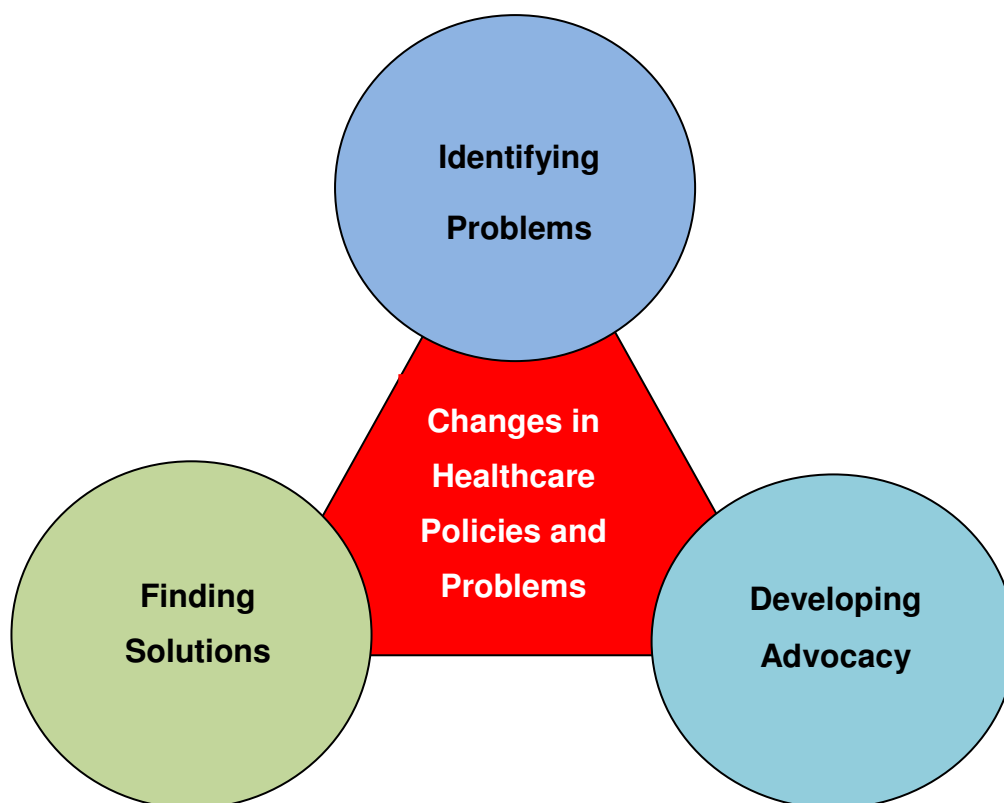


GUIDE TO ADVOCACY FOR THE AMERICAS REGION



2008

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Executive Summary

Since its beginnings, **VISION 2020: THE RIGHT TO SIGHT** has made it clear that achieving the elimination of avoidable blindness by the year 2020 would require both adequate resources and the political will to make any visual-health action plan sustainable. The resolution supporting VISION 2020 approved by the World Health Organization (WHO) and which calls on its member states to establish national VISION 2020 plans and commit resources to their implementation, which was preceded by an intense persuasive effort made by the **International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB)**, are an example of this.

Advocacy, or lobbying, is a fundamental tool for implementing the plans and projects carried out by the VISION 2020 initiative. The importance of advocacy can be seen in its application to plans promoting health around the world during the last two decades, since the world's nations gathered in Canada, in 1986, for the First International Conference on Health Promotion. **The utility of advocacy is based on its assistance in persuading authorities or decision makers to use their positions of influence to promote action that helps improve the visual health of those populations that need that help.** In some countries advocacy has become a practice so widespread and common that there are regulations governing its range of action.

The organized community turns to advocacy in an effort to make effective improvements in its visual-health status. It does this by trying to have its suggestions put into effect in the form of government action plans that reduce current levels of blindness in the population. To have the greatest impact, such activities must be sustained by very close coordination between the individuals and organizations that are promoting action for visual health and the prevention of avoidable blindness. **The VISION 2020 national committees have a major degree of responsibility for these activities and the development of appropriate advocacy strategies based on clear and specific objectives.** It is also **vital to take advantage of the technical and financial support offered by national and international development assistants** through NGOs like PAHO-WHO and the IAPB, among others.

A specific strategy that takes into account the profile of the decision maker in question must be prepared for each visual-health problem addressed so that persuasive and convincing arguments can be used beginning with the very first contact, and this plan must be used as a reference point for decision making. It is therefore essential to have impressive and up to date technical and policy information

derived from evidence-based research that reflects the national or local eye-care situation, as well as information on the usual practices and reactions of the official or authority you need to convince

Healthcare advocacy can be carried out by any organization independently of the area in which it works; something which was demonstrated by the approval of the VISION 2020 initiative by the World Health Assembly: the fruit of ongoing advocacy by organizations such as the IAPB, and an achievement whose repercussions are still being felt across regional and national lines.

Before undertaking any advocacy effort, it is necessary to establish a set of priorities; in doing so remember to:

1. Choose and define specific problem areas in visual health that require solutions that are sustainable and for which the relevant information is available.
2. Have a clear and concrete objective that embodies a realistic and achievable solution to the problem addressed.
3. Establish a final goal for our actions.
4. Analyze the political environment in which the work will be done, and identify the actors who have decision-making power or who can influence the decision makers.
5. Develop a strategy for using the information and political influence you can muster to influence the decision maker **based on the audience that defines the issue** and supported with relevant facts and evidence.
6. Prepare an action plan that includes monitoring of the activities performed.
7. Form alliances with organizations and individuals who can provide support or influence in key meetings. Cooperate closely with other groups that are advocating the same objectives.

The Advocacy Campaign

The following steps must be included in preparing a healthcare advocacy campaign:

1. Problem Analysis

Before undertaking any visual-health advocacy campaign, you must establish a main objective, one worthy of discussion and analysis, so that a single problem to

work on can be selected.¹ Frequently problems selected by groups are too broad; when that is the case it is a good idea to dissect the broadly defined problem to arrive at a more specific one. **The more concretely defined the problem, the better chance there is to solve it.**

Use a list of the components of a problem to group them by type: The following criteria are suggested for grouping the problems:

- a) Type of problem (political, socioeconomic, administrative or legal).
- b) Institutions relevant to the issue.
- c) The working agenda of legislative sessions, **audiences, and** officials.

It is suggested that you **list the components of the problem in order**, choosing which are the most important or the easiest to solve first.

Once you have listed them in order, you can think about the **possible solutions for each component**. Remember that it is not the goal of advocacy to issue a declaration against a specific problem, but to offer a concrete solution to it.

From three to five proposals addressing the problem chosen should be selected, each of which should be considered as **possible avenues of action** in a tentative **action plan**. Before adopting a definitive proposal for solving the problem, it is important to consult with experts who can guide the group in choosing criteria for selection of key proposals.

2. Refining the Proposal

In most cases it is necessary to **concentrate your efforts and optimize human and financial resources behind one or two proposals designed to achieve or promote a specific change**. Groups that launch ten or more initiatives at once dilute the strength of their advocacy campaigns.

¹ Parts of this document have been taken as best practices from a manual on lobbying published by the Instituto Nationale de Estudios Politicos [1].

Refining the proposal means specifying and detailing the steps and tasks to be performed including what is to be done, how to carry it out, a schedule for its performance, and the human resources involved. To achieve a specific and detailed proposal it is necessary to fulfill the following requirements:

- a) The proposal should be quantifiable and measurable.
- b) It must be stated in a specific and understandable fashion.
- c) It must be politically and financially possible.
- d) It must be possible to carry it out in a reasonable time period.
- e) It must contribute to the formation or strengthening of alliances and coalitions.

After assessing the problem and refining the proposal, the next step consists of identifying the decision-making structure; in other words, identifying the people with power to make decisions about the proposal. Influencing decision makers means using both formal and informal procedures. The chances of success may be greater using formal approaches, but there are situations in which success is only possible if informal means are available.

Power mapping is an analytical exercise that permits the group to identify the decision maker who makes up the primary audience, and the secondary actors (allies, opponents, and undecided) who make up the secondary audience. The secondary actors are those who at some point in the process have the ability to influence the decision maker to some degree. One of the purposes of the power map is to identify the actors who can help contact the target. To do that it is crucial to have continuously updated information. **To create the power map, place the decision maker in the center, and around him or her, the first and last names of all the secondary actors with direct influence on the decision maker.** Although campaigns are proposed at the national level, the possibility of international influences also needs to be considered.

How the advocacy campaign should be organized is decided in the stage of self-analysis. It is necessary to specify who will make up the working teams to carry out specific activities, the contributions of each organization or group member, and the procedure for making decisions within team. It is also important to define the team's powers, the limits of its negotiating and decision making power, and how

to decide when it is necessary to consult with the grassroots or allies. The following must not be forgotten:

- a) Be thorough in assessing the organizations that will help push the advocacy campaign.
- b) Specify the mechanisms for decision making within the coalition or working team.
- c) Clarify how each organization will support the advocacy campaign.
- d) Carry out political analysis.
- e) Do an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the organization in order to measure its real level of influence.
- f) Propose possible solutions for the weaknesses that are revealed.
- g) Develop a strategy for increasing the institutional capabilities of the team, and select two or three activities to strengthen it.

Strategy is the body of actions oriented toward influencing or convincing the decision maker to approve the proposal. That implies having previously completed the following tasks:

- a) Research, which is crucial to establish the strategy and which requires statistical data, citation of expert opinion, and the testimony of people who are directly affected.
- b) The formulation of a proposal with participation of all parties that participate in the advocacy campaign.
- c) Identification of the decision maker and formulation of a strategy of influence to **convince the decision maker and undecided parties, motivate allies to action, and neutralize opponents.**
- d) Identification of allies, opponents, and the undecided.
- e) Evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the team performing advocacy.
- f) Analysis of the interests, motivations, and positions of the identified actors.
- g) Definition of the arguments and means for applying pressure. One of the surest ways to raise awareness of the problem you need to resolve and secure broad support for a specific proposal consists of **formulating convincing arguments**

or messages designed for the primary and secondary actors. Confrontational actions have their place, but it is usually more effective to use persuasive action first, above all if we remember that the primary objective of the advocacy campaign is to convince those who have decision making power. **If one moves quickly to confrontation and public condemnation, it can cause the opinions of the decision maker to harden, greatly impeding progress toward the objective.**

- h) Persuasion, motivation, or neutralization of the respective actors with decision-making power.
- i) Planning of activities made up of concrete tasks that the group performs as part of the advocacy campaign. During this stage try to list each and every one of the activities needed to finish preparing the campaign and carry out the strategies defined in the previous stage. There are two activities that can never be omitted in an advocacy campaign, those are **preparation of a written proposal** that details the proposal in a brief and clear manner and explains why it is important, and **personal visits to the decision maker, the undecided, opponents, and allies.**
- j) Assessment is a vital element for any advocacy campaign; it creates victories, prevents failures, and strengthens the group for future attempts at influencing policy.

Presentation

Since the beginning, VISION 2020: THE RIGHT TO SIGHT has made it clear that the elimination of avoidable blindness by the year 2020 would require both adequate resources and the political will to make any visual-health action plan sustainable.

This is all the more true when one realizes that 90% of the world's blind live in developing countries that still have serious problems with basic sanitation and high rates of mortality and morbidity caused by infectious diseases that have been overcome in first-world countries, as well as budget-induced limits on their ability to meet the growing demands of their populations.

Among the many needs that exist, a place must be found for the most important visual-health problems in the political agenda at the local, national, and regional levels while preventing unsuitable decisions or the creation of conflicts between institutions for control of resources.

An example of such an effort was the issuing by the World Health Organization (WHO), of the resolutions supporting VISION 2020 and calling on WHO member states to establish national VISION 2020 plans and commit resources to their implementation. The accomplishment was brought about by an intense persuasive effort by the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB).

To do that a powerful procedural tool called "advocacy" was used. The advocacy method combines data of the first order with an effective persuasion strategy so that the information provided can be employed in the development of arguments that are attractive and convincing to decision makers.

This success would not have been possible without the ongoing commitment of people who make advocacy a sort of avocation, and who do not measure success by the amount of time they work at it, but by the willpower, determination, and endurance they demand from themselves to reach their objectives.

Introduction

Advocacy, or lobbying, is a fundamental tool for implementing the plans and projects carried out by the VISION 2020 initiative.² The importance of advocacy can be seen in its application to plans promoting health around the world during the last two decades since the world's nations gathered in Canada, in 1986, for the First International Conference on Health Promotion.

The utility of advocacy is due to its ability to gain the support of authorities or decision makers to use their positions of influence to promote action that helps improve the visual health of those populations that need help. In some countries, advocacy has become a practice so widespread and common that there are regulations governing its range of action.

The vision problems that afflict the population are the result of environmental, economic, lifestyle and other factors that make it necessary to fulfill a series of intermediate objectives before the needed improvements in the health situation of a community can be addressed. That means that successful advocacy leads in turn to action on the next stage of the problem, becoming an ongoing activity until it finally culminates in the hoped for social impact.

In all this the decision maker should be placed at the forefront of any accomplishment, and be allowed to enjoy the "photo ops" while the advocacy team often remains anonymous, conscious that they have accomplished only a single step on the long road toward equity in visual health.

The existence of an approved action plan for visual health does not guarantee that it will be carried out and sustained over time unless the authorities or officials in power take charge of the matter and make it state policy.

One point of great importance for incorporating and sustaining visual-health plans is the degree to which they mesh with other strategic objectives established by governments, such as a desire to reduce poverty in accord with the Millennium Development Goals

² Some of the ideas and concepts in this document are taken from a lobbying manual published by the Instituto Nationale de Estudios Politicos, which in our opinion represent some best practices [1].

The commitment made by low- and middle-income nations to meet the Millennium Development Goals is generating strong pressure for their achievement, and the argument that implementing the VISION 2020 plan helps to reach those goals can be used.

The objectives of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger are related to the problem of blindness, since poverty can be either the result or a contributing cause of blindness. Epidemiological data confirm that populations living in poverty are more prone to vitamin A deficiency and infectious diseases such as measles or trachoma, all of which increase the risk of blindness. Persons who are blind also have a reduced ability to get access to eye-health services, education, or rehabilitation (the vicious circle of poverty and blindness).

On the other hand, it is also useful to cite studies that show the impact of VISION 2020 on a country's economy, such as the one that demonstrates that each dollar invested in visual health and prevention of low vision returns five times as much value to the community. It has been estimated that VISION 2020, if it is successful, will mean a savings of 223 billion dollars in the next 20 years.

Definition

As was emphasized in the introduction, advocacy is based on the ability to influence one or more of the actors with decision-making power (the targets), and draw their attention to the most important problems affecting the health of the most vulnerable populations (children, women, and the aged), as well as to promote among them a new positive attitude toward carrying out government programs or projects to resolve a health problem in the community.

Advocacy is not a single act, but a process that implies having strategic data, advance planning, and sufficient resources to reach the desired objectives. This means strengthening the organized community by encouraging active, structured, and planned participation to influence the public discourse and permit the population the full exercise of their rights as citizens.

A related term, "lobbying", is used to describe the activities of persons who work intensely to secure some specific objective, generally a self-interested one, by means of the persuasion of elected officials or public employees.

Another related activity is “health activism”, which is done by groups of persons who actively commit themselves to improving healthcare on their own behalf or to help organizations with which they sympathize.

Purpose

Community organizations turn to advocacy to make effective improvements in their current visual-health status by trying to have their initiatives put into effect as government actions that prevent or reduce the primary causes of blindness in the population.

To have the greatest impact, these activities must be supported by very close coordination between individuals and organizations involved in promoting action for visual health planning. The VISION 2020 national committees have a major degree of responsibility for these activities and for developing appropriate advocacy strategies based on clear and specific objectives.

It is also vital to take advantage of the technical and financial support offered by national and international cooperation through non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as PAHO-WHO and the IAPB, among others.

In this respect, VISION 2020 has gotten significant results during the first five years of its existence, with some of the contributing factors being increases in:

- a) Commitment to policies for the preventing or reducing blindness by the relevant governments.
- b) Activities carried out by eye-health professionals.
- c) The signing of agreements and the provision of support by NGOs committed to addressing the problem of blindness.
- d) Citizen participation in organizations involved in these initiatives.

Requirements

From the moment an advocacy plan is developed it is vital to clearly define the goals and objectives sought while remembering that accomplishing the objectives must follow a set schedule and be specific, measurable, achievable, and realistic. The rest of the job consists of reaching those goals and objectives by the scheduled time.

A specific strategy for the problem that takes into account the profile of the relevant decision maker must be prepared so that persuasive and convincing arguments can be used from the very first contact, and this plan must be used as a reference point for

decision making. It is therefore essential to have high-quality, current, and impressive technical and policy information that faithfully portrays the national or local eye-care situation and is based on serious evidence-based research, as well as information on the usual practices and reactions of the official or authority you need to convince.

For those doing it, advocacy means great deal of analysis and the use of all their talents to manage the different situations created by the diversity of decision makers. One must be able to establish empathy with the person with whom one is speaking, and know how to use personal contacts to help get closer to important officials or authorities.

This means being able to work directly in the design, execution, monitoring and assessment of the government programs or in the promotion of laws and regulations.

The person performing advocacy should be able to pinpoint the moment when it is useful to publicize information through the media, initiate a social mobilization, or explore the possibility of alliances with similar movements – all for the purpose of pressuring a decision maker to adopt the desired posture in relation to a given problem.

Finally, advocacy is supported as needed by information, communication, education, publicity, and fundraising.

Levels of Advocacy

Advocacy can be carried out by any organization independently of whether its venue is local, regional, national, or international, as was the case for approval of the VISION 2020 initiative by the World Health Assembly, which was the fruit of ongoing advocacy by organizations such as the IAPB, and whose repercussions are now being felt across regional and national lines.

National and international NGOs are also continuously involved in advocacy at various levels as active partners in putting the plans of VISION 2020 into effect in various countries around the world.

Processes of Advocacy

Advocacy, as a powerful tool for guiding the decision-making of an **authority** or public official, is imbued with a peculiar dynamic that is characterized by:

- a) The ability to do research, build a consensus, and choose between different proposals.
- b) Persistence in reaching for specific changes in given public policies.

- c) The possibility of involving organizations, institutions, and individuals that are committed to the cause.
- d) Promotion of broad participation and outreach concerning the topic.
- e) Giving the opportunity to groups of citizens to exercise their right to promote social change.
- f) Promoting training of citizens in how to influence policy.
- g) Promoting continuing education based on professional knowledge and the experience of the citizenry.
- h) Promotion of networking by groups or civil, social, or political organizations.

Developing Capabilities for Advocacy

Negotiation and the need to manage the diverse situations that present themselves during the campaign are implicit in advocacy, and require the ability to:

- a) Reach a consensus proposal within a group so as to generate the highest degree of support and coordination.
- b) Influence governmental circles.
- c) Influence an actor with decision-making power.
- d) Initiate a process of social change that involves the construction of a new relationship between citizens and government.

Prerequisites for Undertaking an Advocacy Campaign

Before undertaking any advocacy effort, it is necessary to establish a set of priorities, and for that purpose the following must be taken into account:

- a) Selection and definition of a specific problem or issue for which there is a solution that is sustainable and for which highly trustworthy information is available.
- b) Establishment of a clear and concrete objective that brings about a realistic and achievable solution to the problem addressed.
- c) Establishment of a final goal for these actions.
- d) Analysis of the political setting, and direction of efforts toward those actors who have decision-making power and others who can influence them.
- e) Development of a strategy for the use of information and political influence on the decision maker that is based on the audience that defines the issue, while supporting it with facts and relevant evidence.

- f) Preparation of an action plan that includes monitoring of the activities to be carried out.
- g) Formation of alliances with organizations and individuals who can provide support or influence in key meetings and close cooperation with groups that are advocating other objectives in the same field.

Foundations of Advocacy

1. To propose solutions to social, political, and economic problems.

Advocacy allows us to move from mere complaint or condemnation to a positive solution; in other words, it helps develop and empower people to stop being part of the problem and become part of the solution by progressively taking more responsibility for the implementation of public policies, laws, or regulations that seriously address the needs of the population.

2. To reinforce the power of civil society organizations

Put a halt to nonproductive government practices and simultaneously establish a new culture of citizen participation. This helps create an organized community that can have a greater degree of influence in the spheres of government.

3. To promote democratic citizen participation

As a working tool, advocacy strengthens and enriches democratic practices by transcending the formal electoral setting and promoting its social aspects (direct citizen participation in public affairs) for the purpose of developing new types of citizen-government relationships.

4. To build cooperation between citizens

Advocacy promotes cooperation between citizens for the purpose of better confronting common problems by helping them make their voices and views heard through the exercise of their rights as citizens.

The Advocacy Campaign

To prepare a healthcare advocacy campaign, it is necessary to remember the following steps:

1. Problem Analysis

a. Selection of the general and specific problems

Before undertaking any visual-health advocacy campaign, establish a main objective, one worthy of discussion and analysis, so that a single problem to work on can be selected.

Frequently problems selected by groups are too broad; when that is the case it is a good idea to dissect the broadly defined problem to arrive at a more specific one. The more concretely defined the problem, the better chance there is to solve it.

Selection of a specific problem the group intends to address is a complex task, and requires consideration of a series of basic criteria.

- ✚ The type of knowledge within the organization on the topic.
- ✚ Areas in which organization members are already strongly committed.
- ✚ The topics that affect the lives of organization members.
- ✚ The topics that facilitate getting support from other actors.

b. List and prioritize the components of the problem

Create a list of the components of a problem that is grouped thematically. The following criteria are suggested for classifying the components:

- ✚ Type of problem (political, socioeconomic, administrative or legal).
- ✚ Institutions relevant to the issue.
- ✚ The working agenda of legislative sessions, **audiences**, and officials.

It is suggested that you list the components of the problem in order, listing first those that are the most important or easiest to solve, or those of greatest interest to the group. It is suggested that the same criteria used for problem selection also be used in prioritizing.

c. Stages of policy creation and implementation

One useful tool in the identification and analysis of the problem is the concept of the stages or phases that exist in the creation and implementation of the policies of governments and national or international institutions.

Four stages are distinguishable:

- ✚ Definition of the public or institutional agenda.
- ✚ Formulation of concrete policies and their embodiment as laws or programs.
- ✚ Application of the laws or the implementation of programs.
- ✚ Monitoring and assessment of impact.

Advocacy is carried out during all stages, and **it is therefore important to determine clearly which of them demands the most attention** at a given moment.

It is easier to have an effect during certain phases because they offer better opportunities to achieve influence, or because of the nature of the group and the way in which its specific abilities can be applied, a factor which also influences its choice of strategies.

d. Proposing concrete solutions to the main components of the problem

Once the current stage of the problem has been identified, development of a proposal can begin. This can be done in any of the four stages already mentioned.

Once you have listed the components of the problem, you can think about the possible solutions for each one. Remember that it is not the goal of advocacy to issue a declaration against a problem, but to offer a concrete solution for it.

e. Proposal Selection

From three to five proposals addressing the chosen problem should be selected; each should be considered as a possible avenue of action for a tentative action plan.

It is important to remember the institutional, human, and financial limitations of the group itself, since this is vital in avoiding distraction from the central topic.

Before adopting a definitive proposal for solving the problem, it is important to consult with experts who can guide the group in choosing criteria for selection of key proposals.

2. Refining the Proposal

a. Selection of a single proposal on which to work

In view of the enormous amount of work that the planning and execution of a serious advocacy campaign requires, it is important to avoid undertaking one that cannot be accomplished by the group.

In most cases, you should concentrate your efforts and optimize human and financial resources behind one or two proposals designed to achieve or promote a specific change. Groups that launch ten or more initiatives at once dilute the strength of their advocacy campaigns.

b. Reviewing and Refining the Proposal

The proposal should be directed at solving the problem selected by the group. Defining the problem requires specifying what the group wants to achieve in detail, and doing so is exercise that can be very useful as the starting point for an advocacy campaign.

Refining the proposal means specifying and detailing the steps and tasks to be performed, and that means establishing what is to be done, the human resources involved, the way it should be carried out, and a schedule for its application.

To achieve a specific and detailed proposal it is necessary to fulfill the following requirements:

- ✚ The proposal should be quantifiable and measurable.
- ✚ It must be stated specifically and in an understandable fashion.
- ✚ It must be politically and financially possible.
- ✚ It must be possible to carry out in a reasonable time period.

- ✚ It should contribute to the formation or strengthening of alliances and coalitions.

c. Analysis of the decision-making structure

After assessing the problem and refining the proposal, the next step consists of identifying the decision-making structure; in other words, the person who has the power to make decisions about the proposal.

It is important to quickly learn the procedure for decision making at each stage, because the better the process is understood, the better chance the chance of influencing it.

Analysis of the decision-making structure requires answering the following questions:

✚ *Who will make the final decision on the proposal?*

Try to identify the actor who will make the final decision; that is to say, the person who in the end will decide to accept or not accept the group's proposal.

The primary actor is the target of the advocacy campaign, and it **is in this person that one must imagine the effect of the opposing arguments**, because advocacy doesn't persuade institutions, it persuades people.

In cases where decision-making is done by consensus between various persons or institutions, the group must prepare a list of the relevant persons or institutions in order of importance.

✚ *How are decisions made?*

To influence decision making, there are both formal and informal techniques. When the proposal requires passing a law or regulation, it is necessary to understand the functioning of the lawmaking body or agency to be lobbied.

It is also important to resolve the following questions that come up in regard to decision making:

- When are decisions made?
- Do they require a special meeting?
- Is there a specific committee involved?
- Who is on the committee?
- How often does the committee meet?
- Who is responsible for preparing the committee agenda?

Informal techniques are those that take advantage of pressure from the private sector, consultation with influential advisors, and recommendations made by national and international organizations.

To influence the target it is necessary to use both formal and informal procedures. The chances of success may be greater with formal methods, but there are situations in which success is only possible if informal means are available.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the most organizations do not allow enough time to perform a good analysis of the decision-making structure.

Doing this sometimes requires investigative work to gather the needed information; this task is frequently overlooked, and that means that these organizations do not know **their target's** exact schedule or procedure for decision making. If this is not kept in mind, or if sufficient time is not allocated for it, it is very likely that the advocacy campaign will fail.

d. The Power Map

Power mapping is an analytical exercise that permits the group to identify the key actor (the target) who makes up the primary audience, and to recognize the secondary actors (allies, opponents, and undecided) who make up the secondary audience. These secondary actors are those who at

some point in the decision-making process have the ability to influence the target to some degree.

Below the traits of typical secondary actors are described:

Allies

These are the actors who sympathize with and support a specific initiative, not necessarily our friends. It isn't necessary to do the work of convincing them, only to coordinate actions with them in favor of the proposal.

Opponents

These are the persons involved in the matter who are against the proposal, but that doesn't mean they should be considered evil. Those who cannot be persuaded should be left alone so as to save energy and concentrate it on people who it is possible to convince or lead to neutrality on the topic.

The Undecided

These are the persons who do not have a defined position on the proposal, or whose exact position is unknown. The undecided, in particular, can become secondary targets, and so the task at hand is to convert the undecided into potential allies.

The position of the secondary actors can sometimes be affected by specific details of the proposal.

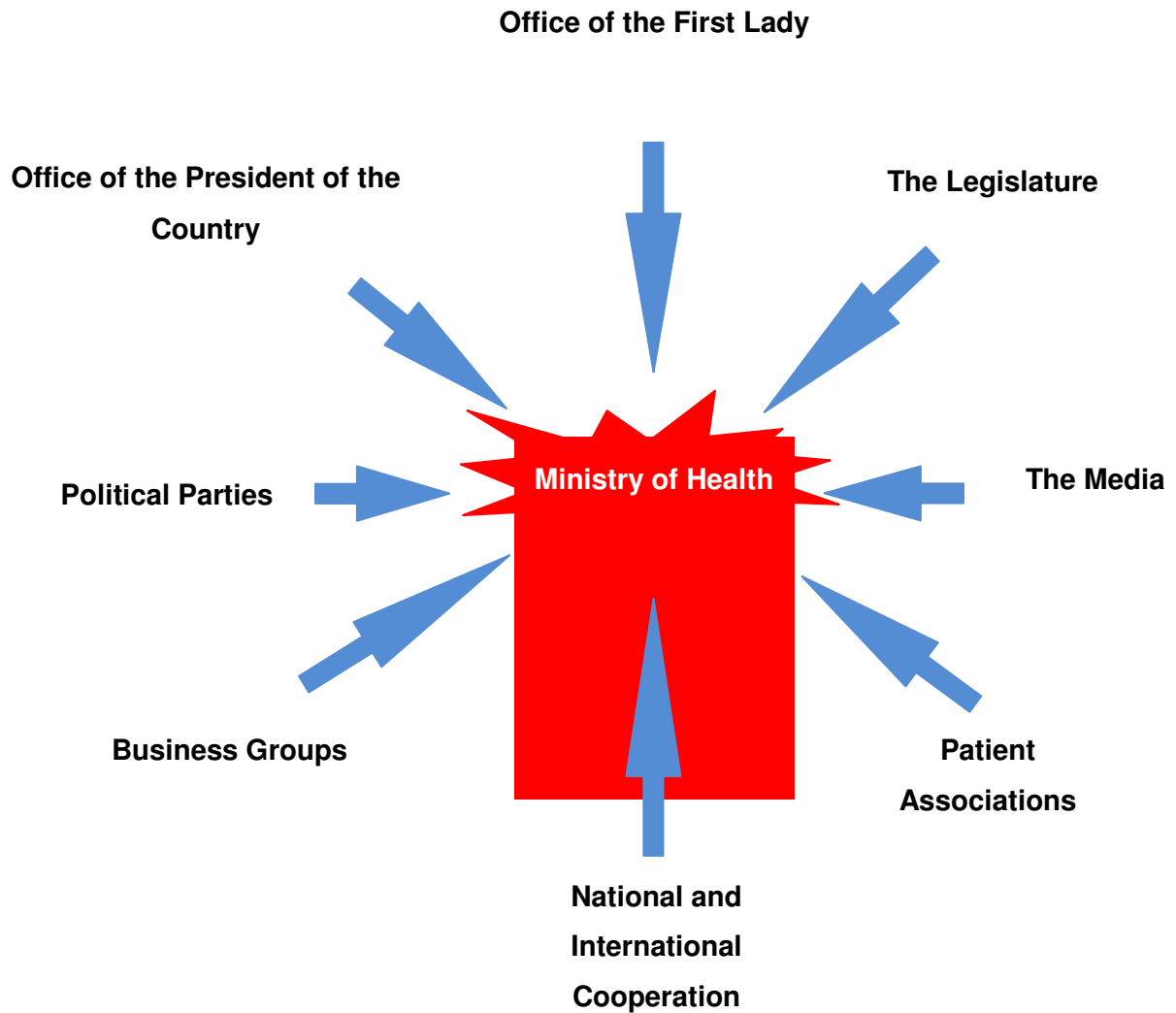
Finally, the degree of influence each secondary actor has with the target must be identified, for which reason it is necessary to make an analysis of one's allies.

One of the purposes of the power map is to identify the actors who can help contact the target. To do that it is crucial to have continuously updated information.

To create the power map, place the decision maker in the center, surrounded by the first and last names of all the secondary actors with direct

influence on the decision maker. Although campaigns are proposed at the national level, the possibility of international influences needs to be considered.

Below is a sample power map:



The power map changes constantly during the advocacy campaign, and it is recommended that it be updated at least once every two weeks.

A power map for secondary actors can also be done to facilitate subsidiary advocacy campaigns. Below is a list of suggested questions to aid in making the power map:

- ✚ Who are the actors with the greatest influence on the target?
- ✚ Who are the target's advisors?
- ✚ Are the key undecideds really undecided?
- ✚ Are the key allies really allies?
- ✚ Are the opponents really opponents?

e. Self Analysis: Organizing for Advocacy

The self analysis is the exercise that determines the way the advocacy campaign will be organized. It is necessary to specify who will make up the working teams that carry out specific activities, the contributions of each organization or team member, and the procedure for making decisions within the team.

It is also important to define the team's powers, the limits of its negotiating and decision making power, and how to determine when it is necessary to consult with the grassroots or allies.

It is vital to clearly establish the rules of the game among the participating organizations, which may not necessarily have experience in working as allies. A mechanism for consultation may be needed within which the strengths and weaknesses of an organization, institution, or coalition can be analyzed.

Self analysis, which may be needed again at any moment during the campaign, requires consideration of the following:

- ✚ Thoroughly assess the organizations that will help promote the advocacy campaign by answering the following questions.

- Which organizations are participating?
- Who are the official representatives of those organizations?
- ✚ Specify the mechanisms for decision making within the coalition or working team, taking into account the following:
 - Which organizations make up the working team?
 - How will you communicate with groups that do not belong to the committee?
 - Which members of the committee could form a high-level negotiating committee? Specify clear limits for negotiating.
 - Who will make up the press team? Specify who is authorized to release information.
 - How will disagreements or conflicts be handled? Name a committee responsible for defining the mechanism for resolution.
- ✚ Clarify how each organization will support the advocacy campaign while keeping the following in mind:
 - The quantity of human and material resources available so that they can be allocated most efficiently.
 - The number of tasks to be distributed within the working team.
- ✚ Performance of political analysis that includes the following considerations:
 - Research on policies, programs, and official plans.
 - Measurement of the type of relationships between actors in the public sector.
 - Identification of the amount of knowledge possessed about the topic, and about the availability of statistical data.

- Assess ties to the media.
 - Identify the degree to which the grassroots are mobilized, and the relationship the group has to them.
 - Identify possible allies at the national and international level.
 - Test your power to draw people your credibility, your **perceived** legitimacy, and how well your group or coalition represents society.
- ✚ Do an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the group in order to measure the real level of influence it has.
 - ✚ Propose possible solutions for the weaknesses that are revealed.
 - ✚ Develop a strategy for increasing the institutional capabilities of the team, and find two or three activities to strengthen it. These can include:
 - Training for members.
 - **Spreading knowledge to** the public
 - Promotion of **cooperative participation**.
 - Planning to better position the group and its members.

f. The Strategy of Influence

A strategy is a body of planned and coordinated activities designed and carried out by members of a group to achieve a common objective. In advocacy, strategy is the body of actions oriented toward influencing or convincing the target to approve a proposal.

Designing a strategy means having previously completed the following tasks:

✚ Research

The design, timeliness, and quality of the research are crucial for establishment of a strategy. The effectiveness of the task of advocacy depends on the quality and objectivity of the research; this means

statistical data, expert opinion, and testimony from people directly affected. Any incorrect or unconfirmed information can lead to an outcome that is indeterminate, incomplete, or even unfortunate, and that can discredit the group carrying out the advocacy campaign.

Preparing the Proposal

It is necessary to go through a period of internal discussion to arrive at a durable consensus. That means that all parties participating in the advocacy campaign must participate in designing the proposal, although a committee can be designated by the general membership to assemble the contributions made and create a draft for approval by the membership.

Identifying the Target

It is necessary to identify the most important actor in the advocacy campaign, the person who will make the final decision on the proposal. There are many types of activities that may be performed as part of an advocacy campaign, but those tasks most likely to really influence the target's decision must be given priority.

Among the possible actions to take are those that use the media. Their ability to mobilize opinion or apply pressure can be very useful.

Formulating a strategy of influence and defining the tasks to be performed are the most creative parts of the advocacy campaign. In the strategy we should see how the target and the undecided actors are convinced, allies encouraged, and opponents neutralized.

Identification of Allies, Opponents, and the Undecided.

The identification of these actors is vital in reaching and influencing the target.

Evaluating the Strengths and Weaknesses of the Advocacy Team

It is necessary to identify the human, material, and financial capabilities and limitations of the group so as not to set unreachable goals.

✚ Analyzing the Interests, Motivations, and Positions of the Identified Actors

The strategy and activities proposed should be oriented toward influencing the most important actors. The interests, motivation, and positions on the proposal of the actors, including the target, allies, opponents, and undecideds, must be analyzed to guide the preparation of arguments used and the design of pressures to apply.

✚ Definition of Arguments and Means for Applying Pressure

One of the surest ways to raise interest and knowledge about the problem and secure broad support for a specific proposal is the formulation of a convincing argument or message directed at the primary and secondary actors.

The arguments must be based on objective and verifiable data, expert opinion, and the testimony of people directly affected.

The style, content, language, sources of information, and the moment chosen for presentation of the arguments should be adapted to the political environment and the interests, motivations, and positions of the actors you are trying to influence. The arguments must also propose concrete objectives.

Two types of arguments exist, the general and the specific. The general arguments can be incorporated into the written proposal, but the more detailed arguments can be used as part of a "fact sheet" or internal working guide for organization members working to convince the various actors.

Below are some activities frequently used in advocacy:

- Use the expressed opinions of influential persons.
- Mobilize public opinion through editorials or surveys published in the press.
- Emphasize the achievement of previous goals.
- Praise or criticize actions taken by primary or secondary actors.
- Orient the organized community to put pressure on the relevant authorities.
- Promote public mobilizations.

Although confrontational tactics have their place, in general it is more effective to use persuasive tactics first, above all if we remember that the primary objective of the advocacy campaign is to convince those who have decision making power. Moving quickly to confrontation and public condemnation can cause the opinions of the decision maker to harden, greatly impeding progress toward the objective.

Persuading, Motivating, or Neutralizing Actors with Decision-Making Power.

Below are some basic criteria for influencing the actors with decision-making power:

- ***To convince the target you must define...***
 - their interests, motives, their general positions, and those related to the proposal,
 - the arguments that can be used in support of the proposal,
 - Other types of persuasive pressure decided on by the group.
- ***To convince or neutralize opponents, you must determine...***
 - the identity of the most important opponent,
 - their interests, motives, and positions related to the proposal,
 - the arguments or actions to use to support the proposal over their objections, or to neutralize the objections.
- ***To motivate your allies you must determine...***
 - the identity of your most important ally,
 - their interests, motives, and positions related to the proposal,
 - the arguments you will use to encourage their continued support of the proposal,
 - their role and importance in the advocacy campaign.
- ***To convince or neutralize opponents, you must determine...***

- the identity of the most important opponent,
- the opponent's interests, motives, and positions related to the proposal,
- the arguments or actions to use to support the proposal over their objections, or to neutralize the objections.
- ***If the advocacy campaign includes a press strategy, think about...***
 - the messages or arguments you expect to put out,
 - how to convince journalists who write on the topic by taking into account their own interests and motivations.
 - The different methods for approaching the media include taking advantage of journalists sympathetic to the cause, holding press conferences, issuing of press releases, etc.
- ***Other points to remember***
 - Keep a constant flow of information going within the group,
 - Coordinate the tasks being done,
 - Look for financing to help advance the proposal.

Finally, remember that people make many decisions based on subjective factors such as:

- the way a problem is initially framed or brought to our attention,
- a person's preconceptions about life, or about how the world works,
- each person's personal values.

Of these three factors, the way a problem is framed is the easiest to modify in persuasive argument. In contrast, it is difficult to change a person's personal values, and so direct confrontation, which creates hostility and resistance, should be avoided.

g. Activities Planning

"Activities" are the concrete tasks that the group carries out in planning and carrying out the advocacy campaign. During this stage you must list each and every one of the activities necessary to...

- ✚ finish preparing for the campaign,
- ✚ carry out the strategies defined in the previous stage,

There are two activities that can never be omitted in an advocacy campaign:

- ✚ Preparation of a written proposal that details the proposal in a brief and clear manner and explains why it is important.
- ✚ Personal visits to the target, undecideds, opponents, and allies. These visits are the most direct and effective way to explain the initiative, and are also useful for gathering additional information. Neither of these activities requires a large investment of scarce resources, and both are easy to do.

Members of the group should make sure that every activity contributes to carrying out the advocacy strategy of working on the actors with decision-making power. This means...

- ✚ supporting preparation of the proposal with research activities.
- ✚ seeking preliminary reactions from key policy sectors.
- ✚ carrying out activities to strengthen the group that will carry out the advocacy campaign.
- ✚ performing activities that will persuade the target, the undecided, and opponents.

For each activity, one person must be put in charge of scheduling and performing the related tasks and estimating and assigning the human, material, and financial resources needed to carry out the activities plan.

Among the most important tasks are:

- ✚ Planning and preparing for visits to the identified actors.
- ✚ Carrying out press activities.
- ✚ Preparation of a written proposal.
- ✚ Design of a specific strategy for promoting the proposal.
- ✚ Approval of the final activities plan for the advocacy campaign
- ✚ Obtaining and assigning of resources.
- ✚ Performance of research and analysis to refine the proposal.
- ✚ Other tasks decided on by the group.

After a list of all activities has been made, the plan may need to be readjusted in line with the activities decided on in accord with the real capabilities of the organization and the probability of acquiring additional allies and resources.

It is vital to make a cost-benefit analysis for each proposed activity. We have found for example that long-term studies and workshop-seminars can help with planning strategy and activities, but do not have great impact

themselves. It is important to choose activities that have the most impact at the lowest cost.

h. Ongoing Evaluation

Assessment is a vital element for any advocacy campaign. Applying it creates victories, prevents failures, and strengthens the group for future attempts at influencing policy.

Assessment means monitoring things at three levels:

- ✚ At the policy level, assessment brings about specific changes in policies, programs, and the behavior of public employees. It is important to take into account the planning work of the organization, the implementation of the strategy, the efforts made to construct alliances and coalitions, the effectiveness of arguments, the audiences reached, and the successes or failures that occur during advocacy that affects those with decision-making power.
- ✚ At the level of the civil society, assessment strengthens the governmental and non-governmental grassroots organization; thereby permitting the building of new and more equitable power relationships. It is important to assess the impact of advocacy in terms of the strengthening of the organization, institution, or coalition in order to promote, defend, or guarantee the specific change proposed.
- ✚ In terms of democracy, assessment increases the range of influence on policy and participation by citizens, organizations and institutions from civil society. Successes and failures should be assessed in terms of democratization: in what areas has the breadth of influence on policy, level of participation, and perceived legitimacy of the civil society to carry out its tasks been improved?

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