

ADVOCACY TOOLS AND GUIDELINES

Advocacy is the deliberate process of influencing those who make policy decisions. Advocacy involves delivering messages that are intended to influence the actions of policy makers. CARE audiences typically include multilateral institutions, governments and bilateral donors. While advocacy is a relatively new strategy for CARE, it is a well-established method in other NGOs. Until recently, CARE identified policy causes in its analyses but assumed that changing policies was beyond the scope of our programs. Advocacy does not intend to replace other program strategies, it rather expands the menu of effective strategies available to CARE country offices.

Within CARE, advocacy will almost always be grounded in programming experience and an outgrowth of programming priorities. Without that link, staff will lack the credibility they need to influence decision makers.

The four essential steps for planning advocacy initiatives are:

- **Step 1:** Analyzing policies
Select the policy issue that can effectively be addressed through advocacy. Identify target audiences. Set a specific policy goal for your initiative. Identify potential allies and opponents.
- **Step 2:** Outlining an advocacy strategy
- **Step 3:** Finalizing an advocacy strategy
- **Step 4:** Framing a plan

Once you have selected a policy goal and identified target audiences, allies and opponents, you need to make several fundamental decisions:

1. **Select an advocacy role** (a very visible, public approach or working behind the scenes).
2. **Identify key messages.**
3. **Define advocacy activities, i.e. steps you will take to convey your messages to your target audiences.**

To frame a plan, you need to:

1. **Set a timeline**
2. **Prepare a budget**
3. **Prepare a logframe**
4. **Plan for monitoring and evaluation of your advocacy initiative**

Delivering messages persuasively to your primary target audience lies at the heart of any advocacy initiative. The key to good message delivery is knowing as much as possible about your target audience. You also need to:

- **Develop clear and compelling messages.**
- **Deliver messages effectively.**
- **Reinforce messages.**

In most cases, advocacy is a group enterprise. Various approaches you can consider as you are preparing to work with others are:

- **Building local capacity for advocacy**
- **Organizing constituencies**
- **Working through coalitions**

There are many ways to be effective in advocacy. Some people are more skilled at certain types of advocacy than others, and different situations will call for different tactics. You can use **direct written and verbal communications, negotiations in meetings,** and **media communications.** Tactics for managing risk also are an integral part of advocacy.

The kind of advocacy that is culturally acceptable and effective will vary from country to country. Your own informed judgments should guide you first and foremost in deciding what kind of advocacy will work in the political context where you live.