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What is Advocacy?

In this book we discuss the principles and techniques of managing a successful advocacy campaign. Our first step is to define advocacy:

Advocacy is a strategic series of actions designed to influence those who hold governmental, political, economic or private power to implement public policies and practices that benefit those with less political power and fewer economic resources (the affected group).

An **advocacy campaign** is a long-term set of activities that includes research, planning, acting, monitoring, and evaluating our advocacy efforts. Alleviating poverty, fighting oppression, challenging injustice, or supporting sustainable development are all common themes of advocacy campaigns.

Advocacy in CAMBODIA

In 2002, a large fire in the Block Tanpa neighborhood displaced 300 families. The local authorities proposed forced relocation as a solution but the UNDP and local NGOs intervened. Their advocacy campaign used media attention and donor pressure to convince the authorities to wait until emergency shelters were erected and another suitable site for their community was found.

No matter what kind of public policy change we seek, all successful advocacy campaigns share the same characteristics. They are:

STRATEGIC

We must research and plan our campaign carefully.

SERIES OF ACTIONS

Advocacy is not simply one phone call, one petition, or one march but a set of coordinated activities.

DESIGNED TO PERSUADE

We must use ideas or provide arguments that convince people that the desired change is important and they will support it.

TARGETED

We must aim our persuasion efforts at specific people who have the power to make our advocacy campaign successful.

BUILD ALLIANCES

We must work with many stakeholders to increase the impact of our campaign.

RESULTS IN CHANGE

Our advocacy campaign must result in positive change in the lives of the people affected by the problem. For our advocacy to be effective we must persuade the targets of our advocacy campaign that

what we want is what they want.

In this book we will explore the different **strategies** for research and planning, choosing an effective **series of actions**, identifying our **targets**, and **evaluating** the results of the campaign.

Advocacy and Society

Understanding advocacy requires that we understand democracy. Ideally, all societies have three spheres of influence: **the state, the private sector, and civil society**. In a working democracy, the three spheres share power and work together.

We will focus on advocacy that is conducted by civil society in order to change a government policy or practice and advance the public interest. Some call this approach “people-centered advocacy” or “social justice advocacy.”

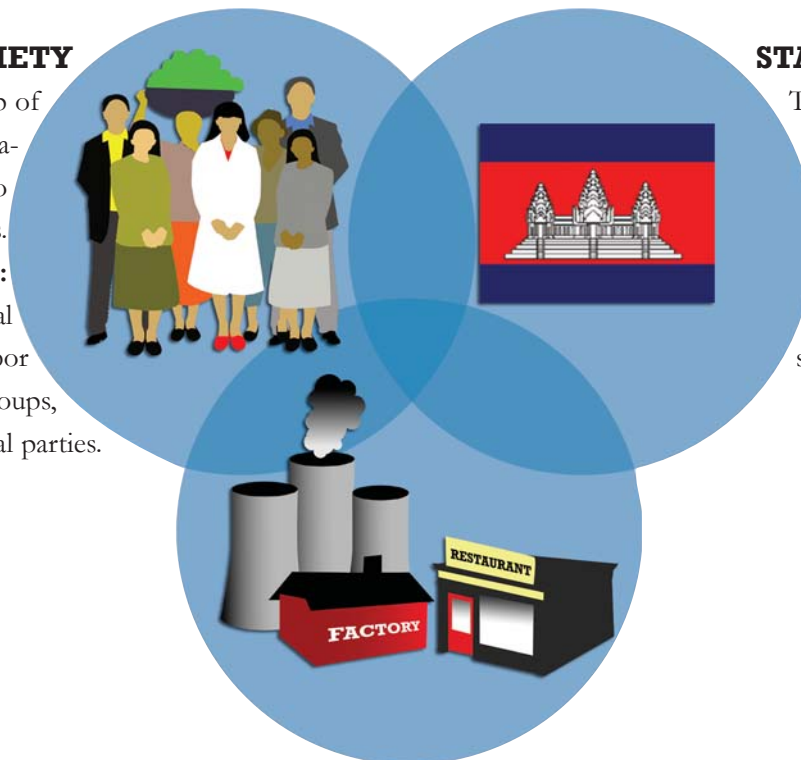
3 SPHERES OF SOCIETY

CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society is made up of private citizens and organizations working together to advance public interests.

Examples:

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), labor unions, community based groups, religious groups, or political parties.



STATE

The state is made up of public entities working to advance public interests.

Examples:

Government officials, bureaucrats, the military, schools, the police, and courts.

PRIVATE SECTOR

The private sector consists of private people and organizations working to advance private interests.

Examples:

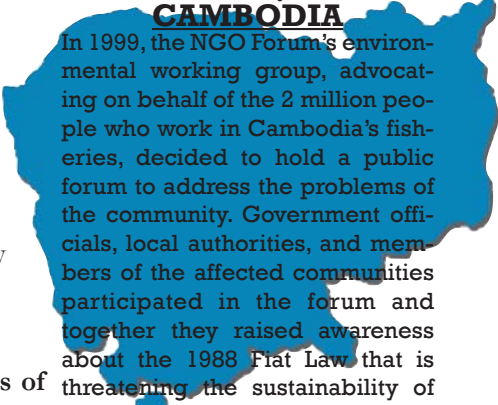
Corporations, small businesses, the media, factories

Principles of Advocacy

“Social-justice” advocacy campaigns yield real improvements in people’s lives. They strengthen civil society's role in decision making and expand people’s awareness of their rights and responsibilities as citizens. Effective advocacy can also strengthen relationships between the three different spheres of society and improve the accountability of government institutions.

There are certain challenges to a successful advocacy campaign. If poorly planned, advocacy can disempower the affected group by speaking on their behalf without consulting them. Due to frustrations with government or other power structures there may also be a temptation to compromise too much. Diverting needed resources from our other activities to the advocacy campaign will demand careful planning. In some difficult cases, advocates may face threats to their personal safety, property, or job security.

These challenges to advocacy can be overcome using the **five good practices of an advocate**.



Advocacy in CAMBODIA
In 1999, the NGO Forum’s environmental working group, advocating on behalf of the 2 million people who work in Cambodia’s fisheries, decided to hold a public forum to address the problems of the community. Government officials, local authorities, and members of the affected communities participated in the forum and together they raised awareness about the 1988 Fiat Law that is threatening the sustainability of the industry.

5 GOOD PRACTICES OF AN ADVOCATE

encourage **PARTICIPATION**

Involve as many people as possible in the decision-making during our advocacy campaign. Each participant will bring different skills, contacts, resources and ideas. When we encourage participation we give the affected group a sense of ownership over the process and ultimately increase the likelihood of success.

ensure **LEGITIMACY**

To be legitimate, all advocacy campaigns must earn the trust of the people and communities they represent. This is done by respecting the variety of opinions and experiences of the individuals in the affected group.

be **ACCOUNTABLE**

We are accountable when we openly and honestly discuss the campaign’s progress (and problems) with the affected group. This process will also reduce temptations we face to abuse power and will help avoid corruption in our advocacy campaign.

act **PEACEFULLY**

Do not use violence to achieve your advocacy goals. Violence is never a sustainable, long-term solution. Peaceful advocacy will earn the trust and respect of both your supporters and your opponents.

REPRESENT the affected group

Listen to the affected group, develop a strategy with them, inform them of any risks or challenges and take action together. Whenever possible, build their capacity to advocate on their own behalf.

Roles of an Advocate

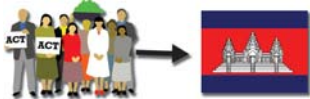
When advocating for an affected group there are many different roles we can play to help us achieve our goal. It is important that we are sensitive to the needs and desires of the affected group so that we can select a role that best fits the situation.

Advocacy in CAMBODIA
 In response to frustrations and deteriorating relations with the Department of Fisheries, advocates formed a network called the Fisheries Action Coalition Team (FACT). This network created better coordination between interested groups allowing them to engage in more effective advocacy campaigns.

NEGOTIATE Bargain for something



ACCOMPANY Speak with the people



EMPOWER Enable the people to speak for themselves



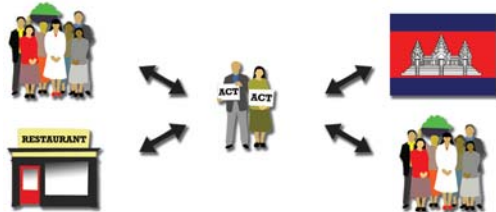
REPRESENT Speak for the people



MEDIATE Facilitate communication between people



MODEL Demonstrate behavior to people or policy makers



NETWORK Build coalitions



KEY

 Private Sector
  Power Structures
  Advocates
  Affected Group

Advocacy Cycle

Advocacy campaigns share a cycle of activity: **Identifying** the problem, **researching** the issues surrounding the problem, **planning** a set of activities, **acting** on our plan, and **evaluating** the results of our efforts. Advocacy campaigns all over the world use this model - or something very similar - to help design more effective advocacy campaigns.

In this section we will explore these steps in detail. They will provide the foundation of our advocacy campaign.

5 STEPS OF ADVOCACY

IDENTIFY

Identify the problem that needs to be addressed.

RESEARCH

Gather the necessary information and ensure that the causes and effects of the problem are understood.

PLAN

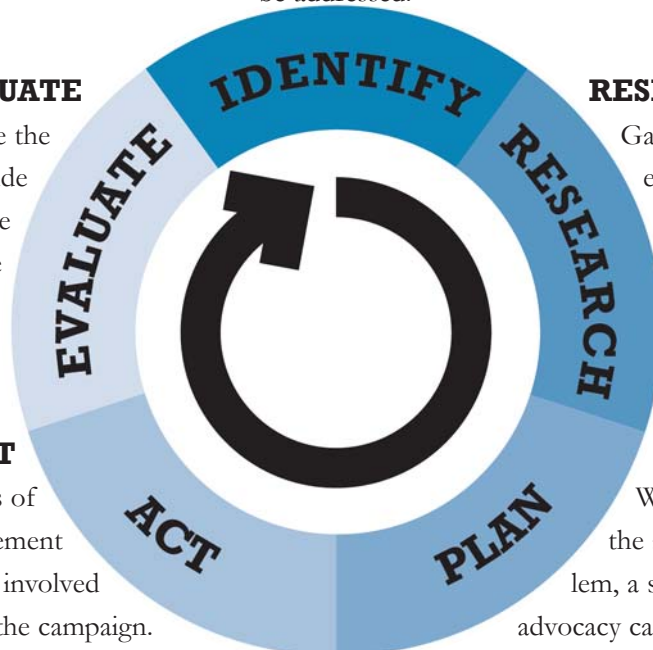
When advocacy has been identified as the appropriate way to address the problem, a strategy needs to be formulated. An advocacy campaign action plan includes the goal, objectives, indicators, methods, activities, and timeline.

ACT

Following the five good practices of an advocate, take action in agreement and coordination with everyone involved in the campaign.

EVALUATE

Monitor actions and evaluate the results throughout the cycle. Decide what further action is appropriate or how advocacy could be done differently in the future to be more effective.





Identify

Problems created by government policies or social practices cannot usually be solved by one individual. Affected communities need advocates to help them address their problems and offer solutions. The first step in preparing for our advocacy campaign is to identify these problems and educate ourselves about their causes and effects.

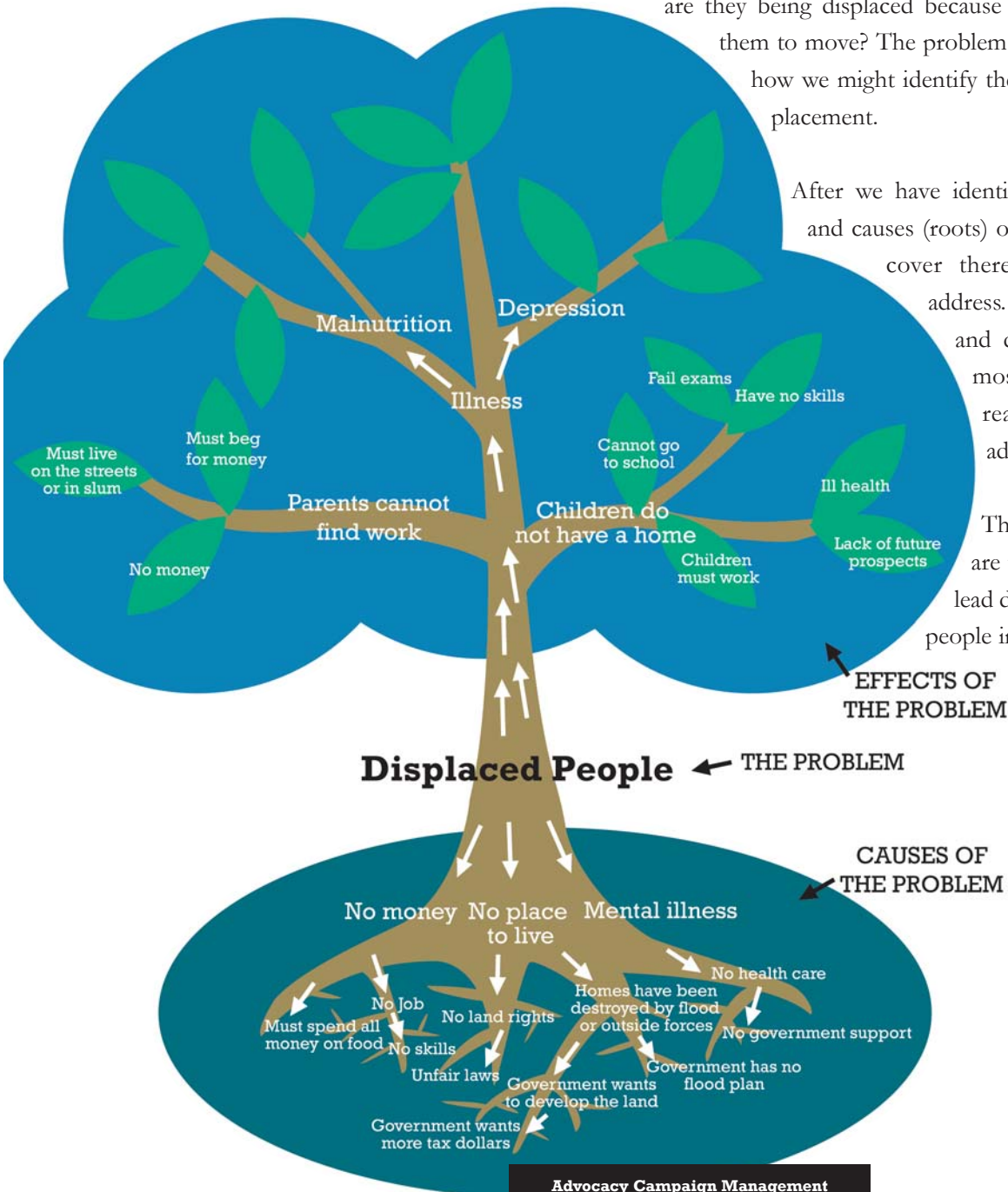
Problems often resemble the structure of a tree. If we imagine that the most important problem is the trunk of the tree, we can then see all of the related effects growing out like branches. Our problem tree will most certainly have deep, root causes which feed the trunk and branches.

We can create a problem tree by asking ourselves “But why?” when examining every aspect of a problem. For example, many people in urban and rural areas of Cambodia have recently been displaced from their homes. Therefore, when creating the problem tree we must ask ourselves, “But why are people being displaced?” Are they being displaced because they cannot afford a place to live? Are they being displaced because they are suffering from mental illness? Or

are they being displaced because the government is forcing them to move? The problem tree on this page illustrates how we might identify the causes and effects of displacement.

After we have identified the effects (branches) and causes (roots) of our problem we may discover there are other problems to address. We will need to prioritize and decide which ones are the most important and can be realistically solved by our advocacy.

The most important problems are the ones that, if solved, will lead directly to better lives for the people in the affected group.





Research

Research is an important step in preparing for our advocacy campaign. Careful, objective research will educate us and our supporters about the causes and effects of the problem. Many campaigns make the mistake of implementing advocacy activities without first researching the problem. We must be fully informed about the problem if we expect to persuade people and institutions to change policies for the better. Remember, information is a type of power and research provides information.

Thankfully, there is already a wealth of information available to us on the Internet, in libraries, government departments, and NGOs. There is no substitute, however, for hearing directly from the affected group. We can learn much about the problem by conducting questionnaires, surveys, interviews, and focus groups. Simply observing how the affected group manages and lives with the problem will greatly inform our research and ultimately, our solution.

RESEARCH METHODS

METHOD	DEFINITION	ADVANTAGES	CHALLENGES
Questionnaires and Surveys	A form containing a set of questions, given to a statistically significant number of people, as a way of gathering information	Easy to administer to many people	Impersonal
Informal Interviews	A conversation in which facts or statements are discussed and noted	Flexible and intimate	Time intensive and difficult to objectively analyze
Documentation Review	Review literature about the problem and examine international best practices	Comprehensive	Time intensive and inflexible
Observation	The process of gathering information about how a problem looks in a community	View operations as they occur, adaptable	Subjective and complex
Focus Groups	Assemble small groups of people to discuss the problem and explore potential solutions	In-depth examination of a problem	Difficult to draw conclusions

NOTE: The information gathered in our research should be integrated into the activities of our advocacy campaign. Attracting media attention by holding conferences or writing publications and press releases can help communicate our research to a wider audience.



Plan

Once we have identified a problem, conducted research, and determined that advocacy will be the most effective response to produce positive change, we must plan the campaign. We start the planning process by choosing our **goals, objectives, indicators, targets, and activities.**

GOALS

Goals articulate the desired change in policies or practices that we want to achieve over a set period of time.

SAMPLE GOAL
“Make domestic violence recognized and treated as a crime and a violation of basic rights by society and the legal system.”

OBJECTIVES

Objectives define what will be accomplished, with whom, how, and in what period of time. They should yield a significant and measurable behavioral change in people. Advocacy strategies usually have more than one objective that guides different activities. Good objectives should be **SMART**:

SMART OBJECTIVE
“In one year, 75% of police demonstrate a 50% increase in knowledge of domestic violence law.”

SPECIFIC

Is it clear whose behavior must change?

MEASURABLE

Is it clear by how much the behavior must change?

ACHIEVABLE

Will you be able to raise money or other resources to support our work on the objective? Does our organization have the internal resources to achieve this objective?

REALISTIC

Considering the current social and political conditions, can we achieve our objective?

TIME-BOUND Does the objective have a clear and realistic time-frame or deadline?

ACTIVITIES

Activities are specific tasks we must do in order to achieve an objective.

SAMPLE ACTIVITY
“Survey the current police force regarding their knowledge of the current domestic violence law.”

NOTE: Watch out for activities disguised as objectives. If our task describes something our organization will do - like a training - that is an activity, not an objective.



Plan: Indicators

Indicators are signs that let us know that we are making progress toward our objectives. All good indicators should be **direct, discrete, practical and reliable**.

DIRECT

A direct indicator measures only one thing at a time. Suppose, for example, that we trying to study income levels for a specific population. We could collect a direct indicator like household income over a specific period of time. Occasionally, however, a direct indicator is not available. For example, in rural areas it might be difficult to find statistics on income levels. Instead, we could look at the percentage of village households with radios or bicycles as a substitute indicator of wealth. These substitute indicators are called *proxy* indicators.

DISTINCT

Sometimes we may need to separate information about our activities into categories. These categories, divided by gender, age, location or some other characteristic, are called distinct indicators. Distinct indicators show us exactly who is benefiting and participating in our advocacy activities.

PRACTICAL

An indicator is practical if data can be obtained easily and at a reasonable cost. Both cheap and readily available, the number of newspaper stories published about our advocacy campaign is a good example of a practical indicator.

RELIABLE

A reliable indicator provides dependable information for confident decision-making.



Newspapers: A practical indicator

Many indicators are based on numbers, like household income figures, which means they are easy to understand and evaluate. There are many other indicators, however, that are based on peoples' personal experiences or opinions and therefore less clear and sometimes less reliable. For example, if we ask our affected group how they *feel* about a problem we may hear many different opinions and ideas. If there is no consensus within the group it can be very difficult to find a indicator that represents the progress towards our objectives.

It is not always possible to find indicators, both based on numbers and on experiences, that fit all four characteristics. We should search for as many of these four characteristics as possible.



Plan: Stakeholders

Anyone who has a direct interest in the outcome of our advocacy campaign is called a “**stakeholder**”. Stakeholders include the people directly affected by the problem, groups responsible for creating the problem, and groups interested in solving the problem. Stakeholders can be separated in three groups: **allies**, **neutrals** and **opponents**.

STAKEHOLDERS



ALLIES

Allies are people and organizations that support our advocacy campaign. Typically they are individuals and institutions sympathetic to our cause such as opinion leaders, present and former politicians, media personalities, NGOs, community groups, professors, and of course, the members of the affected group. They will contribute time, technical expertise, financial and material resources and influence to our advocacy campaign.



NEUTRALS

Neutral stakeholders are people and organizations who have not yet formed a strong opinion on an issue. Neutrals are important to our advocacy campaign because they can often quickly become allies or opponents.



OPPONENTS

Opponents are people and organizations who oppose our advocacy campaign. Advocacy often challenges existing imbalances of power in a society and such a challenge often provokes a negative reaction from those currently in power or people with different values. Our opponents can range from people who disagree but do not take action to aggressive or violent enemies.

Stakeholders will have different degrees of influence or control over the problem in the affected group. Understanding their **power** over the problem is a critical part of the planning process.

All societies (and institutions) have three dimensions of power: **open**, **closed**, **invisible**. Over the course of an advocacy campaign, advocates will engage with all three dimensions.

3 DIMENSIONS OF POWER



INVISIBLE

Power structures use secrecy, information control, and fear to prevent conflict.

How do we advocate?

"ADVOCACY FOR THE PEOPLE"

Increase political awareness, confidence, and understanding of the affected group by strengthening community organizations.



VISIBLE

Power structures allow only certain issues and groups to be recognized.

How do we advocate?

"ADVOCACY WITH THE PEOPLE"

Professional organizers build leadership of community organizations and coalitions to help communities raise awareness and mobilize.



OPEN

Relatively accessible political system in which all issues can be recognized.

How do we advocate?

"ADVOCACY BY THE PEOPLE"

Community organizations mobilize the public, engage with decision makers, and use the media to successfully promote policy change.



Plan:Targets

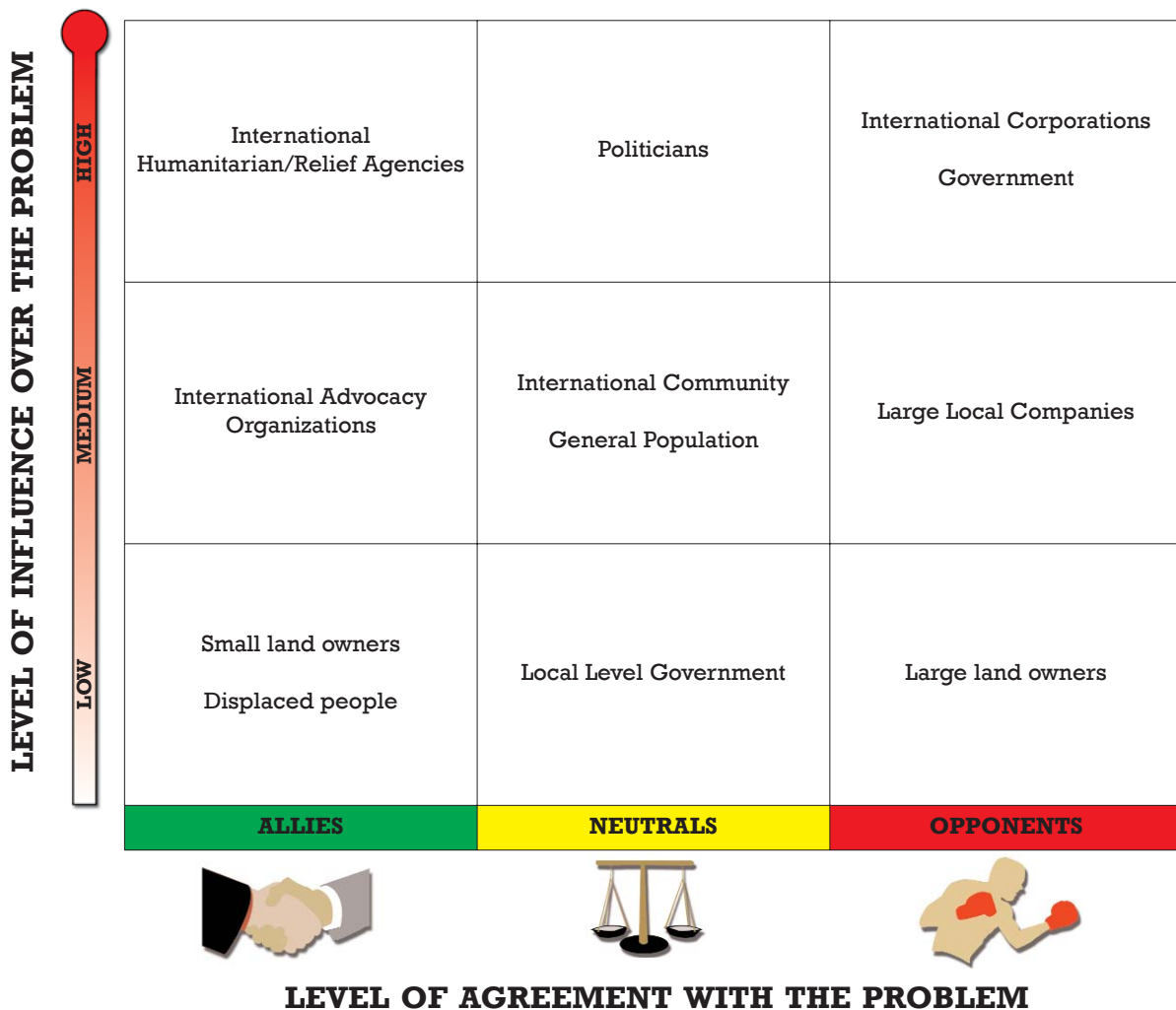
CASE STUDY: Cambodian Land Reform

You might remember, from our problem tree exercise, the problem of displaced people in Cambodia. In order to understand how to identify targets, let's explore this problem a little more carefully.

Road improvements and urban developments in Cambodia have forced people to relocate or lose their sources of livelihood. Private businesses have also conceding land without community consultation. The government's national resettlement policy is not yet in place and people's land rights are unclear. Donors and multilateral development banks have their own resettlement standards which will not be enforced until there is effective monitoring and people are given a chance to speak out about their situation.

If we wanted to advocate for these displaced people, who might be our allies and opponents?

ALLIES AND OPPONENTS



NOTE: When identifying allies and opponents, we should consider the degree of influence each stakeholder has over the problem. The people affected by the focus of our advocacy campaign are certainly stakeholders but they often have little ability to directly change policy. Any stakeholder listed with high influence over the problem, regardless of their level of agreement with our position, is a **target**.



Plan:Targets

Targets can be broken down into two groups: **Primary** and **secondary**.

PRIMARY target

A person with the most power to directly address our problem. However, we may not have access to this person or there may be too great a political risk for them to openly support us.



**Targets are people
not institutions.**

SECONDARY target

A person who cannot solve the problem directly but has the ability to influence the primary target. If we can influence this person, they can influence the primary target.

Remember that there are multiple sides to every problem and some of our targets may also be our opponents. We will need to educate ourselves about their opinions and ideas so we will better prepared to find common ground or counter their arguments. Our factual research, ability to understand their interests, and persuasion skills will provide them with the motivation to change their position. Creating a chart is an easy way to identify primary and secondary targets. Below is a sample target table from the Cambodian Land Reform advocacy campaign.

TARGET TABLE

OBJECTIVE:

Within two years, the Cambodian Council of Ministers adopts a policy to provide greater protection to the poor and vulnerable affected by resettlement.

TARGET NAME	CONTACT PERSON	WHAT DO THEY KNOW ABOUT THE PROBLEM?	WHAT IS THEIR ATTITUDE ABOUT THE PROBLEM?	WHO HAS INFLUENCE OVER THEM?	WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO THEM?
PRIMARY TARGET			SECONDARY TARGET		
International Corporations	Director of Public Relations	Main concern is profits	Whatever is most cost effective is best	Politicians	Whatever is important to their supporters
				Government	Whatever elected officials decide
				General public (consumers)	Fairness
				The Media	Selling News
Government	All Members of Parliament	They are aware of the problem but it is not a priority	See development as a means of economic gain	International Donors	Sustainable & pro-poor development
	Minister of Planning			General public	Fairness
	Minister of Land Management			The Media	Selling News
International Humanitarian/Relief Organizations	Members of the National Poverty Reduction Strategic Plan Working Group (NPRSPWG)	Are familiar with this problem from other parts of the world	Want justice Fair property-rights legislation	International Donors	Sustainable & pro-poor development
				NGOs	Justice
				The Media	Selling News
Affected Community	Heads of Households	Live with the problem every day	Want justice Fair property-rights legislation Need help to fix problem	Government	Whatever elected officials decide
				The Media	Selling News
				Family Members	Positive change



Plan: Activities

Once we have selected our targets we will need to select our activities. The activities we choose will depend largely on our resources and our relationship with the targets. The most expensive option might not be the most effective at reaching our targets. The best methods are participatory, cost-effective, and reach as many people as possible particularly the poorest or most disenfranchised.

Sample Advocacy Activities

Policy research	Press Conference	Workshop
Lobbying	Strike	Training
Demonstrations	Poetry Contest	TV or Radio Drama
Watchdog activities	Marches	Door to Door
Flyers	Pamphlets	Letter writing
Website	Surveys	Interviews
Networking	Theater	Public forum
Meetings	Court cases	Press Release
Newsletter	Poster Campaign	Mediation
Petitions	Talk Show	Exposure Tour
Negotiations	Round Table	Press Briefing

NOTE: The best activities for our campaign will have the greatest impact at the lowest cost.



Advocacy in **CAMBODIA**








Cambodian Teachers marched on the streets of Phnom Penh to demand better wages. This march was one piece of a series of activities in their advocacy campaign.



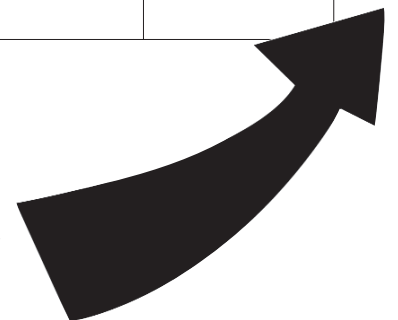
Plan: Advocacy Campaign Action Plan

After a thorough analysis of our goals, objectives, indicators, targets, and activities we are ready to create an advocacy campaign action plan. This plan will help consolidate all of our thoughts and efforts into a concise framework for our advocacy campaign and help guide everyone working on the campaign.

ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN ACTION PLAN

OBJECTIVES	INDICATORS	MEANS OF MEASUREMENT	TARGET	ALLIES	ACTIVITIES	TIMEFRAME	
Within two years, the National Assembly adopts a policy to provide greater protection to the poor and vulnerable affected by resettlement.	The National Assembly adopts 50% of NGO's recommended changes to their national resettlement policy.	Copy of National Assembly policy Letter from National Assembly detailing the policy Media report giving details of the National Assembly policy	National Assembly International Humanitarian / Relief Organizations Donors Media	NGO network members World Bank Asian Development Bank	Develop strategy among coalition members Lobby National Assembly Members through direct meetings & workshops Media campaign to mobilize public	Year 1-2	  
A clear resettlement plan will be integrated in the 5 year plans of the local authority.	The national development plan will have a resettlement plan.	Existence of resettlement plan in National development plan	Minister of Planning	NGO network members Local authorities National Poverty Reduction Strategic Plan Working Group (NPRSPWG)	Research resettlement plan options Develop & present message to NPRSPWG & local authority	Year 2	 
Complaints of the poor or vulnerable are submitted to the appropriate authority, recognized, and action is taken.	At least 50% of cases handled by the Resettlement Action Network result in some documented improvement in resettled people's situation.	Length of response time from government Number of cases solved	International Humanitarian / Relief Organizations	NGO network members World Bank Asian Development Bank Affected communities	Survey affected group and issue report through press conference Gather potential legal cases from affected group	Year 3	 

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Expert Series**





ACT

After writing our advocacy campaign action plan we are ready to begin implementing our campaign activities. Before we begin our series of chosen activities, however, we need to prioritize them. Some activities can be done anytime, some may require that other activities are done first, and some others will need to occur at specific dates or times. Campaign activities will have a greater impact if we plan beforehand.

FOLLOW THROUGH

Commit to your advocacy plan. Don't start and stop.

STAY FOCUSED

Keep everyone focused on our activities. Don't get distracted.

BE TIMELY

Think about how can we tie our activities into important holidays, regional meetings, government conferences or world theme days.

SOME WORLD THEME DAYS	
MAR 8	International Women's Day
MAY 1	International Labor Day
APR 22	Earth Day
DEC 1	World AIDS Day





Evaluate

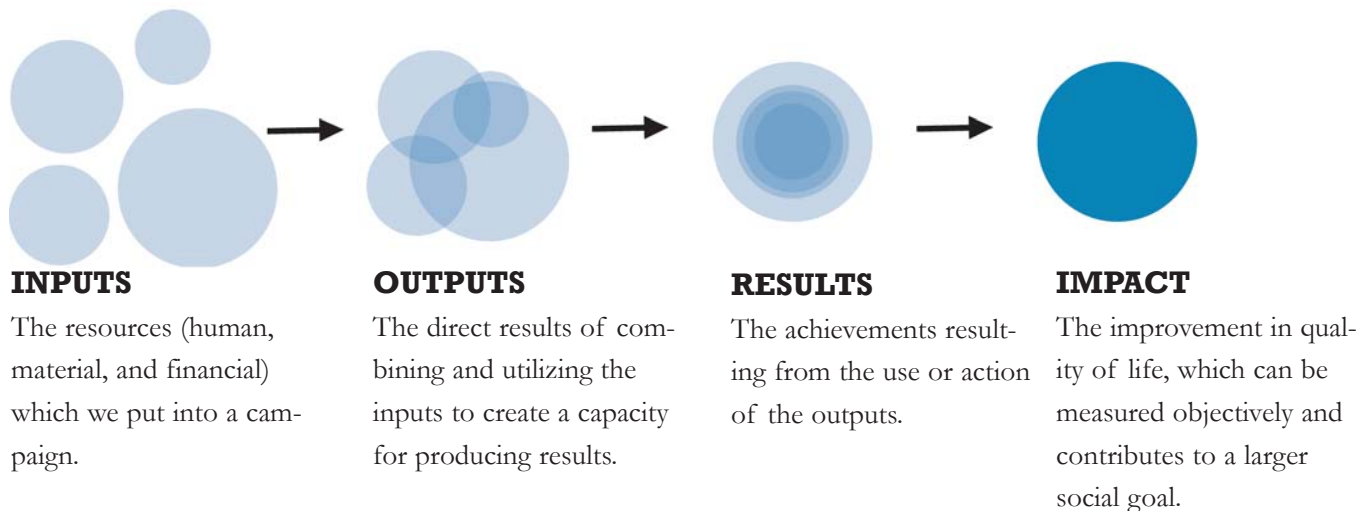
In addition to a well-built and realistic advocacy campaign action plan, all successful advocacy campaigns have a strong commitment to regularly monitoring and evaluating their efforts. It is through monitoring and evaluating that we can adjust our action plan to reflect lessons we have learned mid-campaign.

Monitoring

Gathering information to measure the impact of our advocacy campaign is called “monitoring.” Monitoring compares the **inputs** (human, material and financial resources), **outputs** (activities, products), and **results** (achievements) against our advocacy campaign action plan. In order for monitoring to be effective it must be completely integrated into all phases of our advocacy campaign. When we monitor regularly we can tell if our activities are helping us achieve our objectives.

A successful monitoring program will provide us with a rich source of information about our campaign and ensure accountability. For example, to see if our media campaign is successful, we would keep a record of press coverage. To see if our lobbying efforts have been successful, we would count the letters of support from Ministers.

THE MONITORING PROCESS



Evaluation

Periodically during our advocacy campaign we need to analyze the information we have gathered during the monitoring process. This is called evaluation. Evaluations will help us think critically about our strengths and weaknesses. Using the indicators from our advocacy campaign action plan, we can assess what has been accomplished and how well our resources have been used. Our monitoring data might also indicate changes in power structures, allies and opponents, or even the problem itself. We must be prepared to adjust our advocacy campaign action plan, even while the campaign is underway, to reflect the results of our evaluation.

Conclusion

Wherever there is oppression, poverty, or injustice there is a need for advocacy. Behind every strong advocacy campaign is a clear and concise advocacy campaign action plan based on the five steps of the advocacy cycle. In the end, this plan will guide us through the obstacles and challenges we face to creating real change in our communities.

In our next book, **“Building Relationships with Government”** we will explore the techniques of developing and communicating our advocacy message to people in government.



**"Never doubt that a small group of
thoughtful,
committed citizens
can change the world;
indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."**

Margaret Mead

Glossary

Accountable

Answerable to an individual or organization.

Campaign

A series of activities linked strategically together to accomplish a common purpose.

Confrontational

Conflict arising from differing opinions and ideas.

Capacity

Ability to perform or produce; capability.

Coalition

An alliance of people, organizations, parties, or nations.

Disenfranchised

People who are deprived of the rights of citizenship.

Empower

To equip or supply with an ability; enable.

Framework

A set of assumptions, concepts, values, and practices that constitutes a way of viewing reality.

Implement

A means of achieving an end; an instrument or agent.

Objective

Something worked toward or striven for; a goal.

Opponent

A person who disagrees with another or others.

Proxy

A person or thing authorized to act for another; a substitute.

Stakeholder

Anyone who has a direct interest in the outcome of an activity.

Target

Stakeholders who have the greatest power to change public policy. Targets are people not institutions.

Values

A principle, standard, or quality considered worthwhile or desirable

Resources

For more information on these topics:

Advocacy Toolkit: Understanding Advocacy
by Graham Gordon, Tearfund (2002)

Advocacy Toolkit: Practical Action in Advocacy
by Graham Gordon, Tearfund (2002)

Advocacy: Building Skills for NGO Leaders
The Center for Development and Population
Activities (CEDPA) (1999)

**Advocacy Handbook: A Practical Guide to
Increasing Democracy in Cambodia**
by Christina Mansfield, Kurt MacLeod, et al. Pact
(2003)

**Advocacy in Cambodia:
Increasing Democratic Space**
by Christina Mansfield, Kurt MacLeod, Pact (2002)

**A New Weave of Power, People & Politics:
The Action Guide for Advocacy and Citizen
Participation**
Lisa VeneKlasen with Valerie Miller, World
Neighbors (2002)

Advocacy: What's it all about?
WaterAid (2001)

