

# Our Advocacy plan

<b>What needs to change?</b> Our objective Tip: Choose one objective. Use words like 'improve, decrease or increase' to describe the change. See page 54.			
<b>Who do we need to influence?</b> What do we need them to do? Tip: Identify 2 or 3 things which would help achieve the objective, for example, 'We need the local council to...' Avoid writing the actions you will do. See page 55.		1.	
		2.	
		3.	
	<b>To do</b>	<b>By whom</b>	<b>By when</b>
<b>How can we influence them?</b> Tip: Write down the detailed specific actions you will carry out to influence the person or organisation in box 1. See page 57.			
<b>Managing risks</b> Tip: Consider the risks of your advocacy plan, what can you do to manage them? See page 68.			
<b>Monitoring success</b> Tip: Think about how you will know if you're being successful and identify some actions you can carry out. See page 70.			



# Plan it

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## SUMAYA'S STORY ON PLANNING FOR EDUCATION ADVOCACY

### **Comprehensive sexuality education in India**

In 2007, India put a ban on the Adolescent Education Programme (AEP), the first in-school curriculum to include comprehensive sexuality education.

A revised AEP was drafted after advocacy from many groups involved in sexual and reproductive health, women, and youth rights; however, it was extremely watered down and did not give accurate information. Even this was banned in some states.

Our aim was to ensure that young people have access to comprehensive sexuality education in schools.

"We have learnt that advocacy is a LONG process. It's important in planning to set out small, defined goals to keep on track, see progress and stay motivated.

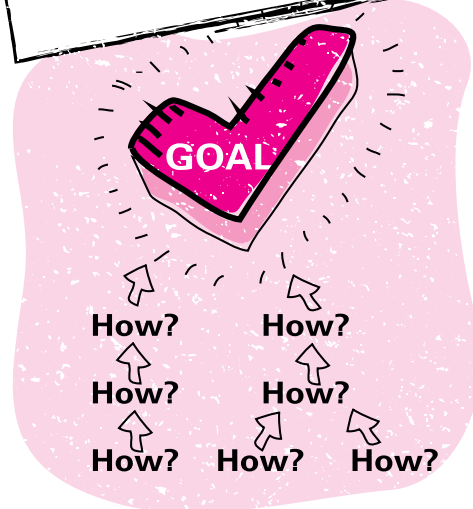
Advocacy is also very fluid. We made several plans and strategies, and we had to plan to be reactive as well as proactive."

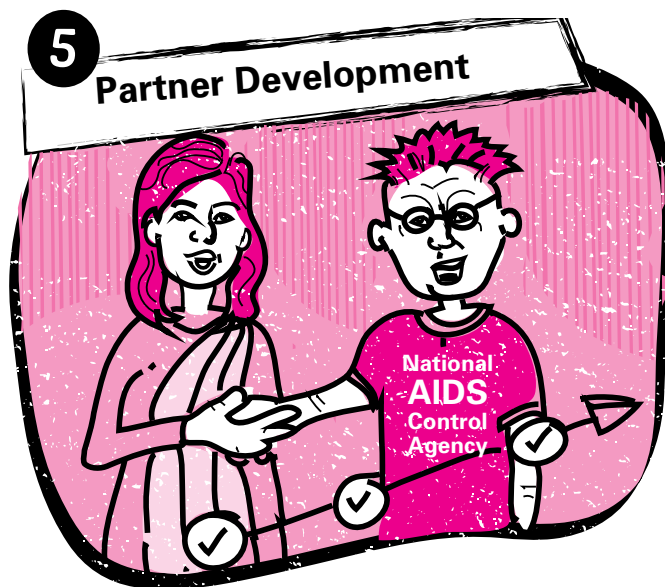
#### **Story from India**



**4**

#### **We followed the Medical Research Council's Theory of Change tool**



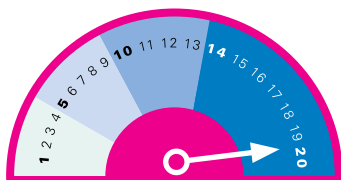


# 2 WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?

## Deciding on your advocacy objective

If you've carried out research you should have a clearer understanding of the problem, as well as possible objectives for your advocacy.

Reflect on the objectives in your objectives tree. You will need to make a strategic decision about which of these objectives to select as your advocacy objective (the change you want to see). It's best to have just one or two objectives. When choosing your objective think about the following:



What really excites you?  
Are you confident you can  
achieve change? (page 26)



What did you learn from your PEST?  
(page 43)



Do you have evidence of  
the problem and how the  
situation could be improved?  
(page 44)

**SMARTEN things up. Make sure your objectives are:**

**S**pecific:

Say what you  
mean. Change?  
Who, what, when  
and where?

**M**easurable:

Will it be possible  
to measure  
success? It should  
be!

**A**chievable:

Be realistic about  
what can be  
achieved.

**R**esults  
oriented:

Focus on achieving  
meaningful change.

**T**imebound:

Say when the  
change will  
happen by.

# WHO DO WE NEED TO INFLUENCE?



## Tool: Target analysis

As advocates, your role is to influence people or organisations that have the power to change things. The first stage in your advocacy plan is to decide who you will be trying to influence. Take a look at your Stakeholder analysis from section one. (If you haven't done it then see Section 1, page 28)

1. Look at the top right hand box of your stakeholder analysis, if necessary add details to the list, by writing specific people and organisations.

**Your possible target group. Make sure the list is specific.**


2. To help you decide who to target ask yourself these two important questions about each of the people/organisations and write them into a table like the one below:
  - a. What would we need them to do? How much impact could they have on achieving our objective?
  - b. How easily can we influence them?

3. Place them in the table in terms of where you think they fit. Consider:
- a. What is their current position on the issue? Are they in favour or against?
  - b. What influences them? Is it likely that you or somebody who supports your cause could have an influence on their decision?

Each box has some advice on how to work with these people and organisations during your advocacy work.

4. You can't reach everyone. You'll need to decide on two or three who you really think you could influence to achieve your objective.



**Difficult to influence**  
**High impact**

**Advice:** Try to work with this group over the longer term. Explore what influences them, look for opportunities to build a relationship.

**REACH  
OUT TO  
THEM**

**Easy to influence**  
**High impact**

**Advice:** Focus most of your time and energy on this group.

**TARGET  
THEM**

**Difficult to influence**  
**Low impact**

**Advice:** Forget it! Well, almost. Just be aware of them, as they may become easier to influence or more powerful in the future.

**FORGET  
THEM!  
FOR NOW...**

**Easy to influence**  
**Low impact**

**Advice:** Reach out to this group, they could give you some easy successes to inspire others with. They could also be door-openers to more important targets, allies who will add their voice to your campaign, or informants who have access to crucial information.

**REACH  
OUT TO  
THEM**

# HOW CAN WE INFLUENCE THEM?



## Tool: Who and What

The people you want to influence have their own beliefs, experience and values – a whole world around them... just like you.

**Try this quick activity.**

**1**

**DRAW A  
PICTURE  
OF  
YOURSELF**



**2**

**ASK YOURSELF THE  
QUESTION,**

“What influences my position  
on education for all?” (i.e. what  
I think education is for, the global  
situation, what needs are there, etc.?)



**3**

**THINK ABOUT:**

- a.** What you care about   **b.** What you do   **c.** Who you know
- d.** Where you get information from.

**For example...**



**Ambitions**



**News on TV**



**Political  
views**



**Culture**



**Friends**



**School  
experience**



- 4** **WRITE DOWN YOUR TOP 5,**  
around your picture. Look at your list. Notice that some of your influences are people and some influences are other things like experiences or cultural factors.

- 5** **SHARE YOUR TOP 5**  
If you are working in a group then compare and discuss your influences.

Knowing **WHO** and **WHAT** influences your target is crucial to effective advocacy. For each of your key targets map out the influences on their position around your issue.



Know who influences your target.  
You can ask them to act on your behalf or lend their support.



Know what influences your target.  
Find ways to include what your targets care about in your advocacy messages.

For example...

Advocacy Objective: Provide pathways into education opportunities for out-of-school children.		
TARGET	WHO	WHAT
Minister of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 very close personal advisors</li> <li>• Teachers Union</li> <li>• Prime Minister</li> <li>• National media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public negative sentiment towards young people</li> <li>• Upcoming national election</li> <li>• Used to run a private education organisation</li> </ul>

# WHAT'S OUR MESSAGE?

## What makes a good message?

Think about when you last sat up and took notice because someone told you something. What grabbed your attention? What made you want to find out more?

On the whole people respond well to messages which:

- Link to an existing interest – use the information you've gathered from 'What influences them'.
- Appeal to the heart, the head and the hands – see below.

In preparing your messages it is helpful to follow this order.

### 1. Appeal to the heart

#### Why should they care?

– Communicate the need and what needs to change

### 3. Appeal to the hands

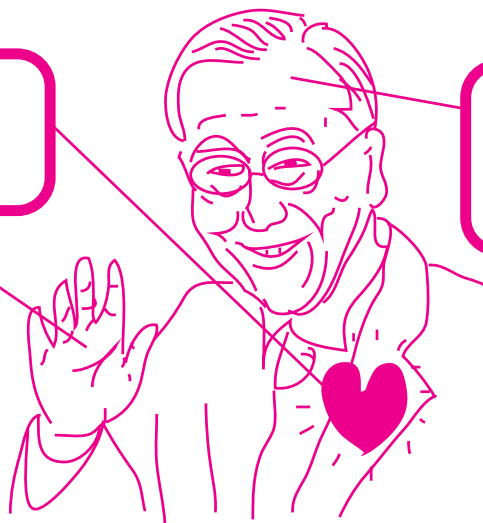
#### What can they do?

– What are you asking of your target audience

### 2. Appeal to the head

#### What can change?

– With inspiring examples and strong ideas of what's possible



**Which of the following do you think is the more powerful message?**

The person is a celebrity who may not have heard about the issue.

1. “Thousands of girls are being denied their rights, are at risk, and are not reaching their potential. Our project provides an effective and cheap way for girls to get an education. Your voice at our next gathering would convince the community to get behind us and make this a success.”

Or

2. “We run a girls education project and we would like you to speak at our next gathering to convince the community to support us. The project provides an effective and cheap way for girls to get an education. If it’s successful we can ensure girls claim their rights as well as reduce the risks they are exposed to and help them to reach their potential.”

Approach one is usually the most effective because it makes an emotional appeal first, which encourages the target to pay attention to the rest of the message.

2

## Preparing your messages

Use different approaches for different audiences.

- **A full brief** is useful for you and your team, and can be used for those who are really interested and involved. It should include:
  - What the problem is and how it can be changed?
  - Evidence.
  - Why change is important?
  - What is being done and can be done to make the change happen?
  - What specific actions need to be taken?
- **A quick-fire message** to get your message across quickly (in less than one minute) to people who might be interested. Include:
  - What the problem is and how it can be changed?
  - What you want from the person you're speaking to? It could just be a chance to meet and discuss in more detail.
- **Adapted messages** for your specific audiences. Find ways to link the interests of the people you want to influence with your advocacy issue. For example, if your objective is to get more girls into education and you want to appeal to a person with an interest in economic issues your message could be: A girl with one extra year of education can earn 20% more as an adult.

## Test out your messages

A good message informs, persuades and moves people to action. Talk to people who are involved in your education issues, make sure your facts are correct, collect good examples, and ask for feedback so you can improve your messages and your delivery.

**Brilliant messages are:**

1. Simple.
2. Solution focused.
3. Practical and reasonable in their requests.
4. Evidence-based – they including real life stories, facts and stats.
5. Appropriate for the audience in language and content.
6. Personal – they show why you care.

## HOW?

# CHOOSE SPECIFIC ACTIONS

In order to complete your plan you'll need to decide on the actions you want to undertake. Refer to the possible advocacy methods listed on page 65 and described in detail in section 3, and consider:



- What will have the biggest impact?
- What might be the easiest things to do? What skills and contacts does your group already have?
- What do you and others involved like doing? What excites you?
- What do you know has worked in the past?
- Will you influence decision-makers by working closely with them as an 'insider' or by mobilising the public? (see page 64).

# Insider, outsider or a mix?

## Insider advocacy:

Working closely with decision-makers to influence them can be effective but be aware, it can lead to:

- A conflict of interests where fear of losing your insider position could prevent you from speaking out on important controversial issues.
- Losing touch with the community you want to help as you focus on understanding the decision-makers.
- Being used by decision-makers to give the impression that they are listening to the public – when in fact they're not.

## Outsider advocacy:

Bringing about change through mobilising the public and / or undermining decision-makers is effective but be aware, it can lead to:

- Tension and conflict between decision-making groups and communities and the different groups within the community.
- A stronger opposition to the change you're advocating for. If a group feels threatened it can make them stronger as they forget their differences, work closer together and are joined by like-minded people.
- Missed opportunities to work together through dialogue.

Every advocacy plan will be different, but most will include a mix of one or more of these elements:

- **Lobbying**  
to directly influence decision-makers.
- **Campaigning**  
to support action by the public.
- **Media and communications**  
to promote your issue and campaign.



Tip: Your actions should be consistent with your message and how you want to be seen by others. If one of your messages is asking the government to stop wasting money on big political events and spend more money on education, it's probably best to avoid organising a big political event as part of your strategy.





# WHAT'S OUR PLAN?



## Tool: Change Map – Our plan

NOW

THE FUTURE



**How can we move from the problem now to our objective in the future?**

**Start planning:**

1. Write your objective on the right hand side of a big piece of paper.
2. Who needs to do what for this objective to be achieved? Write down each answer separately to the left of the objective. For example, we need the local council to allow school buildings to be used in the evening.

3. Look at the statements you've written to the left of your objective. Do any of them seem unrealistic? Or too difficult to achieve? Cross these statements out.
4. Look at those you need to influence. How could you influence them?  
Write these ideas as HOWS to the left.



5. Continue the process until you have a detailed map of the different pathways you could take.
6. Which of these pathways do you think would be the most effective and realistic?
7. You can now add a timeline – work backwards from your objective – what needs to happen and when?
8. Once you have completed your diagram you can use this information to complete your advocacy plan.

**If this is logical and understood by everyone involved then you are well on your way.**

# MANAGING RISKS

All advocates and campaigners will run into problems, and working on education can be particularly difficult because so many people want to influence it. But playing it too safe rarely gets you far. The important thing is to identify the risks in advance and consider how to avoid them if you can – or deal with them if the risks turn into realities.

1. In your team, brainstorm possible risks.
2. Colour-code them: yellow for low risk, orange for medium risk, red for high risk.
3. It may also help to group the risks into categories and deal with them together – for example, you may get a lot around lack of resources.
4. Starting with the high risk issues, discuss how each can be avoided or dealt with.

## For example

Risk	Avoid	Deal with
Being over ambitious	Plan to start small and grow slowly	Review progress regularly to keep focused on the most important activities

**Here are a few issues that you might face as education advocates.**



Lack of public support  
for education reform.



Too many organisations  
trying to influence  
education in  
different ways.



Resources / funding not  
available or tied to other  
objectives.



Unclear aims  
Weak evidence / not  
being convincing.

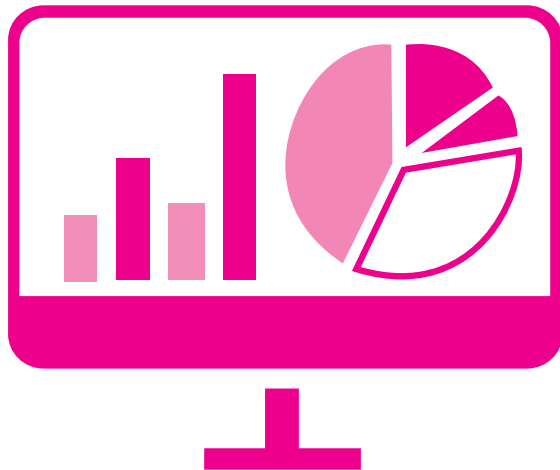


Not able to put  
education change on  
the agenda.



Not understanding what  
is really influencing  
education policy /  
curriculum programmes.

# MONITORING SUCCESS



Monitoring is about regularly gathering information on the positive and negative impacts of your advocacy campaign.

By monitoring you'll be able to:

- PROVE: gather evidence about whether change is happening – so that you can know and show to others what's really going on.
- IMPROVE: learn about what's working and what's not.

What to monitor

- Did the actions get a reaction?
- Did the reaction achieve a result?
- Did this result have the desired effect?
- What worked and what didn't?
- Were there unexpected outcomes?

To answer each of the above you should think carefully about the information you need and how you will collect it during the planning phase. When gathering information make sure it's from a reliable source and where possible use the same sources of information throughout.

**You'll need to gather information at different phases of your advocacy work:**



Below are some places where you can find useful information about what the situation is at the beginning (your baseline) and how it's changing;

- Surveys
- Evaluation forms
- Statistics
- Impressions or observations from people involved
- Consultations
- Audits
- The media
- Internet and social media.

**The information you collect does not always have to be formal data. Our personal perspectives and those of others who are involved forms an important part of monitoring. For this reason one of the most effective methods is to call regular review meetings to reflect on what's working and what's not.**

## Review meetings:

Reviewing means gathering information at key moments during your advocacy campaign to get a wider perspective on what's happening. When planning a review meeting, it's important to choose the right questions and create an atmosphere where people are able to share freely. Participants should feel that their opinions are valued and that they're able to question the suggestions of others. It could be a good idea to involve a variety of stakeholders in your review meetings.

- What have we learnt?
- What inspired us?
- What were the challenges?
- How could we improve?
- Are there other key questions which we need to answer before we can draw any conclusions? You may need to carry out research.
- Who do we need to share our learning with?

Don't worry if things don't turn out well. Very few strategies work as planned the first time round. Reflecting, reviewing and tweaking your plans will help you to improve your strategy quickly. After carrying out your review share your findings with those who have supported you as well as others who are working on the same issue.



Some useful tips when planning your monitoring:

**Make monitoring easy**, avoid using methods which are time-consuming. **Involve others** who would benefit from successful advocacy in planning and carrying out monitoring – this will encourage ownership and trust of the advocacy campaign. Assessing the effect of your advocacy campaign is best done by the people the campaign is trying to help.

# Completed example plan

This example is based on a real story from YAG member Esther, who has been fighting fees in South Africa.

<b>The change we want</b> Our objective	Widen access to higher education and decrease numbers of students dropping out by lowering fees in our university		
<b>What would make this change happen?</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Raise awareness of the situation amongst the students and get them involved</li> <li>2. Provide viable alternative ways to bring down the university budget</li> <li>3. Get the student voice listened to by the university board</li> </ol>		
<b>HOW</b>	<b>TO DO</b>	<b>BY WHOM BY WHEN</b>	
<b>1. Raise awareness of the situation amongst the students and get them involved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host a campus event to draft shared requests in a student 'Memorandum of Understanding'</li> <li>• Build social media connections for regular communications</li> <li>• Hold a demonstration</li> </ul>		Ongoing
<b>2. Provide viable alternatives to bring down the university budget</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research details of the university budget, and how it is allocated</li> <li>• Draw up different options</li> </ul>		
<b>3. Get the student voice heard to by the university board</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand how decisions are made at the university</li> <li>• Write to the Minister of Education</li> <li>• Mass meeting between students and university board</li> </ul>		
<b>Managing risks</b>	<b>RISK</b>	<b>AVOID</b>	<b>DEAL WITH</b>
	Loss of motivation with slow moving change (team and students)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be realistic about expectations with everyone</li> <li>• Track involvement</li> <li>• Regular injections of energy</li> </ul>	Step up the pressure if interest fades
	Being manipulated or ignored because we don't understand how things work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the system! Get to know the bureaucracy and decision-making processes</li> </ul>	Refer to the higher authorities
	Being seen as an insider or 'part of the system' by the students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring students and Board together</li> <li>• Lead demonstrations</li> </ul>	
<b>Monitoring success</b>	<b>WHAT TO MONITOR</b>	<b>SOURCES</b>	<b>WHEN</b>
	Numbers of supporters	Signatories to the 'Memorandum'	Start, and throughout
	Perception / support of university authorities	1 to 1 meetings	Before and every 3 months
	Wider support	Local media coverage Other groups offers of involvement	Throughout





**A young girl broadcasting on the radio as part of Plan's Girls Making Media Project which seeks to empower girls to use media to address gender discrimination**

