Advocacy Planning to Achieve Your Goals

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What Is Advocacy

To participate in a process to influence decision-makers in a political, social or institutional system.
What is an Advocacy Campaign?

A series of coordinated activities designed to achieve a desired outcome.

Usually, a time-bound, concerted effort that ends in a “win” or a “loss”.

Multiple strategies working in concert
Usually several actors and target audiences

Usually a decision by a social institution, corporation or government agency. E.g.
• A new/better policy
• Better implementation or enforcement
• More resources
• A symbolic gesture
Advocacy Planning in 5 Steps

1. Set Objectives
2. Understand the Decision Landscape
3. Determine How You Will Win
4. Make an Action Plan
5. Monitor and Adapt
1. Set Goals and Objectives
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
Start with an Issue Analysis

What is the problem?
Why does this happen?

Consequence 1
Direct Cause 1
Indirect Cause

Consequence 2
Direct Cause 2
Indirect Cause

Consequence 3
Direct Cause 3
Indirect Cause

The PROBLEM
Identify What You Will Change

Young girls are married

- Early childbearing damages their health
- Limits their educational and professional options
- Girls remain stuck in bad marriages
- Girls have no role models or options
- No consequences for non-enforcement
- Social norms outweigh legal considerations
- Parents prefer to marry off girls early
- Lower dowry for younger girls
- Fear loss of virginity/reputation
- See unmarried girls as a financial burden

Laws against child marriage are not enforced

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Clear Actionable Advice.
How to Set Objectives

**Issue analysis**
What must change?
What will have the most impact?

**Political Analysis**
What is best changed via advocacy?
Where is the momentum? Opportunities?

**Internal Analysis**
What will energize our stakeholders?
Relevance to mission and programs?
What can *we* influence?
What do we risk?

**Advocacy Objectives**
Why make objectives **SMART**

- **Specific**
- **Measurable**
- **Attainable**
- **Realistic**
- **Time-bound**

**Who** will do **What** and **When**
2. Understand the Decision Landscape

The Decision Process
Decision-Makers
The Stakeholder Map
The Decision Process:
How will this decision be made?

How does the process work?
• What is the timeline for the decision?
• Who holds the power? Who has influence?
• What are the opportunities to participate?
• What are the formal and informal avenues to influence the decision?

Who sets the agenda?
Who frames the problem?
Who develops policy solutions?
Who decides among the options?
Who monitors and reports on implementation?
The Stakeholder Map: Who can influence the decision?

- **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.

Advocacy Goal
CHECKPOINT: Go/No go Decision

• Is there a convincing evidence base for our recommendation?
• Is this the right time for a campaign?
• Can we mobilize the resources to give it a good shot?
• Can we win?
• What are the risks of failing?
• What are the risks of not acting?
• Will my advocacy affect the outcome?
3. Determine how you will win

(Hint: By having a winning strategy!)
A winning strategy is based on knowledge and analysis

Decision-makers
What will motivate them?
What is blocking them from making the right decision

Key Influencers
What will motivate them to join your cause?

Stakeholders
How can you cultivate allies? How will you neutralize the opposition?

Your Strengths
What are your sources of power and influence?

The Evidence Base
The arguments to support your case

The Decision Process
Opportunities for participation
Timing of tactics
The Basic Strategy

A persuasive argument in a compelling frame + A Reason to Act

E.g.:
- Media and public opinion
- Moral authority/Core values
- Expertise/credibility
- Professional pressure
- Political cover
- Neutralizing opposition
Choose and Profile Target Audiences

• What they know and believe
• What they say and do
• What they stand to gain (“Gain”)
• What they stand to lose (“Pain”)

Then Tailor your Efforts

• WHAT to say (ideas, arguments)
• How you will persuade:
  - HOW you make the case (language, style, format)
  - WHO carries it (messenger)
  - WHEN, WHERE and HOW it is delivered.
4. Develop Your Action Plan

The Action Plan puts your strategy into action
Action Plan to Reach and Persuade Target Audiences

• What messages and materials need to be developed
• How and when they will be delivered; by whom (tactics, channels, timing)
• How coalitions and relationships will be managed
• What milestones must be achieved

• What needs to be done?
• Who will do it?
• When?
• What resources are needed?
Connecting Actions to Outcomes

What you will do → What others will do in response → How this will influence targeted decision-makers → What actions they will take → How this leads to your goals
Connecting Actions to Outcomes

**OBJECTION**
- Introduction of law banning child marriage in Parliament
- Passage of law banning child marriage

**GOAL**
- End Child Marriage

Whom do you need to influence? How will you do this?
5. Monitor and Adapt
Why Monitor Advocacy

✓ To track ongoing progress in a long battle
✓ 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
✓ To facilitate collaboration
What to Monitor

- Outputs
- Process measures
- Outcomes (milestones towards ultimate objective)

Record expected and unexpected outcomes.
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