

Aims & Objectives

Unlike other areas of project planning, where aims are simply broader or longer term than objectives, in advocacy & campaigning it is good practice to have a clearer distinction between an aim and an objective.

Aims

Aims should relate to the reason for doing the advocacy or campaign. For a development NGO or human rights organisation that is to achieve an improvement in certain people's lives. Therefore in your advocacy or campaign plan, the aim should state how those people will be affected. In this way, you will be less likely to be absorbed in policy debates at the expense of achieving an impact for your people or your beneficiaries.

Objectives

In order to achieve your aims, you are trying to make some specific changes happen. These are called your objectives. Objectives can be long or short-term, ambitious or readily achievable. There are six different types of objective:

Advocacy/Campaign objectives for an **institution**, such as a government department or a business, fall into two main types:

- **Policy change objectives**
- **Practice change objectives**

In most cases, an institution will need to adopt a new policy before it changes its practice. Therefore policy change objectives may be seen as an intermediate goal, with change in practice being the end point that leads to impact on the situation of the beneficiaries.

However, even if the institution does adopt the policy you want, the desired change in practice does not automatically follow. Often, the factors determining practice change are more complex than for policy change, with responsibility more dispersed. Practice change is therefore harder to achieve than policy change, and should not be neglected in your planning.

Advocacy/Campaign objectives for **individuals**, or groups of individuals, have four types:

- **Knowledge**
- **Skills**
- **Attitudes (or beliefs)**
- **Behaviour (or action)**

Again, these objectives increase in difficulty, with knowledge being the easiest to change, and behaviour the hardest. However, in most cases behaviour

change should be our ultimate goal, as that is what will have an impact on our aim and our beneficiaries.

Giving people new knowledge will not automatically lead to them changing their attitudes (although it can be one of the contributing factors). Likewise, the development of new attitudes or beliefs will not automatically lead to changes in behaviour (although again it is probably an essential but not sufficient factor). We have to identify what factors will promote or inhibit the desired behaviour change and develop our strategy accordingly.

Market research can be used to assess the current status of a group's knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours, and to track their changes over time. Behaviours can also be tracked by more tangible methods, such as looking at voting or purchasing patterns, or by what campaigning or lobbying actions they take up.

Objectives should be written as outcomes you hope to achieve not the activities you will undertake. For example, instead of writing "*to lobby the government to increase spending on education by 20% in the next budget*", you should write "*the government to increase spending on education by 20% in the next budget*". By doing this, you are not pre-judging what approaches you will take to achieve your objective. Although this may seem a matter of semantics, it is important to clear our minds of preconceptions before we develop our strategies.

Whenever possible, objectives should be **SMART**:

- **S**pecific
- **M**easurable
- **A**chievable (or Realistic)
- **R**elevant (or Appropriate)
- **T**imed

Achievable objectives can still be ambitious and not guaranteed.
Relevant means that the objective, if achieved, will contribute to achieving your aims