



Module 1

Part 2

Public Advocacy

ADVOCACY & ACTION - Overview

An E-course

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Module 1 – Part II: PUBLIC ADVOCACY AND ACTION- AN OVERVIEW

Learning Objectives:

- To introduce participants to a variety of concepts and forms of advocacy.
- To develop an understanding of several different approaches to advocacy.
- To develop an understanding of the impact of advocacy on NGOs & CBOs
- To develop a preliminary understanding of the advocacy approaches of Paolo Freire as an example

In the first part of this Module, you have seen the word ‘advocacy’ used many, many times. However, what does advocacy really mean? What are some ways different experienced organizations define advocacy?

Defining Advocacy

Advocacy aims to influence people and organisations in power to create an environment which protects the rights, health and welfare of everyone, both HIV positive and negative. For NGOs/CBOs involved in HIV/AIDS, this means understanding the role of advocacy in relation to other responses to HIV/AIDS, such as information, education and communication (IEC), community mobilisation and service provision.¹

Advocacy involves attempts to influence the political climate, public perceptions, policy decisions and funding determinations in order to improve adolescent reproductive and sexual health. Advocates work not only to promote a defined solution, but also to defeat unacceptable proposals. Advocacy takes many forms. A comprehensive advocacy campaign will first and foremost influence political support for a program by educating policymakers. Depending on the situation, policymakers can include national, state or local legislators; county or city council members; school board members; or anyone else in a position to promote or reject proposals that you care about. In the context of this course, we can influence political support by pointing out commitments that governments have made and educating them about the value-added and effective work done by young people to support their peers in HIV/AIDS prevention and care. A combination of education and holding policymakers to commitments made is needed to advocate on these issues.

Another important target for advocacy campaigns is the public, since public desires affect political decisions. A campaign aimed at the public could target a general community or a specific group such as parents in a particular neighborhood. In your case, this could mean that you inform those in your community about the issues through awareness raising events and in this way, influence the community (particularly if it's greatly affected by HIV/AIDS) to join you in the kind of advocacy work you will be doing to reach out and influence governments. Partnerships and alliances are a vital part of effective advocacy

¹ Advocacy in Action – International HIV/AIDS Alliance



Keep in mind that the only prerequisite to being an advocate is being committed to the issue at hand. Therefore, if you work with staff or health professionals who are passionate about this and offer help, make use of it – it is important to involve as many interested people, particularly those you work with, as possible.

There are many different viewpoints of the appropriate meaning of ‘advocacy’. Below are three fairly typical definitions:

David Cohen, Co-Director of the Advocacy Institute suggests that:

*Advocacy is the **pursuit of influencing outcomes** - including public policy and resource allocation decisions within political, economic, and social systems and institutions - that directly affect people's lives.*

Advocacy organizations draw their strength from and are accountable to people - their members, constituents, and/or members of affected groups.

Advocacy has purposeful results: to enable social justice advocates to gain access and voice in the decision making of relevant institutions; to change the power relationships between these institutions and the people affected by their decisions, thereby changing the institutions themselves; and to bring a clear improvement in people's lives.

David Cohen, *Reflections on Advocacy*, Volume I, Advocacy Institute

Similarly, the Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA) suggests:

***Advocacy** is a process that involves a series of actions conducted by organized citizens in order to transform power relationships. The purpose of advocacy is to achieve specific policy changes, program changes, or allocation of resources that benefit the population involved in this process. These changes can take place in the public or the private sector. Effective advocacy is conducted according to a strategic plan and within a reasonable time frame.*

Adapted from The Arias Foundation, Costa Rica

According to Advocates for Youth, advocacy is critical in efforts to ensure that adolescent reproductive and sexual health programs are enacted, funded, implemented and maintained. Advocacy (like lobbying) seems intimidating to many—but the idea is more frightening than the activity. All advocacy involves is making a case in favor of a particular cause using skillful persuasion and/or strategic action.²

All definitions suggest the need to:

- “transform power relations”
- achieve effective outcomes and “improvement in people’s lives”
- achieve greater social justice by making a case in favour of a particular cause

² Advocates for Youth Advocacy Toolkit: <http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/publications/advocacykit.pdf>



Advocacy is often regarded as one of a number of forms of *activism*. Other, closely related forms of activism include *campaigning* and *mobilising*. Advocacy need not necessarily involve mobilisation. For example, an advocacy group might be able to successfully lobby a business group in order to achieve a change in policy without needing to mobilise large numbers of people. However, in order to *empower* people it is usually necessary to involve or mobilise them. Also, keep in mind the difference between advocacy and information, education and communication (IEC), which can also involve influencing, persuading and mobilizing people into action – these are all advocacy ‘words’³. One can use IEC to prepare for advocacy but the point of advocacy is to persuade influential people to change, rather than IEC and community mobilization, which are more about working with the general public or specific groups of people⁴.

In much of this workshop we will focus on the forms of advocacy that most clearly involve **campaigning in ways that mobilise and attempt to empower people**. This is not to deny the important role that other forms of advocacy can play, and advocacy types need to be chosen to suit the circumstances and objectives of the group involved (as will be stressed throughout the workshop).

Sometimes desirable outcomes can be achieved without changing power relations, and vice versa. For example, it may be possible to lobby a powerful politician to change a law (say on domestic violence or to provide a village health service), without changing the power relations which give the politician his/her power. Alternatively, it may be possible to change power relations by overthrowing a government and yet not achieve the outcomes that were desired.

It is important to develop advocacy strategies that effectively reconcile short-term, intermediate and long-term goals of the program.

Different forms of Advocacy

There are many different forms that advocacy can take. Each has its strengths and weaknesses and each can play an important role in advancing the human and social rights of people and AIDS-related impact mitigation work.

One form of advocacy involves the work of experienced advocates with government or major agencies (such as UNESCO or the World Bank) to change national or international policies. An example of this was Greenpeace’s advocacy work to influence the exportation of toxic waste from the producer nation to other (usually developing) nations. This led to the Basel Convention which implemented many of Greenpeace’s demands. Another example is Oxfam-CAA’s Mining Ombudsman who acts on behalf of communities adversely affected by the activities of mining companies.

Keck and Sikkink (1998) view the work of *Transnational Advocacy Networks* in terms of campaigns, which they define as “sets of strategically linked activities in which members...develop explicit, visible ties and mutually recognized roles in pursuit of a common goal (and generally against a common target).” Many of the Transnational Advocacy Networks that Keck and Sikkink review are networks aimed at putting

³ Pg. 12 ICASO’s Advocacy in Action Toolkit

⁴ Ibid.



international pressure on governments or corporate bodies in order to change their policies. This involves major research and information sharing between network members and often relies on international moral and political pressure for success. However, their global nature and government focus sometimes makes it difficult to simultaneously work to empower people at a grass roots level.

A different form of advocacy can be seen in the community building work of many agencies in the third world (including Oxfam-CAA). One example is the work of a small NGO called *HEED Bangladesh* (the word 'HEED' is a derived form of Health, Education and Economic Development). In order to empower members of the community HEED established village-based groups in the form of education groups. They were built around Paulo Freire's adult literacy methods (discussed below), involving creative reflection using pictures for discussion, and learning to read and write. In the process of developing literacy and education groups HEED also facilitated community discussion around health and other issues that were considered important to group members. The groups became increasingly aware of their local issues and confident about starting to tackle them. From a feeling of powerlessness and resulting apathy the groups became empowered and active in influencing their own future. (<http://www.wistp.murdoch.edu.au/teaching/N212/n212content/topics/topic11/topic11.html#casestudy>)

Both examples represent valid and valuable forms of advocacy, but in some ways they appear to be at opposite ends of an advocacy continuum: the first is an example of *advocacy for* a community and the second is an example of *advocacy with* a community.

Advocacy conducted *for* others, for instance, a group of impoverished villagers or disabled people, involves campaigning to achieve better outcomes, such as financial assistance, access to services, etc., for those groups. The people who directly benefit from such outcomes often do not really play a major role in the advocacy program, so long as the outcomes are achieved. There are many examples of such forms of advocacy. Advocacy programs aimed at obtaining greater foreign aid contributions have achieved valuable results through the efforts of activists in the rich or developed countries⁵. However, these have generally not directly involved people from the poorer countries that they aimed to assist. Similarly, campaigns to assist disabled people, especially those suffering severe disabilities, have sometimes had little alternative but to advocate on behalf of a group of people not able to advocate on their own behalf. A group like Amnesty International usually has no choice but to act on behalf of, or for, someone whose human rights are being abused.

But experience has shown that in the case of both foreign aid and disability advocacy, there is often considerable opportunity, and value, in facilitating greater involvement of those people who are expected to benefit from the changes. There is a real danger of underestimating people's abilities in advocating on their own behalf (even if some assistance might be required in the early stages – a good example of this was provided by the disability self-help

⁵ Throughout this discussion I have used the terms "developed" and "developing" countries as a way of distinguishing between the relatively prosperous, capitalist and largely "western" nations, in contrast to those countries that are much poorer, have fewer productive resources and capacities and considerably less financial or industrial power. The terms are largely synonymous with the "North" and "South" distinction or the 'third world', 'first world' classification. I am fully aware that alternative terms are often desirable, and that the so-called "developed" countries are in reality "over developed" and take not only an unfair but also an unsustainable share of the world's resources.



group called “Reinforce” in Victoria during the 1980s). Indeed, many well-intentioned advocacy programs risk inadvertently ‘patronising’ the people they intend to help and in the process further *disempowered* them. By speaking on behalf of disadvantaged people instead of assisting them to speak on their own behalf it is likely they will feel even less capable or confident to manage their own affairs or influence their own futures. The people that advocates contact, such as governments or agencies, are also likely to be confirmed in their views about the limited abilities of the community when the community is not advocating on its own behalf.

Advocacy organisations increasingly desire to promote the *empowerment* of people and groups currently not empowered. Most advocacy theorists now argue that wherever possible, and to whatever extent possible, we should engage in advocacy *with* the people we want to help. In other words, instead of advocating on behalf of others we should be working with people to help them advocate for themselves. For these reasons, it is very important that when you think about advocacy, involving those who you will advocate around and aim to affect.

Also, ensure that you don’t isolate potential allies by partaking in radical protesting or shouting of slogans. For example, if you block the roadway, you will only anger the drivers who will be upset at you and not pay attention to the cause that you are advocating. It is very easy to alienate potential allies in this way so be careful not to do so!⁶

There is nothing new in this proposition. An old Chinese proverb said that “*Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day: teach him how to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime*”.

The concept of *empowerment* is central to most theories of community development because without giving people the skills, resources and the confidence to use them there is little lasting progress. Short-term gains can be obtained, but often it is only when a community or group is empowered that those gains can be defended and built on.

Nevertheless, much advocacy work involves both types of advocacy (i.e. advocacy *for* and advocacy *with*), sometimes hand in hand. There is no simple rule about the most appropriate form of advocacy and activists need to base their judgement on what is appropriate in the social and political environment they are working in. It is generally recognised that successful advocacy involves an appropriate balance between advocacy for *empowerment* and advocacy for *outcomes*.

To help you understand differences between advocacy and other related concepts, please study the table from the Advocacy in Action Toolkit, International Council of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO) below on the next page.

For these reasons, it is very important that when you think about advocacy, involving those who you will advocate around and aim to affect.

⁶ Thank you to Daniel Suk, GYCA Canadian focal point for this information.

	Advocacy	IEC	Community mobilisation	Networking & partnerships	Fund raising & resource mobilisation	Overcoming stigma & discrimination
What can it change?	Policies, implementation of policies, laws and practices	Awareness and behaviour	Capacity of communities to identify and address their problems	Isolation and duplication	Level of resources available for HIV/AIDS work	Level of stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS
Target group	Decision-makers, leaders, policy-makers, people in positions of influence	Particular age group, gender, residents of an area, etc.	Members of a community	Individuals or groups who have a similar agenda	Communities, local councils, government, donors	People who stigmatise or discriminate
Does it mainly target people who have influence over others?	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Typical indicators of success	Policies, implementation, laws or practices which enable improved HIV/AIDS prevention and care	Percentage of youth using condoms; changes in attitude to people living with HIV/AIDS	A community problem is solved; more people attend community meetings	Members of the network or partnership achieve more than they could if they worked alone	Farmer gives use of building for meetings; members of mosque give alms; donor gives grant	Fewer workers dismissed because of HIV status; less cases of depression among people living with HIV/AIDS



Planning a Vision of Change

After studying the above definitions and different forms of advocacy, you should understand how change happens and what are some useful elements to understand the process of change. In this workshop, we take on key concepts offered by the Oxfam Advocacy Institute⁷.

In the context of UNGASS, we will aim to highlight the importance of youth activism in achieving the commitments as well as holding governments accountable. To do this, we will try to

- Influence political, economic and/or social *outcomes* that directly affect people's lives (i.e. lobbying for a policy change)
- Change the *processes* by which decisions are made, including creating openings for those affected by decisions to be involved in making them (i.e. involving participation of young people in policymaking on HIV/AIDS via a National Youth Council or National AIDS Council)

In studying these concepts, you need to think about what you speak for and who you represent. Also, remember that the process of change is incremental. In most cases, the changes desired are large and complex, meaning they will be reached by stringing together a series of smaller steps and victories. While campaigns should be planned with timelines, achieving objectives might take longer than you initially anticipate. It takes time to meet with government officials, organize the process and meetings – and it might take as long as a year to achieve desired outcome. However, to link one step to the next, planning, reflection and vision are essential. Two cycles of change affect advocacy efforts:

Problem solving Cycle:

- You will understand UNGASS Declaration of Commitments and to what extent your government has gone to take action on the commitments
- You identify what needs to change and/or be addressed
- You consider solutions and one for identified reasons
- The solution is implemented and necessary change happens

Issue Life Cycle: At each stage, different skills, actions, roles and responsibilities are needed.

Birth. A new demand, issue, idea or proposal takes form (this will be done by you when you identify what needs to be changed or addressed – either locally or nationally)

Childhood. The issue is nurtured, supported and built (partnerships, alliances to involve interested stakeholders in the planning process)

⁷ Information for this section is substantially taken from 'Advocacy for Social Justice' Toolkit: A Global Action and Reflection Guide from the Oxfam Advocacy Institute



Adolescence. The issue advances through early stages of decision making (organizing awareness raising, actions to advocate the issue)

Adulthood. The issue reaches a resolute decision (make some progress with campaigning – i.e. policymaker agrees to meet and discuss potentials for policy change or agrees to involve a young person with National AIDS Council)

Maturity. The idea is implemented, monitored and evaluated in the short term

Renewal. Implementation is evaluated to determine if it should continue in the long term (if the new demand has not manifested in a policy change or action by government, consideration should happen as to why not, what can be improved and if the campaign should continue as is)

Use these concepts to think ahead and brainstorm about advocacy planning. Change is multi-dimensional. The process of organizing demands and placing them on those with power to make change affects individuals, organizations, families, communities, and civil society as well as society as a whole and its governing institutions.

Even the best advocacy efforts will rarely know exactly which action, tactic or tool moves a key audience to act in the desired way. Therefore, it is important to focus on several key audiences at once and to combine “inside” tools (such as lobbying a decision maker(s)) with “outside” tools (such as mobilizing the grassroots, mass media and other pressure makers). This combination of inside and outside tools serves another purpose: it helps organizations and advocacy efforts stay connected and accountable to the grassroots and those who are directly affected by the issue.

Approaching Advocacy from the First World and Third World Advocacy

This e-workshop recognizes that first and third world advocacy is often very different, not least because the issue being advocated might have a much greater impact in a third world country rather than first world. Since 70% of HIV/AIDS infections occur in Africa⁸, activism to impact PLWHAs (People Living with HIV/AIDS) will happen on a much greater scale there than it would in the US which has 0.6% HIV prevalence rate⁹, a more aggressive response is needed in areas which have particularly high prevalence and incidence rates.

In this light, the e-workshop provides flexibility for participants who are from the US, Canada, Europe or another country that has taken domestic action to challenge HIV/AIDS. Although the research methodology will be the same, the actions might be different; twinning

⁸ See Human Rights Watch, World Report 2002: Africa Overview, available at <http://www.hrw.org/wr2k2/africa.html>

⁹ 2003 figure, according to U.S. Central Intelligence Agency



(connecting youth in one country to youth in another) can occur as well as letter-writing campaigns and other actions of solidarity. Additionally, other campaigns in first world countries that center around universities will also be encouraged in areas where direct community organizing among PLWHAs and/or other partners¹⁰ would not make an impact. These will be discussed in more detail in the next modules.

Here is an example of an approach to advocacy – taken from the third world and applied in the first world:

Paulo Freire – Advocacy as Liberation Through Adult Learning

Paulo Freire is well known through his work in adult literacy and community building in developing South American countries from the 1960s onwards. He developed what has sometimes been called “liberation pedagogy”. Liberation pedagogy means ‘learning for liberation’ and was based on the theory that people learn best when they can directly relate what they are trying to learn to their immediate experiences. Freire argued that adult literacy was best learnt through the discussion of the lives, problems and hopes of the students. He also argued that the learning of literacy, when undertaken in this way, would raise people’s understanding of their circumstances and enable them to develop liberating consciousness and programs. Freire’s aim was not simply to provide higher levels of literacy within oppressed communities but to raise awareness (or ‘consciousness’) of their oppression and to empower them to liberate themselves from oppression.

Tom Heaney summarises Freire’s approach thus:

Shared power in learning is exercised in control over the curriculum, its contents and methods, and over the coordination of all learning activities. Education for liberation provides a forum open to the imaginings and free exercise of control by learners, teachers, and the community, while also providing for the development of those skills and competencies without which the exercise of power would be impossible. Empowerment is both the means and the outcome of this pedagogy which some have come to call "liberatory education."

Freirean, community-based adult education continues to provide a working model for resolving the problem of illiteracy in the United States . . . because it links the problem of illiteracy with broader social and political ills and because it does not propose merely educational solutions to these problems. Its hope and its promise lies in social action for change as an intended consequence of critical understanding.

Tom Heaney, [Issues in Freirean Pedagogy](http://nlu.nl.edu/ace/Resources/Documents/FreireIssues.html#Empowerment),
<http://nlu.nl.edu/ace/Resources/Documents/FreireIssues.html#Empowerment>

During the 1960s Freire’s “liberation pedagogy” became well-known in many developing countries as well as in the western world. In the USA it was seen as relevant to attempts to educate adults in impoverished, ghetto communities. Freire’s work was also recognised as part of a broader attack on western forms of education and schooling in which writers like

¹⁰ This might be the case in parts of the West where local organizing might be difficult simply because there are not many organizations or people working on the issue.



Ivan Illich also participated (see for example Illich's *Deschooling Society*, <http://philosophy.la.psu.edu/illich/deschool/intro.html>).

Freire's work appears to be considered most relevant to advocacy and activist work aimed at **'community building' and raising both the skills and consciousness of a community.**

When HEED applied Freire's approach they had to alter his methodology: *"The reading and writing aspects, although useful in bringing some dignity and hope (the Paulo Freire methodology stimulates this) were limited. The lack of ongoing reading resources and the busyness of life made it less than ideal, especially for women. In time the consciousness raising aspect of the group work was continued, though less emphasis was placed on a high degree of reading and writing skill development."*

<http://www.wistp.murdoch.edu.au/teaching/N212/n212content/topics/topic11/heed/heed3.htm>

Tom Heaney concludes that Freire's liberation pedagogy is most likely to work and obtain some official support when the political and cultural context is appropriate:

"Historically, liberatory programs for literacy have been sustained by government only during the brief time following a revolution, as in Nicaragua (Miller, 1985) or Guinea Bisseau (Freire, 1978) -- a time when the possibilities for change are real and the political apparatus for accomplishing those changes is at hand. The pedagogy of Paulo Freire has limited potential outside such chaotic and transitional periods in a nation's history."

Tom Heaney, Issues in Freirean Pedagogy.

In conclusion, Freire's approach is valuable because of:

- Its emphasis on the empowerment of the disadvantaged community he is working with.
- Its method of relating educational activities directly to the lived experiences of the community.
- Its use of learning activities as a form of consciousness raising within the community.

Freire also placed considerable emphasis on the value of "Action Research" or "Participatory Research" where the community or group being researched is directly involved in deciding the nature of the research, its methodology and outcomes. Freire considered such Action Research as a form of empowerment (analogous to Freire's literacy campaigns).

For further information see:

Paulo Freire, "Research Methods", *Literacy Discussion* (Dar es Salaam), Spring 1974.

Budd Hall, "Participatory Research: An Approach for Change", *Convergence*, Vol. 8, No. 2.

Budd Hall, "Knowledge as a Commodity and Participatory Research", *Prospects*, Vol. IX, No 4, 1979. reprinted in *Action Research Reader*, 3rd edition, edited by Stephen Kemmis and Robin McTaggart, Deakin University, Geelong, 1988, pp 275-290.

Chris Duke, *Participatory Research Working Papers*, Asian-South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education, and Centre for Continuing Education, ANU, Canberra, 1978.L. Dave Brown, 'People-Centered Development and Participatory Research', *Harvard Educational Review*, Vol. 55, No.1, pp. 69-75. 1985.

Richard Guy, "Exclusiveness and Inclusiveness in Educational Research: Prospects for Participatory Research in Papua New Guinea", in *Participation and Educational Change: Implications for Educational Reform in Papua New Guinea*. Eds. Charmian Thirlwall and Beatrice Avalos, University of Papua New Guinea Press, Port Moresby, 1993, pp. 35-50.



Exercise 1

It is always important to consider the type of activism or advocacy you might want to engage in. Without first clarifying the directions and extent of your advocacy project you may end up either achieving fewer outcomes than possible or trying to achieve outcomes that are not practical.

For example, is your aim to empower people or to achieve a specific change in policy? Can you manage both? How will this influence your strategy and tactics or impact on your organisational structure and resources?

Outline the problem

1. Write a few sentences indicating what the issue or problem is that you want to develop an advocacy campaign around. If you already are working on a campaign describe it.

Establish some initial guidelines

2. Is the project's primary focus to achieve a change in policy or practice or is it to empower a group/community? Explain your answer.
3. Will you engage in advocacy *for* the group or community or advocacy *with*? Why? Explain your answer.

