Introduction to Strategic Advocacy

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Definitions of Advocacy

To build support for a particular cause or policy.

To participate in a process to influence decision-makers in a political, social or institutional system.
Advocacy can mean...

- Raising the urgency of an issue/problem
- Promoting your perspective on the issue (or that of your beneficiaries)
- Developing policies to address the problem
- Promoting a particular policy or solution
- Ensuring effective implementation and enforcement
Why *Strategic* Advocacy

- Better use of limited resources
- Simplifies decisions
- Minimizes risks
- Ensure coherence and credibility
Can you be both strategic and opportunistic/responsive?

**YES!**

A strategy is a road map (not a checklist). It enables you to correct course and adapt quickly.
Strategic Advocacy

1. Setting goals and objectives

Goals and Objectives

Measures

Role and Style

Key Relationships

Strengths/Resources
Goals and Objectives

The big problem you’re trying to solve.
e.g. End marriage of girls under 18 years

Specific changes that you can bring about to help reach that goal. E.g.
• Passage of law prohibiting underage marriage
• Better enforcement of such laws in your state or district
• Laws mandating school attendance for girls
• Efforts by local school districts to keep girls in school
• More funding for youth programs to empower girls
Setting Advocacy Goals

How does advocacy fit with your organization’s mission and programs?

– Facilitate your programs (e.g. more resources)
– Spread your ideas or perspective
– Raise the profile and credibility of your organization
– Ensure your constituents get what they need
Limiting Your Goals

What is the range of goals you will work on?

– How deep/wide is your advocacy effort?
– Is it aligned with your resources?
– What are the risks of engaging (or not engaging)
Choosing Objectives

• What specific decisions are you seeking right now? **Who** will do **What** and **When**.

Why **SMART** objectives are smarter?

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Realistic
- Time-bound
Strategic Advocacy

2. Defining your role and style

- Goals and Objectives
- Role and Style
- Measures
- Key Relationships
- Strengths/Resources
2. Defining Your Role and Style

*How you will participate in advocacy?*

– Where (what levels and forums)
– Ideological vs. pragmatic
– Single objective vs. opportunistic
– Confrontational/Insider/Friendly critic
– Start/join a campaign?
– Start/join a coalition?
Strategic Advocacy

3. Mapping your advocacy strengths and resources
What qualifies you to be an advocate?

*Your passion for the cause*

Everything else can be learned or developed.
What makes you an effective advocate?

- Knowledge/expertise
- Experience in the field
- Authority to speak for a group of people (formal or informal)
- Ability to mobilize/influence a group of people
- Ability to frame messages, communicate ideas
- Relationships and access

How will you use, maintain and cultivate these sources of “power”.
Strategic Advocacy

Goals and Objectives

Role and Style

Measures

Strengths/Resources

Key Relationships

4. Mapping key relationships
4. Key Relationships

- Constituents—the people whom you represent
- Activists—the people whom you can mobilize to act
- Target audiences—those who make the decisions (corporations, legislators, government agencies)
- Influencers—those who can influence the decision-makers
- Allies—the organizations that work with you
- Opposition—organizations that work against you
Advocacy is about cultivating, managing and using relationships

- Staying connected with those whom you represent → Faithful representation, increased ability to empower and mobilize them.
- Developing alliances with organizations who share your goals → Amplified voices
- Cultivating relationships with decision-makers and influencers (e.g. media) → More access and influence
- Growing and inspiring your base of activists → More power and credibility
- Understanding the opposition → Converting or neutralizing
The Stakeholder Map is a useful way to organize the landscape

- **Natural Allies**: Positive influence, with similar culture and values
- **Potential Allies**: Positive influence, different culture and values
- **Potential Constituency**: Weak influence now, but potential to be mobilized
- **Opposition**: Negative influence, must be neutralized or persuaded

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Clear Actionable Advice.
Your Basic Strategy

• Whom will you influence? (target audience)
• What do you want them to do differently?
• How will persuade them to do this?

Argument + A Reason to Act
Why Monitor Advocacy

✓ To track ongoing progress in a long battle
✓ To facilitate collaboration
✓ To adapt the action plan
✓ To update your knowledge of your strengths, the landscape, and decision-makers
✓ To know if you are faithfully implementing the strategy
✓ To test the strategy itself
✓ To report on your achievements and secure funds
What you should monitor

• Outputs
• Process measures
• Outcomes (milestones towards ultimate objective)
• Advocacy resources (update stakeholder map)

Record expected and unexpected outcomes.