‘Mission Possible’: A Gender and Media Advocacy Toolkit

Module 6: How to Develop an Advocacy Campaign

This module outlines strategies that can be used for developing gender and media advocacy campaigns (planning, setting goals and objectives). It includes a guide that can be used to plan a gender and media advocacy campaign.
Module 6: How to Develop an Advocacy Campaign

1. Plan what you want to do…

If you want to make an impact with any gender and media advocacy strategy or campaign, planning is a crucial first step. When initiating an advocacy activity, it is important to make strategic choices about where to direct your energies and to look for strategic entry points.¹

Planning can help activists to:

- Use resources (often limited) efficiently
- Minimize the element of surprise
- Build commitment and a cohesive vision among those involved in advocacy to speak with a strong and united voice
- Help to focus energies.

Key questions for advocacy planning

- What aspects of gender and the media will be tackled and why?
- How do you ensure that the aspects identified are also the priorities of your primary audience?
- Who are you targeting?
- What change do you want to see?
- Are you best placed to work on this, and if so who else is working in this area?
- Are you duplicating efforts or adding value?
- How can you add value?²

Advocacy planning is defined as the development of the following³:

¹ An Advocacy Guide for Feminists, Young Women and Leadership, Awid, No. 1, December 2003
² Colleen Lowe Morna and Lene Overland, Getting Smart, strategic communications for gender activists in Southern Africa, published by Gender Links and Women's Media Watch, 2002
An overall change strategy – a long-term plan that embodies your vision, and reflects where you are, where you want to go, and how you get there.

A campaign – a medium-term plan with activities aimed at influencing the policy environment and public opinion. The activities are intended to achieve some of your advocacy strategy objectives.

Tactics, actions or activities – short-term activities within a larger change strategy, designated for a specific moment or opportunity. These could include research and media work to shape the campaign and capture the attention of people in power in relation to your issue.

Impact assessment – continuous monitoring through the advocacy campaign in order to adjust, modify or change the plans according to the situation or information that comes along the way.

2. Know what you want to achieve

An advocacy campaign should begin with well-defined and measurable goals and objectives.

- A goal is defined as a forward-looking and ambitious statement of what is to be achieved over the long-term, e.g. reducing the objectification of women as sex objects in the media.

- An objective is an incremental and realistic step towards achieving the goal, e.g. developing gender portrayal guidelines for the media.

The objective must specify the changes to be brought about and should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound).

Several questions that can help to create SMART objectives include:

- Do qualitative or quantitative data exist to show that reaching the objective will improve the situation?
- Is the objective achievable, even with opposition?
- Will the objectives gain the support of many people? Do people care about the goal/objective deeply enough to take action?
- Will you be able to raise money or other resources to support your work on the goal/objective?
- Can you clearly identify the main audiences? What are their names or positions?
- Is the goal/objective easy to understand?

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4 Making a Difference Strategic Communications to end Violence Against Women, Jenny Drezin and Megan Lloyd-Laney, editors, UNIFEM 2003
Module 6: How to plan and develop an Advocacy Campaign

- Do you have the necessary alliances with key individuals or organizations to reach your objective? How will the objective help to build alliances with other NGOs, leaders and audiences/stakeholders?
- Will working on the objective give people opportunities to learn about and become involved with the decision-making process?

Gender and Media Advocacy in Practice! Planning and Setting Goals

To illustrate how the information on planning and setting goals can be put into practice, let us take the following example.

**What’s the issue?**

You are a group concerned about the issue of gender violence, and believe that the media does not cover this issue often, and when it does cover stories on gender violence, they are usually sensational, portray women as victims or as having provoked the violence perpetrated against them (in stories of sexual violence, some media may allude to the woman’s appearance, how she was dressed, or of her doing something which is considered ‘not appropriate’ in terms of gender stereotypes like drinking alone in a bar, for example). Or, your local airwaves are filled with songs which contain lyrics which perpetuate violence against women and girls blasting daily on the radio.

In deciding how to approach the media on this issue, as a group you decide to build a campaign on gender violence in the media.

**What is the angle/focus of the campaign?**

Gender violence in the media can be tackled from several angles. A few that could be considered in a gender and media campaign on this issue include among others:

- The playing on radio of popular music (either foreign or locally-produced songs) that contains lyrics and language that denigrates women and condones and perpetuate violence against them
- Gender violence is not considered a newsworthy topic for the media and is seldom reported on as an issue which is central to the protection of women’s human rights
- Women only make news when they have been raped, beaten or abused by a partner

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5 Adapted from SARA/ED: An Introduction to Advocacy Training Guide cited in Making a Difference Strategic Communications to end Violence Against Women, Jenny Drezin and Megan Lloyd-Laney, editors, UNIFEM 2003
In designing your campaign at the planning stage, you choose one angle to focus on in order to be able to develop clear objectives, and to ensure that you engage with the media in a dialogue and process to bring change.

So, for our example, the focus of the campaign is: **to improve the quantity and quality of coverage on gender violence in the media.**

**What is the goal of the campaign?**

Given our focus, the **goal** is to shift the media’s coverage of gender violence from that of a sensational news event to an issue of human rights and justice.

**What is the objective of the campaign?**

**Main objective:** To improve the quantity and quality of coverage on gender violence in the media

**Specific objectives:** There could be three objectives to reach the overall objective:

- To train journalists on how to report on gender violence
- To develop guidelines for the media on how to report on gender violence
- To illustrate to editors and journalists the gaps and gender biases in media reports on gender-based violence

In short good planning entails:

- Identifying the media house(s) or companies that you wish to lobby.
- Deciding on what method will be used (i.e. telephone calls, letters/faxes/e-mails or face-to-face meetings)
- Preparing your position
- Mobilizing a network of supportive organizations, groups and individuals.
  Establishing a relationship with media regulatory bodies

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6 Whose perspective? A guide to gender-sensitive analysis of the media, Women’s Media Watch Jamaica, 1998


Advocacy Planning Tool

The following guide can be used to plan a gender and media advocacy campaign. Remember, planning is the first and an important step in campaign building.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Issues for Planning</th>
<th>Use the gender and media monitoring, content analysis, situation analysis and/or research tools to identify the problem and get concrete data and specific media examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the problem and what are its causes and solution(s)?</td>
<td>Use the gender and media monitoring, content analysis, situation analysis and/or research tools to identify the problem and get concrete data and specific media examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are your goals and objectives?</td>
<td>A goal is a long-term ambition which will be realized through a combination of advocacy and practical activities. An objective is a more immediate ambition and should be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound (SMART)</td>
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<tr>
<td>What are the changes you are trying to bring about through your advocacy campaign (e.g. Awareness, knowledge, attitude or behavioral changes which can influence how journalists do their work, for example, believing that women are experts on issues and should be accessed as sources, the introduction of missing gender editorial policies, etc)</td>
<td>Another way of thinking about this is: “What will be different as a result of the advocacy?”</td>
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<td>What indicators will you use to track progress towards results?</td>
<td>Think about the different sorts of progress you want to keep track of throughout the life of the strategy, e.g. of the process, of the impact and outcomes of your strategy, and of the change in context (which might influence whether you achieve your objective). Identify what systems you will use to collect and analyze your indicators.</td>
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<td>Who are your key stakeholders?</td>
<td>What do they know? How are they influenced? How do they make decisions? What information do they need?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who are your primary stakeholders? How have they been involved in designing the goals, objectives, results and indicators of your strategy? Who are your secondary stakeholders and significant others?</td>
<td><strong>Key stakeholders</strong> include those who have the power to effect change, but who may need to be persuaded to act; <strong>secondary stakeholders</strong> include groups whose support can be rallied, <strong>primary stakeholders</strong> are those who will benefit from the changes being made, and <strong>significant others</strong> include target groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Answer</td>
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<td>What research do you need to carry out to test assumptions about knowledge, attitudes, etc.</td>
<td>How will you reach a representative sample of your target audience, and what techniques will you use to find out their views about the issues? How do they access information on the topic now?</td>
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<td>What are the key messages that you need to communicate to each group of stakeholders to bring about the desired change (e.g. Increase their knowledge, change media practices, etc)?</td>
<td>Use focus groups with media practitioners and other kinds of media research to find out what is happening and why and target your messages accordingly.</td>
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<td>What communications products (e.g. Popular versions of research findings, fact sheets), channels (face-to-face communications, seminars, the media) and activities (media literacy with targeted consumers) are most appropriate for your key stakeholders?</td>
<td>You will probably need to influence many people to do different things at the same time. Be explicit about whom you’re targeting to do what; find out about each group and target them with appropriate messages, and products conveyed through appropriate channels. Think also about who is communicating, involve those who have credibility/influence with key stakeholders.</td>
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<td>What will be the timing/work plan for your advocacy strategy/campaign? What are the key dates/occasions for release of messages and materials?</td>
<td>It’s useful to do a timeline when planning your strategy so that deadlines are met and tasks distributed in a fair and effective manner. National, regional or international commemorations may serve as useful occasions to release and distribute materials.</td>
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<td>What process documentation systems will you use or create to capture the process and results? How will you package and disseminate this information and knowledge to anticipated audiences?</td>
<td>Think about what systems already exist for capturing and sharing this information, e.g. stakeholders meetings, media alert systems, etc. Can they be used to convey information about process and results? Who needs to know the information you have and what information do you have that is useful? This should be linked to the indicators.</td>
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<td>How much will you need to budget for your advocacy strategy and what skills and expertise are necessary?</td>
<td>It is important to be realistic and to choose method consistent with the resource that you have.</td>
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<td>How will you assess and disseminate the impact of your strategy and the lessons learned from your experiences?</td>
<td>Think about how other organizations can benefit from your experiences.</td>
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</table>
How will you ensure sustainability of your advocacy strategy?  

| How will you ensure sustainability of your advocacy strategy? | If you have successfully brought about changes you need to think about how to ensure that these continue once the original enthusiasm/conviction has died down. Who needs to sustain the intervention, and what communications approaches will be most effective? Media Watch Canada continues to lobby to ensure sex-role portrayal and other gender guidelines are enforced by the appropriate regulatory authority. |

Source: adapted from Making a Difference Strategic Communications to end Violence Against Women, Jenny Drezin and Megan Lloyd-Laney, editors, UNIFEM 2003