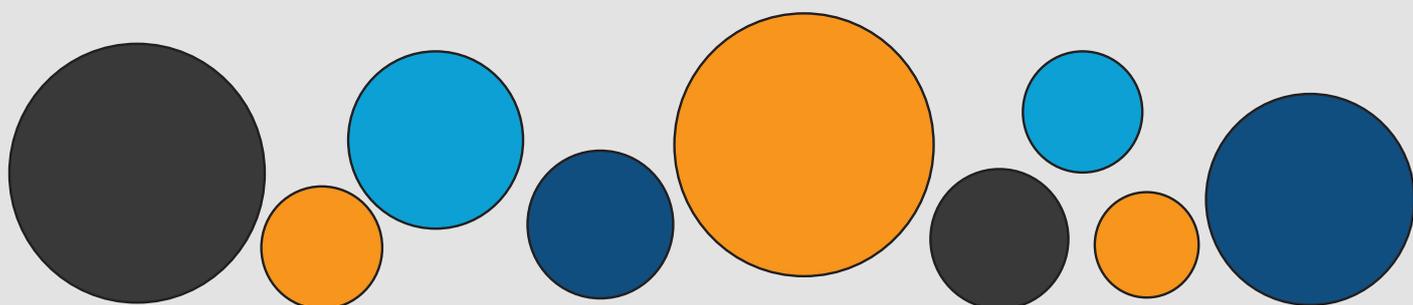




نبض ایران

تقویت صدای ایرانیان
www.nabz-iran.com

PLANNING FOR AN ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN



Planning for an Advocacy Campaign

There are many ways that a group of people can work together to address common concerns.

In many situations, the best way to ensure that the government takes on its responsibility of responding to public needs in a sustainable way is for citizens to influence the policymaking process by advocating for their preferred solution.

Any advocacy effort, whether a neighborhood initiative or a larger initiative around a national concern, benefits from a well-thought out plan of action. You may be tempted to react on instinct to external circumstances during the course of your advocacy campaign, but keep in mind that this could result in a lot of effort without much progress. A good plan will help you to stay focused and to strategically allocate your efforts towards the best results throughout your campaign.

What is advocacy?

Advocacy is the process by which people, groups, networks and coalitions seek to bring about positive change by influencing policies, policy implementation and policy making processes of governments. In simpler terms, it is influencing the government to respond with the specific solution that you would like to see implemented.

Who is an advocate?

Advocates are people like you who care about bringing about positive changes in their communities. In some cases, where the advocacy focuses on local institutions, one individual or a small loosely organized group can successfully influence policy. In other cases where large institutions are the focus, successful advocacy requires one or more formal organizations, often working together through networks and coalitions.

Who are advocates trying to influence?

Who an advocate is trying to influence depends on the need he or she is trying to address. An important part of effective advocacy is to understand which institution is responsible for what services and policies.

Why use advocacy to address a need in my community?

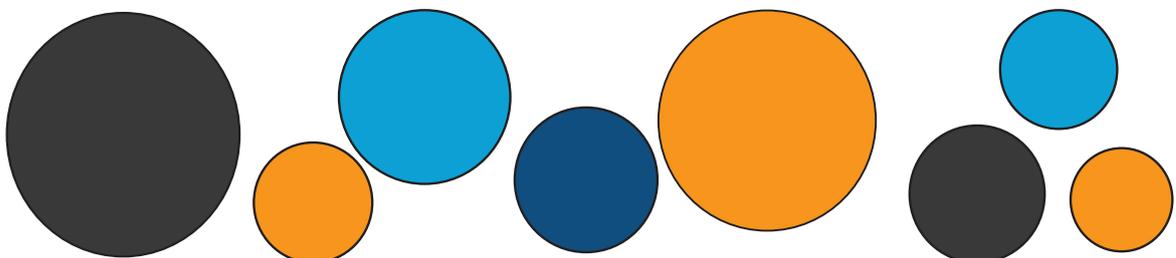
Although there are many ways to address a need, you will likely find that an advocacy approach is the best way to ensure that the government becomes more responsive to similar needs as they arise in the future. This often includes passing laws or changing regulations that improve the system as well as fixing the particular immediate problem. The goal with advocacy efforts is to improve the overall policymaking process, which will result in more sustainable improvements over the long term. Government must repair a road no later than one week after it has been damaged.

Imagine a road is in disrepair; there are many ways a group could get it taken care of: raise the money for repairs themselves, or do all the work on their own. An Advocacy Approach to such a situation would be mobilizing neighbors to persuade government officials to fix the road and to ensure that the roads continue to be maintained, for example by introducing a law that mandates that the government must repair a road no later than one week after it has been damaged.

One important thing to keep in mind is that particular advocacy efforts are not always successful in the short run. Sometimes there are not resources available to address the need you have identified or perhaps the government does not have the capacity to respond. In other cases, the government - or individuals within it - may have an opposing opinion and will not be convinced immediately.

However, even in these situations, advocacy initiatives still provide great benefits, such as:

- raising awareness on the issue at hand, particularly if it is a new need,
- strengthening a community of people by working together to address a concern,
- identifying and training new citizen leaders,



- establishing relationships with appropriate officials, and
- giving a group the experience and leadership needed to take on other issues.

Successful advocacy often means working toward small successes that contribute to bigger goals over the long-run. This can provide momentum and give supporters a feeling that they can do more.

How to plan an advocacy campaign?

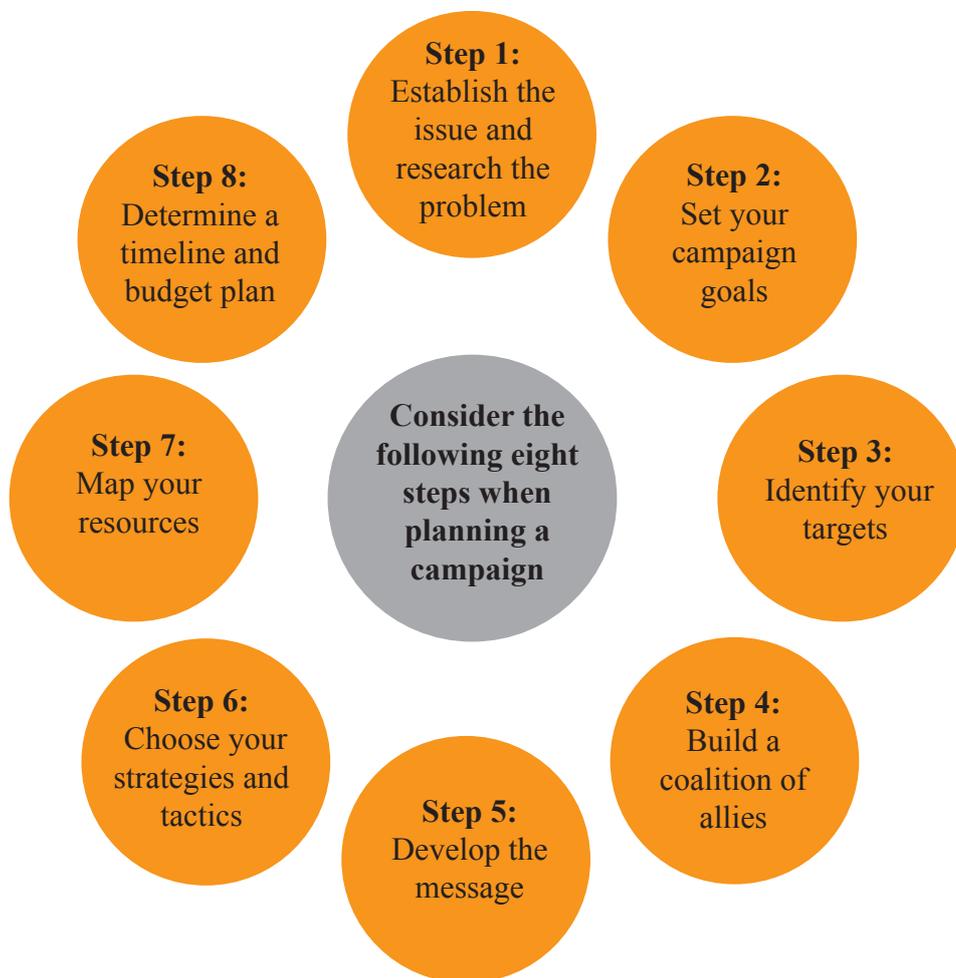
An advocacy campaign consists of a set of short-term activities with a long-term vision, aimed at persuading or influencing decision makers on issues that impact the public.

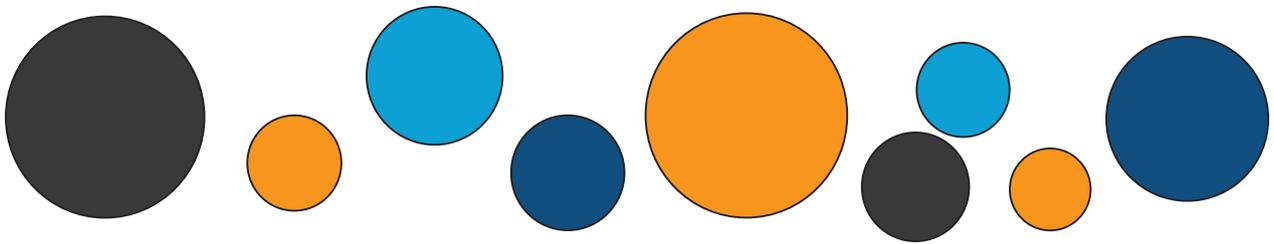
Begin with identifying or describing the problem you wish to address. Identifying or describing the problem can be best accomplished

by engaging members of an affected community or group of people in discussions about the problem. For example, you may want to invite your neighbors to a meeting to discuss the problem of waste management in your neighborhood and collectively agree on the source of the problem and a description of the problem.

Once you have a clear definition or description of the problem you wish to address you can begin working on an advocacy campaign plan to help address the problem and fix the situation.

Taking a collective approach to planning by including diverse people or members of the community in the development of the advocacy plan is very important. This allows for different perspectives on the problem and its impact as a whole to be represented in your plan. Ideally, you should develop your plan collectively with at least 4 to 5 other people.





Step 1: Research the problem and identify the issue

In order to establish the issue of your advocacy campaign, it helps to first identify the problem related to your issue. To research your problem, begin with answering a few questions:

- When did the problem related to the issue first come to light?
- What are the root causes of the problem?
- How has the problem impacted you and others?
- Have there been any attempts to address the problem to date? If so, what has been the outcome of these attempts?
- What are some viable solutions to the problem?

Once you have concrete information, summarize the problem in one sentence and connect the problem with an advocacy issue. For example, your problem might be trash in the streets and parks of your neighborhood, and the issue is therefore waste management. Or your problem might be the poor mental and physical health of children in urban areas and the associated issue of child labor.

Keep in Mind

A good advocacy issue is focused enough so that it can be linked to clear solutions and can be easily communicated to many people.

Step 2: Set your campaign goals

A goal is a result of your time and effort towards reaching your desired outcome. Once you have established your issue you can start to set goals for addressing the issue. Your goals should be:

- **Specific:** avoid setting general goals and be as specific as you can about the outcomes you wish to achieve. For example, a general goal would be “a cleaner neighborhood” and a more specific goal would be “regular pick ups of garbage bins in my neighborhood.”
- **Measurable:** your goals should be measurable, meaning that you should be able to develop indicators to measure the progress of your campaign over time.

- **Attainable:** when setting your goals make sure that you have the resources and timeframe to make your goals come true.

- **Realistic:** setting realistic goals means that you have an understanding of the realities or circumstances within which you are working. You should evaluate whether you have the time, resources and support to achieve a given goal.

- **Time-bound:** your goals should be set within a realistic given time frame. It helps to set both short-term and long-term goals. Short-term goals are goals that can be achieved in up to six months to a year whereas long-term goals can take many years.

Keep in Mind

When setting goals remember to avoid:

- Setting goals that are too big
 - Setting too many goals
 - Setting goals that are not specific
- Make sure that you also write down your goals.

Step 3: Identify your targets

A target is always one single person, not an institution. Even if you are planning to change a law and need the vote of a majority of parliamentarians, you must personalize your target to make it just one person. Target one parliamentarian at a time.

Targeting refers to the process of strategically narrowing down the universe of people that your campaign communicates with and whom you aim to influence throughout the course of your campaign. These people are your stakeholders or those individuals, groups and organizations impacted by the problem you are seeking to address, and who have an interest in helping you to address your problem or persuade decision makers.

- Start by making a list of relevant stakeholders. For example, if your problem is waste manage-



ment in your community you could begin with listing your neighbors, local businesses, schools and religious centers. You could also list media outlets who would be interested in drawing attention to the problem of waste management in your neighborhood and elected or appointed officials who have waste management on their official agendas. Finally, you could list local businesses that have an incentive in investing to find a solution to waste management in your neighborhood.

- Next, divide your targets into primary and secondary targets.

- The **primary** target is the decision-making person, body or institution that decides on the issue. The primary target is the person who has the power to give you and your organization what you want. It is the person to whom you will advocate.

- **Secondary targets** are those people who do not have the power or authority to give you what you want but has the power to influence the primary target. Although secondary targets might not have the direct mandate and authority to decide on the particular issue, they have the ability to influence. Usually you will have more power over these people than you have over the primary target.

- For every listed individual, group, organization or business in your primary and secondary target list, describe their connection to the decision maker who has the power to address the issue you are seeking to address.

Each tactic that you utilize should be individualized to your targets. A tactic that is directed at all of your targets at once will be diffused and, therefore, not as powerful.

Step 4: Build a coalition of allies

Once you have decided who your primary and secondary targets are you need to decide whether they are your allies, your opponents, or neutral individuals. Knowing this information will

help you be more efficient in your work and magnify your capacities.

Allies are those people, organizations, and/or institutions that might help you. These are the ones that you should solicit to work with you to obtain your goal.

Questions to ask when identifying allies:

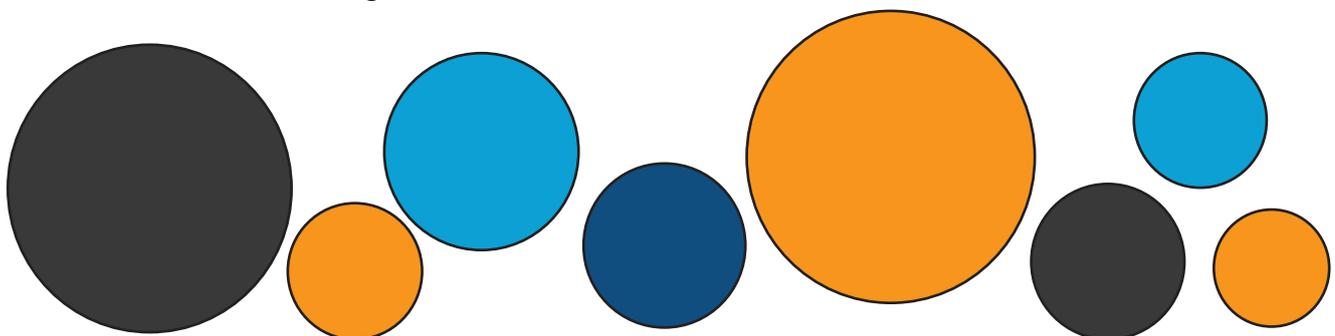
1. Whom does the issue also affect?
2. Who would also benefit from resolving the issue?
3. Who might be interested to help us out?

Opponents are those who are interested in seeing the issue not addressed or the advocacy campaign fail. Opponents can be powerful and weak, depending on the actual strength they have for impeding your work. You may choose to put effort into turning opponents into allies, but keep in mind that some of your opponents are likely to be closed off to persuasion. It is up to you to judge which of your opponents are likely to be persuaded and which ones are not. Always be mindful of your time and efforts to make sure that you are efficient as you move ahead with planning your campaign.

Questions to ask when identifying opponents:

1. Who would be damaged if this issue were addressed?
2. Who might be interested to see this campaign fail?
3. Who might act as an obstacle for any reason?

Neutral individuals are those who are indifferent towards your issue and have little or no investment in the outcome of your campaign. They are also individuals who may be open to being persuaded to support your issue. If you sense that someone could be persuaded, you might put effort into turning significant neutral individuals into allies. As with opponents, be mindful of your time and efforts. Some neutral individuals may choose to



remain neutral or uninterested on a given issue regardless of your efforts to persuade them.

Step 5: Develop the message

Your message, or how you communicate your advocacy goals to the public, is a key element in conducting a successful advocacy campaign. Through the message, you inform, motivate, and energize people to join your efforts. The message should summarize the problem and explain the solution clearly. An effective message speaks directly to people's feelings and interests. The strongest messages can convey a sense of exhilaration as people see a way through to the solution of a difficult problem.

Messages should be:

Clear: your message should clearly communicate your goals. Make sure that your message is brief and easy to understand.

Concise: make sure that your message is focused on your goals. Your message should not list every objective you have or all the causes of the problem you are addressing. It should be short and focused.

Consistent: your clear and concise message should be repeated in your communications. Repeat your message again and again and again throughout your advocacy effort.

Correct: make sure that your message is truthful and that it addresses the concerns of the target audiences. You should be able to support your message with facts and to readily give justification for your message.

Research the views of your target audiences and appeal to their interests.

Knowing your audience's experiences and perspectives will allow you to develop a more persuasive message that speaks directly to their concerns.

Consider the following questions in regard to your target audiences:

- Are they friendly or hostile?
- Where do they live, and in what kind of conditions?
- What is their economic status?

- How are they the same as or different from the majority of people living in the area or nation? What are their problems and concerns?
- What is their knowledge of and attitude toward the government, the political process and civic groups?

The more factual information you have about the audience, the better your message development will be.

Step 6: Choose your strategies and tactics

A **strategy** is the method you use to achieve your campaign goals. It is made of a set of targeted actions. Each targeted action of your strategy can be described as a **tactic**. For example, your issue might be child labor and your objective to provide access to education for street children. As a strategy you might decide to improve public knowledge about the benefits of education for street children. For this you may have more than one tactic, such as meeting with government officials on a weekly basis to discuss benefits, placing articles in newspapers and securing endorsement for your issue by a celebrity.

Tactics change by your target audience. For example, you may want to meet in person with a government official to discuss a given issue and invest in developing informational pamphlets to inform the general public about your issue. If you have several different targets you will also likely need several different tactics to reach all your targets. You may have a set of tactics to reach the general public, one for media outlets and another for government officials.

Group your primary and secondary targets, such as community members, the general public, media outlets and government officials. For each group list the tactics you will use to influence them to support your issue.

Keep in Mind

Remember that community members, the general public, media outlets and government officials are also your messengers, so your tactics should focus on them both supporting your issue and passing your message along to others.

Step 7: Map your resources

Once you know what you want to achieve, who you want to reach and ways you might do that,

you need to determine what you have the actual capacity to take on right now. Take an inventory of what you and allies have in terms of resources, particularly around people, supplies and finances:

People: Do you have staff or volunteers who can commit to an advocacy campaign? What do they do now? How much time can they give to a new project? Are there people you could mobilize to contribute to your campaign?

Supplies: List any resources that you have access to, such as computers, copy machines, phones, office supplies, internet connections and meeting spaces. How much of these resources could be dedicated to an advocacy project?

Money: Look at how much money you and your group have overall. How much of these resources could you make available for an advocacy campaign? How much could you expect to raise?

The chart below will help you with planning:

	How many/how much do you have?	What is their/its significance within your campaign?	How much is available of this of this for your campaign?
Staff			
Volunteers			
Supplies			
Money			

Once you have an inventory of your resources, it is helpful to identify your campaign’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, a process known as a SWOT analysis. Having this mapped out will also help you in developing a budget for your activities and ways of getting additional resources that you need.

A SWOT analysis is used to identify your campaign’s strengths and weaknesses and the opportunities and constraints it faces in the external world.

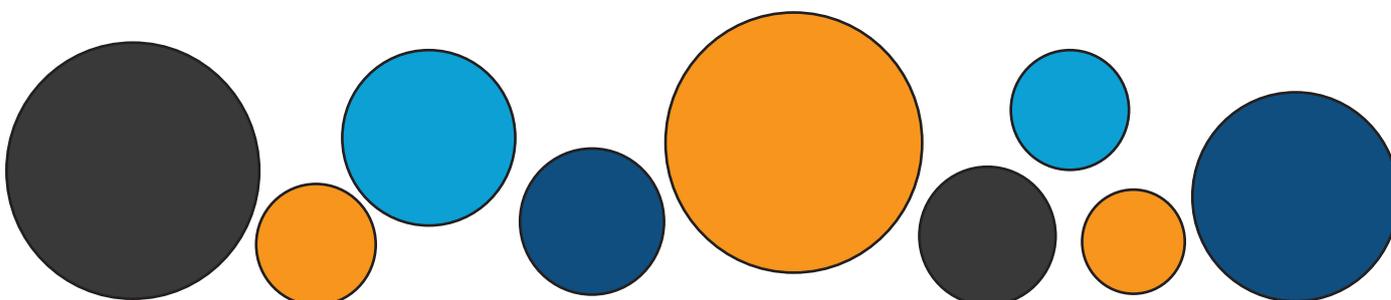
- Strengths and Weaknesses are internal to your group or organization.
- Opportunities are attractive arenas for action which your group or organisation can respond to

because it has some special advantage or contribution to make.

- Threats are unfavourable trends or specific changes in the external environment that could lead to stagnation, decline or the demise of an organisation or a part of it.

Strengths and Opportunities are enabling forces - they increase the chance of an organisation achieving its goals; weaknesses and threats are resisting forces – they prevent (or at least make it difficult for) the organisation to achieve its goals.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats



Step 8: Determine a Timeline and Budget plan

Keeping your goals and resources in mind, create a timeline for your campaign. List the resources you will need for every step of your campaign on your timeline and add deadlines for tasks.

Timeline

	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4
Necessary resources				
Deadlines Internal Events and Activities				
Deadlines External Events and Activities				
Deadlines for Critical Tasks				

Creating a budget is an essential component of your advocacy campaign plan. A budget allows you to evaluate your finances and to decide where to allocate your time and resources. Look back at your SWOT analysis and consider allocating your funds to items which fall under your campaign's strengths and opportunities.

There are many different formats you can use for your budget. It is important that you choose a format that works best for you.

Budgeting Dos and Don'ts

DO consider every expense in your campaign plan. Try to picture the activity taking place, so that you can envision all the hidden costs in each step.	DON'T assume that the budget from another campaign will suffice for your campaign. Everyone is different. Think for yourself!
DO estimate. There will be many numbers that you just don't feel confident about. Make an educated estimate, and mark it as such. Keep a list of items you need to research and numbers you need to verify. As you get more accurate numbers, recalculate your budget.	DON'T lump expenses together on the same budget line. It is good to remind yourself of all the costs you will have to face within every campaign program.
DO develop a budget that is as detailed as possible. Try to think of all expenses related to every activity and have those accounted for.	DON'T plan to end with a deficit. Be fair to the individuals and businesses that trust your campaign to pay its bills. Plan to pay them what you agreed to pay when you agreed to pay.
DO monitor your budget closely. Weekly. Daily.	DON'T rush. The budget is crucial, so take your time and do it right.
DO find a form that works for you to keep track of your budget.	DON'T create your budget then set it aside for months. Refer to it often. Always consult your budget before making any spending decisions.

If you find that you are lacking funds for certain activities make a list of sources who would support your campaign by investing in your efforts. These sources could be friends, acquaintances, community members, non-profit organizations and local governmental entities. For each source, describe the interest in your issue and include ideas of how to approach each for support.