

Time-bound

- a specific time has been set to achieve the objective



21. Use the space below to define the goal for your policy advocacy effort.



22. Use the space below to define the objectives for your policy advocacy effort.

Vision Statements

Another option to help shape your efforts is to construct a vision statement. A vision statement is a description of what society will be like in the future, once your policy proposal has been successfully implemented.

There are a number of scenarios that can help create a vision statement. They all involve using your creative abilities to imagine what is possible. Try one of the following:

- Imagine you are at an award ceremony ten years from today. It is a large event in which a prestigious award is being given to the organization or individual responsible for the policy initiative which had the greatest positive impact in the last decade. You are the recipient of the award. The emcee comes up to the microphone to introduce you. What does he or she say about your policy and what it did? How does he or she describe its impact and its outcomes?
- A documentary film has been made about the policy you initiated. The big premiere is tonight. The film includes a time lapse sequence which shows the progression from what the problem (that your policy was designed to address) once looked like to where it is now, several years later. What does the final scene of the time lapse sequence look like? What is happening? What does the narrator say about the impact of the policy on the affected communities?
- Several years after you initiated your policy advocacy effort, a lead story is to be written about it in a prominent news magazine, including the publication's website and blog. What will the layout look like? What language will be used to describe the impact of the policy? Consider all of the elements below.

Headline that describes what the policy did

Photo or image of the beneficiaries of the policy

Quote from a stakeholder that validates and explains the headline

First **two sentences** of the lead paragraph that describe the impact of the policy



23. Using either the awards ceremony or documentary film settings as a springboard for your ideas, construct a vision statement for your policy advocacy effort. What does the situation look like in five or ten years?



24. Use the lead story concept to create a vision for your policy advocacy effort. Fill in the form below to come up with a description of what your policy will do.

Headline that describes what the policy did
Photo or image of the beneficiaries of the policy
Quote from a stakeholder that validates and explains the headline
First two sentences of the lead paragraph that describe the impact of the policy

Section 2.4: Writing the Research Question

At this stage, you have identified and verified the issue or problem you intend to address, you have isolated the key causes fueling this problem, and you have constructed a vision for what you would like the outcome of your policy advocacy effort to be. You've done a lot of work already!

However, you may be noticing something as you progress with your analyses. Although you have a lot of information at this stage, there are noticeable gaps in what you know. Societal problems are typically complex and even when we have a sound understanding of what's causing them, it's not always clear what solutions or policy might have a positive impact.

The next step, therefore, is to figure out what it is you don't know and work out where to get the information you need.

Writing the Research Question

Good policy is based on good research. Decades of policy development and implementation have shown that the more that policy proposals are based in evidence – rather than ideology, good intention or an educated “guess” – the more efficient they are, the more effective they are and the more likely they are to lead to the best possible outcomes.

Outcomes are results, but they are results that affect the quality of life of those impacted by the problem or issue. Sound policy should always be focused on outcomes: i.e., if we do this, what will happen? Research and evidence help policy developers anticipate and plan for certain outcomes.

To use research and evidence effectively, you have to know what you don't know. In other words, you have to be able to isolate and identify what you need to know more about in order to compose an appropriate policy response. This is done by constructing a research question. To construct a research question:

1. Examine the problem and its causes, which you have identified through research and/or analysis (such as a Problem Tree Analysis).
2. State the general issue or problem that needs to be investigated in the form of a problem statement.
3. Translate this into a question that can be researched. The question must be:
 - a. Precise, focused and clear
 - b. Open-ended
 - c. Arguable and addressable
 - d. Connected to the problem statement



The example below offers a problem statement and research question on an issue involving education policy.

Issue/Problem: More than half (51%) of young men from poorer neighborhoods are leaving secondary education with no qualifications. This phenomenon creates financial, social and health penalties that stay with these young people throughout their lives, i.e., they are far likelier to earn less money and experience lower qualities of life and poorer health than their peers.

Cause: One of the contributing factors that has been identified is that, from the first days of primary school at the age of 5, children from poorer families struggle to do as well as their peers from better-off families. Over time, they are unlikely to make up this gap in academic performance, despite having access to the same education system.

Problem Statement: Children from poorer families are benefiting less from the education system than their peers from better-off families, despite having access to the same system.

Research Question: What are the causes of this type of educational disadvantage? Are there aspects of the current education system that contribute to situation? What types of interventions have been shown to make a difference for children at this age and over the long-term?



25. Examine the causes you have isolated from the problem tree. Identify the general issue that needs to be investigated. Translate this into a research question. What are your gaps in information? What do you need to know to address these issues?



Going back to the example on education on the previous page, answering our research question provides the following information:

- Research shows that educational disadvantage is embedded by the age of 5; policy interventions after this age are more expensive and deliver fewer results
- The Department of Education currently spends £1,250 per pupil per year in secondary education and £750 per pupil per year in primary education
- Various studies report that between 10 – 30% of academic achievement comes from what goes on in the school; 70 – 90% of academic achievement comes from what goes on in the home

This evidence begins to give us some vital information about how our policy response should be constructed, the types of interventions that might result in better outcomes, and a sense of where and at what time in a child's life programs should be directed.



26. What do you think? Based on the example given about education and the research provided, where should the policy response to this problem focus?

Section 2.5: Using Outcomes-Based Evidence

As you begin to seek out research and evidence to inform your policy proposal, it's important to have a sense of what is out there and what it is you're looking for. Not all research is the same. It's not all good, and it's not all useful for policy development.

This section provides an overview of the types of research that are generally used to inform policy, and offers some guidance on where it can be found.

Types of Research

The following chart provides an overview of the main categories of research:

Primary Research	First-hand collection and collation of data. Examples include: • Survey Research → designed to assess a population's perceptions of a problem and the general size of the impact • Experimental Research → designed to study cause-and-effect where a certain type of intervention is tested on a specific population while a control group, which does not receive the intervention, is maintained Useful for understanding how a population is experiencing a problem, as well as what types of policy interventions have been effective or ineffective.
Secondary Review Studies	Interrogation (testing) and review of primary research studies. Examples include: • Systematic Review → a review and appraisal of all high-quality research evidence related to a specific topic or research question Useful for developing a more comprehensive understanding of the types of policy interventions that have consistently proven to be effective or ineffective.
Quantitative Research	Answers the questions: • "What?" • "How many?" Useful for understanding the size of a problem and its general impact.
Qualitative Research	Answers the questions: • "Why?" • "Why not?" Useful for understanding the reasons behind a problem or issue and affected populations likely response to various interventions.

Research and Evidence

Research that examines causal relationships and that has been peer reviewed is the “gold standard” in policy development. Causality is the relationship between an event and what happens as a result. In other words, if I do something, what will happen as a result? For example, if I create a citizen board to work in partnership with the local water utility company, will this result in better services for local residents? Do the powers given to the citizen board make a difference? This is also known as cause-and-effect research. It’s a bit like playing Angry Birds: if I fling this bird at that pig at this angle, what will happen?

Peer reviewed means that the research mechanisms, techniques and findings have been rigorously challenged and tested by multiple experts in the field, so the results are considered more reliable. There are generally three types of cause-and-effect research:

Experimental	• Also known as intervention designs and randomized control trials (RCTs) • To conduct this type of research, researchers manipulate an independent variable and/or randomly assign subjects to treatment groups and control groups
Quasi-Experimental	• Includes one but not both key features of experimental research, frequently for ethical or practical reasons
Observational	• Researchers do not manipulate the intervention but infer causal relationships through observation of phenomena

This type of research is not always available, but there are many options for gathering robust evidence and vital information that are necessary to create fully-formed policy proposals. These include:

Academic Research	Professional research from local universities and non-partisan think tanks can provide an independent analysis of a problem’s causes, symptoms and possible solutions.
Asset Inventories	Use the results of community asset maps or inventories (described in detail in Part One of this workbook) to identify the strengths, skills, abilities, or chances for growth that a community can build on to solve problems.
Audit Reports	Countries with a professional and independent audit capacity – whether based in a government agency, legislative committee or provided by civil society organizations – can use assessments of government spending to inform recommendations on how public funds can best be directed to solve urgent or enduring problems.
Community Cafés	A community café creates the atmosphere of a restaurant or café in which small groups of people from a local area discuss potential

solutions to problems in a relaxed, friendly environment. It is important that this type of research is organized in a way in which all members of the community can participate. For example, if young people or women do not go to such venues, then the model needs to be adjusted to accommodate their participation as well.

Committee Reports

If they have fully developed their capacity, legislative committees at the national, regional or local level will frequently compile reports that examine societal issues or problems and make recommendations on how they might be addressed.

Community Mapping

Community mapping involves getting to know the social, economic and demographic characteristics of a community in order to map out services that are already being provided, to assess how well these are being used or serving the population, to identify essential services that are not being provided, and to get a clearer idea of all resources available to the community.

NGO and IO Reports

Some larger international organizations, such as UNICEF, UNESCO, the World Bank, UNDP, and others, address a number of common societal problems worldwide, particularly those connected to development, increasing standards of living, reducing poverty, protecting the environment and advancing Millennium Development Goals. In the course of this work, these organizations produce reports that are often based on extensive research on specific problems, their causes, and recommended policy responses. Local NGO's and policy research organizations can also be a source of this information.

Focus Groups

Focus groups are a form of facilitated discussion in which groups of people are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes towards a particular issue. It is helpful if the individuals recruited for the group are from a similar background, as this typically leads to a more comfortable environment for sharing ideas and feelings.

Gender Analysis

Many societal problems affect women and men differently because of their different roles in society. Gender analysis of issues involves assessing how women and men, girls and boys are each affected by a problem, to what degree and with what results. Sound gender analysis helps ensure that recommended solutions deliver best outcomes for all members of a society or community.

Media Coverage

Monitoring media coverage of an issue can sometimes lead to good sources of information, such as newly-released data or experts on the issue.

Official Statistics	Official statistics are figures published by government agencies or other public bodies which provide quantitative information on major areas of citizens' lives, such as employment, education, access to sanitation, electricity and clean water, relative age of the population and the male/female ratio. A country's census is an example of official statistics.
Public Consultation	Public consultation on issues and policy involves engaging a large population – sometimes the entire electorate – in discussions around a problem and in the development of solutions by gathering their thoughts on the origins of the issue and how it should be handled. Good consultation, structured around a uniform set of questions or defined process, helps to improve the quality of the policy outcome and gets interested parties involved and invested in the issue.
Stakeholder Interviews	Stakeholder interviews are structured discussions or surveys held with any group or individual affected by an issue, problem or proposed solutions.
Surveys	A survey is one of the best known and most popular methods of identifying problems and evaluating public opinion about symptoms and solutions. Surveys can be very simple, targeting only a small audience, or quite complex, sampling large segments of a population. If there are insufficient resources or time to conduct a standalone survey on an issue, consider adding a few questions to a larger survey (often referred to as an omnibus survey) which a government agency or private sector research or marketing firm may already conduct on a regular basis.

The choice of mechanism or mechanisms depends on the amount of time available, what you need to know and how complex the issue is. Typically, more complex issues require more consultative forms of research to engage the communities or groups most impacted by an issue, or who are more likely to be affected by proposed solutions.

To identify the types of research that would be most useful for your advocacy campaign, ask:

- **What information do we need?** ⇒ What are our gaps in knowledge or experiences?
- **Where does information on this issue already exist?** ⇒ Is it reliable and credible? Is it accessible to us?
- **Who do we need to hear from?** ⇒ Have key players or stakeholders made a contribution to any discussion on the issue?
- **What resources do we have for information collection?** ⇒ Can we do this on our own or do we need partners? Do we have the skills and expertise to manage data systematically and without interjecting bias?



27. Answer the questions above for your own issue. What information do you need? What are your gaps in knowledge or experiences?



28. Where does information on this issue already exist? Is it reliable and credible? Is it accessible to us?



29. Who do you need to hear from? Have key players or stakeholders made a contribution to any discussion on the issue?



30. What resources do you have for information collection? Can you do this on your own or do you need partners? Do you have the skills and expertise to manage data systematically and without interjecting bias?

FACT BOX: In policy development, the purpose of using research is to generate policies that address societal issues more effectively, manage resources better, and deliver the best possible outcomes for people. This means constructing policy interventions that have been proven to improve a given situation.

The research used to inform policy efforts must be:

- **Rigorous and high quality:** Experimental studies that seek to demonstrate cause and effect relationships are most useful in policy development. Such efforts that have been peer reviewed are the 'gold standard'
- **Large enough:** The research used doesn't have to be a massive 'meta-analysis,' but it must be large enough to garner sufficient, reliable and useful information.
- **Inclusive:** The research mechanism used must be accessible to all members of the community affected by the issue or problem. For example, research on education that

includes the opinions of young people is likely to be more useful for formulating policy on education.

- **Non-biased:** Organizations seeking a greater understanding of key issues for local communities must ensure that their approach does not assume what the outcome will be, and that questions don't lead respondents to give a certain answer.
 - **Able to answer the question “why?”:** Research used for policy development should not just be hard numbers; it should also be able to provide an understanding of why things happen the way they do and why a problem exists in its current form. This context is vital for addressing complex problems for the long-term.
 - **Active:** This standard is particular to civil society organizations and citizen coalitions. A civil initiative will get more valuable information and build better relationships by proactively going out into the community to canvass opinions, rather than expecting local residents to come to them.
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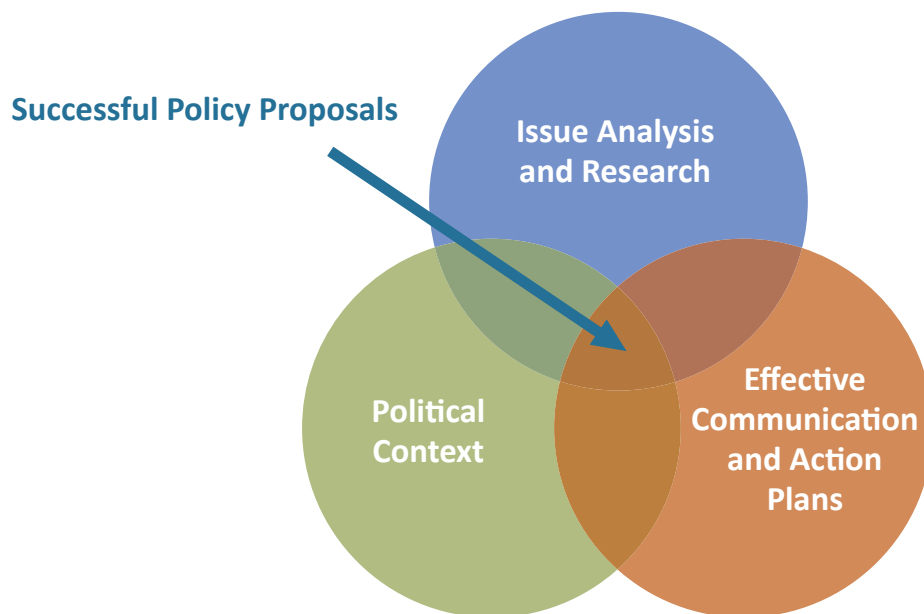
Section 2.6: Best Practice for Developing Policy Proposals

Developing Policy Proposals

In advocacy, it is often easier to identify problems than it is to identify solutions. This is the challenge for activists trying to have an impact on society – to come up with policy proposals that are sound, viable and that will have a positive impact on affected communities.

Developing effective policy proposals requires three key elements:

- Developing and using a sound evidence base, that comes from solid issue identification, problem analysis and outcomes-based research
- Understanding and managing the political context, including how and where decisions are made
- Being able to communicate complex issues in a manner that is clear, compelling and which inspires action



As the diagram above indicates, it can be a small window or wedge into which successful policy proposals actually fit. Policy is not implemented in a vacuum, but in a complex societal environment with many dynamics at play. The best way of transforming all of the work that has been done in analyzing and researching the issue into actual policy proposals is to take it in four steps:

1. Clearly define the outcome or outcomes you need or want to achieve
2. Identify all possible policy-based routes for reaching or achieving these outcomes
3. Check the viability of proposed solutions, including their cost
4. Check the clarity of proposed solutions

1. Clearly define the outcome or outcomes you need or want to achieve

Outcomes are results. The best policy options are formulated by starting with intended *outcomes* and working backwards from there. In other words, what do you need to happen as a result of your policy alternative? What would the situation look like, once the problem you're trying to address is solved?

This is essentially the vision statement you wrote in Section 2.3. Go back to those pages and review what you have written there. You may find it helpful to continue revisit what you have written as your vision as you work to construct policy proposals, just to keep your response focused on your intended outcome. Otherwise, it can be easy to become distracted and end up with a proposal that won't lead to the situation you were trying to create.

Another way of looking at it is to consider how you would reverse the terms of the problem you clarified in the issue identification stage earlier. If the problem, for example, is that 51% of boys from poorer families are not completing secondary education, what is the opposite of this in realistic terms?

2. Identify all possible policy-based options for reaching or achieving these outcomes

This is where your base of evidence will be most useful. What have you learned from the work you have done by writing and answering your research question? What are the most efficient

and effective routes to the outcomes you have defined in step one (i.e., your vision statement)? Apply the following questions to the information you have gathered:

- If nothing is done about this issue, what is likely to happen? Does it get worse, in terms of human or financial costs? Does it get better? Does nothing happen? It is too difficult to tell?
- Where are the shortfalls in current policy? Are there any aspects of the current approach that are worth maintaining?
- Where would change be most desirable?
- What are other policy areas with similar issues? How have these been addressed? Has this been successful or not?
- What are other countries with similar issues? How have they addressed these? Has this been successful or not?
- If we were to address this issue in a new, innovative and creative way – something that has never been tried before – what would solutions look like?
- What are those groups which are most affected by the problem asking for?
- What actions can be taken to address or neutralize the causes of the problem? How effective are these? Are they sustainable?
- What actions can be taken to mitigate some of the symptoms or effects of a problem? How effective are these? Are they sustainable?
- What approach(es) would best meet the needs of women? Men? Girls? Boys? Different minority groups?
- Is there documented best practice on this issue?

These questions serve as a filter mechanism. As they are applied to the information that has been gathered during the research phase, policy alternatives for responding to an issue or problem begin to emerge.

3. Isolate the most viable options

“Viable” comes from the Latin word for “life.” The question is, can this policy live?

The first standard for viability is good governance. Does the proposal meet current standards for risk management, value for money, gender mainstreaming, and oversight and transparency?

There is always an element of risk involved in doing something differently. Check your policy alternatives for the degree and type of risk, i.e., financial, physical, material, environmental or social. Is the amount of risk reasonable and manageable; does it justify the potential rewards?

Any policy alternative that requires the use of public funds must also be assessed for its value for money – whether the benefits to society justify the costs. Consider which options represent a smart investment for the country and sound use of public funds. Ask whether spending money in this manner represents good financial management.

Contemporary standards for good governance also require a sound gender analysis of policy proposals to ensure there is no inherent bias. Check your emerging proposals against the following criteria:

- In terms of gender, what groups are most likely to be affected by the proposed solution?
- What is the estimated impact of the solution on these groups?
- Does the proposed solution change the activity patterns of men or women, and how?
- Does the proposed solution increase or decrease women or men's workload?
- Who (men or women) would make the decisions and who would do the groundwork to implement the solution?
- Would women and men have equal access to resources, benefits or services that result from the solution?
- Who would benefit the most from the proposed solution?

Oversight and transparency are linked to all of the areas already discussed. Does the policy approach involve processes that are accountable and transparent, and that would avoid decision-making or spending that could be perceived as inappropriate?

Ultimately, there are the realities of the political and social environments to consider. When policy alternatives move from the development phase and enter the world of possibilities, they immediately confront the reactions and opinions of others. Some people and organizations will have a vested interest in the status quo and will respond with opposition to proposed changes. Policy advocates must have a firm understanding of the political and social dynamics at play so that they know how to construct and position proposed policy solutions. It is important to anticipate, understand and plan for a range of likely responses to any policy proposals, as these will significantly impact their viability.

Use the framework below to assess the likely political environment for your policy proposal:

Environment	What is current public opinion on this issue? What is current opinion of major political actors on this issue?
Supporters	Who is likely to support the policy? Why? Will their support be strong or weak? How can I maximize their support?
Opponents	Who is likely to oppose the policy? Will their opposition be strong or weak? What will their arguments be against the policy? How can I neutralize these arguments?
Stakeholders	Who is most likely to be affected by this policy? What degree of change will they have to adjust to? What is their initial reaction likely to be? What information or interaction do they need to support the policy?

4. Check the clarity of options

Finally, check how well your policy alternatives have been formulated and devised, whether your objectives are clear, your action points are compelling and the language is lucid, especially for complex issues. Clear and compelling policies are much easier to communicate and therefore more likely to garner public support and make it to implementation. Policy options must also be specific, so that decision-makers know exactly what they are being asked to do and advocates can hold them accountable for progress on the issue.

Consider the examples below. First, review each of the issues listed, then review the proposed solutions. Finally, indicate whether you think each is clear or unclear and be prepared to discuss why.

Issue	Proposed Solution	Clear or Unclear?
Supporting the growth of small business to boost the economy	"The government should give small and medium-sized enterprises tax breaks."	
High levels of unemployment among young people	"We want the government to find more jobs for young people."	
Unreliable electricity and frequent blackouts	"We propose the creation of an advisory panel of citizens to oversee decisions being made by utility companies. It will have the same authorities as an executive board." "The government should just nationalize all the utility companies and throw the corrupt owners of these companies out of the country."	
Girls from rural areas leaving education (school) at an early age	"Redirect funding from secondary schools in urban areas to pay to build more schools in rural areas." "Train more female teachers from rural areas to work in their own communities."	
Poor health care services	"We want free, universal health care by the end of the next year."	

Transportation and traffic issues	“We have devised a five year plan in which the government invests heavily in public transportation in the first three years, and as this becomes more successful and delivers a good service to citizens, the use of private vehicles in cities during certain hours will progressively become more expensive.”	
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As you reach the final phases of policy development, you need to ensure you’ve completed work on all of the essential elements before you move forward with any advocacy efforts. Take a few minutes to answer the questions below to ensure you have thoroughly developed all aspects of your policy proposal.



31. What specifically will change as a result of this policy proposal?



32. Who will be responsible for implementing the change and/or policy?



33. Who will be responsible for monitoring implementation of the policy?



34. Who will be responsible for funding or paying for the change? From where will funds come?



35. What mechanism will be used to institutional the change (e.g., law, regulation, order or decree, etc.)?



36. What will the official name of the policy be?

Part Three

Identifying Opportunities for Influence and Impact

Section 3.1: Mapping the Decision-Making Process

Most policy advocacy campaigns involve some form of shift in the way a government or other official body, organization or institution conducts itself. For example:

- A policy advocacy campaign focused on reducing youth unemployment asks the government's Department of Labor to fund more apprenticeship program and asks the Department of Education to expand access to training programs.
- A policy advocacy campaign focused on developing better sanitation asks the local council and a private water company to subsidize the costs renovating the toilets in all rural schools over the next three years, and asks both bodies to shift long-term spending plans to include an upgrade of the area's sewerage system.
- A policy advocacy campaign focused on supporting the development of small business asks the government Investment Development Authority to establish two enterprise zones in areas around the capital within two years, and provide businesses that locate there with tax breaks and incentives for at least five years.



In other words, once a policy advocacy initiative has defined what it is asking for, it needs to know who to ask to help deliver it. Each of the campaigns listed above had to figure out how decisions were made that affected the issues on which they were focusing.

It is vital that your advocacy campaign has a comprehensive understanding of the decision-making processes that affect the issue on which you are working. Without this, your campaign is at risk of asking the wrong people for the wrong things and ending up with very little in terms of results.

Where are decisions made?

To identify the decision-making processes associated with the issue or problem on which your campaign is focusing, investigate these questions:

- **Spending and Investment** → Where are decisions made about how money is spent on this issue? Who makes those decisions?

- **Policy and Regulations** → Where are decisions made about how policy is formulated on this issue? Who makes those decisions?
- **Implementation and Enforcement** → Where are decisions made about how policy or regulations on this issue are implemented or enforced? Who makes those decisions?
- **Public Opinion** → Where are decisions made about how this issue is perceived or understood? Who makes those decisions?

How are decisions made?

Decision-making processes can take many forms. Legislatures have mandatory committee processes, a local council may have an audit and risk sub-group, and a business may have a board of directors. All of these are decision-making bodies. But this does not necessarily mean this is where key decisions are being made. Generally speaking, decision-making processes are either formal or informal.

- **Formal:** required by law or by documented organizational policy. For example:
 - Committee hearings, meetings or reporting processes
 - Legislative debates and votes
 - Ministerial decrees
 - Executive bylaws and regulations
 - Audit, risk and oversight reporting processes
 - Board meetings
 - Consultation processes
- **Informal:** activities and procedures which occur outside formal process, often concurrently, which are not required by law or official policy but which still have an impact on the official decision taken. For example:
 - Community meetings
 - Private meetings
 - Legislative drafting sessions
 - Ministerial meetings
 - The local, cultural equivalent of the “golf course”
 - Places decision-makers meet socially (Shisha, coffee house, qat chews, smoking breaks, restaurants)

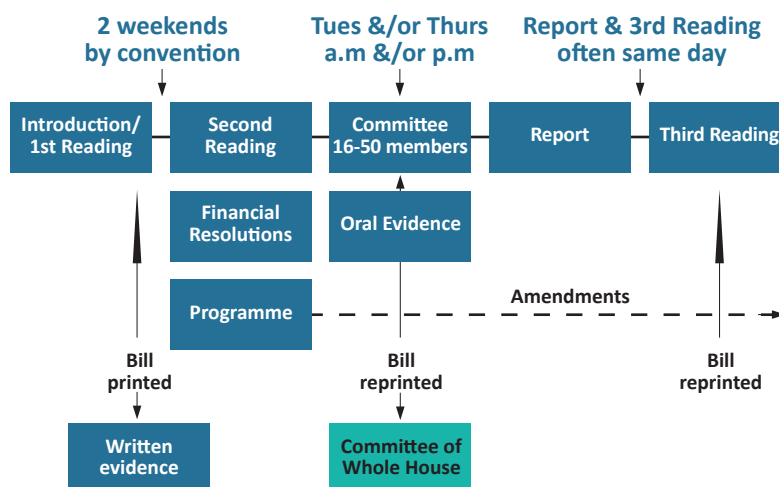


Clearly, there is a higher level of transparency for some of these processes than for others. The key is to understand the processes in as much detail as possible, and to map it out so that you have a clear idea where decisions are being made, by whom, and when.

Consider the process by which legislation is made in House of Commons (lower house of parliament) in the United Kingdom. The process has been refined over centuries, and so at this stage it is very clear and accessible. If you were working on a policy advocacy campaign trying to get legislation through the parliament, the decision-making map below suggests that you would know what to expect and when and, with a bit more research, have a pretty good idea of who is making the decisions based on who leads each stage in the process.

A Legislative Process

House of Commons stages



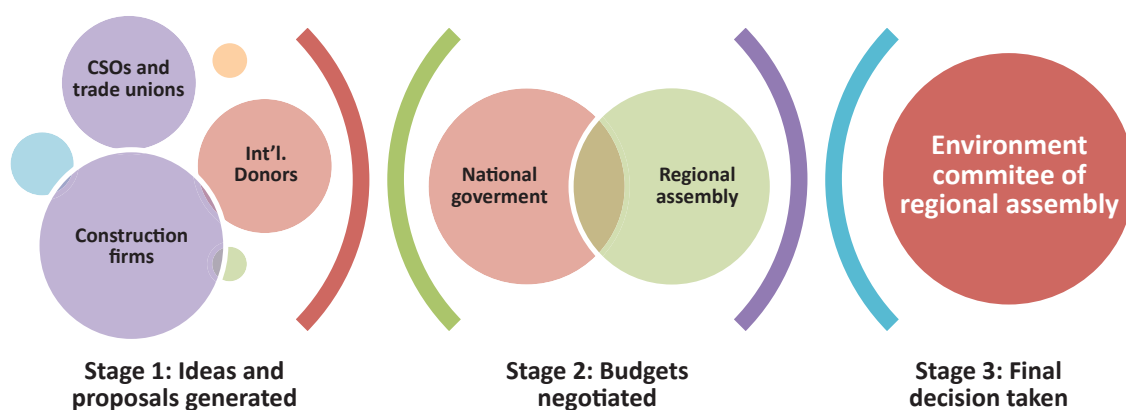
NB: There are at least 21 stages of decision-making before the bill is even introduced!

However, what this map does not reveal is that there are at least 21 stages of decision-making that take place before a bill is even introduced at the first reading! So, if you waited until the Introduction phase to try to influence the content of a bill, you would have missed multiple opportunities to weigh in earlier in the process.

This reinforces the points about knowing and understanding all aspects of the decision-making process – both formal and informal – and being particularly mindful of timing. Policy advocacy campaigns need to be aware of when decisions are taken so that they can set up enough time in advance to ensure decision-makers are fully briefed on the issue and understand what the campaign is asking for.

Mapping decision-making processes

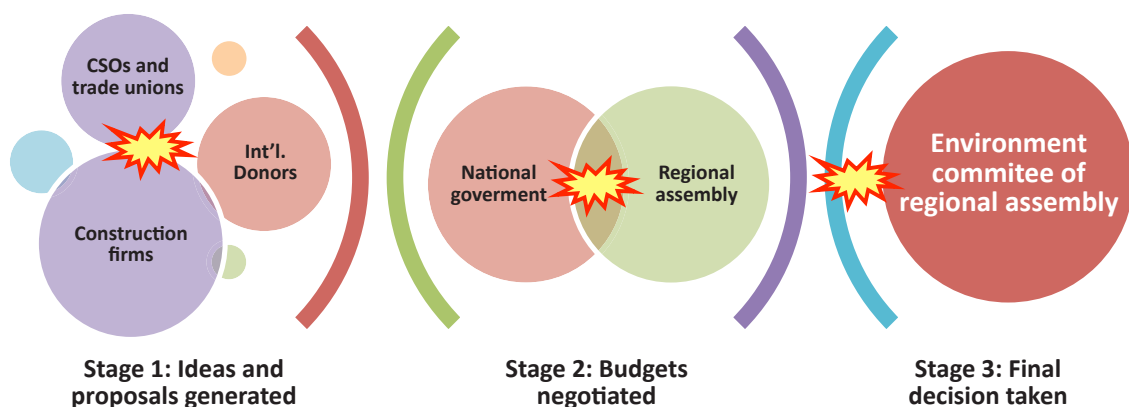
The key to identifying opportunities for influence in decision-making processes is to map them out. The diagram below attempts to illustrate the process by which a decision was made by a regional parliament on how and when to rebuild roads and bridges, and to reconstruct transportation structures after an armed conflict destroyed much of the infrastructure.



Notice that in each step of the process, the players who are making or influencing decisions change. Additionally, there is an informal process of information and ideas gathering that begins before the official bodies responsible for overseeing the matter begin to act. For a group or individual advocating on behalf of this issue, there are opportunities to influence decision-making throughout this process.

Consider the revised map below. The symbol  represents opportunities for groups or citizens to influence the decision-making process.

In the first phase of the process, the opportunities are both early and throughout discussions about how the matter should be handled. In the second phase of the process, the best opportunities are while the two levels of parliament are negotiating how resources will be allocated. In the third phase of the process, the best opportunities are before the committee takes a final decision.



37. Use the space below to construct the decision-making map that affects the issue or problem on which your campaign is focusing. Once this is complete, highlight where there are opportunities to influence the process and when these are likely to occur.

Section 3.2: Identifying Decision-Making Audiences



Mapping the decision-making process, as we did in the previous section, not only provides a better sense of how decisions are made that affect our advocacy campaign and when the best opportunities to influence these decisions might occur, it also affords more awareness of who the decision-makers are that impact our efforts.

Decision-makers are the people with the power and/or authority to approve or implement the change that is the focus of your policy advocacy effort. Without the involvement and support of these individuals (and possibly the organizations they lead as well), the objectives of the campaign cannot be achieved.

There are decision-makers in all sectors of society. The decision-makers affecting your advocacy campaign will depend on your issue of focus and your objective.

Private Sector	Public Sector	Civil Society
Corporations or businesses	Government ministers	Religious leaders
Individual business leaders	Committee heads or members	Community leaders
Financial institutions	Regional assembly members	Student or youth leaders
Business or trade associations	Local government officials	Civil society leaders



38. Thinking about your policy proposal, who are the decision-makers who will affect the outcome? Review your decision-making map to help you identify all of the individuals and organizations that influence decisions on this issue. List decision-makers by name in the charts below, clarifying why this person is critical to the outcome of your campaign, what their position is and which sector of society they come from.

Name	
Why critical to campaign?	
Position or organization	
Sector (private, public, civil society)	

Name	
Why critical to campaign?	
Position or organization	
Sector (private, public, civil society)	

Name	
Why critical to campaign?	
Position or organization	
Sector (private, public, civil society)	

Name	
Why critical to campaign?	
Position or organization	
Sector (private, public, civil society)	

Add any additional decision-makers who affect your advocacy campaign's issue in the space below.

Impact of decision-makers

The next question to consider is the impact these individuals will have and how they will respond to your campaign. It is important to know how much information, knowledge or awareness these individuals have about the issue, how they feel about the issue, and whether their feelings are strong, weak or somewhere in between.

We can assess these dynamics through the process of Power Mapping. Power Mapping creates a strategic understanding of what the response of decision-makers might be to an advocacy campaign, and how much support or opposition organizers can expect.

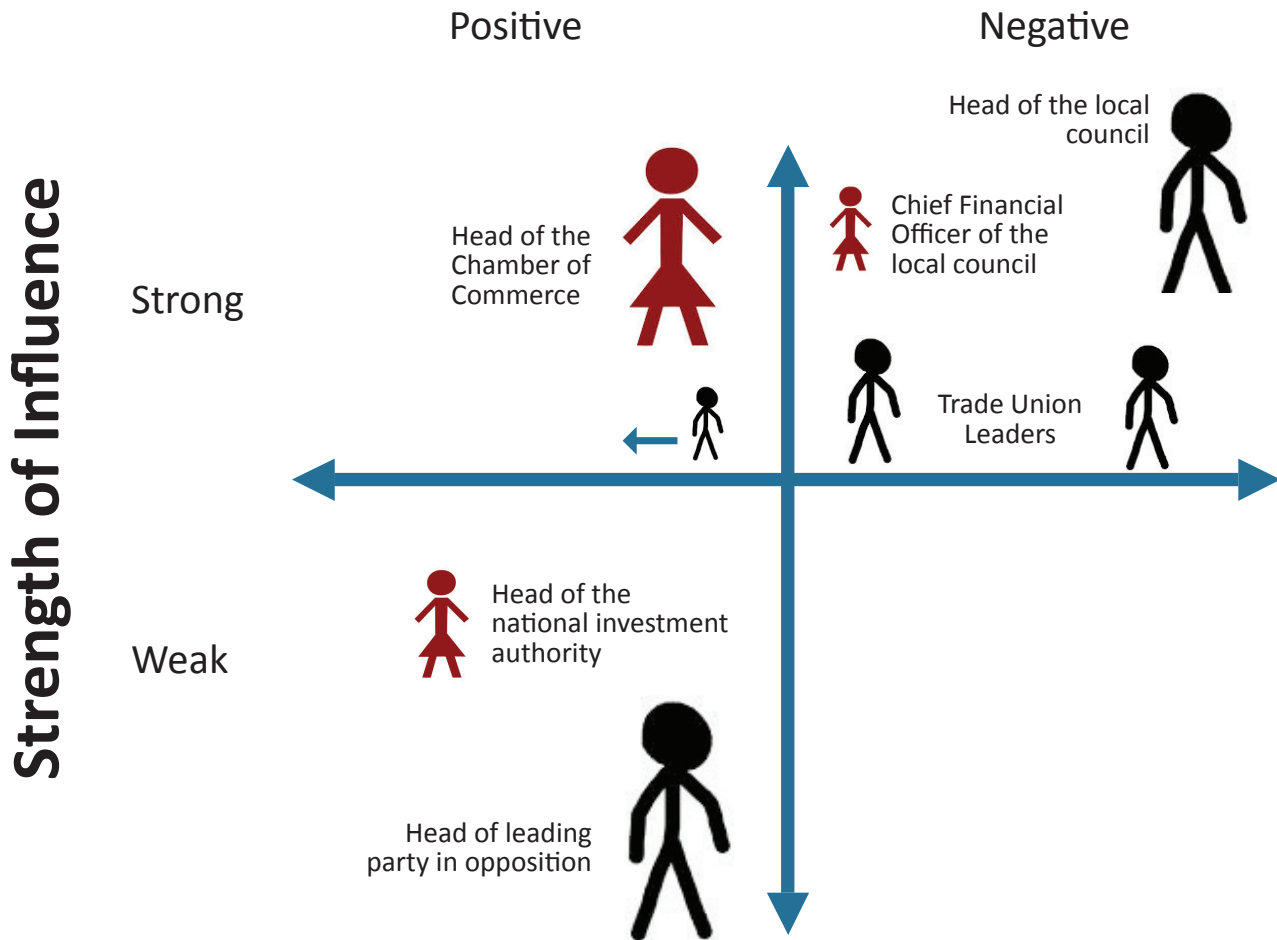
Consider the chart below. It assesses the response of decision-makers to an advocacy issue by assessing quadrants based on strength and direction of influence over the issue.

Direction of Influence



Power Maps can be modified to suit any issue and any decision-making process. The map below was developed by a coalition of business owners trying to persuade decision-makers to reduce the taxes and rates charged to small and medium-sized businesses.

Direction of Influence



In this example, the size of the figures represents the strength of the relationship that members of the coalition have with various decision-makers. Using a scaling system like this helped them identify where their best opportunities for influence were, and also helped them clearly identify a strategy for the way forward. As the power map indicates, the campaign will not be able to progress without working with the large number of senior figures in the strong/negative quadrant. Additionally, the coalition realized that they needed to activate their allies and do more to turn weak support into strong support.

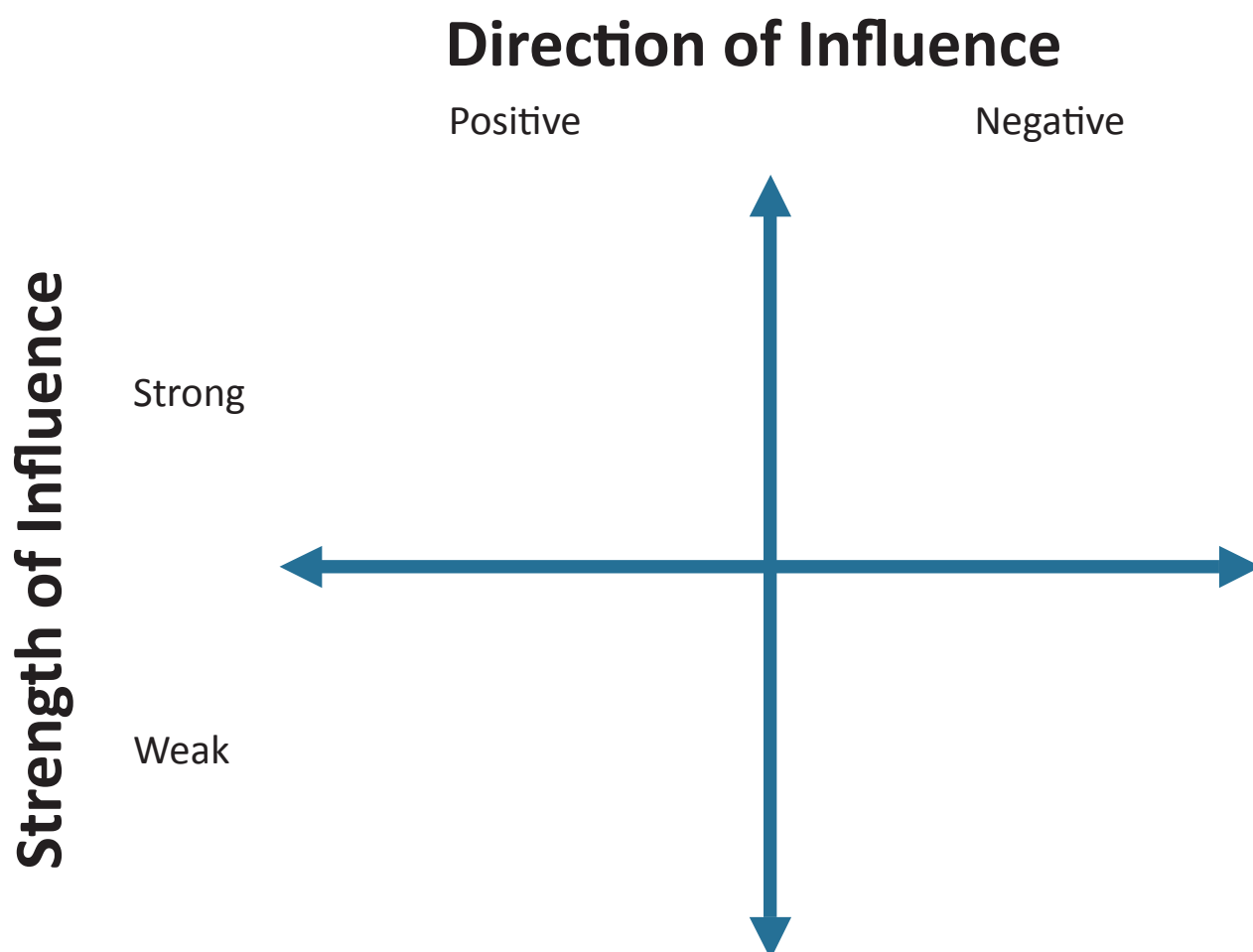
The basic strategic responses to the information and analysis revealed through power maps is outlined below:

	Positive	Negative
Strong	Recruit for assistance Keep involved and engaged in the campaign	Engage and actively seek to influence Attempt to persuade these individuals to become either positive or neutral
Weak	If time is sufficient, attempt to persuade to become stronger or more active If they are still not interested, keep informed and monitor their involvement in the issue with minimum effort	Keep informed



39. Use the section below to construct the power map for your advocacy campaign. Start by reviewing the list of decision-makers you made in the previous section and thinking through their likely response to the issue and your efforts.

Once you have completed the map, think through your best strategic response, and where your best opportunities for influence lie.



Section 3.3: Advocacy Tools for Working with Decision-Makers

What do you do if you put together your list of decision-makers and constructed your power map, and it reveals that you have very few connections or very little influence with those people who will have the biggest impact on your issue? Or, what if you have decent relationships with decision-makers, but you aren't quite sure how to engage them in your campaign?

The next step to consider is the type of advocacy tools and the approach that you will use in your campaign while trying to engage with and influence decision-makers.

Advocacy tools for working with decision-makers

Advocacy tools are the techniques, actions and activities we use to promote an understanding of and support for the change we want to see. Before selecting the tools you will use to engage decision-makers in your campaign, think through the following questions:

- Where do decision-makers get their information?
- In what format do decision-makers like to get their information?
- What do decision-makers need to know about the issue?
- What do you want decision-makers to do? What's the best way to ask them to do this?
- What type of engagement would be most meaningful or motivational for a decision-maker?
- What would offer the most effective means through which to persuade a decision-maker?



40. Consider the questions above. What do you think would be the most effective advocacy tools for working with decision-makers you have identified as important for your advocacy campaign? Write down your ideas below.



Advocacy tools frequently used to engage decision-makers include the following:

- Policy papers and briefings
- Personal meetings
- Public or community meetings
- Public rallies
- Petitions and letter writing campaigns
- Email campaigns
- Informational websites
- Blogging and tweeting
- Community radio
- Local news programs
- Television debates and roundtable discussions
- Campaign launch events
- Network or coalition events
- Pledge cards or commitment boards (where decision-makers publically sign something to support the campaign or issue)

When working with decision-makers, it can be particularly important to use advocacy tools that are personal and that ask them to make a public commitment to the issue or to advancing the proposed policy solution.

Who influences decision-makers?

Sometimes, civil society or advocacy organizations find themselves well on the outside of formal decision-making processes. Decision-makers may operate in an environment restricted by security, which makes them difficult to access; decision-making processes may be closed or inaccessible to ordinary citizens; or, there may be geographic challenges to reaching decision-makers, with government buildings or meeting places too far away to travel.

In these situations, the best approach is to figure out who is in the sphere of influence around the decision-maker, i.e., who has connections and influence with the decision-maker. This type of analysis expands the universe of contacts and the possible communication network for the advocacy campaign. The organizations, individuals and sectors of society that make up this sphere are referred to as the **secondary audience**, since the decision-makers themselves are the primary audience with whom you are trying to communicate.

Consider the chart below of who might represent secondary audiences for a decision-maker:



As the circles illustrate, if an advocacy organization does not have a direct relationship with the decision-maker himself or herself, there are a number of other individuals or organizations who can be asked to help build that relationship. Additionally, if a decision-maker is not responsive to an advocacy campaign’s requests, or if his or her initial response is negative, working with secondary audiences can help create a more positive engagement.

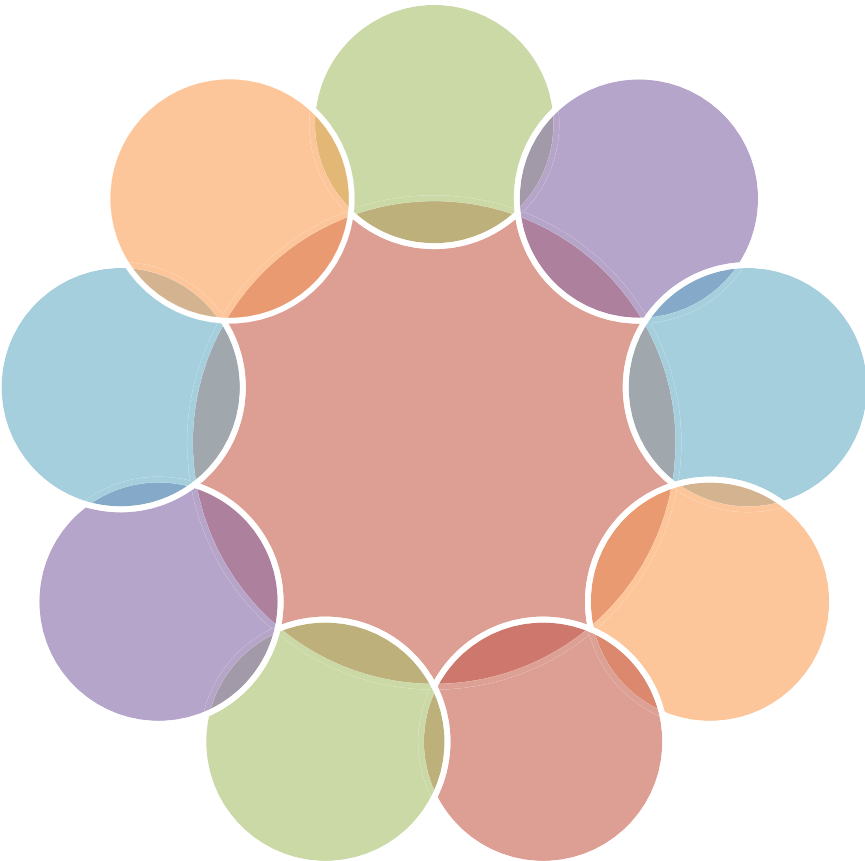


41. Think of the decision-makers you have identified as vital for the success of your advocacy campaign. Are there any for whom you will need to identify a secondary audience, either to gain access to the decision-maker or to exert influence? Write these below, or use the blank graphic on the next page to help you think through who they might be. Use either the list or the graphic; you do not need to do both.

Decision-Maker	Secondary Audience



42. Use the graphic below to help you think through the secondary audiences who may influence a key decision-maker whose support is important for your campaign. You do not need to fill in all the circles available for secondary audiences; only as many as are relevant for the decision-maker you have identified.





43. What do you think would be the most effective advocacy tools for working with the secondary audiences you have identified? Write down your ideas below.

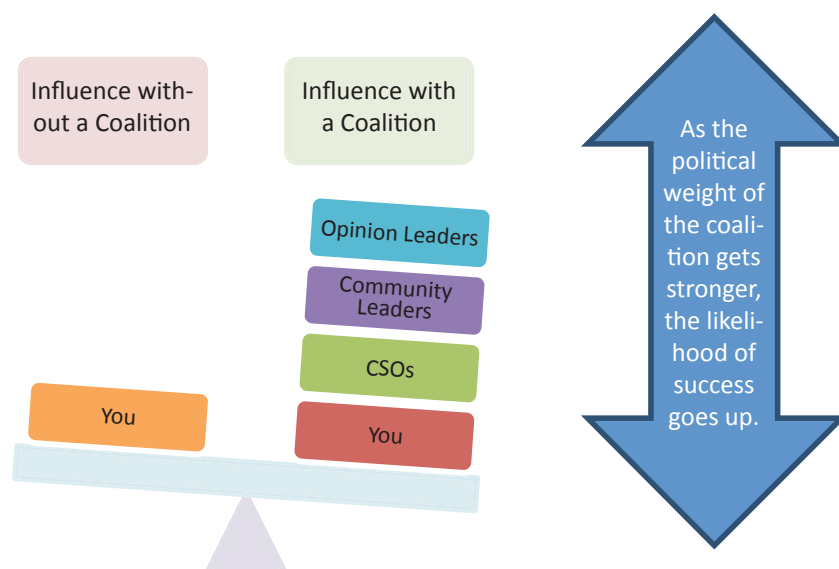
Section 3.4: Building Coalitions

Consider this scenario: you want to advance legislation that changes the way the government spends money, making it much more transparent and much easier for citizens to find out where public funds are going. You walk into a meeting with the relevant ministers to tell them about your policy proposal. You produce a copy of the draft legislation, inform them of its merits, and encourage them to support your effort. They nod politely, thank you for your time and, if they're in a good mood, wait for you to leave the room before they start laughing.

Joking aside, if you are the only one to walk into a room to ask for something so important but also so politically ambitious, are the ministers likely to agree to introduce to this and support the legislation? Maybe, but probably not.

Now consider whether the conversation would be different if you were to walk into the same meeting and, instead of being on your own, you enter with a coalition of dozens of civil society organizations, high-profile community, religious and opinion leaders, and with evidence of support of hundreds of ordinary citizens. Would the conversation be a little bit different under these circumstances? Probably.

Coalitions allow policy advocacy campaigns to “get bigger,” essentially adding more political weight, social capital, media interest, citizen support, money and other resources to the effort.



Policy coalitions also help to direct efforts among like-minded organizations and individuals to work collectively on the same agenda, rather than on separate agendas, so that decision-makers are hearing the same requests from multiple sources. This concentrates minds, resources and makes it more likely that significant progress will be made on a single issue, rather than small amounts of progress (or no progress) on many issues.



44. Thinking about your policy advocacy campaign, are there potential advantages in forming a coalition which you may not have considered before?

Who Should be in My Coalition?

Putting together an effective coalition is both a leadership and a networking exercise. Building a coalition starts with a vision for what can and should be achieved in terms of newer or better public policy. From there, coalition leaders need to build relationships with other organizations and individuals who can make a meaningful contribution to achieving this vision.

There is frequently a vast choice for the types of individuals and organizations who can be part of a policy advocacy coalition. Some of these broad categories are illustrated below.



Who you ask to be part of your policy advocacy coalition will depend on what you are trying to achieve. It can be helpful to think beyond the obvious partners your organization may have worked with frequently already, and consider expanding that network to build a coalition from a more strategic perspective. Whose involvement can help make the coalition stronger and more effective?

Remember when thinking about who to bring into a coalition, it is always important to keep impact and effectiveness in mind. You are trying to build something stronger, not just bigger. Don't just reach out to organizations that you have an easy relationship with if they cannot bring anything useful to the coalition in terms of influence or impact. Recall the famous quote from long-time organizer Mike Miller, "0 + 0 = 0!"

To identify who might be good coalition partners, consider these questions:

- **Who could help raise the coalition's credibility on the issue?**

Consider which organizations and/or individuals are issue experts or have a strong reputation on the relevant issues. For example, if you're working on a human rights issue is there a legal or lawyers' association that has successfully taken on this or a similar issue before through the judicial system? Is there an academic or research institution that has published solid studies on the matter? Are there religious or community leaders who have taken the issue on publicly?

- **Who would help strengthen the coalitions' relationships with local communities?**

Policy advocacy is not just about decision-makers. Involving local communities – particularly those most affected by the issue – gives a coalition more credibility as a real, grassroots movement and strengthens the democratic process for the long-term by connecting citizens to the decision-making process. What individuals or organizations are well-connected to local communities who might have a stake in the issue? Are there women's or student organizations who can mobilize large groups? Could syndicates or trade unions be invested in the issue? What about community or religious leaders – could they find a reason to get involved?

- **Who would help build the coalition's public profile?**

Some organizations are better at external communication, either because they've structured themselves to make this an organizational strength, or they're so large they automatically bring attention to themselves, or because they have high-profile people involved. Think about what individuals or organizations might help raise the coalition's profile. Are there larger CSOs who might bring some strong communication resources to the group? Or are there cultural figures – sports heroes, beloved poets or writers, popular singers or musicians – who might have a connection to the issue and be ready to take a public stand as part of the coalition?

- **Who would help strengthen the coalition's access to and relationship with decision-makers?**

Ultimately, policy advocacy almost always involves bringing the proposed policy change into the official decision-making process and influencing the relevant decision-makers to take action. It can therefore be helpful to recruit organizations and individuals into the coalition who may have already worked with this decision-making process, know it well and have professional relationships with the decision-makers involved. Are there former or current political leaders who might want to take a stand on the issue? Are there other CSOs who have navigated this same process before?

- **Who could help strengthen the coalition’s effectiveness overall?**

Coalitions can be an extraordinary mechanism for catalyzing progress on an important issue. But they’re not always easy to work with. Disparate organizations and individuals with different perspectives and agendas can be challenging to steer and to keep focused on the same objectives. Therefore, it can be useful to bring in stakeholders who can generate and maintain a common understanding within the group, who inspires respect from all the members of the coalition, or who are perceived as “rainmakers” – someone who can make good things happen for everyone involved. Are there leaders from civil society, academia, culture, the legal profession, or the religious or business community who might help keep relationships among coalition members smooth and the group as a whole focused on its objectives?



45. Consider your own policy advocacy campaign. What individuals or organizations might:

a. Raise credibility on the issue

b. Strengthen relationships with local communities

c. Build the coalition’s public profile or bring more attention to the issue

d. Strengthen access to and relationships with decision-makers

e. Strengthen the coalition’s overall effectiveness and facilitate relationships between members



46. Review the list you made in your answers to question 45. What is your message to potential coalition partners? In other words, what are you asking them to do and why are you asking them to do this? Thinking through your message before you approach potential partners can help ensure your coalition is established based on a shared vision and with strategic purpose. This can help avoid problems and misunderstandings from the outset.

Organizing and Managing Coalitions



Coalitions are like families – when they are communicating well and supportive of one another, they can make great things happen. Conversely, when there are internal disputes or differences of opinion, they can make quite a mess.

Policy advocacy coalitions can make a tremendous difference in whether real policy change is achieved, but there are real, multiple barriers to success. Battles over “turf” (who works on what issues) and funding, poor links to local communities, coalition partners who insist on dominating rather than cooperating, limited organizational capacities, and poor leadership or decision-making structures can all make a coalition falter, or at least make it feel like the costs of being part of the coalition outweigh the benefits.

The guidelines below will help policy advocacy coalitions prevent or minimize some of these challenges, and create as solid foundation as possible on which to build an effective alliance.

- **Define a vision and get consensus on the vision.** Starting with a clear, explicit, common vision will help keep coalition members focused on a shared goal and provide valuable perspective when inevitable, unforeseen events create distractions and threaten to throw the coalition off course.
- **Lay out roles and responsibilities within the coalition at the outset.** This will help minimize misunderstandings about who’s doing what and help the group start to work together effectively as soon as possible.
- **Establish clear rules for decision-making and communication.** It needs to be absolutely clear how decisions are made, by whom and when. Absolutely clear.
- **If possible, use experienced coalition staff.** Someone needs to take responsibility for the smooth operation of the whole coalition. This rarely happens well if it is not clearly defined. Ideally, the person tasked with this role should be an experienced organizer and manager who is perceived as impartial, not favoring any one organization in the coalition.
- **Develop a realistic coalition budget.** The budget should include staff time being contributed by each organization so that the real costs of the campaign are clear and each organization has made an explicit commitment to its contribution.
- **Celebrate success and distribute credit fairly.** In a coalition, there will be some organizations and individuals that are more prominent than others. The spotlight (and media coverage) tends to fall here, leaving smaller or less well-known partners out in the cold. Ensure that everyone who has made a meaningful contribution gets credit for this, no matter their size or stature.



47. Consider the guidelines above. Based on this information, how do you think your coalition should be organized? How should it be managed? Are there any changes you would make to the way any alliances you are in are currently run?

Section 3.5: Persuasion and Influence

In politics and policy, there are essentially three ways to try to influence people to come around to your way of thinking. These are: power, payment and persuasion.²

Power → to exert one's authority over another, sometimes by force

Payment → to offer material or financial goods in exchange for support

Persuasion → to induce someone to undertake a course of action or embrace a point of view by means of argument, reasoning, or entreaty



48. In terms of policy advocacy, which of these approaches do you think would be most effective? Why?



49. Now, consider some of the following situation where one individual must try to influence others. Which approach might be most effective in each of these?

a. A fire chief needs to get a large crowd away from a burning building that's about to collapse

b. The head of a fragile coalition of political parties needs to reach consensus among all the parties on a controversial issue

c. A father needs to convince his two year-old daughter to eat her vegetables



While different types of influence may be more effective in different situations, the enduring question is the issue of sustainability: how long do I need the change in attitude or opinion among my target audience to last? Power and payment can be effective means of influencing others, but they are typically only effective for short periods of time. Money runs out; power can too. Power and payment are not sustainable. Additionally, when considering advocacy, not all individuals or

² Source: Professor Gary Orren, *Persuasion: The Science and Art of Effective Influence*, JFK School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, USA.

organizations interested in creating positive change have access to the status and resources associated with power and payment.

However, when persuasion is used to convince people to embrace an opinion or course of action, the support is more enduring, more sincere and less costly. Additionally, persuasion is universal: it is available to all.

Effective persuasion requires a strong skill set. There are many abilities associated with persuasion, but the most important include:

- Know your audience and its predispositions
- Establish credibility and authority
- Create commitment
- Keep it simple

→ Know your audience and its predispositions

As adults, we have a lifetime of learning and experiences which affect how we see issues. These are called our predispositions.

Adults will seek to embrace information which confirms what they already know and believe, and look to reject or undermine information which challenges these beliefs. This is important to consider when advocating for an issue: a decision-maker or other stakeholder may have a very different view on the matter depending on his or her predispositions. You will have a very difficult time persuading someone to your view if they do not believe that you understand the issue from their perspective.

The best ways to get to know the predispositions of our audience are **research** and **listening**. You can also help your audience develop a personal understanding of a problem from your perspective, which can create a higher motivation for action.

Advocacy Actions:

- Before a meeting with stakeholders or before designing a communication strategy, research audiences well and develop as strong an understanding as possible of what they might know on an issue and what their feelings or opinions might be.
- Construct a power map of all the decision-makers who could affect the outcome of the issue. Consider whether they would be supportive or if they would work against your objectives, and how strongly they would engage for or against your efforts.
- Listen and pay close attention to body language in meetings. If you are mindful of these dynamics in your personal communications, stakeholders and decision-makers will give you a lot of information about what they need to know and understand about an issue in order to support it.
- Ensure that stories are part of your external communication strategy. Our brains are designed to absorb new information quickly through stories. Stories also help those who are unfamiliar with an issue or problem to develop a more empathetic and personal understanding of its consequences.

→ Establish credibility and authority

We are far more likely to be persuaded by someone who is perceived to be an authority on the issue or matter under discussion. Credible authority comes from: 1) perceived knowledge or expertise; 2) a sense that the person making the request can be trusted; 3) clear conviction or dedication to the issue; and, 4) social proof. Interestingly, age and gender are not usually factors when it comes to establishing credibility or authority.

Social proof can be particularly persuasive. When people are uncertain about a course of action, they tend to look to those around them to guide their decisions and actions. They want to know what everyone else is doing, especially their peers. In these situations, endorsements or support from other leaders or stakeholders can be particularly effective.

Advocacy Actions:

- Before meetings with stakeholders or decision-makers, ask yourself why this person should accept your word as true. How can you convey your expertise? What information do you have about the issue which is scarce, new or exclusive? Who or what could serve as validators to your argument?
- Gather endorsements from authority figures and peers of the person you are trying to persuade. Document how the audience's peers are making the same or similar choices.

→ Create commitment

People like to make choices that are consistent with their prior commitments, i.e., what they have already said and done. Consider whether you can link your issue to other actions or positions your target audience has taken on other issues or related matters. Find ways to stress the consistent values connecting that decision with the choice you would like him or her to make now.

Making a commitment also helps target audiences fully engage and act on an issue. Commitments are most powerful when they are: 1) active (e.g., written down); visible to others or conducted in public; require effort or exertion; or, 4) are part of a sense of inner responsibility.

Also, keep in mind that small, initial commitments can be leveraged into more significant commitments over time. If a stakeholder is having a hard time fully committing to your campaign, invite them to take small steps to get involved.

Advocacy Actions:

- Highlight or praise similar decisions the individual has made in the past to create a sense of consistency and commitment to the issue.
- Create mechanisms as part of your campaign that clearly ask individuals or organizations to commit to something specific. Remember that we're more likely to do something after we've agreed to do it either in front of other people or in writing. Use advocacy tools that allow decision-makers to make such a commitment.

→ Keep it simple

Research has shown that if you try to make one point or deliver one message in advocacy communications, most of your audience will remember that point, especially if you repeat it a lot. If you try to make two or three points, less of your audience will remember all of the points but the majority will recall what you were trying to say.

However, if you try to make four, five, six, etc. points, not only does your audience not remember the additional things you were trying to say, they also forget points one, two and three!

The bottom line is that in advocacy communication, less is more. Make it clear exactly what you are asking for, keep it simple, concise and to the point.

Advocacy Actions:

- If you are struggling to come up with a simple message, point or request for your advocacy campaign, ask yourself what you want the outcome of your efforts to be. What is the change you are trying to create? What's the most effective way for your targeted audiences to help bring about that change? This is what you will ask them for.
- You can personalize your message for individual stakeholders and decision-makers, as long as it remains consistent with your overall campaign. Ask yourself, what is the one thing I want this individual to know or remember?



50. Think through the decision-makers you identified earlier in this workbook. Based on this discussion of persuasion and influence, what do you think are the best tools to use to deliver information to them about your policy advocacy campaign, the issue you are trying to affect, and what it is you want them to do? Write down your ideas below.

Part Four

Community Mobilization and Outreach

Section 4.1: Principles of Effective Community Mobilization

Advocacy campaigns involve not only working with decision-makers, but also mobilizing and engaging with citizen audiences, which are sometimes referred to as target audiences. Target audiences are:

- demographic or geographic groups that are affected by the issue your campaign is trying to address;
- groups that would be affected by the change you are trying to bring about; and/or,
- groups that may not have direct link to the issue, but whose involvement is crucial to the campaign's success because they bring resources, have valuable political clout, or their participation will increase the campaign's profile.

The process of mobilizing target audiences and building grassroots support for a campaign are a form of community mobilization, and it is key to creating momentum and energy around an issue. Strong levels of grassroots support for an advocacy campaign can catalyze change and motivate decision-makers to act quickly and decisively. The involvement of local communities in advocacy efforts also helps ensure that their needs remain part of the campaign's objectives as it progresses. It ensures that people are involved in delivering solutions to their own communities, which yields additional benefits in terms of generating stronger community capacity and increasing the potential for a higher quality of life in the area for the long-term.



51. What does the word “community” mean to you? Write your thoughts below.



52. What does the word “mobilization” mean to you? Write your thoughts below.

Effective Community Mobilization

Effective community mobilization. . .

Is based around the expressed needs or interests of the particular community	It is important that community mobilization efforts do not make assumptions about what the community wants or needs, but actively seeks to identify and verify community interests through research and engagement.
Creates community ownership of the issue and/or the solution	Community mobilization is about facilitating people to be their own agents of change. When community members feel that the initiative in which they are involved belongs to them and that they are leading the effort – rather than this coming from someone on the “outside” – their work is more powerful and effective.
Focuses on processes (towards change), not just events	Mobilization efforts that simply create events without any connection to decision-making or transformative processes, or which have not follow-up mechanisms to work with participants after events, have little lasting impact.
Generates repeated exposure to the issue or solution	Community members should have multiple opportunities to learn about the issue and proposed solution, and to actively get involved in the effort throughout the lifetime of the campaign.
Creates critical mass around an issue or solution	To be effective, most community mobilization efforts need to “get bigger”. This means that they need to get sufficient support in order to make an impact on how an issue is perceived, how decision-makers respond and how resources are spent. The more people who are shouting the same message, the more likely they are to be heard.
Is based on reciprocity	When mobilization efforts ask community members to get involved, they need to be clear about what the benefits are in exchange for that commitment. These may be something as simple as working towards a better quality of life for their children, but community members should be able to connect what the effort is offering to their personal and best interests.

Power Over →

- Getting someone to do something (even against their will)
- Uses rewards, punishments, force, manipulation

Power With →

- The ability to influence and take action based on unity or shared power
- Comes from community, solidarity, cooperation

Power From Within →

- The ability to take action based on a clear vision, thoughtful intentions, self-belief and confidence

Section 4.2 Identifying Audiences for Outreach and Mobilization

So, who is it exactly your policy advocacy campaign should be mobilizing?

Identifying target audiences involves thinking through who the campaign needs to mobilize to support the initiative (citizens), who could be helpful in the campaign (allies), and who may actively oppose it (opponents).

To identify target audiences for your advocacy campaign, ask:

- **Citizens:**
Who is affected by this issue?
Who needs change and may be likely to work for it?
- **Allies:**
Who is not involved or directly affected by this issue, but carries the political or social power to make a big difference in the success of this campaign if they get involved?
Who is involved with this issue now?
Who is effective on this issue?
- **Opponents:**
Who is invested in the status quo and likely to work to keep it?
Who will perceive this campaign and the proposed policy as a threat?



53. Think through the categories listed above and use the space below to identify target audiences for your policy advocacy campaign.

Citizens

- Who is affected by this issue?
- Who needs change and may be likely to work for it?

Allies

- Who carries the political or social power to make a difference in the success of this campaign if they get involved?
 - Who is involved with this issue now?
 - Who is effective on this issue?
-
-
-
-

Opponents

- Who is invested in the status quo and likely to work to keep it?
 - Who will perceive this campaign and the proposed policy as a threat?
-
-
-
-

Nota Bene: We identify opponents in policy advocacy not to mobilize them but, to the extent that we can, to anticipate their reactions, to neutralize this, and to minimize the damage they can do to our efforts.

Once you have identified your target audiences, you need to think through what their current understanding and perspective on the issue is likely to be. Just as you would when working with decision-makers, the process of persuasion begins with an understanding of your audiences' predispositions on the issue and on your policy proposal.



54. The table below offers a planning tool to think through what your target audiences might think about your issue and how they may feel about your policy proposals.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Audience	Does this audience have a high, medium or low level of knowledge about the issue?	What are the audience's beliefs and attitudes about issue likely to be?	In this situation, what is most important to this audience?	Is this audience likely to support or oppose the campaign?	What is the advocacy tool this audience is most likely to respond to?



55. What have your answers to questions 53 and 54 revealed How would you assess the levels of support and opposition to your policy advocacy campaign? What does this mean for your overall strategy? What tools will you have to use to be effective? How will this affect your resource management?

Section 4.3: Engaging Target Audiences

Now that you have mapped your target audiences, the next consideration is how you will engage them in your efforts. To begin to figure this out, you need to ensure you have a solid understanding of where or how target audiences are already gathering as a community and where they are currently getting their information. This is your baseline and should guide the choices you make about advocacy activities and what you are going to ask these people to do. Consider:

- Where do members of target audiences gather, either physically or electronically? Where are they most reachable?
- How do target audiences get information?
- What sources of information do they trust most?
- What are the general interests of each target audience? How do they spend their time? Can our campaign engage them in these situations?



56. Focus now on your citizen audiences, the people affected by the issue you are trying to address or those who are likely to benefit from your policy proposal. Use the framework below to think through this group or these groups in more detail. This information will help you formulate a more accurate outreach and mobilization strategy.

Dominant Age Categories

- _____ 18-35
- _____ 35-55
- _____ 55-65
- _____ 65+

Dominant Education Level

- _____ No formal education / likely illiterate
- _____ Some primary education
- _____ Completed primary education
- _____ Some secondary education
- _____ Completed secondary education
- _____ University level education

Dominant Gender

- _____ More male
- _____ More female
- _____ Equally male and female

Social Communication

- Young men gather socially here: _____
- Young women gather socially here: _____
- Middle aged men gather socially here: _____
- Middle aged women gather socially here: _____
- Older men gather socially here: _____
- Older women gather socially here: _____

Sources of Information

- Young men get their information from: _____
- Young women get their information from: _____
- Middle aged men get their information from: _____
- Middle aged women get their information from: _____
- Older men get their information from: _____
- Older women get their information from: _____

Housing

- _____ Residences are far apart (rural)
- _____ Residences are a short distance apart (suburban)
- _____ Residences are close together (urban)

The community leaders or “impact players” tied to this community are:



57. What does this community audit in question 56 tell you about the types of advocacy tools you should consider? What do you think will be the most effective means for engaging your target audiences?

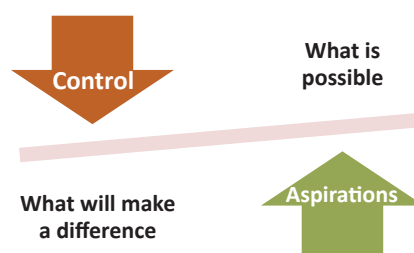
Section 4.4: Defining the Ask

The heart of community mobilization and grassroots outreach is asking individual community members to get involved, to take leadership, to give input, to guide the campaign. This invitation and initiative is always part of community mobilization.

But before you can ask people to get involved, you need to clearly define what it is you’re asking them to do. Do you want them to:

- Sign a petition
- Join a committee
- Become a community leader
- Canvass their neighborhood
- Speak in public on the issue
- Organize an event
- Write a letter
- Donate money
- Recruit other supporters

What you ask people to do has to strike a fine balance between what is realistically possible for them – what they can **CONTROL** – and what will make a difference in their lives – what their **ASPIRATIONS** are for their own lives or the lives of those they care about.





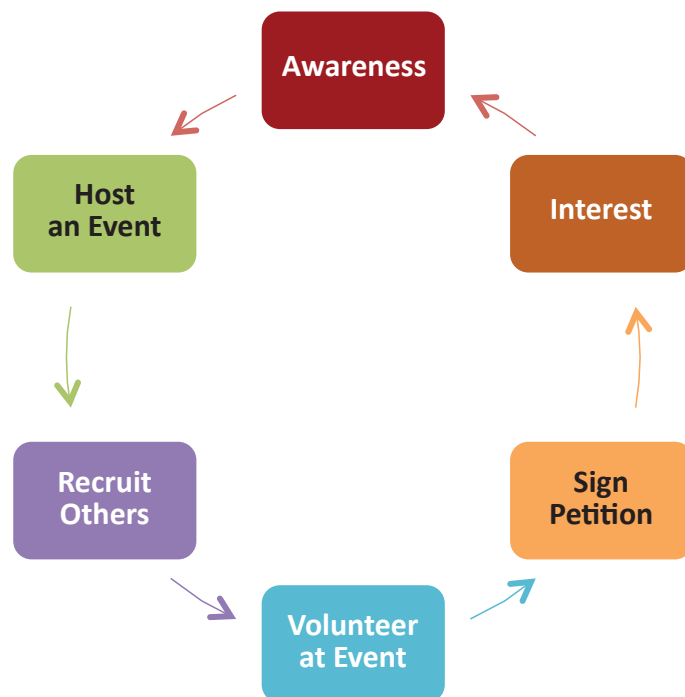
58. What exactly are you asking community members to do in support of your initiative?



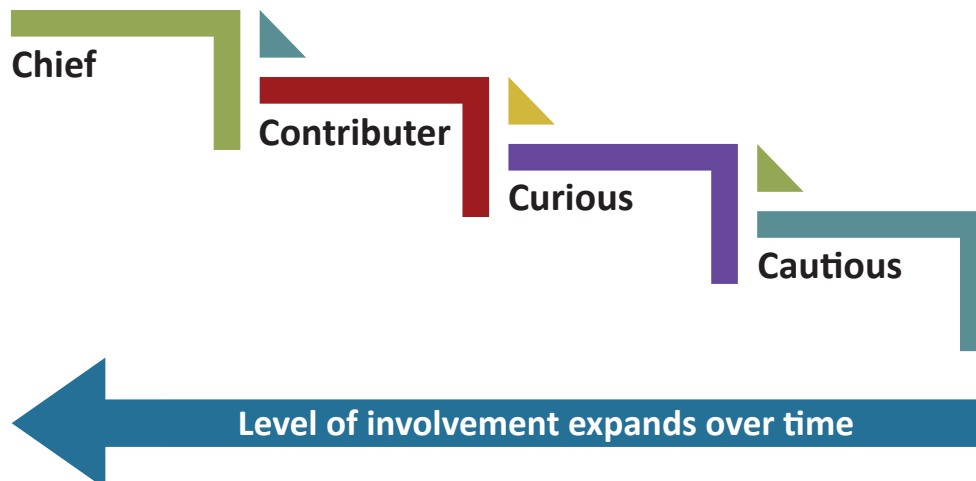
59. Why are you asking them to do this? How is it connected to what is possible for them and what will make a difference in their lives?

Section 4.5: Creating Participation

Effective community mobilization is about creating repeated opportunities for community members to get interested and get involved in an initiative or effort.



Community mobilization is also about creating opportunities for community members to take leadership. An individual may initially engage cautiously, but with the right support, encouragement and opportunity, may expand their involvement over time.



The activities that you choose as part of your effort should create opportunities for community members to repeatedly and progressively engage in the campaign, and should accommodate the following criteria:



Mobilization efforts should meet with community members at times, places and through mechanisms that they are already using, rather than expecting them to find or adapt to new ones. If, for example, internet access is not reliable or you are trying to communicate with older members of a community, Facebook or other social media is probably not the strongest choice for trying to create engagement.



60. Review your answers to questions 56 and 57. Based on your analysis and the discussion about the best ways to mobilize communities, select at least three mobilization tools you will use in your policy advocacy campaign. Use the list on the next pages as a resource. The tools you identify should match the dynamics you have described in your community analysis. List your choices in the lines below.

Communication and Mobilization Tools for Building Grassroots Support around Policy

This list below outlines both traditional and newer advocacy tools for engaging and mobilizing target audiences for advocacy. Review the list and consider if any would be a good fit for your policy effort.

1. Peer educators or peer leaders

Policy advocates often seek to recruit, influence and/or train individuals who are peers of the demographic group they are trying to reach. These peer educators then go out into their communities and inform or influence friends, family, neighbors, colleagues, etc. on the issue at hand. Peer educators can be very effective. This tool is based on research which shows that an individual's friends, family and peers have the greatest effect on their behavior. Peer educators can be particularly effective when the issue being discussed is controversial or likely to illicit an emotional response.

2. Community action initiatives

Community action initiatives create opportunities for members of a community to take direct action to address or solve a problem. For example, advocacy campaigns focused on environmental policy frequently mobilize community members to clean up local parks, beaches, or other areas. Advocacy campaigns focused on youth unemployment may organize local employers to take a young person on as an apprentice for specific amount of time. Campaigns focused on ending poverty or hunger may ask communities to fast for a day and contribute either the food they would have eaten or the financial equivalent to assist others. Advocacy campaigns trying to improve the quality of education may train parents as volunteers and ask them to work in classrooms to assist teachers. With critical mass, these initiatives can have a big impact.

3. Personal action campaigns

These are similar to community action initiatives but focus on the individual rather than the community as a whole. Many policy campaigns ask people to take personal action in order to effect change on a particular issue: stop buying a specific product, stop using electricity during certain hours, start eating certain foods, stop certain behaviors like smoking. Consider whether there are personal actions that people can take in their daily lives in support of your policy effort campaign, and whether there is a way that you can track and publicize these efforts to help people feel that they are part of a bigger movement.

4. Policy-based demonstrations

Street demonstrations with large crowds can be a powerful form of mobilization, but only if they are targeted towards achieving a specific policy or outcome. In other words, demonstrations and rallies that call on citizens to come out and protest against something have their place, but they are generally less likely to lead to positive change; those that mobilize grassroots audiences to march or move towards a solution are frequently a better way to advance policy objectives.

5. Meetings with decision-makers

In many societies, the people who are most affected by a particular issue also have the least amount of contact with decision-makers. Find ways to bring citizen audiences into meetings with decision-makers, even smaller meetings, and ask them to take responsibility for describing the impact of the issue on their lives and make a personal ask to the official to act on the proposed policy solution. These meetings should be about pushing for your campaign's policy solution – not just getting a photo taken! The objective is to get a public or written commitment from the decision-maker to support the policy.

6. Pledge cards or a wall of commitment

Getting people to sign pledge cards or a larger, more visible “wall of commitment” documents and formalizes their pledges to actively participate an initiative by taking specific actions. Those who fully fulfill their commitments can be award prizes or offered public recognition.

7. Writing campaigns

Writing letters or emails to decision-makers is one of the oldest policy advocacy tools, but it can also be one of the most effective. The more correspondence an elected official receives about a particular issue from his or her constituents, the more like he or she will be to listen to the demands of the campaign.

8. Table and team canvass

Station a table with information and promotional materials to give away in an area in the targeted community with high foot traffic. At the same time, send teams walking around the area with the same promotional materials and information. Make sure it is clear what you are asking people to do as you begin to inform them of and engage them in your campaign.

9. Community discussions and town hall meetings

Community discussions or town hall meetings allow advocacy organizations to speak directly to members of the local community, and also to receive valuable feedback. It can be useful to invite decision-makers to these gatherings as well to begin to connect the issue with their interests in the local community.

10. Videos (that create an opportunity to participate)

Videos can be effective forms of communication, but to work well with advocacy they have to create an opportunity for people to get involved. For example, an organization seeking to change policy on water infrastructure made a short film about diminishing water resources and organized events around the country in which the DVD was played in tents or local community buildings, facilitated discussions were held afterwards, and participants were asked to send a letter to decision-makers. Other videos uploaded to sharing or streaming websites can ask viewers to get involved in the advocacy campaign as volunteers or donors, or to take action on a local level.

11. Information booths at cultural and community events

Information booths at large public events raise the profile of the advocacy organization and the issue within the community, and offer a chance to distribute campaign materials and relay key messages. These can also be good opportunities to gather contact information from potential supporters, volunteers or people who may participate in the campaign.

12. Fundraising events

One way to ask people to take leadership on an issue is to ask them to hold a fundraising event for your policy effort. Ask local community leaders to host you in their homes, a restaurant, café or any place community members gather to introduce you to their friends, family and colleagues, to raise the profile of your campaign, to collect financial support (even in very small amounts) and make new professional contacts.

13. Give-away or contests

Everyone loves to win! Create special, low cost (yet desirable) merchandise and give this away at events or create contests to win it. Organize a contents or competition around the campaign. For example, ask students to submit drawings or essays on the issue on which your campaign is focused. Use trivia or knowledge quiz events, cooking or creativity contests to get adults involved. Display the work of winners somewhere highly visible to the public. Make sure the contests or give-aways are directly connected to the issue on which you are working.

14. Mobilizing local business

Local businesses can serve as both partners and financial supporters in policy efforts. Recruit local business leaders to support your campaign. Provide them with (appropriate) promotional opportunities in exchange for financial support or other resources.

15. Hot lines / dedicated phone numbers

If local technology allows, create and heavily promote a dedicated phone number for members of the target audience to ring in. They can call to get more details on the issue, or use it as a hotline to report urgent information about the issue. The line should be staffed by trained and dedicated volunteers and it must work – people must be able to reach someone on the other end of the line, otherwise this will affect the credibility of your effort.

16. Community classes

Community classes are a classic form of grassroots organizing. In this method, organizations deliver skills and information-based learning sessions to members of the target audience or participating community, based around the advocacy campaign and its issue. Community members receive a direct benefit from participation and organizations raise the profile of their campaign, build stronger ties with the community and raise awareness of and participation in the issue.

17. Street signs and billboards

Street signs and billboards create an opportunity to present brief, simple facts to the public on the issue, however these are much more effective if the campaign's message is highly visual and communicated through pictures and images. Billboards or signs with a lot of writing or complex messages are easily forgotten.

18. Facebook fan or group page

Facebook Fan pages are a great way to get individuals involved in a specific policy effort by keeping them up to date on events and proceedings through Facebook. Facebook Group pages are good ways to communicate with volunteers and staff.

19. Twitter campaigns or contests

If it is fully functional in the country, Twitter – or similar social media applications – can generate attention and interest in an advocacy campaign. A number of active advocacy campaigns ask supporters to tweet regular comments or photos documenting their experience with a policy-based issue or solution. (See <https://twitter.com/EverydaySexism> for an example.) Additionally, contests and sweepstakes on Twitter can get a large response and help raise the profile of the campaign. Twitter contest can offer prizes for tweeting a particular update on an issue, for following a particular user (who's posting about the campaign), or for posting updates with a specific hash tag. It is important to follow the Twitter rules and guidelines when organizing a contest via tweet. These can be found at: <http://support.twitter.com/groups/31-twitter-basics/topics/114-guidelines-best-practices/articles/68877-guidelines-for-contests-on-twitter#>

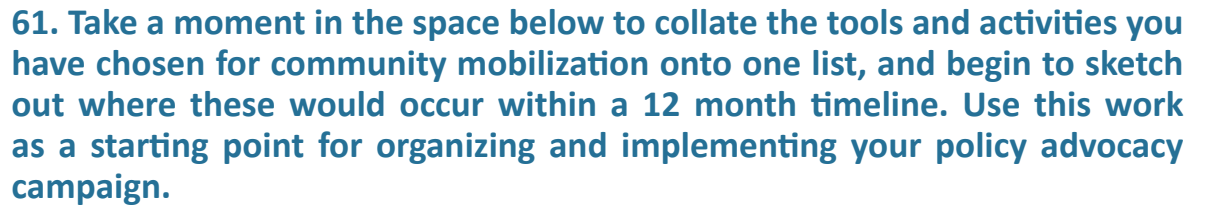
20. SMS campaign

SMS campaigns can be used in a number of ways. An SMS campaign can be used to send small amounts of information to large numbers of people at one time through text blasting, or it can be used as a tool for individuals to get involved in a policy effort by texting a specific word (related to the policy issue) to a designated number. Smart texting is an advanced form of keyword response which allows interaction between individuals and an organization via text message. More information can be found at <http://www.socialbrite.org/2010/02/23/how-to-set-up-an-sms-campaign-system/>

21. Storytelling and witness statements

Storytelling can be one of the most powerful forms of communication when it comes to advocacy. Storytelling and witness statements allow those most affected by an issue to explain how it has impacted them and their daily lives. This type of activity helps to bridge the distance between those on the frontline of an issue, those less-aware of the issue, and the decision-makers who will need to act to change policy on the issue. Storytelling and witness statements can be brought to life through billboards, websites, posters, videos, community meetings, and various other media, and are a great mechanism to garner press coverage for the campaign.

Remember that advocacy tools are mechanisms through which individuals and groups can take action towards change. As campaign organizers select which tools to use to engage target audiences, it is important to ask how the chosen activity will contribute to change, and what specifically those who participate in the activities will do that will bring about the desired change. Activities should not be just busy work; they should represent strategic progress for the campaign and positive engagement for citizens who get involved.

[illegible]

Part Five

Communicating Policy

Section 5.1 : Policy Communication Framework

At this stage, you have identified decision-makers and target audiences for your campaign, as well as the advocacy tools you will use to engage them. The next step is to determine what it is exactly that you are going to say to them.

In advocacy, effective communication is about using the right words to create an image in the minds of your audience(s) about:

- What the change for which you are advocating would look like
- How they are connected to this change
- What you want them to do

This is not always easy. Advocacy often involves mobilizing audiences to act on complex issues or public policy matters that can feel obtuse or distant. This can make it difficult for target audiences to connect the issue to their own well-being and that of their community. To help make this connection, advocacy campaigns typically appeal to target audiences on one of two levels:

Personal Interest → This includes things like safety, security, health, financial stability or general wellness of the individual or those they care about. Advocacy campaigns often try to connect their issues to what is important and relevant in the personal lives of their target audiences, and what they personally get out of responding to the issues at hand.

Values → More recently, campaigners seeking to mobilize populations to action have asked target audiences to think through their values, i.e. what they consider to be most important or even sacred in their lives. The idea is to appeal to issues and ideals which are “bigger than just me” to create more sustainable change and lasting action among target audiences. The values on which campaigns focus must be seen as relevant and important to the target audience in order to influence behavior or attitudes.

The techniques and frameworks in this section will help you begin to think through the language that will be most effective in making these types of connections with your target audiences.

Policy Communication Framework

To ensure your policy advocacy campaign's communications are effective, start by deconstructing the language that surrounds the issue on which your campaign is focusing. Use the framework below to think through how each aspect of the change you are trying to create is currently described and perceived.

Problem	Write one or two sentences defining or describing the problem.
Reason for Bringing the Problem Forward	Explain why the problem is being brought forward.
Symptoms	List how the problem manifests itself – how are target audiences affected by this?
Elaborate on the Symptoms	For each symptom listed, explain what is happening and the impact of the symptom (i.e., why it matters).
Context	Explain the history of the problem: What are the trends that contributed to the problem? Are other geographic locations facing the same situation?
Desired Change (outcome)	Describe the change that the advocacy campaign is trying to achieve (the outcomes). Outline the benefits of implementing this change.
Policy Alternatives	Recommend a specific course of action – what exactly should happen? What do you want target audiences and decision-makers to do? Describe your recommendation(s) framed as a solution to the problem.

Once this framework is complete, review the language in each category. Ask and assess:

- Is this language clear to target audiences and decision-makers?
- Is this language compelling to target audiences and decision-makers?
- Does this language connect target audiences and decision-makers to the issue?
- Is it clear what target audiences and decision-makers are being asked to do?

This analysis will help you begin to transform the language around the policy, problem or issue you are addressing into a campaign message.



62. Use the Policy Communication Framework below to begin to plan how you will construct communications for your advocacy campaign.

Problem	
Reason for Bringing the Problem Forward	
Symptoms	
Elaborate on the Symptoms	
Context	
Desired Change (outcome)	
Policy Alternatives	



63. Now, review the language you have used in the framework and make the following assessments:

- Is this language clear to target audiences and decision-makers?
- Is this language compelling to target audiences and decision-makers?
- Does this language connect target audiences and decision-makers to the issue?
- Is it clear what target audiences and decision-makers are being asked to do?

Make any necessary changes to your language either in the framework itself or in the lines below.

Converting Policy Language into Plain Language

If it is particularly challenging to find the right language with which to communicate about your policy advocacy campaign's issue, idea or proposed policy alternatives, there are two communication tools that can be helpful. One is distinguishing benefits from features. The other is storytelling.

Features vs. Benefits

"Features vs. Benefits" is a tool that helps policy advocacy campaigns identify and clarify what a society will get out of a new policy or change. There can be a tendency to focus on what a program or policy contains (its features) rather than on what it will do or deliver (its benefits). But what target audiences and decision-makers generally need to know is what they will get out of a policy or program, i.e., what's in it for them?

Consider the chart below. It lists a number of common products and policies, their features and benefits. Notice the difference in the language and perspective when features are described and when benefits are described.

Product or Policy Alternative	Feature	Benefit
Toyota Corolla	1.8-Liter 4-Cylinder DOHC 16-valve engine with dual variable valve timing with intelligence	Reliable
Tetley's Teabags	A multi-layered cloth bag with hundreds more perforations and a round shape to encourage centrifugal movement of the contents	Delicious and refreshing tea
Micro Economic Policy	Targeted investment in key areas that promotes economic growth	Jobs and a better future for young people
Youth Mentoring Program	Direct intervention strategy to deter youth people from engaging in high risk behaviors by offering positive alternatives in training and employment	Safer streets and less crime
Reducing Gender Inequalities in Education	Incentive program to persuade younger women and their families to remain in school until the completion of secondary education	Families will have more money and fewer financial burdens for the rest of their lives

FOCUS ON: Language. Boiling complex policy alternatives down to simple benefits does not mean that the features are not important, or that they should not be part of your communications. The purpose of using this type of framework is to ensure your campaign has taken the time to isolate and identify benefits for those you are attempting to engage, so that you can clearly communicate why they should be involved. It begins to answer the question, “Why should I/we get involved?”



64. Apply the Feature vs. Benefit framework to the policy alternative or change you are seeking to implement with your advocacy campaign. Does breaking it down into features and benefits help make it more clear what you should focus on when communicating with decision-makers and target audiences?

Policy Alternative	Feature	Benefit



Storytelling

Much of the public discourse on policy issues can seem boring, obtuse or even irrelevant to people’s lives. This is particularly true if the discussion is highly technical or involves measurements or statistics without context. Stories, which explain the relevance and the background of these figures, are a critical tool to help target audiences understand the importance of an issue or policy alternative.

Our brains are hardwired from childhood to process new information quickly and easily when it comes in the form of a story. Stories help us paint a visual picture in our minds of what the problem and/or the solution might be; they provide a medium through which we can insert ourselves in that mental picture, so that we are better able to understand how we might be connected to the issue.

In advocacy, a good story:

- Enables a leap in understanding by the target audience so that they can more easily grasp the problem and what the proposed solution would look like in practice
- Is short: no longer than two minutes
 - The impact is not through transferring large amounts of information, but by helping the audience grasp the issues at stake faster
- Is generally true
 - Stories can come from research or experience on the issue
 - Include at least one statistic that validates the key point

Below is an example of a story told by group advocacy for children and young people's rights, and funding for support services for vulnerable young people.

"Zainab was nine when her mother married her second husband. Her father died when Zainab was just three years old, so at first she really liked having a new father. Then, he started picking on Zainab. He got angrier and started hitting her when she was just 14 years old. Her mother tried to stop him, but he was too strong. They wanted to leave, but there was no money and nowhere to go.

Zainab knew she needed help. She reached out to our children's rights advocacy group, and we were able to help get Zainab and her mother into a better situation.

One out of every 12 children in our society is having a childhood like Zainab's – filled with violence and abuse. We are a small charity, doing what we can to help, but this is a bigger problem. As a society, we should be standing against this and standing for full funding of a Department of Children's Welfare, and specialized training for our police and judiciary in how to intervene to protect children, our most vulnerable citizens."

FOCUS ON: Storytelling. Consider the case of a policy advocacy network campaigning for more investment in infrastructure. A coalition spokesperson delivered the message, "There has been insufficient investment in the infrastructure in this country, particularly the roads and bridges. Twenty-five percent of the bridges are structurally unsound."

Now, consider whether the same information feels different when it is injected into a personal situation or story,

"There has been insufficient investment in the infrastructure in this country, particularly the roads and bridges. Over Eid, I drove with my family, including my four young children, back to the village where I come from. The journey took two long hours and involved

driving over four bridges that were each built more than 50 years ago. Every time I drove across a bridge I held my breath and thought of my children: one in every four bridges in this country is structurally unsound and liable to collapse. Which one of the bridges that I crossed could it be? Would we be on that bridge when it finally failed?"

“This is why we are launching this campaign to improve investment in infrastructure in our country, and we are asking you to get involved by writing a letter to a member of parliament’s transportation committee today.”

Through the story, the target audience has been pulled into the issue by creating a situation in which they can see themselves and how they are affected.



65. Construct a story that illustrates your policy initiative and why it is important. Make sure that it is short (no more than two minutes long), clear and uses descriptive language. Use statistics to validate your point if you have any available.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Section 5.2: Message Box and Channels of Communication

The Policy Communication Framework, Feature vs. Benefit grid and Storytelling examples in the previous section are techniques that help policy advocacy campaigns begin to isolate the language that can be used to communicate with target audiences. A message box can help transform that language into a single, concise message that can be used for all campaign communications.

The Message Box

A message box is a communication tool in which all the language surrounding a particular issue or policy proposal is placed into a single framework, and a campaign message is extracted.

Benefits → What are the benefits to responding to this issue or implementing the campaign's proposed policy alternative? (Review your answers in the Features vs. Benefits framework for ideas.)

Challenges → What are the challenges to implementing the campaign's objectives? What language will people use to oppose the campaign or undermine the issue? Is there language that the campaign could use that would put people at ease in the face of these challenges?

Dominant Values and Needs → Values and needs affect our judgment and our behavior. What values or norms dominate in the target audience or around this issue? What are the strongest needs among the target audience? How can you connect your campaign's issues to these?

Action and Control → A campaign's message must include a call to action – a clear request letting the target audience know exactly what you want them to do on the issue. The action that you ask them to take must be easily accessible, and it must also feel like it will make a difference; that people have some degree of control over their ability to respond to this issue.

The structure of a message box looks something like this:



A campaign should develop a core message for its advocacy effort (in the center) and also develop language in each of the four quadrants that supports the core message and allows communications to be adapted to difference circumstances, but remain consistent at the same time.

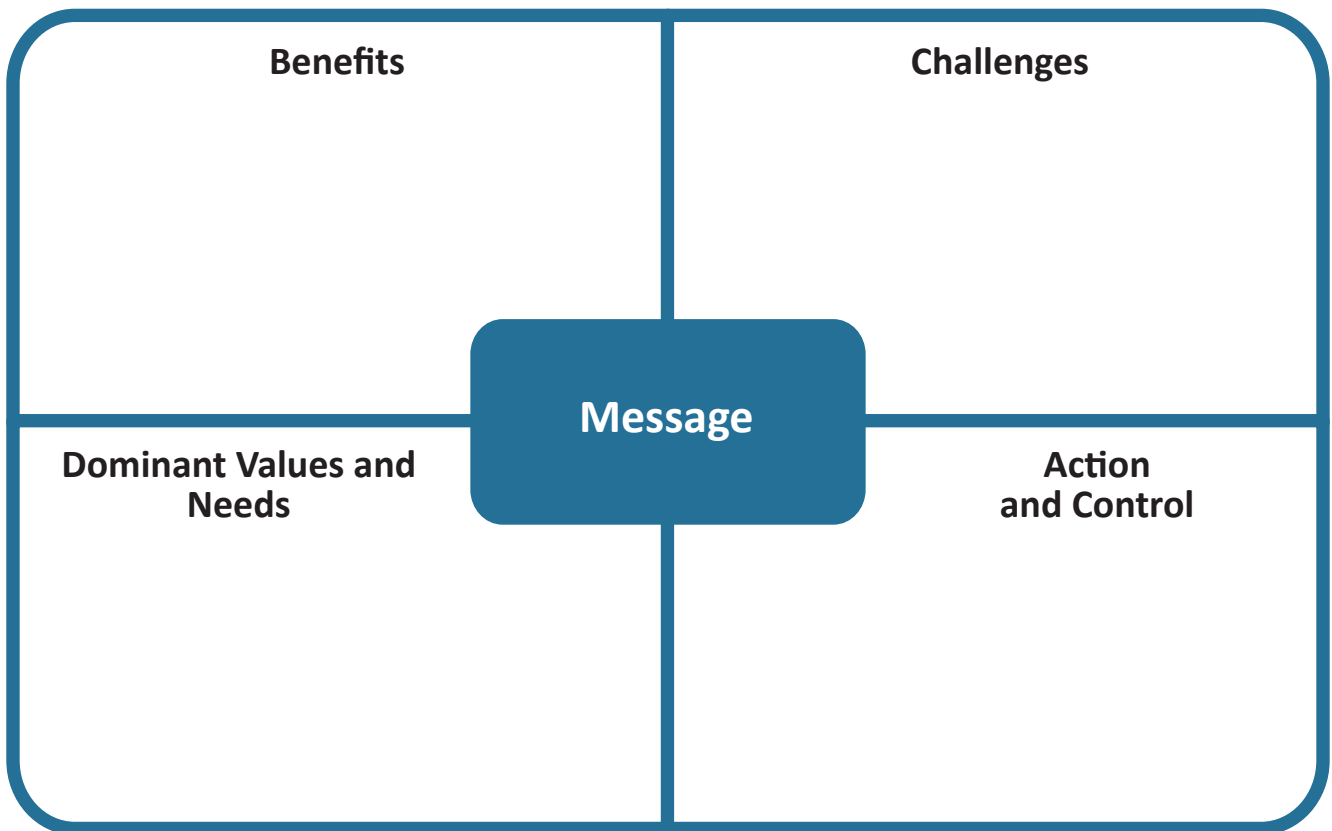
Consider the example from a coalition of small businesses, community leaders, and civil society organizations trying to promote the creation of an enterprise zone in their area. Some local residents are wary of what the impact might be and several trade union leaders have spoken out in opposition to the move as the wrong place to be investing resources right now.

Message Box:





66. Use the blank message box below to construct a message for your policy advocacy campaign.



Channels of Communication

Once you have developed your message, it is important to plan for the best ways to deliver it. Consider the following questions:

- What are the respected and locally relevant channels of communication in the area(s) you are targeting?
- How do people in this area get their information?
- What are the demographics of your target audience(s)? Who are their peers? How can their peer groups be influential?
- Have you identified any community leaders as potential partners? Could they help take on the role of messenger?
- Do the advocacy tools that you identified earlier conform with the manners in which people in this area get their information? What might you need to change?



67. Use the space below to think through these questions about how and when you will communicate with target audiences.
