

Afghanistan Public Policy Research Organization

**Evidence-based, Constructive Advocacy
A Handbook**

February 2017

Training Manual

موسسه مطالعات عامه
افغانستان

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About the Authors

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About APPRO

Afghanistan Public Policy Research Organization (APPRO) is an independent social research organization with a mandate to promote social and policy learning to benefit development and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan and other less developed countries through conducting social scientific research, monitoring and evaluation, and training and mentoring. APPRO is registered with the Ministry of Economy in Afghanistan as a non-profit non-government organization and headquartered in Kabul, Afghanistan with offices in Mazar-e Sharif (north), Herat (west), Kandahar (south), Jalalabad (east), and Bamyán (center). APPRO is also the founding organization of APPRO-Europe, a non-profit association registered in Belgium.

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Introduction

This manual is developed as a result of APPRO's collaboration and interaction with numerous government agencies and civil society organizations throughout Afghanistan since 2007. The manual is intended to serve as a resource for policy and advocacy trainers and civil society individuals and organizations that wish to pursue positive societal change through constructive, evidence-based advocacy.

The right of Afghan civil society and its organizations to express opinions and demand democratic change are enshrined in the Constitution and specified in numerous related laws and regulations. In Afghanistan today there is unprecedented freedom of assembly and speech, both necessary elements of the democratic process, and practical instruments to facilitate advocacy.

This manual presents different approaches to advocacy and techniques and strategies to plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate advocacy at different levels.

A strong and vibrant civil society is the foundation of a democratic society that functions according to the principles of good governance through adequate and accountable state and civil society institutions. The principles of "Good Governance" are participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, consensus, equity, effectiveness and efficiency, accountability, and a strategic vision (Box 1).

Box 1: Principles of Good Governance

Participation: All men and women should have a voice in decision-making, either directly or through legitimate intermediate institutions that represent their interests. Such broad participation is built on freedom of association and speech, as well as capacities to participate constructively.

Rule of law: Legal frameworks should be fair and enforced impartially, particularly the laws on human rights.

Transparency: Transparency is built on the free flow of information. Processes, institutions and information are directly accessible to those concerned with them, and enough information is provided to understand and monitor them

Responsiveness: Institutions and processes try to serve all stakeholders.

Consensus orientation: Good governance mediates differing interests to reach a broad consensus on what is in the best interests of the group and, where possible, on policies and procedures.

Equity: All men and women have opportunities to improve or maintain their wellbeing.

Effectiveness and efficiency: Processes and institutions produce results that meet needs while making the best use of resources.

Accountability: Decision-makers in government, the private sector and civil society organizations are accountable to the public, as well as to institutional stakeholders. This accountability differs depending on the organizations and whether the decision is internal or external to an organization.

Strategic vision: Leaders and the public have a broad and long-term perspective on good governance and human development, along with a sense of what is needed for such development. There is also an understanding of the historical, cultural and social complexities in which that perspective is grounded.

Source: UNDP (1997)¹

¹ UNDP (1997), *Governance for Sustainable Human Development*. United Nations Development Programme, cited on: <http://www.gdrc.org/u-gov/g-attributes.html>

Advocacy or Lobbying?

Advocacy is about educating and creating awareness among policy makers, key decision makers, and the general public about issues of societal importance. Advocacy does not support or oppose specific legislation but raises awareness about issues and calls for action about the manner in which those issues should be addressed or affected through policy decisions. Examples of advocacy are:

- Providing technical assistance or advice to a legislative body or committee in response to a documented, formal request
- Making available nonpartisan analysis, study or research to inform policy
- Communicating with a legislative bodies on matters affecting civil society and its organizations
- Providing informed, evidence-based input on the status of legislation, without a call to action.

Advocacy can occur broadly to include a plethora of interests at multiple levels, or specifically to work with decision or policy makers in a specific arena such as public health, education, or civic rights more generally.

Advocacy and Lobbying are often confused for one another.

Lobbying, in contrast to advocacy, is mostly focused on influencing legislators and legislation to oppose or support specific actions through legislative change. In this sense, lobbying is similar to policy advocacy or advocacy in a specific arena. At the grassroots level, lobbying is carried out to influence specific legislation by encouraging the public (“call to action”) to contact legislators about legislation in a specific arena.²

Advocacy is an integrated component of good governance to:

- Address discrimination
- Empower individuals through information, support and knowledge of their rights
- Educate community
- Increase quality of life of individuals and their families
- Make services providers accountable
- Address inequity of service provision, and
- Inform evidence-based policy reform.

Defining Advocacy

Advocacy is the active support of an idea or cause expressed through strategies and methods that influence the opinions and decisions of people and organizations. In the social and economic development context the aims of advocacy are to create or change policies, laws, regulations, distribution of resources or other decisions that affect people’s lives and to ensure that such decisions

² Adapted from Marion County Commission on Youth, accessed May 23, 2016, available at: <http://www.mccoyouth.org/>

lead to implementation.³

Advocacy is about creating policies where they are needed but do not exist, reforming undesirable or ineffective policies, and ensuring good policies are implemented and enforced to bring about change.⁴ Advocacy is inherently political and an understanding of political dynamics is at the heart of effective advocacy. Much of the outcome of advocacy depends on the character, approach and credibility of those seeking change and the receptiveness of those who are being persuaded through advocacy. As such, advocacy is inherently political and an understanding of political dynamics is at the heart of effective advocacy.⁵

Effective advocacy requires research to establish an evidence base and map out the policy domain, the relevant principal actors and factors, the political relations, the power holders, and the interests at stake. Effective advocacy requires careful planning and a strategic approach since policy change is often linked to broader change in the socio-political and economic environment. As such, effective advocacy requires long-term, medium-term, and short-term planning, an understanding of the points of resistance, the actual and potential allies, and the means to identify entry points to form alliances, and the agility, insight, and flexibility to seize windows of opportunity for effecting policy and, ultimately, societal change.⁶

Types of Advocacy

Policy Monitoring and Public Accountability

Almost all policy-related advocacy efforts commence with observation and monitoring of the implementation and effectiveness of policies already in place.⁷ These might include, for example, commitments to international conventions on fundamental rights such as food security, gender equality, and environmental protection or commitments through national policies on various issues such as education, nutrition, health, or corruption.⁸

High profile policy monitoring by civil society organizations with an advocacy mandate can contribute to improved policy implementation and policy effectiveness by raising awareness on public policy objectives and drawing public attention to underperformance or to policy failure.⁹

Policy monitoring by civil society organizations may be in one-off investigations into particular areas of interest, conducting baseline assessments of situations about which reliable or up-to-date information is lacking, or follow-up research after the policy has been rolled out to establish what results were achieved. Policy monitoring may also be periodic monitoring reports at set intervals to track progress

³ Sprechmann, S. and E. Pelton(2001). *Advocacy Tools and Guidelines: Promoting Policy Change* (Atlanta: CARE International)

⁴ Sprechmann, S. and E. Pelton(2001).

⁵ Based, closely, on Association for Progressive Communications – APC (2014), available from: <https://www.apc.org/en/node/9456>

⁶ From APC (2014)

⁷ From APC (2014)

⁸ From APC (2014)

⁹ From APC (2014)

toward, or away from, policy objectives. In this sense, monitoring for advocacy purposes mirrors applied policy analysis.¹⁰ Right to information laws, where they exist, are indispensable instruments for civil society in acquiring policy-relevant information from otherwise uncooperative officials.¹¹

Involving citizens and civil society organizations in the process of policy monitoring and evaluation and gathering data using such instruments as citizen surveys, social audits, and participatory policy review strengthen advocacy efforts and eventual impact.¹²

Policy Dialogue

Gaining entry and exerting influence at the early stages of policy design in the policy making process can be very effective in shaping policy outcomes. Active participation in the policy process requires engagement with bureaucrats and politicians, not all of whom may be supportive of civil society having a say in the policy design.¹³

Campaigns for Policy Change

Campaigns for policy change utilize a wide range of tools and tactics including public demonstrations, protests, letter writing, petitions, lobbying, using conventional and social media, and legal action. Campaigning for policy change can be confrontational in nature.

Building Advocacy Capacity

Capacity for advocacy needs to be present at different levels.¹⁴ These are:

Individual Capacity: Consists of the following key components:

- Practical skills – negotiating, communicating, influencing, listening skills, research skills, understanding research for policy.
- Partnership skills – identifying basis of unity, collegiality, ability to collaborate, ability to compromise
- Personal abilities and behaviors – enthusiasm, resilience, focus, sense of humor
- Knowledge – practical and/or formal knowledge of a particular field, of local and national policy contexts, of local issues.
- Understanding – ability to interpret knowledge and experiences, determining when to criticize and when to cooperate.

Organizational Capacity: Consists of the following components:

- Strategic leadership and planning
- Financial management, planning, and accountability

¹⁰ See, for example, Parto, S. (2015), "Policy Analysis and Institutions of Governance – Analyzing... What?", available from: <http://appro-europe.net/publication/>

¹¹ From APC (2014)

¹² From APC (2014)

¹³ From APC (2014)

¹⁴ This section draws closely on Stalker, C. and D. Sandberg (2011), Capacity Building for Advocacy (Intrac, available from: <http://www.intrac.org/data/files/resources/698/Praxis-Paper-25-Capacity-Building-for-Advocacy.pdf>)

- Organizational structure, governance, and systems (for finance, human resources, and administration)
- Organizational infrastructure, facilities, and technology in use
- Program and project planning, implementation, and monitoring
- Process management, problem solving and decision making, communication
- Linkages, networks, and partnerships

Operating Environment(s): Advocacy initiatives can face the following challenges:

- Cultures within government institutions not rewarding responsiveness to the community and not promoting transparent consultation processes or joint planning involving civil society.
- Unequal power distribution and relations between civil society organizations and government authorities at different levels
- Oppressive and authoritarian governments disinterested in citizens' voices
- Policy discrimination serving some citizens but not others based on social, economic, and political preferences.

Advocacy Planning and Implementation

The questions need to be answered for effective advocacy:¹⁵

Identifying problems and policy implications:

- Why is the problem important and to whom?
- Is there a policy dimension to this problem?
- What current policies alleviate or exacerbate the problem?
- What changes in policies could lead to improvements?
- Who is responsible for the policies?

Analyzing Policy:

- How was the policy problem defined?
- How were the policy options or solutions identified?
- Were the options or solutions evaluated? If so, what criteria were used?
- How is policy implementation monitored and assessed?
- Does the policy reflect learning from previous similar or related policies?
- Will the policy result in increased efficiency, effectiveness and legitimacy of the policy makers?¹⁶

Defining Advocacy Goal:

- What positive change can be expected to result if the advocacy is successful?
- Is advocacy intended to improve access to information, promote dialogue, or strengthen citizen voice and influence?
- Who will be the primary beneficiaries of the advocacy?
- Are the advocacy goals "SMART": Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound?
- Do the advocacy goals clearly state **what** will change, **who** will make that change, by **how much**, and

¹⁵ Based on Stalker, C. and D. Sandberg (2011) and Sprechmann, S. and E. Pelton (2001), Advocacy Tools and Guidelines: Promoting Policy Change (Atlanta: CARE International).

¹⁶ From Parto, S. (2015), Policy Analysis and Institutions of Governance: Analyzing..... What?, available from: <http://appro-europe.net/policy-analysis-and-institutions-of-governance-analyzing-what-2/>. Also, see Hajer, M. (2003), Policy without polity? Policy analysis and the institutional void, *Policy Sciences* 36: 175-195.

by *when*?

Building Relationships:

- Has any similar advocacy initiative taken place on this issue before?
- If so, what were the results? Do they need to be built on?
- Are there opportunities to build a partnership-based approach from the outset?

Establishing Credibility as an Advocate:

- Does the organization or organizations have a mandate to speak on behalf of those who are expected to benefit from this advocacy initiative?
- Does the advocacy organization or organizations have specialist expertise on the advocacy issue?
- Does the advocacy organization or organizations have influence with decision makers?
- What could be done to strengthen the credibility of the advocacy initiative, for example, by conducting additional research and consultation for building better alliances?

Identifying Relevant Policies, Laws, and Regulations:

- What policies are already in place to address the issue needing advocacy
- How are issues being advocated reflected, or not, in current laws and regulations including international treaty obligations, laws, and standards?

Mapping Power Relations and Decision Making Processes:

- Where are policy decisions taken and who has influence over them?
- Which ministries and departments are responsible for the issue needing advocacy?
- What other ministries have an interest in the impact of the current or proposed policies?
- Are there other public bodies with relevant influence or responsibility in relation to the issue being advocated?
- What about the legislature or parliament – are there different coalitions or interest groups in the policy arena?
- Can support be usefully mobilized across different political parties?
- Who else has influence over the key political decision makers?

Considering Options for Policy Change:

- Would a change in policy alone be sufficient to achieve the advocacy goal?
- What economic and financial resources are there to support policy change in favor of the advocacy goal?
- Should the advocacy goal be achieved incrementally or rapidly?
- What policy options are most likely to attract support, or generate opposition?

Identifying Target Audiences:

- Which are the primary (direct influence over the policy) institutions and individuals?
- Which are the secondary (indirect influence over the policy) institutions and individuals?

Identifying Allies and Opponents:

- What other organizations share similar goals and concerns?
- Would these organizations support the advocacy initiative, be open to partnership or to joining a broader coalition?
- Are there coalitions already in place?
- What risks might there be in alliance or coalition building?

- What groups or organizations might feel threatened by the change the advocacy would accomplish?
- Could these groups and organizations become organized opposition to the advocacy goal?
- What can be done to reduce the risk of opposition?

Selecting the Advocacy Approach:

- What advocacy strategies are most likely to influence the primary and secondary institutions and individuals?
- Will it be effective to work through dialogue and negotiation with policy makers?
- What is the likely impact of public pressure, will it lead to a positive response or resistance?
- How would the media react to the advocacy initiative?

Identifying Key Advocacy Messages:

- What messages are likely to be persuasive with the primary institutions and individuals?
- What messages are likely to be persuasive with the secondary institutions and individuals?
- What are the key advocacy messages most likely to mobilize the broadest support?

Budgeting and Identifying Resources:

- What resources are there for policy monitoring and dialogue?
- What resources are there for a media-oriented advocacy campaign?
- Is there capacity and resources for preparing mass mail outs, mass texting, news releases, briefs, and other forms of rapid dissemination?

Risk Assessment:

- What are the main risks to successful project implementation?
- How can the high and medium risks be managed to reduce their impact and/or likelihood?
- Might the planned advocacy provoke repression by formal authorities?
- Are there non-state actors that pose physical dangers?

Getting Advocacy Messages Across:

Should advocacy messaging be done through:

- A written proposal or proposition?
- Face to face presentation and dialogue?
- Public demonstration?
- Court proceedings?
- All or some of the above?

Building Partnerships and Coalitions:

- What partnerships and alliances are most likely to assist in mobilizing broad-based support for the advocacy goal?
- What processes can best achieve trust, collective ownership, and effective collaboration on the advocacy initiative?
- Should the initiative operate as an open coalition and, if so, what mechanisms are needed to enable participation and to assure accountability?
- Is support needed to build the advocacy capacity of partner organizations?

Employing Tactics and Negotiations:

- What alternatives to the proposed advocacy might be considered?
- What counterproposals can be expected?

- What is non-negotiable and what could be discussed and negotiated?

Monitoring and Evaluation of Advocacy:

- What mechanisms are needed to monitor and record the activities of the advocacy initiative?
- Is there a system to collect and maintain data on interaction with the target audiences (contact details, positions they have taken, willingness to support the advocacy initiative)?
- What mechanisms are for evaluating, on a periodic basis, the impact of the advocacy initiative and activities?

Principles of Constructive Advocacy

Constructive, evidence-based advocacy requires the following:

Being prepared: Identify in advance which individuals or groups might potentially oppose the advocacy campaign and the reasons why. A very useful instrument for identifying actors, factors, interests, and influence is to carry out a stakeholder analysis prior to designing advocacy activities.

Listening to concerns of uncertain or unsupportive individuals and groups: Listening to and respecting views of others who do not understand or agree with the proposed advocacy action is likely to result in an advocacy campaign with a higher chance of succeeding in meeting its objectives.

Providing clear and accurate information to convince critics: Evidence-based information on the topic of advocacy is likely to result in new or changed opinion in support of the advocacy campaign.

Forming networks or partnerships with other organizations: Working as a group makes for more legitimate and audible advocacy messaging. Extensive and explicit linkages with key stakeholders demonstrate a wide based of support and the popularity of change being sought through the advocacy campaign.

Thinking strategically: Having influential leaders' support for the advocacy campaign should be prioritized over seeking the support of those who disagree with the campaign's objectives or are unaware of the importance of the issue being advocated on. Early in the process of building the advocacy campaign all efforts should be made to bring on board supportive individuals and organizations.

Picking persuasive messages: Different types of information convince different types of people. Children's education or health is more of a concern for most parents than individuals without children, for example. Bringing on board the support of non-parents on issues of children's health and education will require tailor-made advocacy messaging based on evidence-based and compelling arguments.

Looking for different ways of reaching advocacy goals and objectives: If the primary target of an advocacy campaign refuses to become engaged or disagrees on taking action to meet advocacy goals and objectives, alternative actors and stakeholders need to be identified to bear pressure on the primary target for the advocacy campaign.

Systemic perspective: The minimum any advocacy campaign should aim for is to place the issue for which advocacy is being waged on as many agendas as possible. The golden rule in advocacy as with all policy-related processes is that advocacy can have a start point but rarely a clear end point.¹⁷

Target Audiences for Advocacy Campaigns

Advocacy campaigns may be focused on one or more of the following types of actors:

- Politicians (local, provincial, national, international)
- NGOs (national and international)
- Religious figures and organizations
- Political parties (national and international)
- Businesses and business leaders (national)
- Rights organizations
- Media
- Parliamentarians (national and international)
- Senior (decision making) civil servants in key ministries
- Ministers
- Multi-lateral Agencies such as the United Nations and the World Bank
- Academic institutions (national and foreign)

The remainder of this manual will describe in further detail the various steps in advocacy planning and activities under each step.

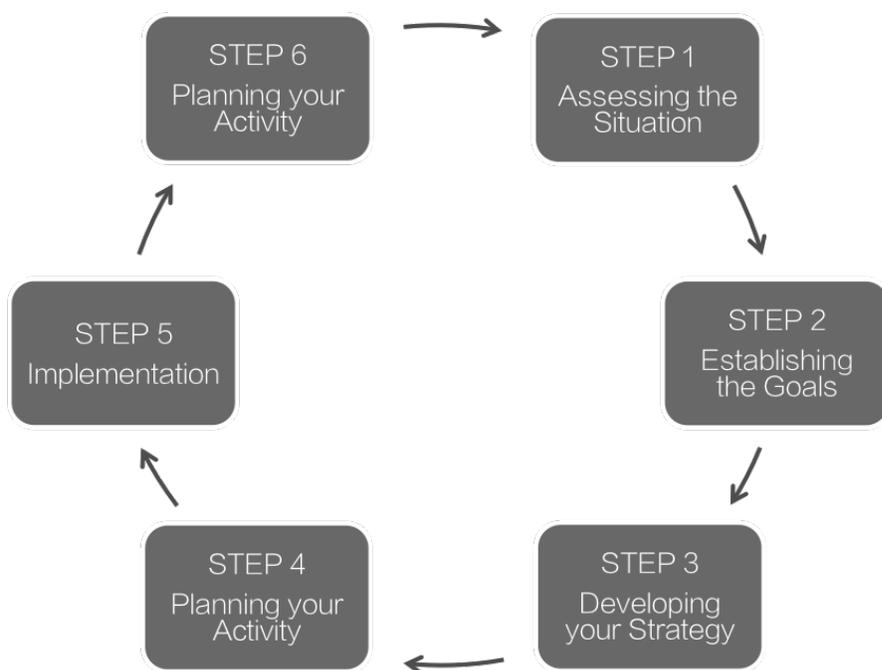
¹⁷ Adapted from http://www.familycareintl.org/UserFiles/File/Anglo_TrainingGuide_June2008.pdf

Devising An Advocacy Strategy: The 6-step Process

The six-step process shown below is designed to ensure that all the key elements are taken into consideration when devising an advocacy strategy.¹⁸ The process is designed to help ensure that key factors affecting our work are addressed, and priority objectives and targets for our advocacy are identified enabling us to maximize the impact of our advocacy activity with the limited resources available to us.

This manual will take us through each of these steps and provide us with tools to help complete each stage of the process. At the end of the process we should be able to produce an advocacy strategy. That strategy will help us establish a logical theory of change that will enable us, our colleagues, partners and others to understand what we are seeking to change and how, allowing them to feed into and support the advocacy work.

The following diagram illustrates these 6 steps:



Step 1: Assessing the Situation

It is important to assess the context in which advocacy work is to be done before devising the strategy and starting on advocacy activities. A good understanding of the external and internal factors that affect the chances of success will help to identify what type of approach and which activities are likely to have

¹⁸ These 6 steps and the activities under each are taken from Safer World's "Advocacy Capacity Building: A Tool Kit", available from: <http://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/view-resource/592-advocacy-capacity-building>

most impact.

SWOT Analysis

Explain that thinking about our (internal) organization and our (external) environment is the first step in helping us maximize our potential and avoid pitfalls as we develop our advocacy plan. A SWOT Analysis allows us to consider how to use our particular experience and other strengths to respond to the opportunities and threats in the environment we plan to work in. It also enables us to choose approaches that have the best chance of success. It can help us design a strategy which builds on our strengths, manages our weaknesses, seizes opportunities and counters any threats.

Internal (Strengths and Weaknesses): Present the 7 issue areas of *Legitimacy, Credibility, Accountability, Preparedness, Working with others, Resources, Funding* and talk through some of the issues within each of these areas by asking the following questions:

1. Does the advocacy organization have **legitimacy**?
 - Who does the organization speak for?
 - Who will accept the organization's right to speak out on conflict issues?
 - Who questions the organization's legitimacy? Why do they question it?
 - How can the organization's legitimacy be enhanced?
2. Does the organization have **credibility**?
 - What ways are used to communicate?
 - How reliable is the information the organization provides to the public?
 - Are the organization's leaders seen as trustworthy, knowledgeable and expert?
 - How can the organization increase its credibility?
3. Is the organization **accountable**?
 - Who makes decisions in the organization or the coalition that the organization is part of?
 - How open is the decision-making process?
 - To whom are decision-makers within the coalition accountable?
 - How are they held accountable?
 - How are members informed and involved?
 - How do is progress communicated to others outside the organization?
 - How can the organization improve its accountability?
4. Is the organization **prepared**?
 - What past experience does the organization have that will be most relevant?
 - Does the organization have access to the research that needed to make the case convincingly?
 - Have the organization considered and prepared for the security and risk implications of its intervention?
 - Has the organization considered and taken into account the relevant gender dimensions of its work?
 - Has the organization identified the key stakeholders and what this means for its work?
 - What is needed to improve the organization's preparedness?
5. Is the organization able **to work with others**?
 - Is the organization well placed to work with others?
 - What are the organization's experiences of working with others previously?
 - Which have been the best partnerships and why?
 - What can be learned from these experiences to ensure that future relationships are more successful?
6. Does the organization have sufficient **resources**?

- Does the organization have the physical resources it needs?
 - Does the organization have the right people with the right experience and skills?
 - Are people and other resources deployed in the best way in the organization?
 - How could the organization better match its resources and programs?
7. Does the organization have secure **funding**?
- Are there good systems of financial control within the organization?
 - Does the organization anticipate significant changes in its expenditure over the next 2-3 years?
 - Can the organization predict how income sources will develop over the next 2-3 years?
 - Is the organization getting money from a good range of donors and funders?
 - What are the financial priorities for the organization and does it have plans to meet them?
 - What measures can the organization take to improve the security of funding?

External (Opportunities and Threats): Present the 5 main external factors of **political situation, functioning of key institutions, public accountability, economic situation, and social situation** and talk through some of the main issues relating to these factors by asking the following questions:

1. What **political factors** could have a critical influence on the organization's work?
 - Which groups or individuals have power to make the changes the organization is looking for and which are excluded?
 - What kind of political alliances exist? What are the relationships between the key players; and between decision-makers and the organization?
 - What political opportunities are coming up that could be used to bring about to achieve the organization's aims and processes, influencing opportunities?
2. How do **key institutions** function?
 - Are government and state institutions accessible?
 - Do regional state and local government have significant decentralized authority?
 - How do the military and police operate? Is the judicial system impartial?
 - How much influence do international donors have on government policy?
 - Who else outside the country has influence?
 - Which institutions are likely to present opportunities for the organization's work and which are likely to put up barriers?
3. What are the levels of **public accountability**?
 - How (if at all) is policy change monitored and enforced?
 - Does corruption play a significant role in how decisions are taken? At what levels?
 - Do decision-makers behave in an open and transparent way? How do they communicate their decisions to the public, if at all?
 - Does the organization have access to information about decisions made?
 - How are decision-makers held accountable?
 - What kind of access is the organization likely to get to decision-makers?
4. What **social factors** could have a critical influence on the organization's work?
 - Is the media wholly state-controlled? Can it be critical? How will it portray the organization?
 - How strong is civil society organization? How independent?
 - Is civil society participation in political life tolerated?
 - How is the organization, as representatives of civil society, likely to be viewed by the decision-makers it may wish to influence?
 - Who is likely to support or oppose the organization?
 - How are electronic communications used and viewed in society?
5. What **economic factors** could have a critical influence on the organization's work? For instance:

- How does conflict affect local and national economies? What are the economic benefits?
- What are the costs?
- How does conflict affect people's access to resources?
- How does the overall state of the economy affect the organization's ability to operate?
- What relationship, if any, does the government have with donor countries?
- What economic alternatives are there?

Once the Internal and External issues and factors are inventoried, present the SWOT Table (below) and ask participants to suggest a few strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats using the questions within each box below. Write up appropriate suggestions within each box.

SWOT Matrix

Strengths	Weaknesses
What are the positive aspects within your organization that organization that could be important in your work?	What are the factors within your organization that might inhibit your work?
Opportunities	Threats
What are the factors in society (external to your organization) that could positively affect your work?	What are the factors in society (external to your organization) that could have a negative impact on your work?

Step 2: Establishing the Goals

Having looked at the context (both internal and external) affecting the issue, the next stage is to begin to clarify the problems to be addressed and the goals (or solutions) that will need to be prioritized.

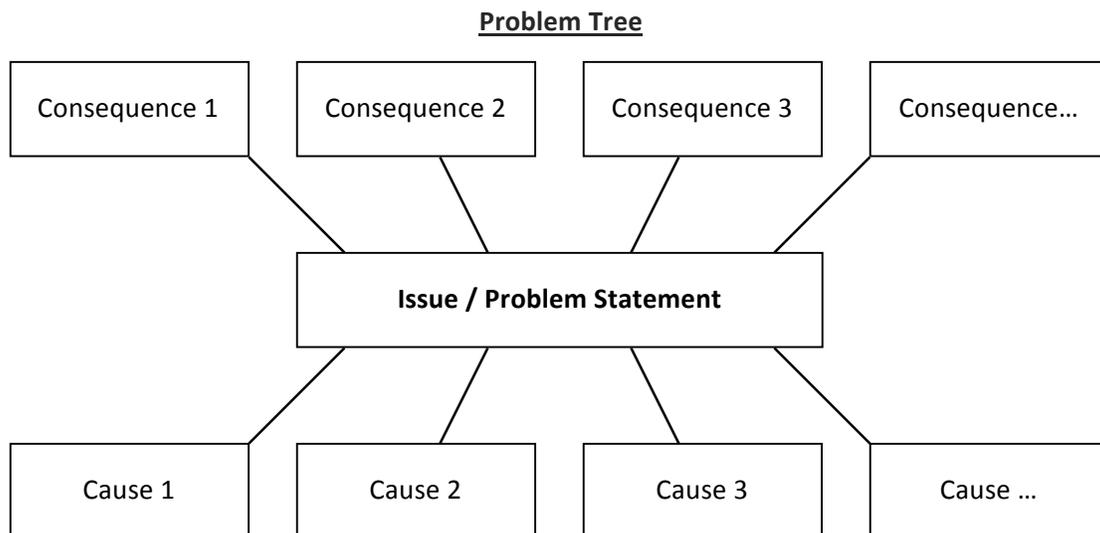
- What is the issue? What are its causes and consequences? What solutions could deal with the causes? What would the solutions achieve?
- What is the change being sought? Who and what need to change? At what level should the change occur?

Understanding Problems and Possible Solutions

Analysis of situations affected by conflict invariably reveals a very complex set of causes and consequences. Being faced with such a range of interrelated problems and causes can make the task of dealing with a problem very difficult and can lead to concluding that nothing can be done. Constructing a problem-solution tree is very useful in to identify entry points for change.

Constructing Problem Tree:

1. State the **problem** as an issue to be addressed.
2. Identify the main **causes** of the problem and list them in boxes below the problem statement.
3. Identify the main **consequences** of the problem; list them in boxes above the problem statement.

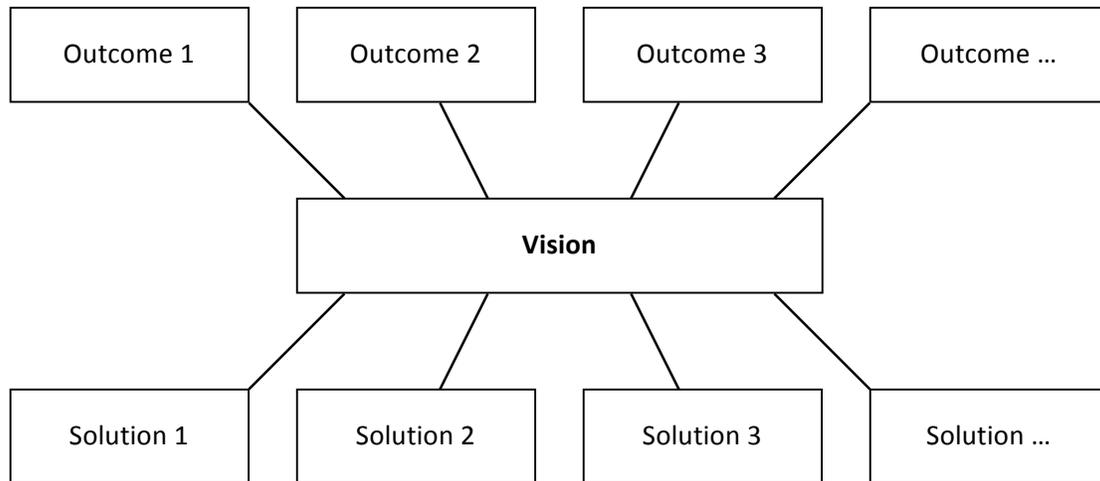


Constructing Solution Tree:

4. Suggest a **solution** for every problem already identified; write this (maybe using a Post-it note or a sticker) above the cause. There may be more than one solution per cause in which case use more Post-its.
5. Consider what would be different if these solutions were achieved - how would the consequences be transformed? Identify the new desired **outcomes**. Write these (on Post-it notes or stickers) over the problem consequences.
6. Using the information from the previous step, construct a new tree. Above the line identify the

new outcomes, below the line write the solutions and through the middle, restate the same problem-issue in terms of the organization's **vision** for the future.

Solution Tree



Recap the process: The above exercise, construction of Problem-Solution Tree, can move us from the identified problem and its causes and consequences to a range of solutions and outcomes and a vision for the work. This analysis can be used for the solutions identified and moving toward a strategy for addressing the problem.

Solutions Table: It is useful to categorize the different types of change sought. In advocacy work three elements of change need to be considered:

- At what **level** does change need to happen: Local, National, Regional or Global?
- What **type** of change is being sought?
 - Changes in the policies of a government or other type of institution?
 - Changes in the practice of a particular institution?
 - Changes in the actions of a particular group of people?
 - Changes in the awareness, attitudes and beliefs of a group of people?
- **Who** needs to change?
 - Institutions?
 - Individuals or group of people within institutions?
 - Key individuals in society- influence-formers such as newspaper editors?
 - A particular social group?

Filling in the Solutions Table: Solutions Table can be used to identify these three different elements of change and map them against each other. It is designed to help with reaching clarity about the kinds of changes being sought at the different levels and point to who needs to change.

Solutions Table

	At local level	At national level	At Extra-national level
What are the problems, their causes and consequences?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • •
What kind of change(s) do you want to see?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • •
Who needs to change?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • •

Ranking Solutions: The decision about where to focus efforts is a vital. A poor choice of focus at this stage can be very damaging to the ability to achieve change. One useful tool in making a decision is a ranking exercise. This enables making direct comparisons between various options against a standard set of key criteria.

Prioritizing solutions is the first step in making sure that changes being sought are manageable and realistic and that they make sense in the context of the external environment and the organization's own ability to respond to it.

Being clear about the goal should give clarity to the whole program of work by providing focus and helping with thinking through how the change sought will actually happen.

The following questions should be considered in the context of the external political, economic and social environment and in terms of organizational capacity.

Consider the following questions for each potential solution:

What is the potential impact?

- How significant would the impact be on the lives of affected individuals and communities if the solution were adopted?
- Who will benefit and who will be left out of the benefits?
- What are the prospects of success?
- How realistic is it that some kind of change in line with the proposed solution will actually occur?
- Will it be possible to maintain action throughout the timeframe of likely change?
- Is it likely that there could be changes that will not achieve the proposed solution but still would benefit affected individuals and communities?
- Who will oppose the changes being sought, and how powerful will their opposition be?

Does it make sense internally for the organization to work on this issue now?

- Does working on this issue fit with the organizational values, mission and mandate?
- Does working on this issue increase the organization’s strengths and minimize its weaknesses?
- Does the organization have sufficient resources? How might it affect future funding?
- How might it affect important relationships?
- Do the efforts fit within a wider movement?
- What additional benefits does the organization bring by getting involved on this issue?

Does it make sense externally for the organization to work on this issue now?

- Does working on the issue respond to specific opportunities?
- Can the impact of any threats be minimized?
- What are the security implications? What other risks are there? Are they manageable?
- Does it help link local and global concerns?
- Can a sequence of achievable steps be mapped that will lead to the proposed solution?

Having introduced the four categories (potential impact, prospects of success, internal rationale and external rationale), involve the participants in using these categories to reach a decision about which solution efforts should focus on. Explain that the ranking exercise is based on a simple scoring technique as follows:

1. List the range of options identified as possible solutions.
2. For each possible solution in turn, consider how well it scores against four criteria:
 - Potential impact
 - Prospects of success
 - Internal rationale
 - External rationale
3. Give each solution a score between 1 and 5 against each criteria, where 1 is a very weak match and 5 is a very strong match.
4. Total the scores and use this as a basis for reaching a decision about where the focus should be.

Note: This can be subjective. People may be less inclined to engage in unfamiliar areas of work and may therefore assess the prospects of success as being less than they would for other more familiar work areas.

Ranking Solutions: Template

List of Possible Solutions	Potential Impact	Prospect of success	Internal Rationale	External Rationale	Total Score

Step 3: Developing an Influencing Strategy

Developing an influencing strategy is at the center of the development of an advocacy strategy. It looks at the changes being sought and who needs to make that change happen. This exercise also allows for thinking through how to influence those that need to change. To do this, it is necessary to consider the forces supporting and opposing the change, and the best resources and options available to the organization to influence them in support of the change being sought.

Identifying Stakeholders

In any situation, all kinds of relationships affect advocacy work. There will be a variety of individuals and institutions whose interests include areas of work that are relevant to the organization's own priorities, often referred to as the "stakeholders". The term stakeholder can be defined as including any individuals or organizations who are either interested in or directly affected by the position taken by the advocacy organization on a particular issue. Advocacy work often involves calling for change. There may be stakeholders who support calls for change, and there may be others that oppose those calls. Some will not want to engage, or do not have the resources to engage on the change being sought by the advocacy organization. It is therefore important to understand who these actors are, and whether they can/will support the organization intending to do advocacy.

If, for example, advocacy is aimed at improving local community policing, efforts must be made to work out who supports this position and who opposes it. This assessment can take place by looking at the attitudes of the people and groups who are interested in or affected by change being sought by the advocacy organization, such as local police officers, local government officials, victims of crime, and those currently benefiting from the status quo. Consider the importance of the issue to them, as well as the influence that they wield over the change being sought.

You need to research	How to find out more
Which part of the government is responsible for the relevant issues including: 1. 2.	Getting information about governing institutions: 1. 2. 3.
Which other organizations and individuals have a major interest in your issue? Name specific.... 1. 2.	Getting information about organizations and individuals 1. 2. 3.
Which international players have and interest in your issue? Again, name specific.... 1. 2. 3.	Check big international NGOs with a relevant focus to their work. Many might have country or regional offices close to where you work e.g. 1. 2.

Categorizing Stakeholders

When analyzing potential allies and opponents, the stakeholders need to be named explicitly.

Categorizing stakeholders will help in focusing on the most important stakeholders and understanding how they currently connect to the issue. This will help the organization in deciding how to relate to them, now and in the future.

The Target

The decision maker: the individual or group with the power to make the change being sought.

The Beneficiaries

The people whose lives will be improved by the successful achievement of advocacy goals.

The Opponents

The people who oppose what is being advocated. Some could become allies in time, with greater understanding of the issues, or they could stand in the way of the change being advocated, in which case they may become targets for advocacy. Ask the group who is benefiting from the current situation. For example:

- Who is benefiting economically and/or politically?
- Who is likely to actively oppose you and what motivates them?
- How powerful are they- how much of a block on progress might they be?

The Allies

Those people and organizations will support this change because they will benefit, either directly or indirectly, from the changes that we are trying to bring about. They may include, for example, religious or community leaders, sympathetic journalists, politicians or political parties, funders or donors and so on. Questions to ask would include:

- Who is losing out from or disadvantaged by the current situation?
- Who else might want to see the situation change?
- How powerful are they? Should/could we work with them?

Stakeholder Mapping

The Stakeholder Mapping is designed to help us think through more thoroughly a stakeholder's influence and their position on our issue. It is also designed to help us compare different stakeholders in terms of two criteria:

- How influential they are on our issue- how much people listen to this particular stakeholder's views on our issues.
- How supportive or opposed to our position they are- and how strong this support or opposition is.

Present the Stakeholder Mapping table (below) and explain what the axes represent. This will depend on a number of factors such as the likelihood of success (what are the chances of impact by challenging those opposed to the position on the change being sought?) and the timing of the advocacy (is there a need to build up relations with allies before confronting the opponents?).

Stakeholder Mapping Template

Influence on our issue – ability to bring about the change we want	High				
	Medium				
	Low				
		Strongly Opposing	Opposing	Supportive	Strongly Supportive
		> > Position on our issue > >			

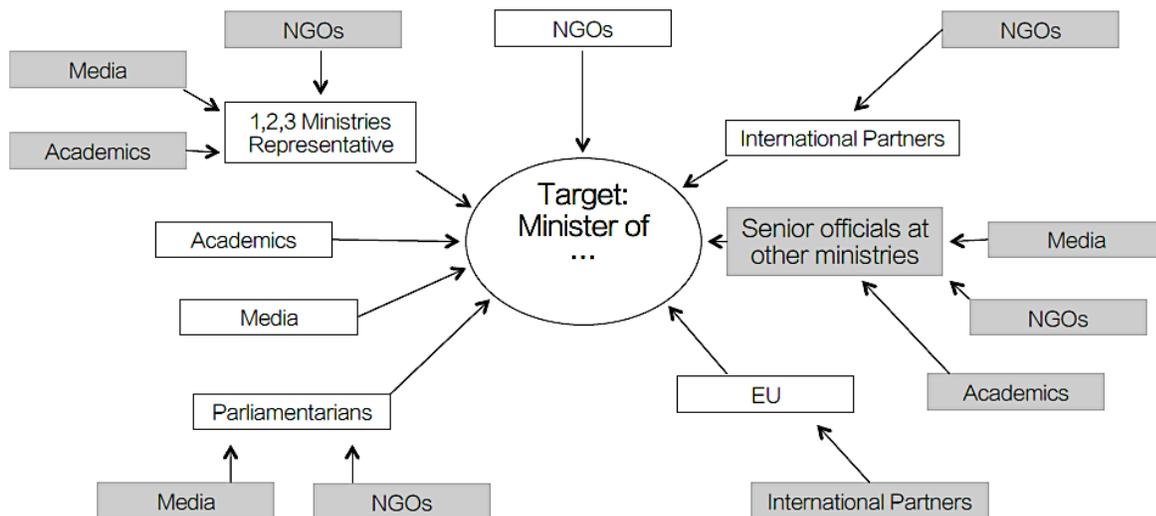
Influence Map

An Influence Map is a tool for developing, presenting and explaining the influencing strategy. It provides a simple visual guide to the routes that will need to be taken in order to influence the target.

To develop an influence map:

1. Write the name of the target on the center of the page.
2. Around the target write/place the names of the main or primary channels of influence that could be used to reach the target.
3. Identify any secondary channels of influence that may be used to influence the main channels.
4. Fill in the arrows to represent the influencing relationships.

Example of Influence Map



Channels of Influence

One of the most important elements of the influencing strategy will be identifying the means to be used to influence the target. This involves selecting the channels through which influence may be focused on the target. A channel of influence could be:

- A direct personal relationship (i.e. do we know the relevant official working on our issue),
- An indirect relationship (would our local MP lobby the Government on our behalf/would supportive media coverage make the government more amenable to change), or
- A process (how will the outcome of review-X affect policy-Y).

In any situation, it is likely that there will be a range of different channels open for influencing the target. Influencing channels may be informal and formal. For instance, is the President's wife interested in the issue? Is the local police chief likely to respond positively to a favorable opinion voiced by a close ally of the advocacy campaign?

It is also important to establish whether supportive media coverage of issue being advocated would have more influence on the target (the government or a specific authority within the government) than an opposition MP. If media coverage supports the advocacy, then all efforts should be made to inform and engage journalists and the media.

To prioritize influence channels, the following matrix below may be used:

Channels of Influence Matrix

	How effectively will we be able to influence the channel?			
		High	Medium	Low
How much influence will the channel have with our target	High			
	Medium			
	Low			

Developing Effective Relationships

A central part of advocacy activity is developing effective relationships. Relationships are particularly important in contexts where only a handful of people are responsible for taking the decisions that the advocacy is concerned about.

Communicating Effectively

Another key element of advocacy activity is communication. In different political situations and at different times, different approaches will be more appropriate. In all cases, advocacy messages need to be delivered in relevant and effective ways. To do this, clear advocacy goals need to be set, target audiences specified to be communicated with, and why. In general the audience can be grouped into three types:

- Decision-takers, policy makers and opinion formers
- Groups and individuals who are interested in the issue
- Wider public

For each type of audience, both the message and the ways of delivering it will be different. It will be important to research audiences, and ensure that advocacy messages are as specific as possible. For example, the 'wider public' is made up of many different sub-groups which may have differing views on or interests in the messages being advocated. In developing the communications strategy and selecting the audiences, the following questions need to be asked:

Who are you trying to reach?

- Who are the various audiences that you want to reach?
- Why are you communicating with them?

What will you say?

- What do they know and care about?
- What messages will work best with each particular audience?
- What do we want to say to them?

How will you reach them?

- In writing
- Face to face meetings
- As part of a wider seminar/policy event
- Through the media

Ask the participants to pick a target audience, and then ask:

- What would be said to this target group
- How this target group would be reached

The chart below shows some of the different ways of communicating with the three types of audience.

<i>small numbers of people</i>	brief description of the different audiences	types of message that it might be appropriate to communicate to these audiences	examples of good ways to convey messages to the different audiences
	(1) policy makers and opinion formers	either detailed, evidence- based arguments, or else show how the issue relates to their power and status	through detailed policy documents, or simpler letters or meetings to establish the importance of the issue to them
different audiences, different messages	(2) groups and individuals who are interested in the issue	<i>explain what you are calling for and why, identifying the barriers to change, but without being too specific about the detail</i>	through newsletters, leaflets, and newspaper articles; provide more detailed information to those who ask for it
	(3) the wider public	<i>simple and emotional stories and messages that make it easy to understand and engage with the issues</i>	through using celebrities or the personal testimonies of those who have suffered as a result of small arms misuse
<i>large numbers of people</i>			

Advocacy Activity

There are many different types of advocacy activity. If the focus of advocacy tends to be at the decision-takers, policy-makers and opinion-formers level, one can make use of a range of activities, such as one-on-one meetings, policy roundtables and written materials, and occasionally through media work.

Step 4: Finalizing the Details

With the broad influencing strategy in place, the advocacy approach can be planned in greater detail. At this stage, the clearer the objectives for the planned advocacy, the easier it will be to identify and allocated the resources to accomplish advocacy objectives.

Theory of Change and the Impact Ladder

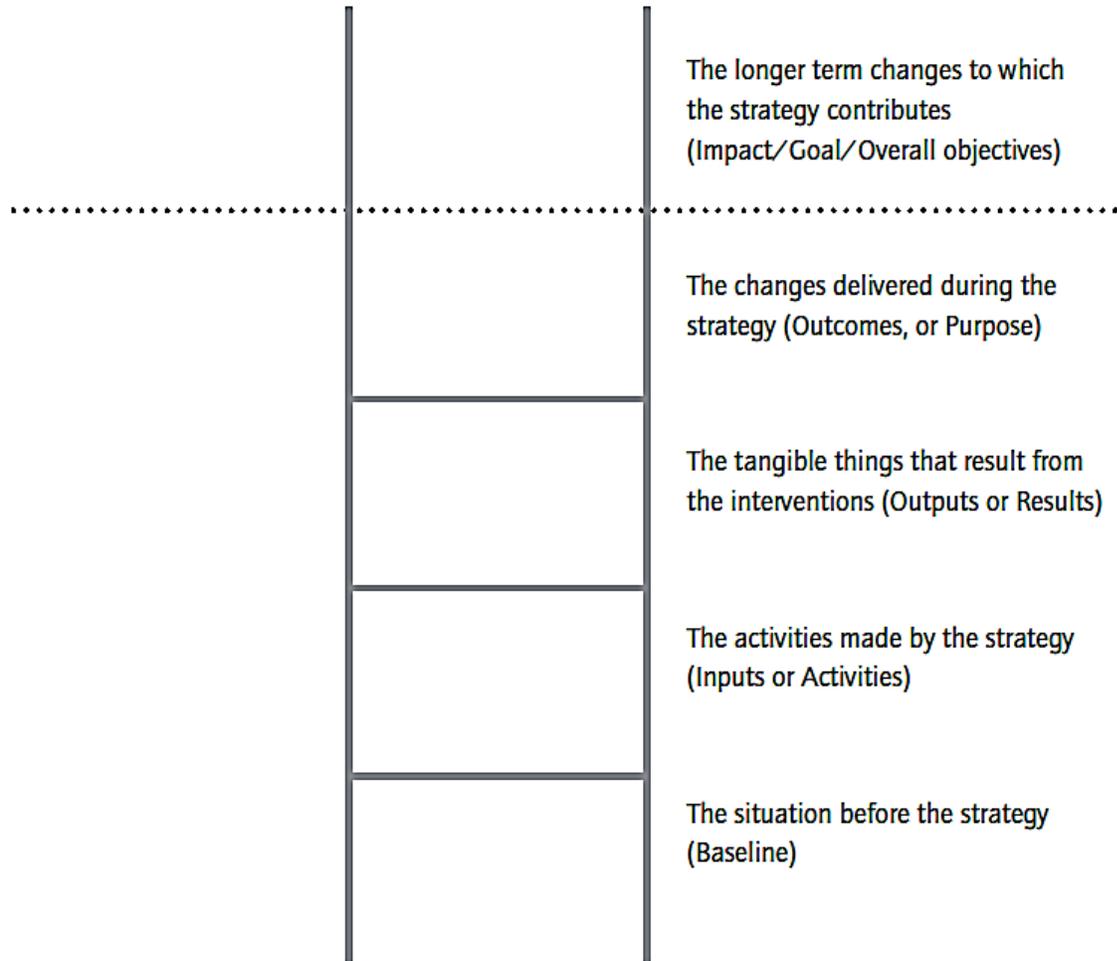
Part 1: Critical Assessment of the 'Theory of Change' – At its most basic a theory of change explains how a group of early and intermediate accomplishments set the stage for producing long-range results. The theory of change makes clear what **assumptions** are being made about the process through which change will occur.

The simplest way of elaborating a theory of change is by asking "What will be achieved the changes being sought through advocacy?" and then following the chain of events likely to occur as a result of successful advocacy. This question will help establish whether the actions to be taken through advocacy are necessary and sufficient to achieve advocacy goals.

Part 2: The Impact Ladder

The Impact Ladder will help in clarifying the links between advocacy actions and progress at different levels. The Impact ladder highlights how progress at one level contributes to progress at the next. It also shows the importance of measuring changes, through ongoing monitoring, at all levels.

The Impact Ladder



Being SMART

Explain the intermediate steps that need to be taken on the way to the ultimate goal. These are called 'outcome level objectives'. They are changes that could be contributed to through advocacy action. The outcome level objectives need to be **SPECIFIC** and **MEASUREABLE**. They also need to be **ACHIEVABLE**, **REALISTIC**, and **TIME-BOUND**.

Step 5: Implementation and Monitoring

An advocacy strategy needs timelines, clear lines of management and clarity on responsibilities. There needs to be clarity on what needs to be measured to track progress toward objectives and adjustments that need to be made along the way based on sound analysis of monitoring data collected through using SMART indicators. Questions that would guide this process are:

- What are the timelines for the objectives and activities?
- Who should be doing what and when should they be doing it? (Gantt chart)
- How can progress be monitored?
- Will it be possible to change strategy if necessary? (Setting indicators)

Implementation

It is important to plan in as much detail as possible how the strategy or activity will be implemented, particularly for larger projects. An implementation plan will make it clear to everyone involved what is expected of them and at what stage of the project timeline. Setting out an implementation plan can often highlight the scale of what is being planned and will help you allocate the necessary resources and staffing.

Gantt Chart

A Gantt Chart provides a practical way of displaying the action plan by specifying what needs to be done and by when, to ensure timely project delivery. A Gantt Chart also helps reveal the relationships and the dependencies between activities. To compile a Gantt Chart, the following information will be needed for each area of work:

1. List all the activities that need to be undertaken.
2. Arrange them roughly in the order in which they should happen.
3. Identify the likely duration of each activity.
4. Put this information on to the project Gantt timetable.
5. Ensure that activities are linked to any relevant external events or deadlines.
6. Ensure that activities are listed in the right, logical, order
7. Ensure availability of adequate human, financial, and other resources to do all the work and prioritize
8. When complete, allocate responsibility to individuals for the completion of specific activities.

Gantt Chart Example

	Oct 2010	Nov	Dec	Jan 2011	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan 2012	Feb	Mar
Inception Phase																		
Clarify and establish staffing arrangements	■																	
Establish financial systems	■																	
Set up Steering Com.	■																	
Conflict Analyses																		
In-depth participatory				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
National Level				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Regional				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Advocacy																		
Stakeholder Analysis		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Capacity Building				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Presentation									■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Monitoring and Evidence Collection									■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Conclusion																		
19th Report – thematic Participatory Analysis																		■
Submission of reports and financial info																		■
Final Evaluation																		■

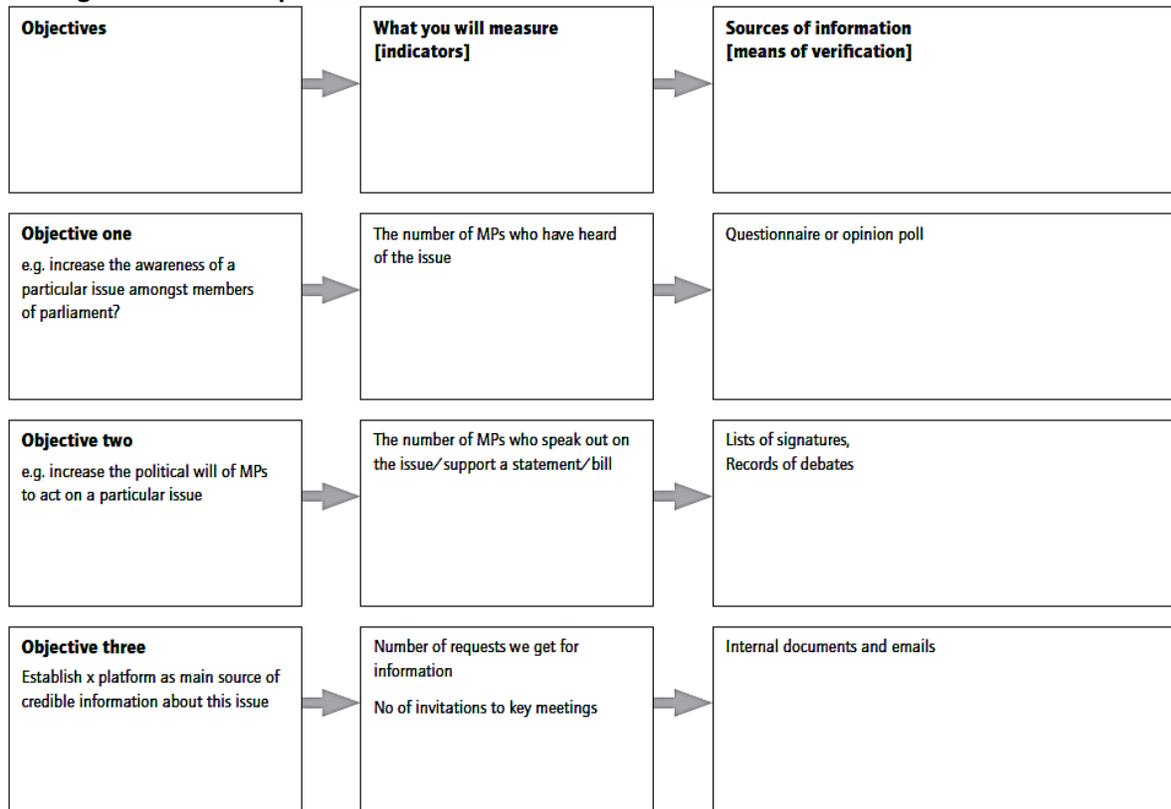
Monitoring

Monitoring is a continuous process of information gathering throughout the duration of a project. The information gathered provides regular indications of progress (or lack thereof) against plans and expected results, and highlights where adjustments to the project might be needed. If planned from the outset of the project, monitoring should not be too time consuming.

Setting Indicators

Monitoring helps identify what is working and what is not, providing opportunities to learn and adapt. The following matrix may be used in developing indicators, based on the SMART principles.

Setting Indicators Template



Step 6: Evaluation

Evaluation is different from monitoring in that it seeks to determine the value of the work, rather than whether it has happened according to plans. Evaluation involves making judgments about the difference the work has made: whether it is relevant, meaningful, lasting, whether it benefitted and involved the right people, and whether it represented a prudent use of resources. Evaluation often occurs at the end of a project but may also be carried out at mid-term point of a project to establish impact and identify lessons and best practice. Most evaluations use variations of the DAC criteria for evaluation.¹⁹ These are:

Relevance

The extent to which the aid activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor.

In evaluating the relevance of a programme or a project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- To what extent are the objectives of the programme still valid?
- Are the activities and outputs of the programme consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives?
- Are the activities and outputs of the programme consistent with the intended impacts and effects?

Effectiveness

A measure of the extent to which an aid activity attains its objectives.

In evaluating the effectiveness of a programme or a project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- To what extent were the objectives achieved / are likely to be achieved?
- What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?

Efficiency

Efficiency measures the outputs -- qualitative and quantitative -- in relation to the inputs. It is an economic term which signifies that the aid uses the least costly resources possible in order to achieve the desired results. This generally requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving the same outputs, to see whether the most efficient process has been adopted.

When evaluating the efficiency of a programme or a project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- Were activities cost-efficient?
- Were objectives achieved on time?
- Was the programme or project implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives?

¹⁹ The *DAC Principles for the Evaluation of Development Assistance*, OECD (1991), *Glossary of Terms Used in Evaluation*, in 'Methods and Procedures in Aid Evaluation', OECD (1986), and the *Glossary of Evaluation and Results Based Management (RBM) Terms*, OECD (2000). For additional information, see: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

Impact

The positive and negative changes produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. This involves the main impacts and effects resulting from the activity on the local social, economic, environmental and other development indicators. The examination should be concerned with both intended and unintended results and must also include the positive and negative impact of external factors, such as changes in terms of trade and financial conditions.

When evaluating the impact of a programme or a project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- What has happened as a result of the programme or project?
- What real difference has the activity made to the beneficiaries?
- How many people have been affected?

Sustainability

Sustainability is concerned with measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn. Projects need to be environmentally as well as financially sustainable.

When evaluating the sustainability of a programme or a project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- To what extent did the benefits of a programme or project continue after donor funding ceased?
- What were the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the programme or project?

Data and Evidence

Valid evaluation depends on gathering reliable and credible data, analyzed to yield findings and conclusions about the impact of the action. To do this, there needs to be a clear, logical link between the conditions prior to the action, the goal for the change through intervention, and evidence that confirms that all or some of what was intended by the action was accomplished. SMART indicators linked to SMART objectives or milestones are best suited for tracking progress and evaluating impact.