

THE ADVOCACY STRATEGY: MOBILIZING FOR ACTION

When you see something that's wrong, no matter how big the problem is, think "Who else would like to change this? How can we work together?"

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan

Introduction

Advocacy is both a science and an art. From a scientific perspective, there is no universal formula for effective advocacy. Nevertheless, experience shows that an advocacy campaign is most effective when it is planned systematically. Advocacy networks frame their issue, set an advocacy goal and measurable objectives, identify sources of support and opposition, research the policy audience, develop compelling messages, and mobilize necessary funds, and, at each step of the way, collect data and monitor their plan of action. Each of these steps requires distinct knowledge and skills to ensure effective and efficient implementation.

Advocacy is also an art. Successful advocates are able to articulate issues in ways that inspire others and motivate them to take action. They have a keen sense of timing and are able to recognize and act as opportunities present themselves. Successful advocates are skilled negotiators and consensus builders who look for opportunities to win modest but strategic policy gains while creating still other opportunities for larger victories. Artful advocates incorporate creativity, style, and even humor in their advocacy events in order to draw public and media attention to their cause. The art of advocacy cannot be taught through a training workshop; rather, it emerges from the network members themselves. Advocacy training provides the tools, but participants must add the spark.

Section III of the manual could alternatively be titled "Pulling it All Together: How to Manage An Advocacy Campaign." In Section I, the network learned about the characteristics of and practiced the skills that form the groundwork for a collaborative and trusting working relationship. In Section II, participants explored and gained a deeper understanding of the policy environment as the context within which their advocacy efforts will take place. Section III, the final section of the manual, is dedicated to the nuts and bolts of an advocacy campaign. The units in Section III correspond to the different steps of the advocacy process and help participants acquire and build the technical skills needed to implement each step successfully.