

## Fundamentals of Lobbying and Advocacy for CSOs

### Outline

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### **Input 1:** Definition of Advocacy and Lobbying

- ✓ **Advocacy** – a pre-planned activity (or series of activities, as in a campaign) done by CSOs that are designed to change public opinion and influence state policies. When CSOs conduct advocacy on their own behalf, they seek to affect some aspect of society, whether they appeal to individuals about their behavior, employers about their rules, or the government about its laws.
- ✓ **Lobbying** – advocacy efforts that are specifically intended to influence legislation. This may either be direct or indirect (i.e., grassroots), but the target is ultimately the enactment, amendment or implementation of laws that favor the lobby group's interests.
- ✓ **Difference Between Advocacy and Lobbying** - Lobbying usually attempts to influence legislation at the local or national level, whereas advocacy is a much broader range of activities which may or may not include lobbying. This distinction is helpful to keep in mind because it means that principles governing CSO lobbying do not necessarily apply to other advocacy activities.

### **Input 2:** Relevance of Advocacy and Lobbying to Sectoral Work

- ✓ Through non-antagonistic forms of social dialogue, as tools by CSOs for raising the public's awareness on relevant issues and convincing it to adopt the viewpoint of the advocating organization.
- ✓ Through enactment of support legislation and policies or seeking changes in existing ones, as tools for pressuring the state to act for public interest and to abide by its social, political and economic obligations to its citizens.
- ✓ Through networking with CSOs and advocates in other marginalized sectors, as tools for amplifying the core capacities of an organization or a sector.

### **Input 3:** Developing an Advocacy Campaign

- 1) Advocacy is most effective when conducted and gradually built up over a period of time. More often than not, it assumes the form of a series of activities that are cohesively put together to achieve a definite objective. This is called an advocacy campaign.
- 2) Advocacy campaigns make use of a variety of methods for getting a set of messages across to their target audiences. Some of the most commonly used are:
  - ✓ Rallies – may be a small group such as a picket, or a sizeable one like a mobilization
  - ✓ Petition-Signing – gathering signatures that signifies support for an accompanying political statement
  - ✓ Letter-Barrage
  - ✓ Symposia
  - ✓ Sports/Cultural Activities
  - ✓ Publications
- 3) Steps to Conducting an Advocacy Campaign

#### *Planning Phase*

- ✓ Know the issue thoroughly
- ✓ Set the objective(s), as well as the minimum and maximum gains desired
- ✓ Identify the target audience and the state entities to be addressed
- ✓ Know the “friendlies” and the “hostiles” in the issue
- ✓ Determine the advocacy methods to be used
- ✓ Set a timeline (or phasing) for the campaign
- ✓ Divide and assign tasks, and create committees if necessary; the following tasks (among others that may be necessary) usually need to have a “point-person” or committee assigned:
  - **Propaganda/drafting**
  - **Media work/liaison**
  - **Spokesperson** for the campaign – provides the “face” for the campaign, and enunciates the unified position of the network on issues regarding the campaign
  - **Finance work**
  - **Campaign officer** – head of the Steering Committee for the campaign
- ✓ Link up with “friendlies” and plan jointly → Joint Steering Committee
- ✓ Ensure meetings of grassroots organizations (or local units of these organizations) to unite on the campaign plan, and if possible, request the local organization to assign team leaders specifically for the campaign; the campaign plan as initially conceived is best validated by these team leaders, and their recommendations incorporated into the final draft of the plan.

### Implementation Phase

- ✓ Launch the campaign with a conceptually appropriate activity; a press conference is the most common method, but generally, any activity that gets substantial media coverage is sufficient
- ✓ The Steering Committee must constantly and closely monitor the implementation of plans through consultations with committees and direct participation in activities (whenever practicable)
- ✓ Tactical leadership is important, and requires an efficient feedback mechanism and timely troubleshooting
- ✓ As in the planning process, team leaders in local organizations must be given a substantial role in the campaign's implementation phase, and their initiative and creativity within the overall plan given full play.

### Closure Phase

- ✓ When the minimum demands in the plan have been met and the maximal capacity of the network to campaign for the issue appears to have been reached, a consultation should be held among all participating organizations by the Steering Committee for a decision to end (or scale down) the campaign. The majority of the network's commitment to continue the campaign is a crucial benchmark in this meeting, and determines the specific level and forms the campaign will assume thereafter.
- ✓ After a decision to close the campaign, an assessment must be held as soon as possible. This is to ensure the integrity of quantitative and qualitative information, including recollections on the context in which events occurred during the campaign.
- ✓ In order to extract maximal lessons, a campaign's assessment should thoroughly review the whole process that it underwent – from planning to closure. While commending strengths wherever they occur in the process, it is of greater benefit for the network and its future activities to identify weaknesses that were committed, and suggest solutions to these that can be tested in the next joint advocacy campaign.

#### **Input 4:** Developing a Lobby Campaign

- 1) Any form of lobby work has the end-goal of influencing public officials for or against a specific cause. Lobbying is a form of public policy advocacy and educating government. It is communicating with legislators and the executive branch to encourage them to take action on specific legislation. Lobbying is a part of the democratic process.
- 2) While elected officials are often the prime target of lobby work, appointed government officials can also be important in a lobby strategy (especially those that have the ears of elected officials). For example, people who work for the local neighborhood, city, province, and national agencies and/or departments that affect particular policies may be effective in this strategy (especially as peers to the legislator to make the case).
- 3) Lobbying can be an integral part of an advocacy campaign, provided that the principal objective of the latter is the enactment of specific legislation on the issue, or the implementation of existing legislation by the executive branch of government. Inversely, advocacy methods can enhance lobbying by providing the social pressure necessary to sway a public official to favor or implement a legislative measure.
- 4) Some commonly used methods in lobby work are:
  - a) Congressional trooping – legislators have to be receptive to their constituents if only for their vote-potential, and lobbyists (including grassroots leaders and CSO advocates) may exploit this vulnerability by talking directly to them in a targeted manner. Senators, congressmen, members of parliament, and executive officials who may be able to influence the decision of these legislators should be approached. A good lobbyist should be able to show the public official in question how he/she will benefit from favoring the lobbyist's position or interest.
  - b) Sending mass postcard, email, or letter.
  - c) Hand-written or personalized letters.
  - d) Telephoning the office of the legislator.
  - e) Conversing over the telephone with a Congressional Aide or public official's key advisor.
  - f) Media trooping/liaison work to deliver indirect pressure on a targeted public official

## 5) Steps to Conducting a Lobby Campaign

- a) Know the issue thoroughly, especially related legislation and judicial actions.
- b) Conduct power-mapping around the issue: who are the political stakeholders (include CSOs and opposition politicians)? why are they interested in the issue? how can they be influenced?
- c) Draft a lobby campaign plan: include methods to be used, a media-work plan and a timetable
- d) Have the draft plan commented on by advocacy network members, if lobbying is done in their behalf
- e) Compose a lobby team by and thoroughly brief (if necessary, train) its members; more often than not, these are sectoral leaders advocating for the issue and who have good communications skills
- f) Unite allies by conducting meetings and sending position papers to them
- g) Launch the lobby campaign, with a lobby officer constantly monitoring the work of the lobby team and making the necessary troubleshooting
- h) End the campaign when the desired legislation has been passed, or when its implementation has commenced.
- i) Promptly assess the whole process from planning to closure, and make recommendations for future lobby work.

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