

## Module 1

# Foundations of Effective Advocacy

Devised & presented for the  
Thematic Forum, Denmark  
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## What is advocacy?

- Advocacy is a process not an event
- It happens at all levels – local, national, regional and international.
- It is about achieving specific outcomes

However, there are different views about what type of outcomes advocacy should focus on, and who should do it.

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## Advocacy outcomes

Individuals and organisations tend to see advocacy as a process whose main purpose is to achieve one or more of:

- Change in institutional policy & practice
- Change in public attitudes & behaviour
- Change in the political process or system
- Increased power and influence for the poor and marginalised

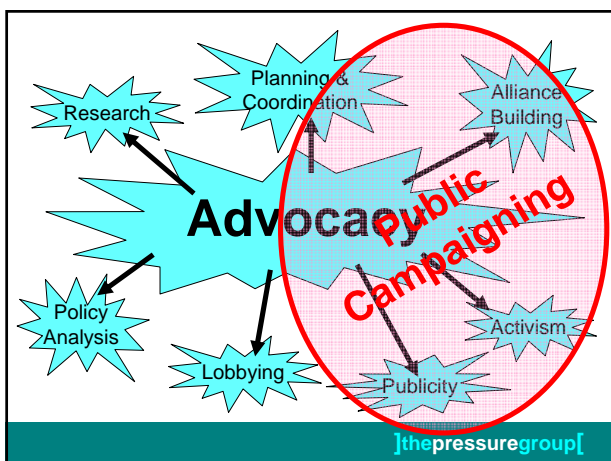
If any of the other changes are achieved, this would be seen as either a bonus or a means to an end.

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## Advocacy or Campaigning?

- Environmental NGOs and Human Rights organisations do “**campaigning**”
- Development NGOs do “**advocacy**”
- Development NGOs tend to see “**campaigning**” as the public aspect of advocacy – this is better referred to as “**public campaigning**”

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## Advocacy Terms

1. Investigating issues and problems, gathering evidence and identifying recommended solutions or courses of action.

- A. Activism
- B. Alliance Building
- C. Awareness Raising
- D. Campaign (noun)
- E. Lobbying
- F. **Policy Work**
- G. Public Campaigning
- H. Public Education

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## Advocacy Terms

2. Direct approaches (usually through face-to-face meetings) to decision makers or individuals with high influence in order to persuade them to take a particular course of action.

- A. Activism
- B. Alliance Building
- C. Awareness Raising
- D. Campaign (noun)
- E. **Lobbying**
- F. Policy Work
- G. Public Campaigning
- H. Public Education

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## Advocacy Terms

3. A project or organised course of action designed to achieve a specific response from a particular audience.

For example:

- fundraising campaigns
- advertising campaigns
- election campaigns
- advocacy campaigns

- A. Activism
- B. Alliance Building
- C. Awareness Raising
- D. **Campaign (noun)**
- E. Lobbying
- F. Policy Work
- G. Public Campaigning
- H. Public Education

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## Advocacy Terms

4. Increasing the knowledge of the public (or sections of the public) concerning the existence of a particular problem or issue.

- A. Activism
- B. Alliance Building
- C. **Awareness Raising**
- D. Campaign (noun)
- E. Lobbying
- F. Policy Work
- G. Public Campaigning
- H. Public Education

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## Advocacy Terms

5. Increasing the understanding of the public (or sections of the public) concerning the nature and/or causes of a particular problem or issue.

- A. Activism
- B. Alliance Building
- C. Awareness Raising
- D. Campaign (noun)
- E. Lobbying
- F. Policy Work
- G. Public Campaigning
- H. **Public Education**

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## Advocacy Terms

6. Generating and mobilising support from the public (or segments of the public) for a particular solution to a problem or issue.

- A. Activism
- B. Alliance Building
- C. Awareness Raising
- D. Campaign (noun)
- E. Lobbying
- F. Policy Work
- G. **Public Campaigning**
- H. Public Education

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## Advocacy Terms

7. Generating, mobilising and coordinating support from other groups & organisations for a particular solution to a problem or issue.

- A. Activism
- B. **Alliance Building**
- C. Awareness Raising
- D. Campaign (noun)
- E. Lobbying
- F. Policy Work
- G. Public Campaigning
- H. Public Education

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## Advocacy Terms

8. Mobilising activity of supporters and/or beneficiaries in order to generate publicity and/or lobby and pressurise decision makers.

- A. **Activism**
- B. Alliance Building
- C. Awareness Raising
- D. Campaign (noun)
- E. Lobbying
- F. Policy Work
- G. Public Campaigning
- H. Public Education

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## Why Advocacy?

- ☺ Tackles the underlying causes of poverty, providing sustainable solutions and reduces dependency on aid
  - ☺ Potentially affects more people than traditional development programmes
  - ☺ Scales up the impact of development programmes through a multiplier effect
  - ☺ Removes barriers to programme implementation or effectiveness
  - ☺ Strengthens civil society and helps hold governments and other agencies to account
  - ☺ Expression of rights-based or solidarity approaches to development
  - ☺ Provides organisational credibility and fulfils the expectations of staff, their peers, supporters, funders & beneficiaries
- And for public campaigning:
- ☺ Enables a higher organisational profile, which helps fundraising and supporter recruitment

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## Risks & Downsides of Advocacy?

- ☹ Diverts resources away from direct help and support
- ☹ Outcomes are often long term and/or intangible
- ☹ Can displace voices of the NGO's beneficiaries
- ☹ Risk of damaging NGO reputation or sources of funding
- ☹ Risk of creating a negative impact and/or provoking a stronger counter-reaction
- ☹ Security risk to the NGO's staff, its partners and beneficiaries

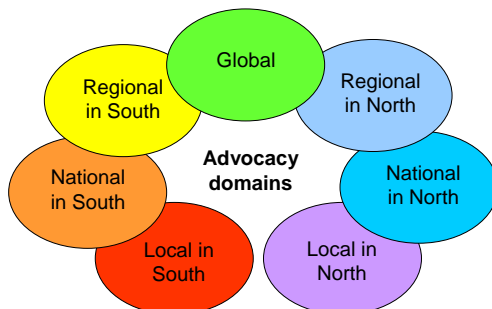
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**“There is nothing more difficult to plan, more doubtful of success nor more dangerous to manage than the creation of a new order of things”**

Niccolo Machiavelli

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## Where is there Advocacy?



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## Who does Advocacy?

Advocacy can be done:

- **By** the people directly affected by the issue
- **For** the people directly affected by the issue
- **With** the people directly affected by the issue

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## Supporting advocacy by the people directly affected

This can be called participatory or grass-roots advocacy, and may involve:

- Popular education or other forms of conscientisation and mobilisation
- Helping form organisations of the people affected by the issue
- Capacity building of those organisations

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## Doing advocacy for the people affected by the issue

This can be the most appropriate approach:

- When NGO staff are in a safer position than their beneficiaries to speak out
- When an urgent response is needed
- When NGOs are advocating to audiences with whom they have access, power and influence

Wherever possible, those affected by the issue should be consulted and give their support to how you are representing the issue.

The NGO should always hold themselves accountable to affected communities afterwards.

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## Doing advocacy with the people affected by the issue

Although this appears to be a happy compromise, in reality it is very difficult. You should question:

- Is your partnership one of equals?
- Have the affected communities played an equal role in determining the advocacy agenda, aims, objectives and strategy?
- Are their organisations or representatives playing an equal role in coordinating action?

It is not about affected people just taking part in some advocacy activities.

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## Common Weaknesses

(or the Seven Deadly Sins of Advocacy & Campaigning)

1. **Unclear aims and objectives**
  - “If you don’t know where you are going, any road will take you there”
2. **Activity planning happening before (or without) developing an influencing strategy**
  - Leading to untargeted actions, wasted effort and ultimately reduced impact
3. **Action plans that run to an internal timetable**
  - Rather than being determined by external events and opportunities
4. **Lack of innovation**
  - In developing strategies and actions, relying on whatever was done last time
5. **Messages that don’t get noticed and move people**
  - Because they are vague, unfocussed, bland, technical or untargeted
6. **Poor monitoring & evaluation**
  - Leading to lack of flexibility, no real accountability and limited learning
7. **Failing to focus**
  - Trying to tackle more issues, adopt more objectives or target more audiences than resources allow

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## Planning Process

Compared with other project & programme planning, advocacy planning has some particular challenges, including:

- Dealing with complexity
- Dealing with uncertainty
- Dealing with ownership

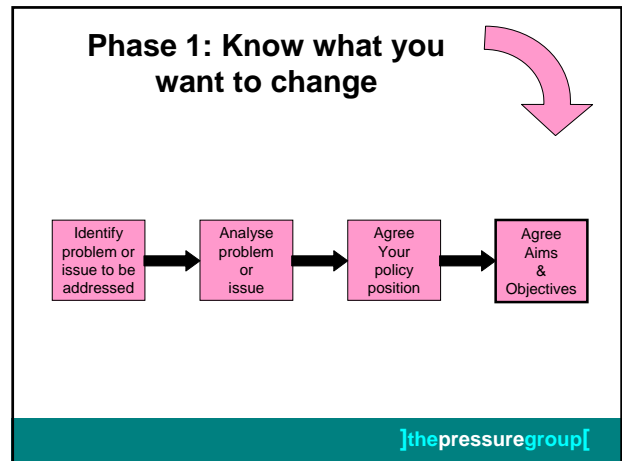
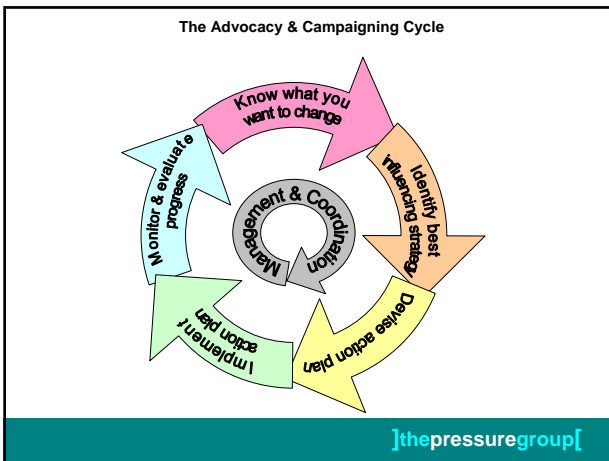
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## Planning Process

Effective advocacy planning is:

- a) Systematic
- b) Evidence Based
- c) Participatory
- d) Decisive

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## Aims & Objectives of Advocacy

The Why and the What of Advocacy

- Why are we doing this advocacy?
- What are we trying to make happen?

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## Why are we doing this advocacy?

- To change people's lives.
- Therefore our **aim** or **goal** is a statement of how a particular group of people's lives will be changed if our advocacy is successful.

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## What are we trying to make happen?

- Changes in institutional practice or individual behaviour that will contribute to the fulfilment of our aims.
- These are our advocacy **objectives**.
- They can be set for the whole campaign and for each activity in the campaign.

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## Institutional Objectives

Objectives that are focused on institutions (eg, governments, UN bodies, NGOs, companies) fall into two types:

- Policy change
- Practice change

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## Individual Objectives

Objectives that focus on individuals or groups of individuals (eg, men, land-owners, MPs, supporters) fall into four types:

- Knowledge
- Skills
- Attitudes
- Behaviours

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## Advocacy Objectives

Institutions

- Policy Change
- **Practice Change**

Individuals

- Knowledge
- Skills
- Attitudes
- **Behaviours**

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## Advocacy Objectives

Write the outcome not your activity.

- For example, don't write:
  - "To lobby the government to abolish the death penalty"
  - "To educate the public about the extent of child poverty"
- Instead, write:
  - "The government to abolish the death penalty"
  - "The public to understand the extent of child poverty"

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## Make objectives SMART!

- **S**pecific
- **M**easurable
- **A**chievable (or **A**ppropriate)
- **R**elevant (or **R**ealistic)
- **T**ime-bound

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## Advocacy is Contested

- Advocacy is about promoting a point of view in competition with other views
- These other views can arise from:
  - vested interests
  - different values
  - alternative perspectives
  - other priorities
  - pressure from other stakeholders

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## Strategic Approaches

- Rational
- Collaborative
- Legal/Judicial
- Political/Pressure

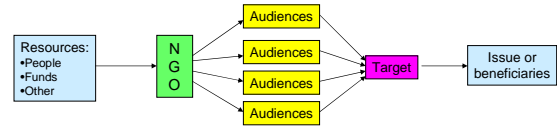
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## Channels of Influence



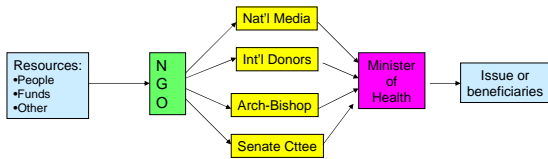
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## Channels of Influence



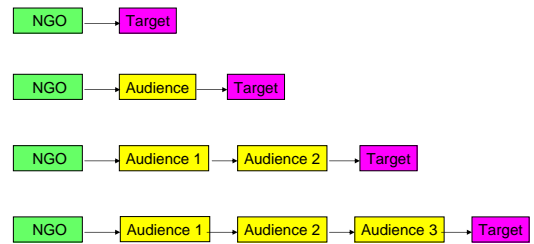
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## Channels of Influence



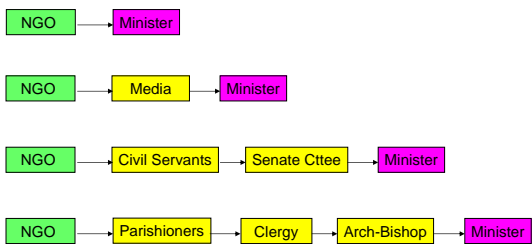
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## Chains of Influence



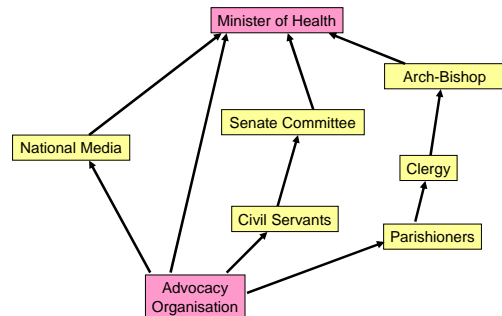
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## Chains of Influence

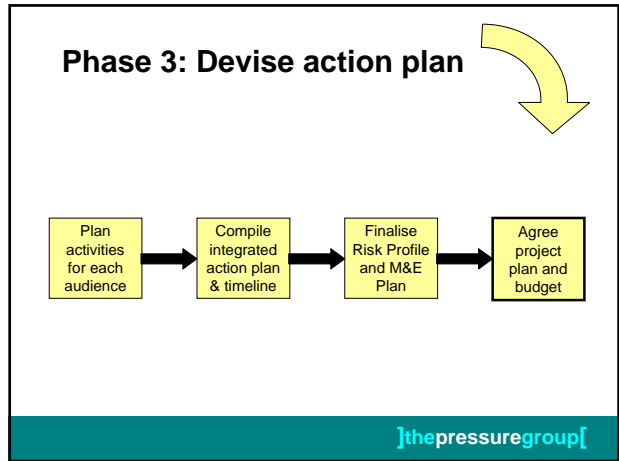
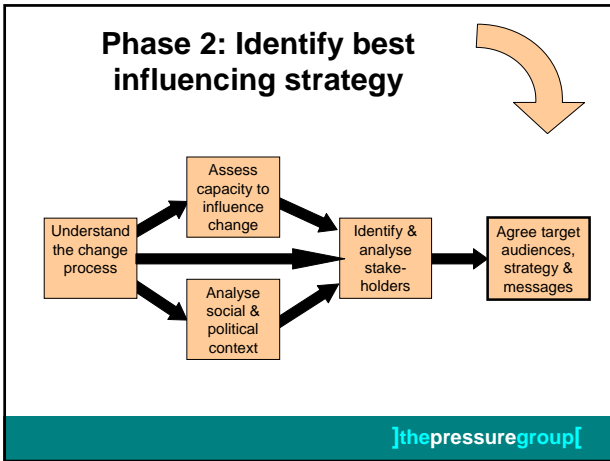


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## Influence Map



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## Risks

There are many types of risk that are associated with advocacy and campaigning, including:

- Reputational risks
- Financial risks
- Operational risks
- Security risks
- Unintended or negative impacts

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## Risk Management

- Risk management has two components:
  - Risk assessment
  - Risk reduction
- Through all the planning and during the implementation, the risk profile and management plan should be constantly reviewed and updated.

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## Risk Assessment

1. Brainstorm all the risks involved in doing the campaign and the assumptions made during the planning. For each of them:
2. Assess the likelihood of the risk occurring or the assumption not holding; assign it a score on an agreed scale.
3. Assess the severity of impact that would ensue if the risk occurs or the assumption doesn't hold; assign it a score on an agreed scale.
4. Multiply the likelihood score with the impact score to give the overall risk factor.
5. When all of the risks and assumptions have been assessed, this is your risk profile.

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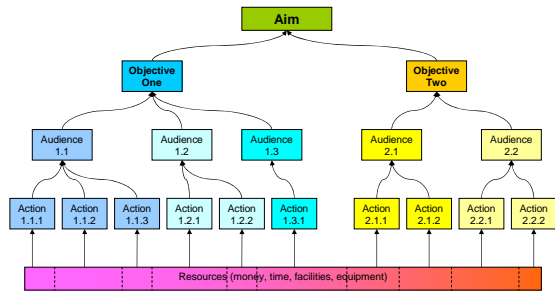
## Risk Reduction

For the highest scoring risks and assumptions in your risk profile:

- Undertake more research to test the assumptions
- Devise strategies to reduce the likelihood of the risk occurring
- Devise strategies and contingency plans to reduce the severity of the impact if the risk occurs or the assumption doesn't hold
- Decide if the resulting risk profile is acceptable or cancel the campaign

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## Advocacy Strategy Map



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## Advocacy Strategy Paper

### Advocacy Strategy Purpose

Why do we write strategy papers?

- To solidify plans, relating activities to aims
- To gain approval and release of resources
- To communicate plans to other stakeholders and win their participation
- To be a reference point for evaluation
- To be your road map for the campaign

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## Advocacy Strategy Paper

### Advocacy Strategy Contents

1. Aims (*how will beneficiaries be affected*)
2. Objectives (*specific changes to be made*)
3. Target audiences & key influencing strategies
4. Proposition/Core Message
5. Action plans & timetable for each audience/strategy
6. Resources & budgets
7. Risks & Assumptions
8. Monitoring & Evaluation plan

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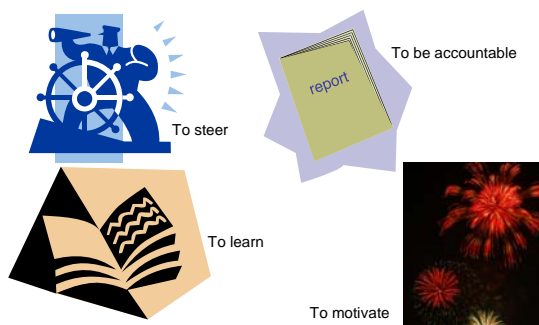
## Implement Action Plan

A wide range of activities and skills are involved in the implementation of advocacy plans – far beyond the scope of a short workshop.

The most important skills are those that enable you to communicate with and engage different target audiences – eg: [Writing](#), [Lobbying](#), [Media Work](#), [Public Speaking](#), [Supporter Recruitment & Development](#), [Community Mobilisation](#), [Supporting Partner Campaigning](#), etc.

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## What is M&E for?



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## Difficulties & Challenges

- The advocacy & campaign environment is complex and with potentially long and unpredictable timescales
- Decision making processes are often hidden from us and affected by many unknown factors
- It is rare that we achieve all our advocacy and campaigning objectives and so any successes we do achieve are usually partial

This leads to some particular challenges:

- Advocacy and campaigning plans may not be clear as to how the desired change will be influenced
- It may be hard, expensive or time-consuming to gather reliable objective data on any changes and what caused them
- Advocacy and campaigning is often a collaborative process so it can be hard to attribute the impact of any one organisations contribution
- Participants may not be motivated to gather and document monitoring data, often because they see no benefit from it
- Individuals and teams may not allocate sufficient time for reflection and evaluation, either because they see no value in it or they fear the results

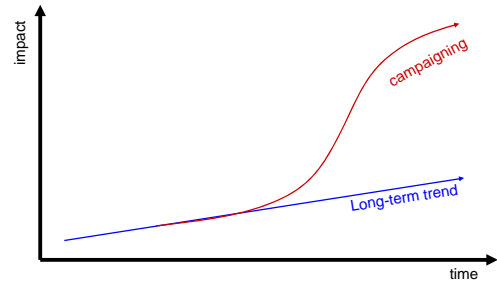
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## M & E Definitions

- **Monitoring** is a continual process of gathering data
  - What you are doing
  - What else is happening
  - How the targets are reacting
  - How the beneficiaries are being affected
- **Evaluation** is a periodic process of reviewing monitoring data and drawing conclusions from it
  - To inform and modify current plans
  - To learn from experience and improve future planning
  - To be accountable to beneficiaries, supporters, donors, managers, trustees and staff
- **Impact Assessment** is a process of measuring how effective you have been in achieving your aims and objectives

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## Advocacy Impact



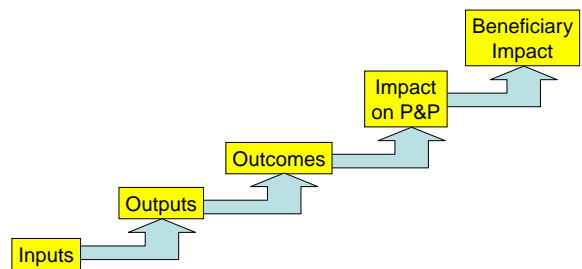
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## Comprehensive M&E Model

- Just looking at final impact has a limited value – it doesn't help you to steer your advocacy campaign as you go along, and it doesn't help you learn how effective the different activities have been.
- Instead, we need a more comprehensive M&E model for advocacy & campaigning.

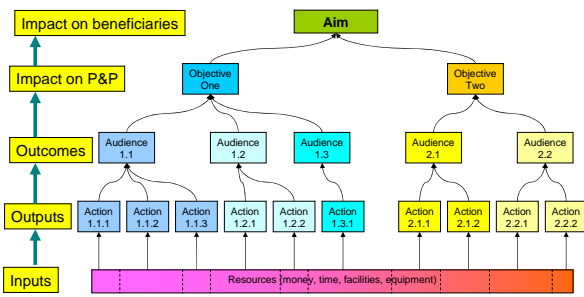
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## The Monitoring & Evaluation of Advocacy & Campaigning



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## Advocacy Strategy Map



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## Possible Progress Indicators

8 steps to advocacy heaven

1. Created debate on issue/put issue on policy agenda
2. Influencing debate
3. Influential "champions" emerge
4. Widespread agreement among influential stakeholders
5. Gained policy commitments from decision makers
6. Policy formulated/proposed
7. Policy agreed/adopted
8. Policy implemented/practice change evident

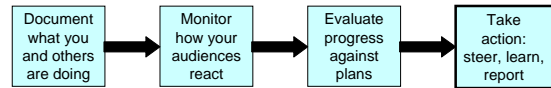
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## M&E Guidelines

1. Its all about the plan:
  - Does it set out the intended influencing process?
  - Does it include clear indicators and means of measuring them?
  - Does it set out how and when you will evaluate or review the monitoring information?
  - Does it set out how and when you will report?
2. Remember that you only need enough information to draw a reasonable conclusions. You are not seeking an absolute academic proof.
3. Keep it manageable and realistic – focus on what is most important or useful for you to know
4. Documentation is essential - keep records (eg, activity file, monthly management reports, etc)
5. Use SMART objectives and other indicators for your desired P&P change, intermediate outcomes and outputs
6. Involve partners & beneficiaries
7. Build in time and opportunities for individual and team reflection

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## Phase 5: Monitor & Evaluate Progress



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## Management & Coordination

During the planning phases, managers should:

- Ensure sufficient resources (time, money and people)
- Provide expert advice and feedback
- Ensure risk analysis is carried out
- Approve (or not) the end point of each of the planning phases:
  - Aims and objectives
  - Influencing strategy
  - Project plan & budget

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## Management & Coordination

During implementation, managers should:

- Ensure coordination and internal communications mechanisms are in place and functioning
- Ensure M&E takes place and is documented, receiving regular activity and progress reports
- Make quick decisions to enable rapid response to events and opportunities
- Motivate – give specific, constructive feedback and ensure that everyone celebrates successes, no matter how small

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