

Thematic Brief

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ADVOCACY AND THE INFORMAL ECONOMY

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WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

Different understandings of advocacy:

1. Crisis advocacy: An **Immediate** response to an urgent situation, crisis advocacy **ends** with the crisis being stopped or resolved, for instance: unlawful imprisonment (Amnesty International Emergency Network)
2. Issue advocacy: It is a single, **one-off need**, it is **time bound** or it stops when goal is reached, for example Cancel Third World Debt by the year 2000 or the One man one Vote Campaign which stopped when universal suffrage was allowed in South Africa.
3. Social /people centred advocacy: Also called "*Social or Citizen Advocacy*" and "*Critical Resistance*" It is about changing **specific decision** affecting people's lives (debt, vote, laws) **AND** changing **the way decision-making happens** into a more inclusive and democratic process (gender mainstreaming, including minorities, or unions, etc. in decisions that affect them).

In this briefing we are working on the basis of point 2 and 3.

HOW TO DO ADVOCACY, ESPECIALLY WITH GOVERNMENT?

Reasons for conducting advocacy:

When we work daily with communities to address real poverty and development needs, very quickly we realise that it is necessary to influence those in power – at local, regional, or national level – to have effective and sustainable change to the lives of the poorest or of the most excluded communities. However influencing governments or decision makers at various levels is not easy: it can take time and it mostly takes skills and perspective of playing a long strategic games, made easier by all the small but important victories picked up along the ways: new rights, new protections, new funds and budget lines.

Methods that can be used¹:

Each country is very different from one another and therefore there is no one size fits all way of doing advocacy. What is probably most useful is to discover tools and questions which helps those involved in carrying out advocacy to develop a strategic way of thinking about their context and what they want to achieve. This short brief aims at highlighting the key questions and generic steps that can be used to start thinking about doing advocacy in real life to start developing a political mindset.

Advocacy planning:

Advocacy is first and foremost about change. Change about a situation that usually needs to be improved for a specific set of people. Such a set can be very large; for instance when people ask for more democracy

¹ Heavily borrowed from the Handbook on Advocacy Strategy and Techniques Development, Institute for Popular Democracy (Manilla, Philippines) Copyright 2003, All rights reserved.

or a right to vote, an entire nation (or industry in the case of unions) might be concerned. Advocacy is therefore highly context specific and involves a large variety of actors such as decision makers in local or national institutions, but also religious leaders, the media, universities and other civil society groups (NGOs but also trade unions for instance). Knowing and understanding how these interact in your context is the first step to building a successful advocacy strategy. We hope that the questions below can be a good start to guide your reflection:

1. Goals and Objectives:

- What do we want?
- What is the issue?
- What do we need to know?
- How are we going to find out?
- What are our goals and objectives?

2. Mapping the target audiences:

- Who are the targeted policy/decision makers (they can also be local decision makers)?
- Why them and why those?
- What are the formal policy-making processes?
- What are the informal policy-making processes (where are the key decisions really made and who makes them?)
- Perspectives, circumstances and constraints with which policy makers have to work?
- What is the target: Legislation? Administrative ruling? Implementation?
- What point of access do you (your organisation) have?
- When along the decision making process will you make your advocacy intervention?

3. Mapping allies, support and opposition:

- Which groups or individuals are concerned with the same issue?
- Can we work with them?
- How can we get them into an alliance on this issue?
- Who would benefit from the Change initiative? Who would be affected?

4. Analysing the external environment

- What are the political possibilities, limits and risks involved?
- What events are taking place in society which may affect the tactics and effectiveness of the strategy?

5. Planning strategies

When planning you might want to take a step back and clarify the following:

- Our strategy: Does it help us reach our goal? Does it make use of our allies? Does it minimize opponents? Does it suit our style?
- Framing messages: What is our message? How will it be shaped for different audiences? Who are the most credible messengers? How are we going to get them involved?
- Tactics and activities: What is the scope of our action? Who will carry it out? When will it take place and for how long? What resources are available? Do we have the resources? Who should be involved (allies and constituents)? Who will oppose us and how?

6. Evaluate:

It is difficult to measure the success of advocacy because full success is rare yet it is now recognized that it is important to try and measure the outcome of advocacy work, from looking at policy changes to try and see whether lives of those at the heart of the advocacy effort has improved. There is a variety of ways to try to monitor and measure such changes. This brief cannot show them all, but when planning for advocacy it is worth keeping a question in our minds throughout the planning process: How will I know I have achieved what I want to achieve?

REFERENCE

Handbook on Advocacy Strategy and Techniques Development, Institute for Popular Democracy (Manilla, Philippines) Copyright 2003

IESF AND AUTHOR TEAM SUGGESTED RESOURCES

<http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/iesf/document/social-behaviour-change-communications-sbcc-and-advocacy-rnsf-seminar-1-3-june-2015-ec-brus>

<http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/iesf/document/advocacy-toolkit-guidance-how-advocate-more-enabling-environment-civil-society-your-context>

<http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/iesf/document/advocacy-toolkit-guide-influencing-decisions-improve-children-lives-unicef-2010>

Advocacy in the Informal economy: Tools for Advocacy: Social Protection for Informal Workers:

<http://wiego.org/sites/wiego.org/files/resources/files/Tools-For-Advocacy-Social-Protection-for-Informal-Workers.pdf>

<http://asociacionrecicladoresbogota.org/>

<http://www.streetnet.org.za/>

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