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ABSTRACT

This handbook is for those seeking to improve children's education, especially those organizations that work closely with children, parents, and teachers. It sets out a way of approaching advocacy work with the understanding that advocacy groups have a greater impact on the direction of educational change if they have a well-thought-out advocacy strategy. The information is based on an international conference of nongovernmental organizations that was held in 1999. The handbook is divided into six chapters. Chapter 1 explains why education advocacy is needed and examines the mechanisms for change and the importance of a planned but responsive process. The next chapter looks at the elements that should be changed and how to decide upon a specific change objective. The third chapter discusses how change can come about, paying particular attention to the political context and the education reform process. Chapter 4 explores who has an interest in change and the need to hear the voices of children, parents, teachers, and civil-society groups. The fifth chapter outlines how to plan advocacy approaches and activities, including action research, policy analysis, and lobbying, and the last chapter discusses the importance of evaluating the effectiveness of advocacy campaigns. An appendix presents two case studies. (RJM)

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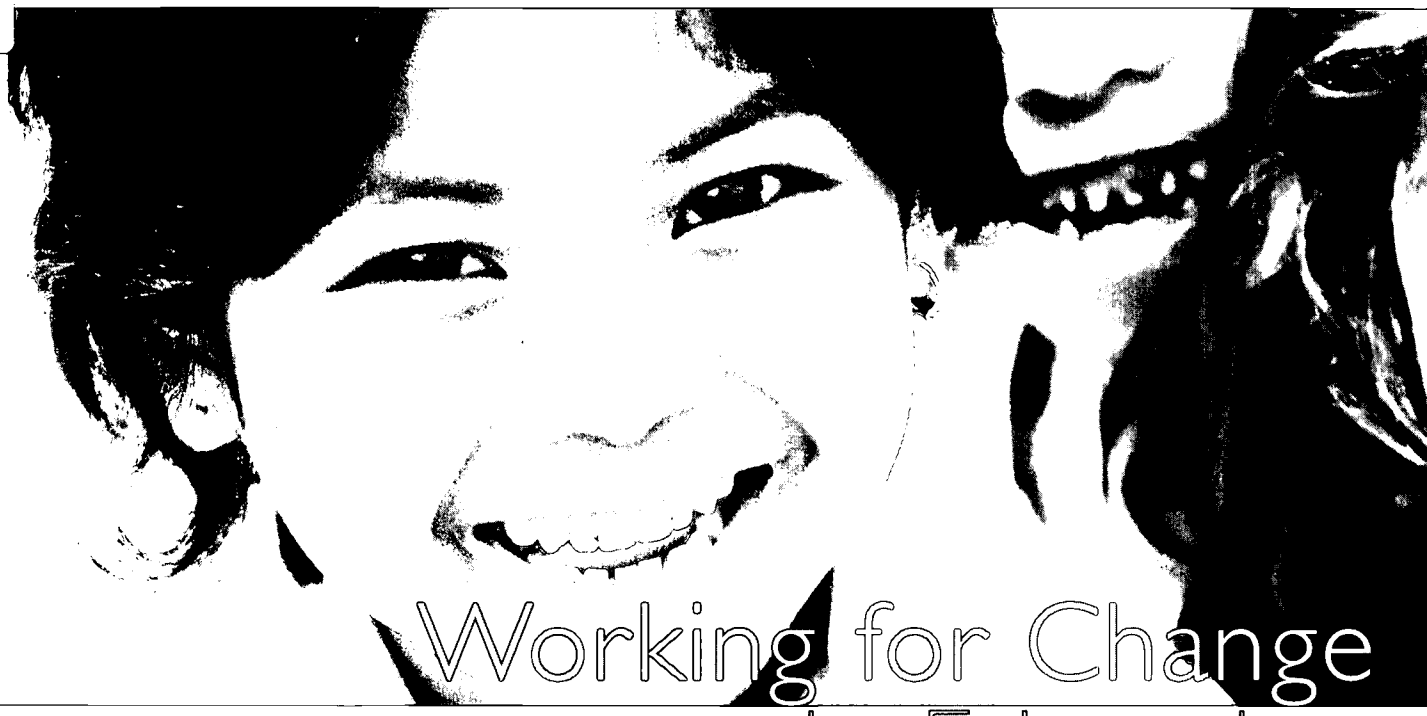

Working for Change in Education

A handbook for planning advocacy

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Save the Children

Working for change in education

A handbook for planning advocacy

Save the Children

Save the Children is the UK's leading international children's charity. Working in more than 70 countries, we run emergency relief alongside long-term development and prevention work to help children, their families and communities to be self-sufficient.

Drawing on this practicical experience, Save the Children also seeks to influence policy and practice to achieve lasting benefits for children within their communities. In all its work, Save the Children endeavours to make children's rights a reality.

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Preface

Who is this handbook for?

This handbook is for any group seeking to bring about improvements in the education provided for children, especially community groups, policy and research institutes, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). We particularly hope it will be useful to groups who work closely with children, parents, and teachers. They have the most to gain from improved education, and the most to contribute to the process of change, but they are traditionally least well organised to press for it.

What does it deal with?

The handbook is a practical guide on *how* to do advocacy on education. It does not deal with the content of education, its policies or practice, but sets out a way of approaching advocacy work, whatever educational issue you are seeking to raise. Our experience makes it clear that non-governmental and other groups can have a greater influence on the direction of educational change if they have a well-thought-out advocacy strategy; in other words, if they are clear from the beginning about what they are trying to achieve, if they consciously direct their activities towards that aim, and continually review what they are doing in the light of a changing situation.

We describe this as a "planned but responsive process". The handbook gives you a framework for planning to work in this way. It takes you through a logical set of questions about the task, and presents tools, or exercises, to help you clarify what you aim to achieve and how to go about it. It gives examples of the experiences of a variety of organisations, with their conclusions about what works well and what problems can arise. Many of these approaches apply to advocacy work in any area, but they are illustrated here by examples from work on education.

How it was produced?

Ideas for the handbook were put together by a group of NGO representatives from across four continents who met in Recife, Brazil, in July 1999. The meeting was hosted by Save the Children UK, an international NGO which works in education in 60 countries, in partnership with a range of national and local groups. The aim was to debate and collect the experiences of these NGOs in a way that would help others plan their own advocacy on education. The material produced was later edited by a smaller group.

The majority of the organisations represented were from Latin America or South Asia. This provided a particularly fruitful comparison of experience, between two regions that do not traditionally have much cross-fertilisation of ideas. Though the cultural and institutional contexts are very different, in both regions there is a strong tradition of civil society groups working for social change, and many NGOs are active on educational issues. But although we draw on this special experience, the approaches to advocacy which emerge from their work are applicable anywhere. In editing the handbook we have also included examples from regions not represented at the meeting.

The experience it draws on

Together the participants brought a broad range of experience:

- They have worked on education issues in rural and urban areas, in situations of long-term development and of response to emergencies.
- They have developed partnerships with other NGOs, governments, multilateral and bilateral organisations, with both the public and the private sectors, and with religious and community groups, teachers, parents and children themselves.
- Their focus ranges from pre-school issues through to adult education; from the skills of basic literacy to education for active citizenship, or specific areas such as prevention of HIV/AIDS.
- Some of them work intensively in one locality, some nationally, and some internationally. The targets for their advocacy range from school management committees through to national governments and the World Bank.

The participants would be happy to hear from any group that is using the handbook. We hope that it will prompt further collaboration across organisations that share similar aims, so that together we can be more effective in getting better education for children.

HOW TO USE THE HANDBOOK

1 Since advocacy is a collective process, ideally you and the group you are working with should use the handbook together.

2 A useful first step might be for each of you to read quickly through it to get a sense of the whole process, and then each say which sections you would like to work through in more detail, depending on what seems most relevant to your work.

3 The handbook follows what some think of as the 'stages' or 'steps' of an advocacy process, getting you to clarify:

- what do you want to change?
- how can change come about?
- who can help bring about change?
- what methods will you use?
- how effective is your strategy, and where do you need to adapt?

4 In real life many of these processes will be going on simultaneously, so use the different parts of the handbook flexibly, in whatever order suits your needs.

5 The tools present questions in terms that could be relevant in any context. To bring them to life you need to relate them to the details of your own situation.

1 Education advocacy: why is it needed?

Education for a changing society

Change in education is continually needed, because the world is changing. The purpose of education is to prepare children and young people to take their place as active citizens. To do this, it must develop the potential of children, encouraging them to think and reflect so that they can deal with situations that school could not have envisaged. It must also maintain a dynamic relationship between school and the society around it. For this, education systems need constantly to adapt to changes in society, and the process of educational change should draw on the perceptions of people in the whole society, not just those of government officials, politicians and professionals. Many groups in society need to be active in pressing for the kinds of changes which their own life experience tells them are necessary.

Education systems worldwide are facing major challenges. Tool 1 suggests what some of these challenges might be. Use it with other members of your group, to begin to analyse the key issues in your context.

What is the mechanism for change?

To be effective in a changing society, education systems need to be flexible and responsive. They should, for example, encourage school users and other community groups to put forward ideas and to become involved in decision-making, and they should set up mechanisms to enable that to happen. Regrettably, the opposite is usually the case. Groups of people who have strong views about the changes that are needed in education generally have to push against a system which does not want to listen. This makes the task difficult and often discouraging, but it is nevertheless very necessary. There have been many cases where clearly planned action by groups that have come together with a common aim has achieved remarkable positive change.

Why are schools so out of tune with what parents, children and the broader society hope they will provide? Many countries lack the resources that would be required to deliver effective schools for all. But this is only part of the problem, as is shown by the fact that even in wealthier countries there is disquiet over the kind of education the system provides. A more fundamental problem is that education systems are inherently conservative, for the following reasons:

- In many cases they have been inherited from a previous era
- They need a range of complex administrative and other systems to keep them functioning. These require bureaucracies, which are by their nature inflexible

- Education policies are usually made centrally, with little flexibility for responding to different local needs
- Policy decisions are normally made by politicians and senior civil servants who do not usually consult with ordinary school users for their views, so there is no mechanism for ensuring accountability
- Professional skills are needed to design curricula, set examinations, train teachers and prepare teaching materials, so it is difficult for those most affected to have an input.

All of these processes have the effect (often unintended) of making education systems cumbersome vehicles for responding to social and political change.

TOOL 1: WHAT IS WRONG WITH EDUCATION?

Here are ten points in which education systems are failing children.

- Which apply in your country?
- Which are the issues that most concern you?

Limited opportunity

1 Many children of school age do not have the chance to go to school. Sending children to school costs more than many poor families can afford.

2 Educational opportunities are not equal. Some groups of children are discriminated against, either explicitly or unintentionally.

Poor quality

3 Schools for the impoverished sections of society are of such low quality that it is doubtful whether children benefit by attending.

4 School limits children's development by making them passive, by over-use of rote learning, by not encouraging their natural ability to explore and discover things for themselves.

Schools don't fulfil their purpose

5 The school system does not provide an "education" in the broad sense, but pushes children through exams, stressing the learning of "facts".

6 Employers have become concerned that schools do not equip children for the changing needs of the economy.

7 Socially concerned people feel schools fail to give children a sound basis of values, to prepare them to think critically or take responsible roles in society.

Schools reinforce divisions in society

8 Parents who can afford to, send their children to private schools because they distrust the quality of state education.

9 Young people from disadvantaged groups are often alienated from school, which they feel offers them little, and is out of touch with life as they experience it.

10 The rapid pace of change in information technology has increased the knowledge–opportunity gap between children in well-resourced schools and those in poorer communities, thus making society less equal rather than more.

Why advocate?

Many organisations which work on education do not have a consciously planned advocacy strategy. Some are national-level research or policy institutes, or professional organisations. Others work with specific communities and are successful in bringing about change within their own project area. What has been learned either through research or through practice may be relevant to the rest of the education system, and the experience gained could benefit far greater numbers if the advocacy approach were more widely accepted. If organisations see advocacy as an integral part of their work, this creates the potential to influence change on a much wider scale.

Advocacy based on research or successful local innovation can:

- show local education providers the value of drawing children and parents into more active roles in running schools
- press the state education system to recognise needs among particularly disadvantaged groups of children
- build up pressure to decentralise education, to renew the connection between schools and society and relate what happens in school to the realities of children's lives
- develop evidence of the paramount importance of teachers in creating a good educational experience, and therefore of putting resources into training and paying teachers adequately, and encouraging their creativity
- challenge international donors to spend their budgets in ways that will bring improvements in quality, rather than focusing on enrolment targets.

Advocacy and empowerment

The process of advocating is itself empowering, since it is about increasing people's choices and increasing the number of people influencing decisions. Advocacy may involve discreet lobbying of the minister of education, or nationwide campaigning to build parents' awareness of their legal rights. Its starting point could be action research within a single community, but it could also be linked up with international networks spanning different continents. But the key to successful advocacy lies in recognising that change is more likely to come about if many people are actively involved. The process forces us to learn to co-operate for a common goal. It also requires us to become facilitators: that is, to focus more on what others can do than on what we can do ourselves, and to see what we can do to encourage *their*

potential to work for change. So a critical feature of advocacy in education is strengthening the ability of communities and civil groups to press for what *they* need from the education system; to hold education providers to account for the quality of education, and to challenge them on the gap between official policy and what children actually experience in schools.

TOOL 2: WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

Here are some common definitions of advocacy:

1 Action aimed at changing the policies, positions and programmes of governments, institutions or organisations.

2 An organised, systematic, intentional influencing process on matters of public interest.

3 Putting a problem on the agenda, providing a solution to that problem, and building support for acting on both the problem and the solution.

4 A social change process affecting attitudes, social relationships and power relations, which strengthens civil society and opens up democratic spaces.

- Which is the closest to how you understand it?
- What else would you include in your definition?
- Get several members of your organisation to rate the definitions in the order of preference.
- Now compare your ratings.

Do you have an organisational consensus?

A planned but responsive process

Advocacy is most often a collectively and consciously planned process, not a spontaneous one. A group or organisation that wants to work for some specific change in education thinks about how that change can be brought about. It considers which people have the power to make change happen, and who can help influence those people. It finds out well in advance what events might be taking place that it can use to its advantage. It plans activities designed to increase public support and to put pressure on those in authority.

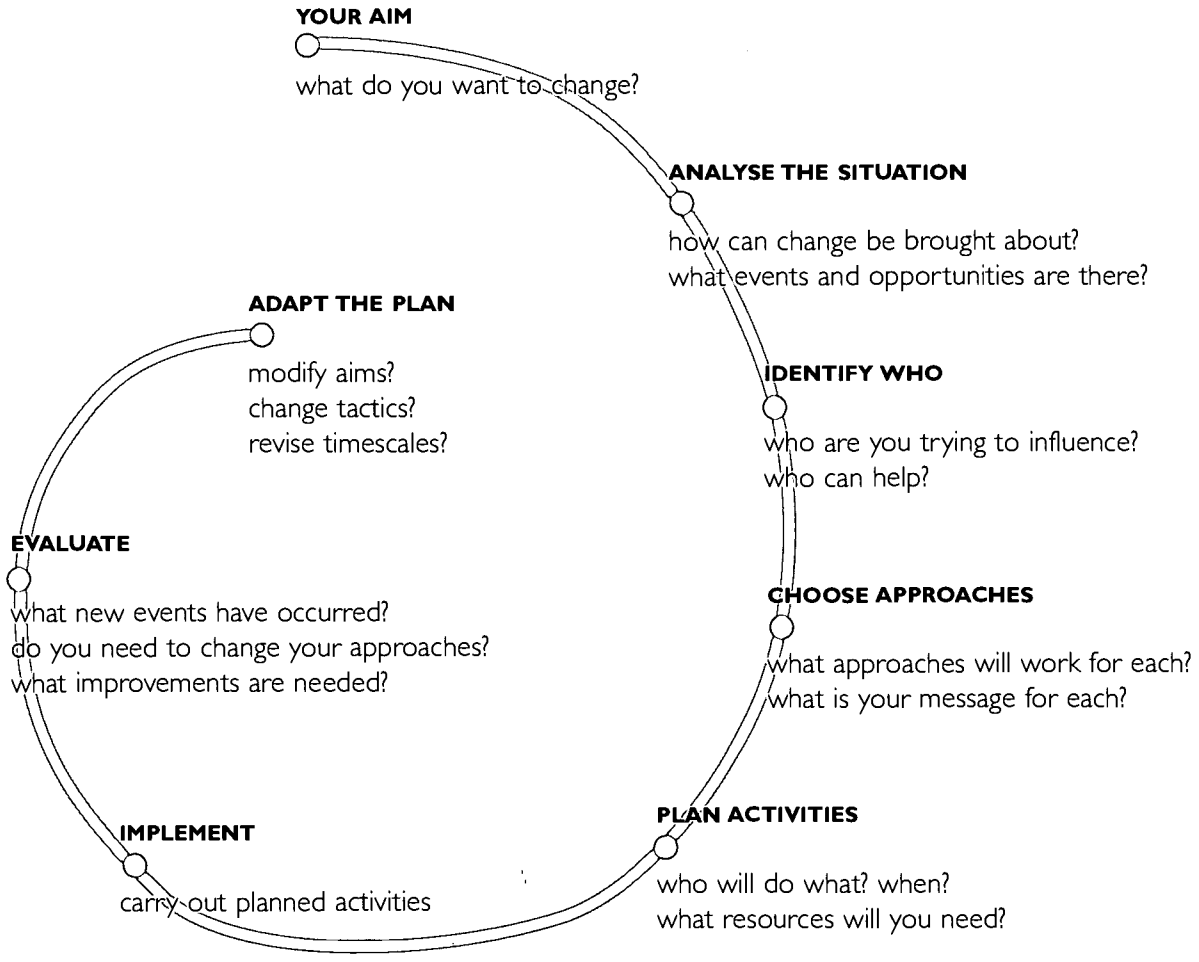
This planning starts long before they begin implementing the strategy. Initial preparation for a major advocacy initiative may take a year or more. This is particularly the case when you are moving away from simply reacting to the initiatives of other agencies (especially government) towards a more proactive style where *you* are trying to set the agenda. Much of the work is gradual, requiring constant consultation with other organisations and individuals. It is important not to rush this work as it represents the foundation of whatever you choose to do next. If you get this planning stage right, your strategy will be clearly focused and based on some level of agreement with like-minded groups and individuals, and this means it is more likely to be effective.

But planning is not something confined to the preparatory stages. An advocacy strategy should be designed so that at regular intervals those involved will stop and consider together what progress they have made, and adjust their strategy accordingly. But in addition to these more formal moments for review, there must be constant checking and validating of plans. The group may need to research fresh evidence to back up their case. Their audience may change after an election or a government reshuffle. Particular events, or the introduction of new policies, could mean that they have to revisit their original perception of what they are trying to change. They will continually need to assess how far they have been successful and whether their planned activities are proving effective. Some of these may have turned out more costly than they had anticipated and they may need to adjust the budget. Advocacy is therefore a highly responsive process. Unless the people doing it constantly adapt to changes in the situation around them, they will find it difficult to succeed. Regular review and adjustment of the plan is a mechanism for remaining responsive, and therefore effective.

TOOL 3: CHARTING THE ADVOCACY CYCLE

Some people find diagrams a useful way to think through all the steps that they must undertake. But different people picture these processes differently.

- The diagram on this page shows them as a continuous spiral. What are the advantages of this? Is there anything it leaves out?
- Work with one other person to devise your own diagrams, which include the processes your organisation will need to go through.
- Get each pair to explain their diagram to the others in the group. Together decide on the features that work best, and produce a final diagram for your own planning.



2 What do you want to change?

What are "change objectives"?

You need to begin by defining the specific changes you want to see happen: your "change objectives". Wherever possible a time element should be included, so you are defining the change you want to see by a certain date.

The first requirement is that these change objectives should be realistic and achievable; but they should also be challenging. In this way they are more likely to inspire people, and to motivate them to help bring about the change you want. You might also want to think of the change objectives in terms of your partners and allies: will having this change objective help support your work within existing partnerships and/or build new ones? If you are unsure of backing from partners and allies, it is unlikely you will be able to mobilise the support needed to achieve your goal.

Change objectives evolve out of an organisation's experience, and derive from its principles. They provide the focus for everything else you do. They need to be expressed in a way that is clear to everyone with whom you come into contact in the course of your work.

Two approaches to improving access

Both these organisations are working to improve access to education, but they have very different priorities, and these are reflected in the way their change objective is expressed:

- *In India, an organisation called Pratham that works in Mumbai (Bombay), took as its change objective: "All children in school regularly and learning by the year 2000". It deliberately avoided defining exactly what children should be learning in school, i.e. details of the curriculum. For the purposes of the organisation's work it was enough that children were receiving some sort of education. Neutrality on the issue of what children were learning meant Pratham was able to harness broad support for its objective from diverse groups – parents, the corporate sector, teachers, the government, etc.*
- *TAREA, an organisation working in Peru, chose as its 25th anniversary campaign objective: "The right to a liberating education". For TAREA the content of education is the key issue, since it sees education as part of the processes of social change it seeks to develop. Thus, it advocates for changes in the curriculum to include education for citizenship, human rights, and environmental sustainability.*

A question of values

The examples in the box above make clear that change objectives are an expression of deeply felt values. Advocacy implies pressing for things you believe in. It is therefore never a neutral activity. This is particularly the case in education. Most people may agree in principle that education is a "good thing" but their ideas about what makes good education will probably differ widely, and there is far from general agreement about whether all children are equally entitled to a good quality education. As advocates we need to be alert to the values that underpin different approaches to education:

- Both the content and the process of good education can be empowering – but many education systems train children to be passive, subservient adults.

  Schools can encourage tolerance and train children to listen to the views of others – but they often reflect the worst of society's attitudes, not the best, and may reinforce class, racial or religious divisions.

- Schools can help children to become active responsible citizens – but many of the so-called best schools encourage children to think that the only thing that matters is their own material success.

Each individual's concept of what makes good education is based on his or her values, and on attitudes to other people and society. Sometimes these attitudes are conscious, sometimes not. There may be a consensus in a particular society which a few individuals or groups wish to challenge. For instance, in many communities it is assumed that it is more important to educate boys than girls, or that children with disabilities cannot learn and therefore it does not matter much whether or not they go to school. Advocacy may involve challenging these deeply held but often unconscious assumptions.

What makes a good teacher?

An education working group was set up in Pakistan to press for improvements in education. The working group includes academics, NGOs and members of government institutions. It works in a context where education provision is highly politicised, and it is difficult for communities or civil society groups openly to challenge the inadequacies of state education provision. It decided to commission research on "What makes a good teacher?" which could be used to build an informed consensus on basic principles about the kinds of changes that were needed.

It might be useful to find a reference point in what has been agreed by international treaty on rights and responsibilities in education provision, and to consider how far the relevant groups in your context share the values embodied in that agreement. Almost all governments have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989; CRC), and pledged themselves to try to carry them out, sharing responsibility with communities and international support where necessary. Tool 4 gives an exercise you can carry out with your own and partner organisations, to establish what common ground you share in your assessment of where there is a need for advocacy.

TOOL 4: CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND EDUCATION

Below are some articles in the CRC which have a bearing on education.

- Which are generally accepted in your society?
- Which does your government try to put into practice?
- Which does your organisation agree with?

On the right to education for all:

Article 28: All children have an equal right to education.

Article 2: There shall be no discrimination based on race, ethnic origin, religion, gender, disability, social group or any other grounds

On children as citizens:

Article 12: Children have the right to have their views heard and respected.

Article 29: The purposes of education are to develop children's capacities and prepare them to take responsible roles in their communities.

On the content and style of education:

Article 31:	Children have the right to leisure and play.
Article 28:	School discipline should be in conformity with the child's human dignity.
Article 17:	Children have the right to information on all matters that affect them, e.g. health education (Article 24); drug and substance abuse (Article 33).

On the rights of particular groups of children:

Article 23:	Children with disabilities have a right to conditions which ensure dignity and allow active participation.
Article 30:	Children from minorities have the right to have their own culture and language respected.
Article 39:	Children from neglectful or exploitative backgrounds have the right to appropriate measures for recovery and social integration.

Deciding on a specific change objective

How do you decide on a specific change objective for your group to focus on?

- It may help to start by thinking in terms of problems and solutions. It is often relatively easy to spot a problem; it is much harder to think of ways of solving it. Nevertheless, it is not enough simply to point out a problem. Your organisation's change objective needs to suggest how change can deliver a solution.
- Learning from others, and sharing your thinking with others, is vital. This is not something that can be done by one person defining the problem and what needs to change, and then bringing in others to help achieve that change. Other stakeholders need to be there from the start, defining problems and proposing solutions.

Listening to those who use schools

When political change in Ethiopia brought in a decentralised education system, Save the Children began to support the new regional administration in one of the poorest regions to manage its basic education system. They prioritised helping regional officials to find out what school users felt was most urgently needed. Some of the communities were refugees who had been resettled; they became involved in deciding where schools should be located. School committees were set up and began to make suggestions about school management. Untrained teachers were consulted about what kind of training they needed. Children were asked to evaluate whether the initial training had made any difference. Head teachers raised problems about the allocation of teachers to their schools and about books not being issued. The regional officials in turn had to press for changes at national level. For instance, the national government initially refused to recognise the training that was being given to new teachers, but after several years of lobbying, that recognition was won.

- Changes in the policy environment may create a need for focused advocacy work, for instance, in response to the drafting of a piece of national legislation, or an international event such as the UN World Education Forum. Or it may be that your organisation or network was created in response to a perceived need for advocacy work on a particular issue.

Building on a common aim

The Education Campaign Coalition in Ghana brought together a wide range of civil groups and NGOs with some interest in education, to put pressure on the government to implement its policy of free compulsory universal basic education. Although each organisation in the network had its own objectives in education, the coalition was able to draw these together into the primary change objective of holding the government to account for its own theoretical commitment to basic education provision.

Analysing the issue

As soon as the problem has been defined, people may have immediate ideas about how to solve the problem through advocacy. The temptation is to move straight away to work on the basis of those ideas, to get moving as quickly as possible. But these initiatives need to be channelled into a coherent framework, developing further advocacy solutions along the way, so that you end up with a strategic advocacy programme where all the activities complement each other, and are directed towards a common purpose.

For this to happen, planning needs to be based on a serious analysis of the problem, undertaken early on. You will need to ask:

- What are the causes of the problems we have identified?
- What are the trends in society that could have an impact on this issue?
- Do these trends offer opportunities, or pose threats, for advocacy work on this issue?

Here is an example of the first step, trying to understand causes:

Why are Roma children disadvantaged?

In Eastern and Central European countries children in Roma communities appear to be a seriously disadvantaged group educationally. A significant proportion do not attend school. Many drop out of school early. They perform badly in tests. A large proportion of children in special institutions (for children with disabilities, for orphans) are Roma. It is difficult to understand fully what is behind this, because the position of the Roma is a contentious topic. Save the Children staff in several of these countries are undertaking an analysis of the situation to consider whether, and how, it would be appropriate to advocate on behalf of Roma children's right to education. In analysing causes they have considered:

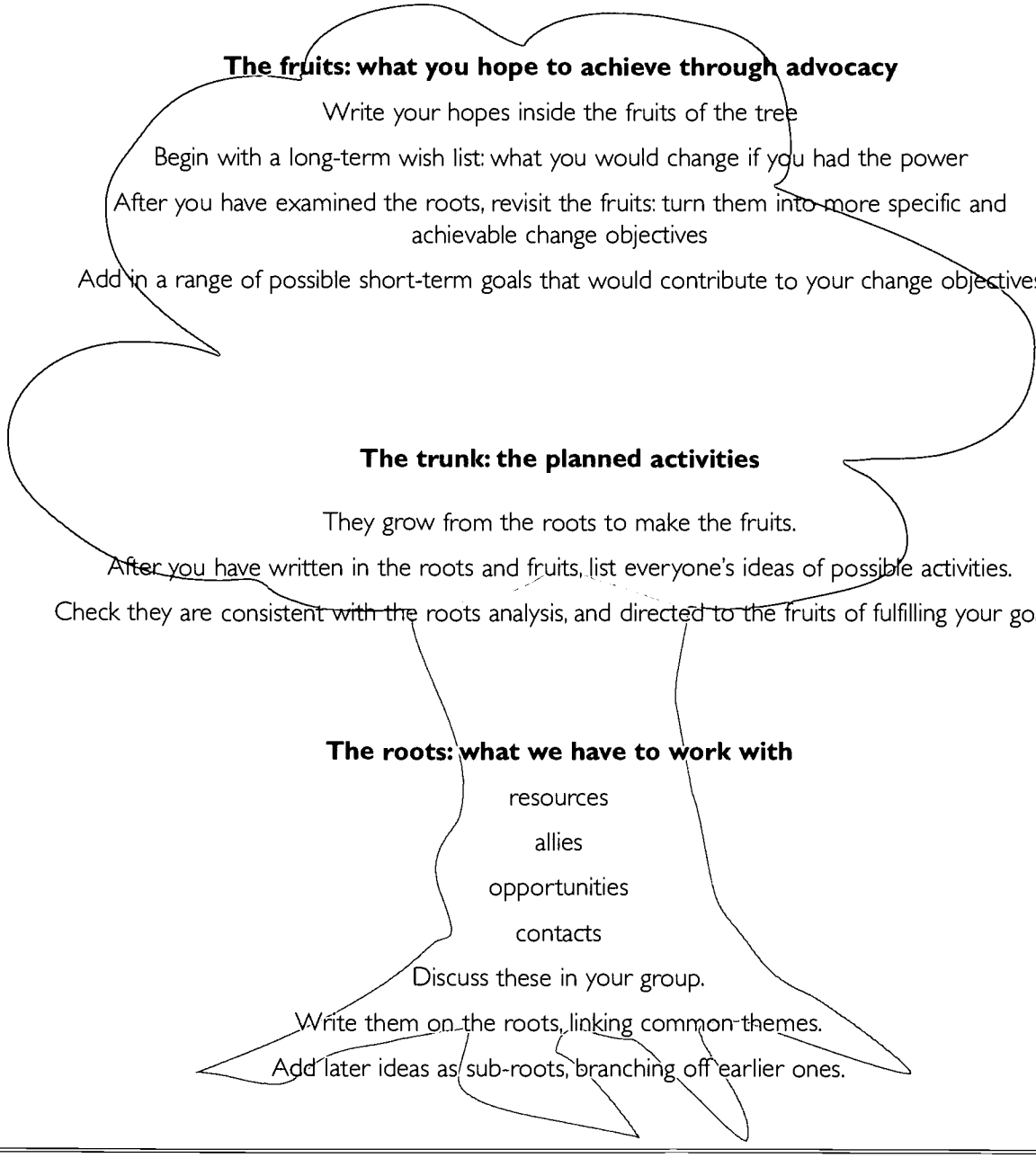
- *Economic causes, e.g. families are poor and need the children to earn.*
- *Social and cultural causes, e.g. Roma parents feel teachers and other children are prejudiced against Roma, and do not want to expose their children to hostility.*
- *The education system, e.g. IQ tests are done in the national language, which young Roma children do not know very well.*
- *Political causes, e.g. decision-makers do not admit there is a problem.*

The same categories (economic, social/cultural, educational, political) can be used in trying to understand trends and opportunities.

Once the issue itself has been researched and the results shared in your group, the next step is to analyse what it might be possible to do. It helps at this stage to draw in the experience of a wide range of stakeholders (people with an interest in change on that issue). Tool 5 gives an exercise you might find useful to facilitate this planning.

TOOL 5: WHAT IS ACHIEVABLE? "ROOTS AND FRUITS"

- Tape together at least six sheets of flipchart paper.
- Draw a large outline of a tree to represent your advocacy strategy.
- It should have a short, fat trunk and plenty of space to add more roots and branches.



The fruits: what you hope to achieve through advocacy

Write your hopes inside the fruits of the tree

Begin with a long-term wish list: what you would change if you had the power

After you have examined the roots, revisit the fruits: turn them into more specific and achievable change objectives

Add in a range of possible short-term goals that would contribute to your change objectives

The trunk: the planned activities

They grow from the roots to make the fruits.

After you have written in the roots and fruits, list everyone's ideas of possible activities.

Check they are consistent with the roots analysis, and directed to the fruits of fulfilling your goals.

The roots: what we have to work with

resources

allies

opportunities

contacts

Discuss these in your group.

Write them on the roots, linking common themes.

Add later ideas as sub-roots, branching off earlier ones.

Developing broader ownership

To advocate successfully you will need to ally yourselves with others who share your values and objectives, but it is important to form an accurate estimate of which of those values and objectives are really shared. It is easy to slip into assuming that the area of agreement is greater than it is.

- Does everyone agree there is a problem or a need?
- Do others have different changes they would like to see?
- Do they think the changes you are proposing will solve the problem?
- Are you and they the right organisations to be doing advocacy on this issue?

Consultation and debate can take place with a variety of stakeholders – those affected by an issue – from children and parents through to international NGOs and organisations. You can solicit the views of others through meetings, consultations, publications, working through networks and so on. If you are able to accommodate the views of such people you are much more likely to succeed in gaining their support for the changes you want. You may find allies and build partnerships, and you will avoid duplicating the work of other groups. In some ways, therefore, defining your change objectives can be similar to coming to agreement over time with as many of the stakeholders as possible. If you do this you can speak out from a position of greater legitimacy since you will be representing the views of many people.

However, there may be limits as to how far you can accommodate the views of others without losing the central thrust of your change objective. This requires careful attention and may need to be renegotiated over time.

Balancing objectives with an open agenda

In Bangladesh the Aspiration Project aimed to get children in a poor community interested in education. But its organisers thought that if they asked children what they needed, education would not come high on their list, that if they went and asked children if they wanted a school they would say "Yes please" but would not be too excited about it.

So they decided to ask the children to think through their aspirations: what they would like to be in the future and what they would probably end up being. The children were asked also to consult elders in the community, and their peers. After a while they had mostly chosen very realisable aspirations (policeman, lorry driver, etc) but had come to recognise that basic education would be needed. They became passionate and angry about why they did not have a school. They did some advocacy with the local authority (which was actually cheating them: a school existed, but only on paper) but no progress was made. One of the problems was that the the area was prone to floods and teachers from outside could not get to the school. In the end, the adults in the community were so impressed with the children's seriousness that they organised to pay for a ferry to bring teachers in.

Refining or modifying your change objectives

Your change objectives are likely to change over time. New evidence, or changes in the external context, in your own organisation, or in the organisations with which you work may all have a bearing on whether the objectives remain relevant, or need updating. The larger the organisation, the more complex will be the process of defining and refining change objectives.

It is a mistake to assume that everyone in your organisation knows where the change objectives have come from and why. There will be a need periodically to confirm the relevance of the change objectives for those people involved in doing the advocacy work. It is helpful if there is continuity, with the same people being involved for long periods. They will know and understand what lies behind the original change objectives. However, getting new people involved can also be helpful in ensuring that the change objectives remain sharp, relevant and with as wide an application as possible.

Do you have evidence and solutions?

There are two sorts of information that you could consider collecting. The first relates to evidence about the current situation – a situation which you want to change. Gathering such information increases your authority to speak out about an issue. To gain authority requires having both legitimacy and credibility. You enhance your legitimacy by representing a broad or important section of people and groups and ensuring their involvement in your work. Credibility, on the other hand, comes from being able to demonstrate that you know what you are talking about. This may come from your direct practical experience of work in education. In such cases, good documentation and evaluation of your work may be crucial. Doing research is another approach which may help to demonstrate the nature of the problem, and is often given additional credibility by the professional reputation of the researcher. Thorough documentation and research at an early stage should also give you good base-line information (in other words, information with which comparisons can be made in the future), which will be useful when reviewing and evaluating your advocacy work.

The other kind of evidence you need is proof that the solutions you are proposing have a good chance of succeeding. When you do advocacy work, it is not enough to call for change. You have to set out what the change should be – in other words, a solution to the problems you see in the current situation. Some organisations doing advocacy work concerning education make demonstrating a solution their main strategy. If you can show that something works, even if it is on a relatively small scale, you may be more likely to persuade people that a change is worth making. Advocacy then becomes a means by which this experience can be scaled up to have an impact at a much wider level.

Showing that it works

The Escuela Nueva (New School) project in Colombia is one of the best-known examples of an education innovation that started small and had dramatic impact. It was set up to support deprived rural communities to generate a quality education that would be relevant to their needs. The key was a high degree of community participation. From working with 500 schools it has expanded to include 27,000 schools across the country. This success has prompted many donors, including the World Bank, to look at the model to see if it could be used in other countries.

Even if demonstrating a solution is not part of your main strategy, you should be able to show that the solutions you propose have a fair chance of succeeding. To do so you need to think about your proposed solution and gather evidence for it. Exactly how you go about this will depend on the nature of your work and the resources you can spare. You might be able to undertake a major research exercise. On the other hand, you might have to make do with whatever previously published material you can find on the subject.

Of course, different audiences respond to different kinds of evidence. Some people demand highly scientific or statistical proof; others are swayed more by personal testimonies and motivating stories. This will vary both between individuals and between different cultures. You will need to consider which approaches are likely to work best; this is a critical factor in how you present your message.

3 How can change come about?

Where are decisions taken?

If you want to bring about change you need to understand how change happens. This will vary considerably, depending on your local context. For example, there is no point directing your advocacy work at local government if decisions are made nationally. In many cases, decision-making follows specific official procedures, and therefore it might be important for you to be seen to be following this protocol.

On the other hand, you might discover that the most important steps in decision-making happen informally or that they are obscured or hidden. It is important that you identify what happens in reality rather than what happens in theory. Who can actually make the decisions you need? What and who could encourage them to make these decisions? What and who could discourage them? Does formal, legal change necessarily lead to real change on the ground? Is government in a position to circumvent bureaucracy or devote appropriate resources to the implementation of the policy? Who can translate decisions into action?

You also need to know the time frame of the decision-making process. Is your issue on the political agenda? Are there specific times – windows of opportunity – when your advocacy is more likely to be heard? How can you get involved in the informal discussions which take place before more public debate? Will there be a formal consultation process on any proposals? If the decision-making process is protracted, this has implications for your strategy. How will you maintain momentum behind your issue?

The defining political context

Education is a social institution, serving a social function. The society and its politics form the framework within which advocacy takes place. They determine what we need to try to change, and to some extent what it is possible to change. For example:

- In societies with extreme divisions between rich and poor – a first step may be to get those in authority to acknowledge the seriousness of the conditions of education for the poor.
- Where there is little hope of persuading government to act – the target could be other civil groups or international agencies.
- Where education is a low priority politically – you may need to raise public pressure on the government, e.g. to spend less on arms and more on education.
- Where the state is serious about trying to improve education – you should look for chances to influence the direction of change.

Education reform processes

Where governments acknowledge the need for change and have plans to reform educational systems, it is often necessary to challenge the way those reforms are planned. Which of the following features apply in your country?

- Education reform is driven by agendas which are not primarily educational.
- The reform plans are decided at senior levels of the national government, not involving local education providers.
- There is no systematic attempt to involve the people most affected – children, parents, teachers.
- Professional educationalists do not agree with some of the reforms, but there is no forum for public debate.
- The reform process excludes civil society groups.
- There is little public access to information about plans.
- It is difficult to find out if money promised for education has actually been spent in the way planned.

Where even one or two of these apply, any group wanting to influence the direction of change will have to first try to get involved in the process, to stimulate a public debate, and to put pressure on the authorities and donors into being more accountable. Here, too, the possibilities are determined by the political context. In a society that is generally based on democratic processes, it will be easier to challenge processes which ignore the views of school users. In societies which permit little political participation, such a challenge will be viewed as much more threatening. But this does not mean it cannot be done, only that even more careful thought has to be given to finding a way to do it that has a chance of having an impact.

Who is the audience for your advocacy?

Your audience is those people on whom you will focus your advocacy. It may help to think of your audience as three interrelated groups – stakeholders, targets, and influentials.

Stakeholders are all those individuals or groups who may have an interest in the change that you are advocating. As part of your preparation, you should think very widely about possible stakeholders. Who cares about the issue you are working on?

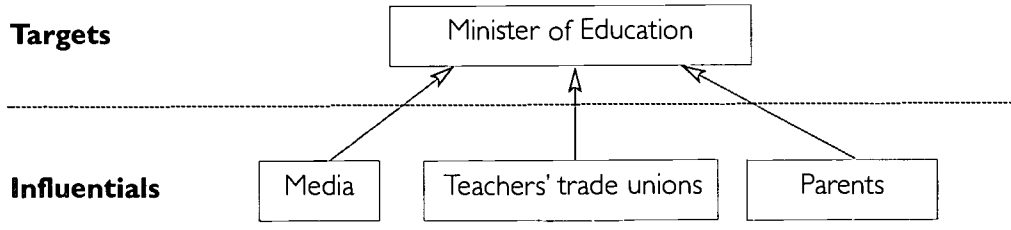
Are there groups or organisations with whom you do not normally work but who may have a real interest in the debate?

Within the group of stakeholders there are specific targets for your advocacy, as well as others who are able to influence them. *Targets* are the key individuals who are in a position to bring about the change you want. *Influentials* are those people who have influence over your targets. They can use this influence on your behalf or against you. To make the most of your limited resources, your advocacy work will be directed mainly at the targets and influentials. How do they think? What motivates them to act? If they have no direct interest in the issue, how might they be motivated to pay some attention? The more you know about the targets and influentials, and the way they all fit together, the more likely it is that you will be effective.

TOOL 6: IDENTIFYING TARGETS AND INFLUENTIALS

- For each change objective, decide who are your targets
  (i.e. people who can make the changes you want, to achieve your objective).
- For each target, decide who are the influentials
  (i.e. people who can affect the decision-making of each target).

Summarise the targets and influentials in an "influence tree":



Now think more specifically about the role of the influentials. What form might this influence take? Summarise this in a table. Below is a simple example.

Your change objective is to affect the content of proposed education legislation, so your key target is the Minister of Education. Influentials include the media, key civil servants, members of a parliamentary education committee and the teachers' trade unions. The chart of targets and influentials will look something like this:

Objective: Ensure that the views of children are incorporated in a new national curriculum			
Targets	**Change you would like each target to make**	**Influentials**	**Likely form of their influence on the target**
The Minister of Education	Invite children's representatives on to the Curriculum Board Fund consultation mechanisms with children in each region	1 Media	Print articles, editorials and letters pressing the minister to make these changes (if they are persuaded this is appropriate)
		2 Teachers' trade unions	Vote to support or oppose minister's re-election
		3 Parents	Voting; letter-writing

How do you influence government?

Government is perhaps the most common target for advocacy work on education. But "government" is too broad a concept. Before you can embark on serious advocacy with government you need to analyse how and where decisions on education are made.

- Which levels of the bureaucracy have which powers (real rather than theoretical)?
- Which section of government decides budgets?
- Which institutions will be involved in implementation?

If you are relatively new to this work, you may want to give a few people the task of doing some informal research to map decision-making. Tool 7 suggests some of the steps they could take.

TOOL 7: MAPPING WHERE DECISIONS HAPPEN

- Ask people who know, and gradually build up a mental map of the different parts of government which might be relevant:

Represent this map graphically

Choose a flexible method such as cards on a pinboard that can be added to and altered as you find out more. Put it on the wall in a room your colleagues use, so they can see it as it develops and add their suggestions.

- Distinguish between policy-makers (those who design and make decisions about policies) and those who implement policies. Find out about powers between different levels of education bureaucracies. Do the professional institutions (teacher training colleges, curriculum development unit, etc.) have a role in policy? You need to make sure you target the people who are able to bring about the particular change you want.

Adjust your map to take account of subtleties

by using colour coding:
blue felt pens for policy
red ones for national implementation
green ones for local implementation

- Within each of the key sections of government, focus on individuals. Who really has the power to make the final decisions that will bring about change? Is it the Minister of Education? Or the most senior official in the Education Department? Or does the President or some other minister really hold power over this issue? Add their names to the map.

Having mapped where decisions are taken, you are then in a position to make an assessment of who are the most important people to target, for the purposes of your particular change objective. This is not always the obvious people:

A network on education in the Philippines aims to get government to look at the social implications of economic policies. They have identified the finance ministers and their economists as principal targets for advocacy

Nor is all advocacy focused at the most powerful level. You may choose to work at a lower level in the power structure, e.g. with local government, in the hope of bringing about change on a wider scale at a later date. This is often a good strategy, for if an innovation at local level is successful it may well get taken up in other areas of a country. But you should be aware that local government is often too weak to be effective in bringing about change on its own.

In many contexts, a change in what children actually experience is not achieved through influencing policy. Policy may already have quite a strong child-rights focus, but what happens in practice is almost completely unconnected with policy. The problem becomes one of ensuring implementation.

Policy or implementation?

Nepal, for example, has a relatively good set of policies for the protection of children and promotion of their rights – including the right to education. There are also government officials who are quite committed to those policies. The problem is that the government has failed to implement any of those policies in practice.

Clearly advocacy has to adopt a completely different focus in this situation. Instead of analysing the process of policy change, it will be important to start by considering what constraints there are on the realisation of official policy. What needs to change? Is it a question of resources? Of political will? Of corruption? Of international donor practices? Or of culture? On the basis of this analysis, your advocacy strategy may target very different people from those who control policy itself. For example, it may be a matter of working with allies in government to strengthen their hand against others who are blocking progress, or it could require a broader campaign to change wider attitudes in society.

Looking for opportunities

Because government is large, complex, and often remote from civil society influence, it is easy to get depressed because there seems no possibility of having any impact. But once you are known to have a certain expertise in an area, surprising opportunities may open up. Government departments frequently feel under-resourced and may privately listen to credible voices in civil society, even if publicly they do not admit it. Officials might be only too happy to have outside groups propose solutions to the problems they face.

Be on the lookout for ways in. Bureaucracies, too, are made up of individuals (though this is not always easy to see). Like-minded people in the bureaucracy may feel as dissatisfied with the present situation as you do, and can act as champions for your message. Though they may feel powerless themselves, they may be able to put you in touch with people who have more power to change things.

Integrating children with disabilities

Save the Children had worked on issues of disability in Lesotho for some years, primarily in a community-based rehabilitation (CBR) project based in a rural hospital. At the same time, UN agencies were helping the Lesotho government to develop a policy on integrating children with disabilities into mainstream schools. Once the policy was in place, people in the Ministry of Education knew they would need help in putting it into practice. There were few teachers who had any experience of dealing with children with disabilities, and limited resources for developing a new approach.

Save the Children was able to offer its CBR experience, and the Ministry welcomed practical support in the form of a secondment to its Disability team of a woman from a neighbouring African country with considerable experience of disability issues. With her input the Ministry has developed a pilot project in ten schools, training teachers in practical ways of including children with disabilities. The national policy is now gradually being implemented countrywide.

International agencies

International, intergovernmental and multilateral agencies or donors may be significant influentials with regard to government education agendas, particularly in poorer countries, because they have the power to give or withdraw funding. For certain change objectives, international agencies may in fact be the primary targets.

Working out how to influence international agencies can be as complicated as working out how to influence government, and many of the same procedures would be useful. These agencies, by their nature, are large, complicated and heavily bureaucratic organisations, and also have strong political agendas. They usually deal directly with governments, with little or no interaction with civil society and NGOs. This makes them a difficult target – especially as they are often based in capital cities in the North.

The best approaches are grounded in thorough preparation work: information gives you scope for interaction.

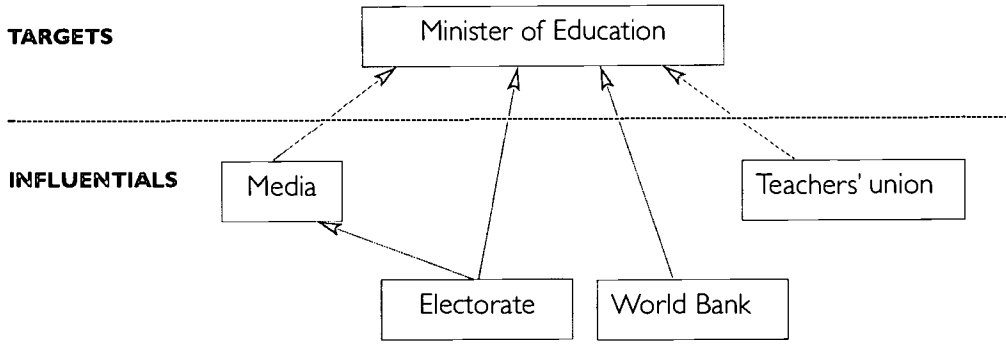
- Make yourself familiar with the policies and priorities of the organisation, and adapt your message to highlight its relevance to these.
- Never assume that information sent to one part of an organisation will be adequately communicated to another. Nor should you assume that policy or practice is consistent between different sections of the same organisation; you might need more than one message and/or approach for the different sections.
- Identify key individuals who can push your message within the organisation. You may have most success targeting intermediate technicians, who are often more receptive to initial contacts. Your message may then spread upwards to the more influential figures at the top of the organisation. If you have the right contacts, national governments could be your best way in to an international or multilateral agency.
- Invite representatives from the organisation to your meetings, give them a role in your networks, send them all your publications. If you are able to involve prestigious universities to participate in your work, this will bolster your credibility, which is of vital importance when dealing with international and multilateral agencies. The same applies to working in partnerships and networks.

You might gain an entrée by acting on behalf of people affected by a project or programme of the organisation concerned, which gives you a legitimate starting point for debate. Or you could consider simply "democratising" all the information available on such institutions, i.e. making it widely available so that civil society is more aware of the organisation's influence on policies and implementation.

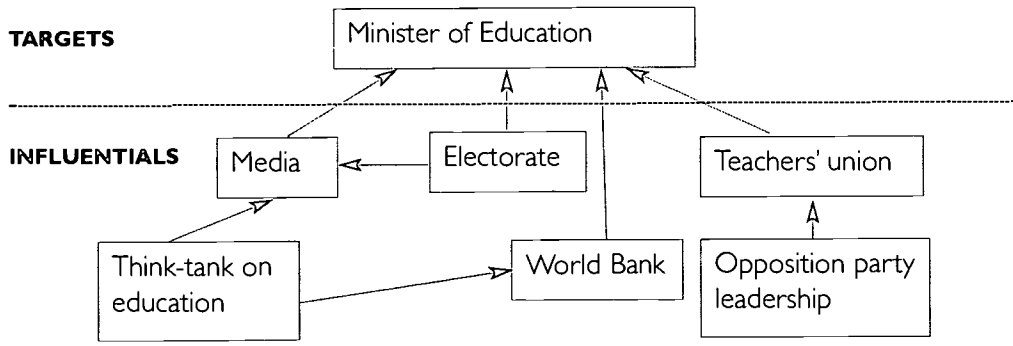
It might be useful to create a map of your audience and the interrelations between its members, as suggested in Tool 8.

TOOL 8: LINES OF INFLUENCE

Put your targets at the top of a large sheet of paper. The map shows how the influentials relate to the targets (directly, or indirectly through other actors). To remind yourself, you can write the form of the influence along each arrow.



As you plot the map, it might suggest other influentials that you need to include. For example, perhaps the position of the World Bank is affected by a key think-tank on education which also feeds key policy documents to the media. Perhaps the teachers' union is affected by the leadership of the opposition. In this case, the map may be adjusted as follows:



In producing this structure, you will become clearer about which channels of influence you can choose in order to have the greatest impact. In the above example, you might have no direct relationships with either the education minister or the teachers' union, but if you are already known and respected by a key member of the opposition party leadership, you could perhaps work with them to change the policy of the teachers' union, and ultimately to influence the education minister through that channel.

- *The Health Action Schools project in Pakistan mapped the relations pictorially. The main targets for its advocacy work were the education and health ministers. They appeared in a circle in the middle. The education and health secretaries were secondary targets, but also influentials for the main targets. Thus, they were partly in the targets circle, and partly in the influentials circles. Other influentials included teachers' associations, departmental consultants, health education officers, the prime minister, the media, other donors (such as the World Bank) and the university presidents.*
- *The Indian organisation Pratham approached the exercise differently, in terms of a delivery system. Their objective was to deliver education to all children. "Children" was placed in a circle in the centre of a sheet of paper. Around this in a ring were the different elements with which the project needed to work – such as communications, research, monitoring, finance, policy. Finally, "programmes" was written around the outside. This showed that for the programmes to deliver education to the children, the middle ground of policy, finance and so on had to be successfully negotiated.*
- *A second stage added the audience. This was done in three dimensions. The different elements were written on the faces of a box. Thus, policy was linked to four other elements – communications, research, monitoring and finance – at different edges of the box. The different audiences were written along the edges or round the corners of the box. Thus, the government was written in on the edge between policy and finance. This showed that for Pratham to deliver education to children it needed to work with getting the right policies and finance, and the government was a key actor for this work.*

The corporate sector

The corporate sector – which includes large companies, employers, local businesses – is often a neglected actor in the field of education. Those doing advocacy work to do with education are sometimes concerned about the implications of working with the corporate sector, and especially with multinational corporations. But there are good reasons for thinking about working with business communities as part of your strategy:

- The corporate sector can be a significant influential, especially with regard to economic policies. If you are working in a region where the lack of government resourcing for education is a major obstacle, creating a corporate lobby which speaks for education can influence economic priorities.
- Once approved, finance from the corporate sector tends be forthcoming without further delays, and it is often possible to use resources more flexibly, for example, for experimentation.
- Corporate know-how concerning management and technology can be useful in the context of your organisation and in the running of schools, their "systems" and "operations".

It is important that you understand the motives and objectives of those you work with in the corporate sector, just as with any other partner. The corporate sector may be interested in the issue of education for a variety of reasons. Perhaps a business is thinking about its future requirements in terms of an educated workforce, or maybe it is seeking to project its image as a good "corporate citizen". Finally, it may contain motivated individuals and leaders with a genuinely altruistic desire to improve the lives of others. Since the business ethos focuses on practical results rather than on principles, the best approaches are usually those that involve demonstrating solutions, preferably on a large scale:

- The corporate sector is likely to assess projects in terms of cost-effectiveness and results and will probably be less interested in the details of the process you are developing.
- Presentations to the corporate sector should use its language, for example, explaining policy change in numerical terms.
- It is a good idea to include senior and/or junior executives in planning or monitoring your programme. If your programme is working, the conviction of those involved will be communicated to anyone who visits or takes an interest in it. If you can activate one individual inside a corporation to become your advocate, he or she is likely to be the best means of spreading your message throughout their organisation.

- The tactic of using guilt as a tool to persuade business to get involved in your work is usually not effective as it tends to suggest charity and disengagement as the solution. If you can foster a sense of pride in what is happening, however, you are more likely to encourage wholehearted involvement.

Understanding your audience

Naturally you need to go beyond simply identifying your targets and influentials. Ideally, you want to know as much as possible about these people. What do they know about your issue? What are their attitudes and beliefs regarding the issue? If they are not particularly interested in your issue, what are they interested in? The more you know about your targets and influentials, the more likely it is that you will be able to deliver an effective strategy. You might find the following tool helpful.

TOOL 9: WHAT DO THEY KNOW AND CARE ABOUT?

Choose one of your change objectives.

List your targets and influentials.

Chart everything you know about them that might be relevant to the process of influencing.

In this example:

- The change objective is for national education policy to require officials developing the national curriculum to seek children's views.
- The target for making this policy change is the minister of education.

Audience – i.e. targets and influentials	**What does the audience know about the issue?**	**What does the audience believe? What is his/her attitude?**	**What does the audience care about (even if it is unrelated to your issue)?**
1 The Minister of Education	Has not heard much about children's participation in decision-making that affects them	Not an important issue Decision-making is an adult's role Children are not capable of making informed choices	Re-election World Bank support
2 Media	As above	Not on their agenda	Circulation rates – i.e. stories that sell Breaking high profile stories
3 Teachers' trade unions	Have had presentations about children's participation in decision-making from NGOs	Split in the ranks between those who think children should and should not be consulted about the curriculum	Whether the curriculum results in a greater workload/ more stress for staff Whether their position as experts on children's education will be weakened

Understanding your audience, whether they be targets, influentials or stakeholders, is an important part of preparing for advocacy. Tool 10 suggests a way to get inside the heads of your audience, to understand their perspectives, goals and concerns.

TOOL 10: UNDERSTANDING YOUR AUDIENCE THROUGH ROLE-PLAY

1. First, ensure you have identified the different elements of your audience – stakeholders (allies and enemies), targets and influentials. Get members of your team to represent the different elements of the audience. One person might play the role of the teachers' union official, another might be a journalist, and so on. Do not forget to include your own organisation.
2. Those playing a target or influential or a representative of your organisation are then given time to think about the person they are playing: what their priorities might be; what they think of your organisation's advocacy issue; who their potential allies or enemies are; whether or not they have a particular strategy to pursue with regard to the issue. Ample time should be given to this stage, and it should involve informal discussions between the various actors. This allows them to forge alliances and/or understand others' positions. This could all be prepared in advance.
3. Convene a meeting to discuss your advocacy issue with all the relevant actors. Watch the different interactions. Whose positions are similar? What kinds of obstacles are being discovered? Who is really interested in the issue? It is worth including brief breaks to allow the actors to reassess their position in the light of what has emerged during the course of the meeting.
4. Finally, have a debriefing session in which the team members – out of character – share the insights they have gained into the motivations and perspectives of the different sections of your audience.

An example of the kinds of things that can be learned during role-play

The group that met in Brazil to plan this handbook tried this role-play. A meeting involving a politician and various other actors resulted in a very frustrating process. This was largely because the politician kept getting replaced (due to cabinet reshuffles, elections, etc.). Each time a new politician entered the meeting the discussion had to start afresh. The group learned that politicians – often the key targets for advocacy – are frequently in place for a very limited period, and that this can hamper advocacy work.

Towards the end of the meeting, however, they had learned something else. Instead of starting their discussion afresh, the group took up with the final politician where they had left off with the previous one. They learned that if there is continuity in the members of a working group looking at an issue, then the group can carry forward the debate even if politicians come and go. It is the politician who has to engage with the debate at whichever stage it has reached by the time he or she comes into office.

This learning point is reflected in the experience of many organisations doing advocacy work concerning education. Long-term advocacy work often suffers temporary setbacks when unsympathetic politicians come to the fore. However, if continuity of the work is maintained during these periods there is good reason to expect greater success in the future.

What is your message?

Your message summarises *what* change you want to bring about, and by *when*. It may also include *why* the change is important, and *how* the recipient can help bring about the change. But it has to do this briefly: it should be short and persuasive.

The message will probably differ according to whom you are presenting it to. There will be no difference in the first part, i.e. what change you want to bring about. This part corresponds to your change objectives. But your explanation of why these objectives are important may be different for different audiences, reflecting their various concerns and interests. After carrying out the *Mapping lines of influence* exercise described earlier, you might find that you should focus your explanation to the World Bank on the fact that the children want their education to be more practically oriented towards preparing them for the workplace, and that this will improve the productivity of the workforce. The rationale given to the teachers' union, on the other hand, might concentrate on the children's expressed need for a smaller children-to-teacher ratio that would in turn mean better working conditions for teachers.

The final part of the message – what part the recipient can play to help bring about the change – will also depend on whom the message is addressed to and how they can help. In the example, the minister of education and the teachers' trade unions have radically different capacities to bring about change.

Adapting the message: an example with the corporate sector

Pratham's objective of "all children in school regularly and learning by the year 2000" appealed to both parents and the corporate sector, but for very different reasons.

- *For the parents it was natural that they should want the best for their own children. Equating this with going to school and getting an education was made easier because Pratham was able to produce evidence showing that children in school were capable of learning.*
- *For the corporate sector the importance of education was judged in starker, economic terms. In Mumbai the corporate sector was aware of the need for a better educated workforce to improve competitiveness. Having children in school and learning was thus an attractive proposition from its own point of view.*

Pratham has managed to attract considerable corporate involvement to the extent that it has a corporate executive as its chairman. It has set up a finance monitoring committee which includes volunteers from the corporate sector and which audits and sanctions expenditure, and reports on a monthly basis. Pratham has also opened up its projects to visits by executives and their spouses, and produces brochures in which corporate executives say, "I believe in Pratham". All the corporate donors involved have been activated by an individual inside their own organisation. These advocates can be at any level, from junior to very senior.

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4 Who has an interest in change?

Letting children's views be heard

Children are the primary stakeholders in education, the ones who will gain or lose most according to the nature of education provided. Yet most advocacy work on education is done by adults on behalf of children, and children's participation is often minimal or absent. At each stage of your planning, ask yourself whether there are opportunities to work in a way that will allow for the participation of children.

Involving children needs careful preparation, firstly to create "child-friendly" settings where they can be put at their ease, and secondly, to take account of the likely hostile reaction from other vested interests. You also need to think through the ethics of involving children. Are you using children for an end they do not understand? How real is their participation? What will happen to them after their involvement? Whom do the children you are working with represent? But these questions are not essentially different from those that would arise in relation to the participation of adults from the same communities.

There are many degrees of children's participation. The first is for adults to find out what children know and think. Children's right to be listened to is clearly stated in the CRC, and education is one of the most obvious arenas where this could happen. Where you are speaking on behalf of children you will have more credibility if you can show that you represent children's perceptions.

Children know more than adults think they do

After a protracted civil war in Mozambique, Save the Children was supporting the provincial government to rebuild schools. The area had many returned refugees from camps across the border in Malawi, where Save the Children knew there were high rates of AIDS. It offered the provincial education officials support in setting up a health education module as part of the teacher training course, to include information on HIV/AIDS prevention. The reaction was a definite No. Some officials said AIDS did not exist, it was a foreign invention. Teachers said it existed, but not in Mozambique. Parents said children knew nothing about such things, and were too young to be told. Eventually permission was negotiated to explore in a sensitive way what children knew. Through children's drawings it became clear that they knew a great deal about adult sexual activity and understood the connection between this and some kinds of illness. (It subsequently emerged that it was not uncommon for girls as young as nine or ten to be forced into sexual experience, often by men in their extended family.)

Confronted with this evidence from the children, the education officials agreed to accept the offer of training for teachers in health education.

Children need to be involved in assessing the impact of changes intended to affect them. At the simplest level, adults can ask them what they think, but children can also be involved in more structured monitoring:

Children evaluating changes that affect them

In Brazil a government programme was set up to eradicate child labour in sugar cane plantations. CENDHEC, a Brazilian NGO, involved children in monitoring its effects. Children participated in establishing indicators and developing an approach to evaluating the programme. A three-day conference was held with the participation of 52 children aged between 8 and 14. Workshops and child-to-child interviews focused on three issues: what life was like before the programme, what changed in their lives after the programme was put in place, and recommendations and suggestions for improving the programme. Two publications (one aimed at children) and a video described the results of the project.

The conference facilitators knew that the children might feel uncomfortable when evaluating a policy which brought benefits for themselves and their families. Children are well aware of power relations that affect them, and might think that if they said things which displeased the managers then the benefits might be stopped. So the facilitators did a great deal of preparation, developing approaches which would avoid the risk of children adopting false positions out of fear of the consequences of speaking out. These approaches included questionnaires, drawings, a variety of workshops and art/play activities, and the opportunity for children themselves to formulate the questions posed in interviews between children. Transparency was very important, and children were involved in planning activities.

The lessons learned:

- *The participation of children in evaluating policies is regarded with suspicion by the majority of governmental and non-governmental organisations that claim to work to further children's rights.*
- *To make governmental organisations listen to children is very difficult. It takes time and careful work to develop partnerships with, and persuade, the different actors involved.*

The organisers concluded that a strategy was needed actually to demonstrate the advantages of involving children in the design and evaluation of policies aimed at them. It is not enough simply to affirm that this is important.

Children themselves can be spokespeople, and are capable of advocating on their own behalf, often better than adults could, as is clear from the example in the following box.

Working children speak for themselves

At an international conference on child labour held in Oslo, the agenda led by the International Labour Organization was to get an international ban on child labour. UNICEF linked this to education, advocating that children should not be working but should be in school. Both of these lines ignored the reality for poor children in countries where child labour is common: they have to work to help support their families. They want education, but it needs to be flexible enough to allow them also to work. Representatives of working children's organisations wanted to make these points to the conference but were at first excluded from the main sessions. On the last day their spokesperson, a young Malian girl, was allowed to make a presentation. She made a powerful impact because she was speaking directly from her own experience and that of many other children.

Parents and communities

After children, the people with the strongest stake in improving education are parents. We include in the term "parents" all those adults who care for and are responsible for children. Parents act as individuals, trying to get the best education for their children; but we are also considering them collectively, as the section of society in which the children are growing up and in which many of them will continue to live as adults. This "community" can be anything from a defined village population to a sprawling city slum.

Can communities find their own solutions?

SIDH is an Indian NGO that works with communities in villages below the Himalaya Mountains. The schools were set up by the communities with the support of facilitators. The first teachers were village boys who had some primary education and were given training by the project. At every stage these teachers, the parents and village communities were involved in planning and managing the schools. For instance, it was through discussions in the community that a way was found to make it possible for girls to attend school more regularly. The girls had been coming for shorter hours, and often had to bring younger children with them while mothers were walking long distances to fetch fuel and water.

So pre-schools were started – which freed the girls, gave a better level of care to the very young children, and gave the older girls the chance to become pre-school teachers.

SIDH has recently become involved in advocacy among other organisations that work in education. One change objective is to get them to take community participation more seriously. Believing that advocacy should be based on an understanding of the community's perceptions, SIDH has undertaken research to find out what parents think are the features of "quality" education.

Parents and communities know more than other groups of adults about the conditions of life for children in that community. Therefore they will have a special insight into what schools should be offering children, to help them cope with those conditions, both now and later. But few education systems recognise the importance of involving parents, and this situation has been so deeply entrenched over many years that in disadvantaged communities special efforts may be necessary to help parents and communities realise that they *do* have experience and knowledge to contribute. Part of your strategy may therefore be to transform stakeholders with no power (e.g. poor children and their parents) into influentials (e.g. a powerful lobby group) that your target (e.g. education officials) must publicly respond to.

Teachers

Teachers are perhaps the most complex group of stakeholders to be considered from an advocacy point of view. Their role is critical. They are the adults in most immediate contact with children, and what they do will define the educational experience for children. Good teachers can create a good experience even in the poorest school system, while lazy or uncaring teachers can undermine what even the best systems try to provide. Domineering and sarcastic teachers can turn school into something really oppressive, which children long to escape from.

However, teachers are not just providers of education; they are also at the receiving end of the system. They suffer from its inadequacies more than any other group of adults. Many of them are highly motivated, love children, and want to help them to learn. In many poor countries teachers carry on teaching despite the fact that their pay is inadequate, comes late, or not at all. If the system improves, their own status and job satisfaction will improve. Moreover, teachers have the potential to work for change, as is proved by the examples described in the next two boxes.

- Teachers are in a position to know better than anyone else about the problems in the present system:

Teachers and refugees

In the UK, English classes are provided for adults who speak other languages. Teachers in London found that an increasing number of their students were refugees from civil wars or political oppression in other countries. The teachers gradually came to understand the problems that refugees face: traumatic personal histories, hostile bureaucracies, complicated immigration processes, very little money – and they have to deal with all these in a foreign language. Teachers began to press local authorities to allow refugees free English classes. In one area, Croydon, a group of teachers set up a Refugee Project to provide support to newly arrived refugees. They recruited volunteers among sympathetic local residents, and refugees who had been in the UK some time acted as interpreters for new arrivals. The project raised funds to provide an advice worker, who advocates on behalf of refugees with various government departments, including the education authorities.

- Teachers are often among the strongest advocates for improving education:

Teachers and minority languages

In Lancashire, in the north of England, people from rural Pakistan have been settled in the area for a long time but form separate cultural communities, and many young children do not speak English when they start school. Teachers led an advocacy movement to get the education system to recognise the problem, and to deal with it in a way that helped children learn English but did not undermine their own language. They pressed for:

- *bilingual assistants in schools to ease the transition for children*
- *training of reception class teachers in the methods of teaching English to speakers of other languages*
- *support for the teaching of Urdu and Panjabi, so that the children's own language could be maintained.*

- But teachers, like everyone else, may see things from their own point of view. So it is important to balance their views, and independently try to assess what children are experiencing:

Do teachers know what changes are needed?

Teachers often identify training as the thing most needed to improve schools. They usually say afterwards that the training was useful. But evaluation of teacher training programmes in many countries shows that training in itself may have little impact on teaching quality if other problems remain ignored. The Aga Khan Foundation, in carefully monitored projects in Kenya and India, found that for training to be effective:

- *it needs to be primarily based in the classroom, so teachers can try out the new ideas with support from mentor teachers*
- *the new approaches must be supported by the head teacher.*

Do teachers know what changes are needed? (cont)

But teachers as a user group may be able to identify areas for training that would not have occurred to people less closely involved with the problems. For instance, the teachers in the Lancashire example lobbied their local authority to set up short, intensive courses for class teachers to learn to speak Urdu. They felt it might help them communicate with parents, and understand the cross-cultural issues the children had to deal with. Not only were these aims achieved, but there was an unforeseen bonus: when the children saw that their teachers were learning their language, it had a dramatic effect on their self-esteem. Relations between the school and community were almost always better in those schools where one of the teachers had learned some Urdu.

- There are also some situations in which we need publicly to acknowledge that teachers may be part of the problem:

Where are the teachers?

Save the Children hosted a meeting to bring together representatives from NGOs, government departments, academics, and teacher trainers to consider problems of primary education in Pakistan. All agreed that teacher absenteeism was one of the major causes of poor-quality education in state schools, and that this in turn was partly caused by corruption in the appointment of teachers. One government official described how shortly after being appointed as district education officer he compiled a list of unqualified teachers in his area, and asked for something to be done. The result? He was immediately transferred to another district.

Civil society groups

In addition to children, parents, local communities, and teachers, there are many other interest groups that have some stake in education, such as community groups, youth groups and religious groups. There are also education professionals, academics and opinion-formers in education; NGOs working on education; and groups with potentially related agendas, for example, on the environment, or on gender issues. Together these groups constitute what is often described as "civil society", that is, people acting in collective ways as citizens.

In many countries civil society is relatively weak, and diversified groups find it difficult to work together. There is often an awareness in society that a problem exists, and there may even be a general consensus on the best solutions. But whose job is it to solve the problem? You may be able to help develop a societal mission, through adopting a position that says, in effect: "We are citizens in this community, so we are going to take an interest in this problem. We are not the solution, but we can invite and help others to work with us in solving the problem."

Improving pre-schools by empowering women

In the West Bank and Gaza the political context meant it was very hard for any civil society groups to operate: Israeli control made it difficult for Palestinians to move about and organise; there was a constant air of tension and threat of violence. Nevertheless, communities and religious groups were active in setting up and running pre-schools, believing that education was the only way to give their children a chance of a better future. Two Save the Children organisations (US and UK) worked together to support these groups. A training programme was started for pre-school co-ordinators, to introduce them to child-focused learning approaches, and to issues such as working with parents. It soon became clear that the most important component of the training was its empowering effect on the women who took part. Their increased awareness of their own capacities led to a growing confidence to initiate, and to press for changes they believed in.

Civil society groups have widely differing agendas and organisational abilities. In looking for allies you will need to assess each organisation's capacity:

- Be clear about your change objectives, and find out about those of potential allies. Do you understand their motivations and objectives thoroughly? Are you really working for the same goals? Do you agree on the strategies to pursue?

- Consider what working with this group would add to your efforts. Do they have expertise that you don't, which could enhance your legitimacy and credibility? Do they offer access to a new constituency of potential supporters? Do they have contacts within the target group?
- Assess whether they have the organisational structures to contribute to your shared vision. If they do not, but are nevertheless a potentially important partner because of their role in the broader society, you may decide it is worth committing time to helping them to strengthen their capacity.
- Mutually agree how you will co-operate. Are different responsibilities clearly established – who will do what? What happens if this ally lets you down, for whatever reason? What would the effect be on your advocacy work?

UN agencies and donors

UN agencies and donors could be targets or influentials (see Section 3) but they could also be potential allies. Among UN agencies, UNICEF is the most likely ally. Like many NGOs working on education, it takes its mandate from the CRC, and has worked for many of the change objectives which you are likely to be considering, for instance, on access for excluded groups, improvements in quality, parental and community involvement in schools, and an awareness of the importance of early childhood development. But other agencies could also be allies on particular issues or in particular contexts. For instance, UNESCO has been a leading advocate on the rights of children with disabilities.

Government donor agencies have sometimes actively sought to work in partnership with NGOs, because of the access to communities this provides, as for instance in the Lok Jumbish programme in Rajasthan. Where funding for your own organisation, or your advocacy initiative, comes from a bilateral donor, there is the potential to turn that relationship into something more creative than that of donor–recipient. Your contacts in the donor organisation may have specific kinds of expertise that you can draw on, or they may be able to put you in contact with individuals in government, or create opportunities for you to represent your views at conferences, etc.

There are complexities in such partnerships, and a great deal depends on the context, so there are no generally applicable guidelines. Here are some of the questions to be considered:

- Does their practice match their rhetoric? For example, the World Bank's rhetoric is strong on participation, but the reality of how the organisation actually operates is usually very different.

Who are the individuals representing the organisation in your country? For example, although you may agree with UNICEF's position on the issue you are advocating on, it is possible that the person you would be working with does not regard that issue as a priority, or they might even be a liability as a partner.

- Given the difference between the size and budget of your organisation and those of the international agency, is an equal partnership on advocacy possible? And if it is not equal, are you content with the role you will be allocated?
- Are there rivalries between various agencies? For instance, there are historical tensions between different UN agencies. Be aware of what you could become caught up in: if in a particular country there is a poor relationship between, say, the representatives of UNICEF and UNESCO, being in a formal partnership with one agency might make it difficult to get co-operation from the other, which in this case could be more important for your advocacy work.
- Will working with a bilateral donor improve your effectiveness on advocacy, or reduce it? For example, a bilateral donor will be in a government-to-government relationship, which means it has to restrict its comments to within diplomatically acceptable limits.

Disarming your opponents

While looking for allies, it is important to remember that there are also sure to be potential opponents of the change you are working for. The fewer opponents you have the better, so the first strategy is to try to win them over. Often, understanding their perspective is the key to finding ways of persuading potential opponents to work with you.

Understanding the other point of view

Pratham recognised that a major stakeholder for its work was the teachers. The teachers were initially hostile to Pratham's ideas since they feared increased work loads, and change is always disruptive. Pratham was able to win over the teachers by listening to their complaints and suggesting solutions to some of the needs and problems raised. For example, it found ways to decrease teachers' workloads by taking routine administrative tasks off their hands.

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5 Planning advocacy approaches and activities

The range of advocacy approaches

Now that you have defined your targets and influentials, the next stage is to select the advocacy approaches that will have the greatest chance of success in influencing each of them. They could include some or all of the following:

- Looking for events and opportunities
- Demonstrating solutions
- Action research
- Policy analysis
- Awareness-raising
- Campaigning
- Lobbying
- Media work
- Partnerships
- Creating ways for people to act.

There is, of course, overlap between these categories. For example, you could use both the media and your work with partner organisations to raise awareness. And there are other approaches apart from those suggested here, so think broadly.

Internal and external influencing

PREAL (Partnership for Educational Revitalisation in the Americas) is working to achieve educational reform in many countries in Latin America. Its strategy for reaching decision-makers in central governments includes both internal and external influencing approaches. The internal political sphere is targeted through seminars and meetings with ministers of education, finance and social welfare. It works with governments through consultancy and in ad hoc working groups on education policies, and through members of parliament who can act as influentials, particularly when a government is looking for budgetary approval. External approaches include targeting the opposition parties and putting education on their agendas. PREAL works closely with the media, briefing influential media figures, issuing press releases and writing opinion articles. Increasing press knowledge about the issues is seen as a priority. It also targets public opinion leaders, asking for interviews or using contacts to secure meetings. It subsequently maintains a dialogue with these people to keep its issues alive. PREAL distributes information relating to its message in the form of short summaries, newsletters and via a web page. It has learned that executive summaries should be short – no longer than four pages if they are to be read. Reports should be no longer than thirty pages. Their audience is unlikely to read any document longer than this.

Looking for events and opportunities

To make the most impact, you must be on the lookout for events or other opportunities for getting your issue on the agenda. Such events are hooks to which you may link your advocacy and draw attention to your messages. Perhaps an election is due soon and politicians might be especially sensitive to voters' views. Perhaps a new law is being written, a conference is taking place, an influential company is about to publish its annual report, an article exposing malpractice has appeared in the press or a partner is planning to run a new campaign. These are the times when you might be able to obtain greater leverage to produce a much greater impact than you might usually expect.

There are two ways to take these opportunities into account when planning your advocacy activities:

- You can look for events and then assess which targets and influentials could be reached by activities that relate to these opportunities, or
- You can start with the audience, and try to identify upcoming events to use in order to reach them.

Either way, you and your team must be constantly on the lookout for such entry points and thinking very creatively about how to use them. However you must also balance the use of such external events against the benefits of creating your own events where you are able to control the agenda and ensure that your messages are clearly heard.

TOOL 11: ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

- As a group, tape together three flip-chart sheets end-to-end and draw on this a wide river flowing from west to east. This represents the timescale of your advocacy project. At the eastern end, draw a simple illustration of how the world will be when your advocacy has succeeded.
- Discuss social or political events that are likely to have an impact on your project during its lifetime. Mark these in sequence on your drawing, showing them as smaller streams joining the river. This gives a simple picture of the external environment in which your advocacy will unfold.
- Now brainstorm possible activities within your advocacy project. As people think of activity ideas, discuss them in the group briefly to prompt more ideas, but each individual should also write them on Post-it notes, or pieces of paper or card that can be stuck on the picture. All ideas are included at this stage; even those that seem unrealistic may inspire great alternatives.
- When there is a good range of possible activities, group members should stick them on to the river, discussing the appropriate sequence and how they would tie in with outside events. Discuss which activities should be priorities, i.e. which contribute most to the overall goals, are most realistic, affordable, and fit in well with other events.

The chosen activities and their sequencing then becomes the time-line for your advocacy project.

Demonstrating solutions in practice

Demonstrating solutions can be one of the most persuasive approaches to advocacy. It is important that you are able to collect evidence to show your solution can work. You must also be able to prove that your solution can be applied elsewhere. Scaling-up a small-scale programme into one that covers a whole region, or replicating it in other regions, inevitably poses problems, but these should not be insurmountable.

What makes for success?

The MV Foundation is an Indian NGO working in the state of Andhra Pradesh. It aims to eliminate child labour in particular communities by replacing it with full-time, formal education. It has a method for doing this which it feels is essential to the success of the project.

The targets for its advocacy work are within the local community – children, parents, teachers, employers. The first stage involves discussions with these groups aimed at overcoming any initial objections to the idea that all children should attend school instead of working. Common concerns include: How will families cope with the loss of income? Who will do the housework which a child may have been doing? Won't children become lazy and refuse to work if they become educated? Will studying guarantee a job? The Foundation has learned that there is little opposition to the basic concept that it is desirable for children to study rather than go to work, and community-level discussions always bring out local examples of how the above concerns can be addressed.

The second stage, of trying to iron out problems, begins only when the village concerned has made a commitment to send all the children to school. There might be individual cases of children already committed to working with an employer. The problem might be more general, e.g. a lack of adequate resourcing for the school. Solutions come from the community itself. This often leads to the community helping to finance teachers or infrastructure, providing furniture, pressing the government for additional funds, and so on. By this stage the community has become an active stakeholder, providing the momentum for continued progress. It owns the programme. There are parent/teacher associations for each school, and the older children form a Forum for the Liberation of Child Labour. The children are also closely involved in monitoring the progress of the programme in their respective schools. The idea spreads to other communities, who see what is happening and want to join.

This success has attracted the attention of state-level officials who have asked if they can come and observe. As a result the MV Foundation is now regularly consulted on education matters, and the state government has taken several policy initiatives based on these experiences.

Action research

- Action research involves using research methods to investigate possible new solutions to a problem, usually through a pilot study. The work needs to be carefully monitored, with clear baseline information to allow subsequent evaluations. If the research indicates a good solution, the next stage is to press for policies to be put in place which support implementation of the same practices on a wider scale.

Try to include decision makers in your project from the outset. You could, for example, encourage them to sit on steering committees or to visit the site of your research.

- Research can also be used to identify a range of relevant factors that help to explain the issue on which you are advocating. The aim should be to present factual evidence on such matters as the needs of pupils and/or teachers; gaps in provision; the way in which certain groups are excluded from services; and significant shortages of resources.

Research, action and influencing

The Institute for Educational Development (IED) of the Aga Khan University in Pakistan has been working with Save the Children on an action research project aimed at developing health-promoting schools – "Health Action Schools (HAS)". The project is monitored by a steering committee which includes members of the provincial government's health and education sectors.

An initial feasibility study confirmed the need for a pilot study, and this was designed around six schools. The research assessed the health needs of primary school children, ensuring at the same time that the project did not ignore traditional beliefs and customs in the region. Schools themselves took responsibility for implementing, managing and monitoring the programme. They used a child-centred approach to teaching health issues, and the expectation was that children themselves would become health promoters in their communities.

Evaluation of the project was carefully built into the research planning, with an initial situational analysis providing baseline data in the areas under study. A range of quantitative and qualitative tools were developed to help monitor the project. The lessons that have come out of the project are shared at all levels – within and between schools, between NGOs, and with government. One year on, there are already indications that it is attracting interest in government circles and among international NGOs. But the longterm success of the project depends on it being legitimised and strengthened by an official government curriculum statement for health education. This will need to be negotiated with the health and education authorities at both national and provincial levels in the final phase of the HAS project

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The common characteristic of research is that it is rigorous, systematic investigation, using recognised methods of study (such as questionnaires, surveys and the range of participatory appraisal techniques). However, within this definition it can be carried out at a variety of levels from very simple surveys to highly complex studies – the choice depends on the time and resources available and the impact that you hope to have. Research can be commissioned from university professors, research institutes and freelance consultants but it can also be done by groups of children or young people themselves, provided they are given enough training and support to enable them to play an active part in the process.

Policy analysis

Policy analysis is an effective approach, provided you share your results with the right audience and in the right way. The intention is to contribute to the professional policy debate. This means engaging with the concepts, language and approaches of those responsible for developing public policy. By getting involved you may also help make the policy process more transparent, increasing accountability and generally democratising the way decisions are taken and policies put into practice.

Doing policy analysis is challenging. You need to have the resources to carry out independent research, and the expertise to make judgements on the information and reports produced by governments or multinational agencies. This frequently means establishing networks to share expertise and resources.

Analysing the invisible influence of the World Bank

Ação Educativa is a Brazilian NGO looking at the actions of multilateral and international organisations in the educational sector of Brazil. The organisation was particularly concerned by the invisibility of World Bank involvement in the projects it is financing. The World Bank has great influence on education within the country, and it has done considerable research on the issues. Much of this, however, is not readily accessible.

Ação Educativa set up a database of all World Bank documents on education projects in Brazil and analysed the Bank's publications and policies on education. It held a conference to discuss World Bank policies and perspectives, and produced a book to share the results as widely as possible. It then began looking at those Brazilian policies which appeared to have been influenced by the World Bank. It had considerable difficulty getting hold of key information, such as the contracts between the World Bank and the Brazilian government, but persistence eventually paid off. After it had been writing a letter a month over a two-year period, the information it had requested was finally handed over. With some initial analyses prepared, Ação Educativa entered into talks with the Brazilian government about some of the major projects it was undertaking with World Bank support. Ação Educativa is also part of a network – Rede Brasil – which monitors the influence of international organisations on Brazilian policy-making. Rede Brasil called for both houses of the Brazilian parliament, not just the Senate, to consider future World Bank proposals.

However good the analysis, its impact will only be as good as the presentation. Too many organisations put too many resources into publishing long, dense reports that few people will have the time to read. Generally, the more important the person, the less time they may have to read each document. Short, clear summaries are vital: they must catch the attention and quickly communicate the key points. One rule of thumb is that the reader should be able to register these messages in the five minutes before a meeting – this is often the only time they will give to your beloved report!

Policy analysis

Ação Educativa produced short, thematic documents on under-researched topics, or on projects which were starting to be implemented. These initial analyses were intended to start debates among opinion-formers in the political sphere, and they were sent to journalists, academics, decision-makers and researchers. It has also been successful in sharing this information with others, by means of networks, carefully targeted publications and high-level meetings with its audience.

Through its strategy of policy analysis and the sharing of information Ação Educativa has brought greater transparency to educational policies in Brazil and the involvement of external agencies. It has become an authoritative and influential actor in its own right. The keys to its success have been its persistence in getting hold of the information it wanted, and the systematic way it has processed that information and targeted its presentation of the results.

A mistake many organisations make is to employ professional experts to write their communication materials aimed at non-professional audiences. Though these people may be excellent at the analysis, their style of writing or speaking may not be easy for everyone to understand. If you can afford it, think seriously about employing communication professionals (journalists, advertisers, designers) to get your message across.

Awareness-raising

Raising awareness of an issue is a gradual process, depending on *whose* awareness you want to develop. If your audience is a small one you are much more likely to reach it effectively in a relatively short time. It can take much longer to raise general awareness levels among the general public, but the advantage of this is that it tends to put the issue on the agenda of decision-makers, who will then be more likely to listen to your advocacy messages.

Raising awareness is about providing information and sharing it with your target audience, arguing your case and making it understood. This might involve producing your own publications and taking part in meetings and debates.

It is difficult to assess your progress in this endeavour. You can count the number of reports you have published, but has anyone read them? You may have attended many meetings and debates, but has your issue spread beyond an interested minority?

Did anyone read that publication?

Like several other international agencies, Save the Children UK has a strong "own country" programme which has produced many publications on education issues. One example is a pack for schools and parents on ways of managing children that do not rely on smacking. A lot of care goes into their preparation, and they are well designed for their target audience. But in many cases the planning stops at the point of production; there is no strategy for dissemination, and in some cases no more than 20 copies of a publication have been sold, though hundreds were produced. The England programme director has decided that an audit needs to be made of who has used which publications, and a more realistic strategy worked out before embarking on future publications.

You also need to be cautious of estimating success: an idea may receive general acceptance in theory but not be realised in practice. For example, the issue of children's participation in decisions which affect them is one that has come to the fore in recent years. There is widespread consensus that it is a good idea, yet how often does one see actual instances of children's participation? How do you avoid tokenism by decision-makers once your issue has been generally accepted by your audience? This could be your next advocacy challenge.

Challenging exclusions

A small NGO, Race on the Agenda (Rota), has worked to raise awareness on the question of exclusions from school in the UK. Though there is compulsory education, schools can exclude children who are considered seriously disruptive. Although there are clearly problems that need tackling here, exclusion simply pushes the problem out of sight, and results in a denial of children's right to education. The issue became a high-profile one for the UK government once people became aware that a large proportion of excluded pupils were from ethnic minorities, particularly of Afro-Caribbean origin.

But awareness has not meant that the issue has been successfully addressed. Rota and others claim that there is still institutional racism and wider discrimination within schools. They have established a steering committe, which also includes representatives of other NGOs and local government bodies, and whose task is to produce a practical manual aimed at anyone interested in raising the education achievements of black and ethnic minority young people in schools. In this way Rota and its partners hope to ensure real change comes about in response to a heightened level of issue-awareness.

Campaigning

Campaigns involve marshalling a range of activities in a specific (usually short-term) timespan, to highlight and publicise your advocacy issue. They usually seek to mobilise public action in support of the changes you are seeking, e.g. through signing a petition, joining a demonstration, wearing a special badge, writing to a minister, etc. Campaigning is one way to go beyond the limitations of awareness-raising, to building and demonstrating public concern on your issue. It seeks to take your supporters from a position where they have an awareness of the issue to one where they have a deeper understanding and ultimately are prepared to commit themselves to taking action that is aimed at putting pressure on decision-makers.

A campaign represents one approach within a longer-term strategy for achieving change. It is important to have a specific reason for launching a campaign. This might relate to the passing of a new law, for example, or be aimed at influencing a meeting of a group of important decision-makers. A campaign usually has its own specific objectives, and will typically combine several approaches.

Campaigns are often seen as a more confrontational approach and they have the potential to alienate key target audiences. They should therefore be used with care and discretion. They can be demanding to run and a great drain on resources and so, before embarking on a campaign, it is worth considering whether the time is right for such an intervention. A short-term campaign should not obscure your longer-term vision and planning. If you do run a campaign be sure to undertake thorough preparation as a great deal will happen in a short space of time once the campaign is launched.

What goes into planning a long-term campaign

In 1999, for the first time ever, Oxfam International launched a global campaign on the issue of education. The campaign was given a name, "Education Now", and a slogan, "Break the Cycle of Poverty". The stated aim was "increased political will and action, by governments and international institutions, to realise basic education targets on universal primary education, gender equality in school enrolments and adult illiteracy". In addition, the campaign set out specific policy change objectives, including: the need for a global action plan by the World Bank, the UN and national governments; a restructuring of debt for poor countries, and a reallocation of money to poverty issues; increased international aid; an increase in Southern government budgets and policies on education, and so on.

What goes into planning a long-term campaign (cont)

The campaign had specific campaign strategies which were embodied in actions such as the production of an authoritative report; lobbying actions; media activities; mass mobilisation activities (the marketing of a symbolic pencil, the sending of postcards to key targets, etc.). These activities were carefully planned along a time-line which highlighted key dates, such as the launch; the IMF/World Bank spring meetings; the G7 meeting; the international day of literacy, etc.

Lobbying

Lobbying means trying to influence the policy process by working closely with individuals in political and governmental structures. You might use this to get information about forthcoming initiatives, to become involved in informal discussions at an early stage of policy development or to have someone speak up for your point of view. To be effective at lobbying you have to have the right contacts. Building up these contacts takes considerable time and effort. If your long-term strategy includes lobbying, you might think about doing work which brings you into contact with your targets, even if the work is not directly related to your change objectives. Such contacts prefer organisations with which they have had a long-term relationship – and which have helped them in the past. Good lobbying requires a sense of reciprocity, both sides feeling that they gain something through the relationship.

How does lobbying fit into the style of your work? Style and formalities matter: who does the lobbying, and how they present themselves, will predispose your audience either to listen or to dismiss what they are saying.

Can campaigning and lobbying go together?

If the other approaches you are using are confrontational this may make lobbying more difficult. You are trying to build up relationships of trust and respect, and these can easily be damaged, for example, by an aggressive campaign aimed at embarrassing key individuals. On the other hand a well-thought-out and constructive campaign can demonstrate to policy-makers that the public shares your concerns, and thus strengthen your hand in negotiations.

Should you compromise principles?

In a culture where age is respected and men make all the decisions, should a young woman be your chief negotiator? You *may* decide she should, to make a point: but then you are making a tactical choice to prioritise these issues over the other change objective.

Can you speak with authority?

You need to be seen to have the authority to speak on your issue. This means you are credible (i.e. you have knowledge and evidence to back up your position) and you have legitimacy (i.e. you represent an important body of opinion). If not, would you be more effective if you combined efforts with other groups which have some of the credibility you lack? A group of NGOs lobbying on the same issue may be taken more seriously than an individual NGO acting in isolation.

International lobbying

If you are lobbying an international organisation (for example, the World Bank or the European Union) will it be effective enough to work through national offices or representatives? Do you know someone in Washington or Brussels who might be willing to lobby on your behalf?

Lobbying across cultures

Where nationals and people from outside that society work together, nationals are more likely to understand the unwritten codes of how things should be done. For instance, someone who is brisk and goes straight to the point would not be the best lobbyist in a culture where it is impolite to be too direct, and where everyone expects to start with slow, courteous greetings.

TOOL 12: NEGOTIATING SKILLS

The "Seven steps to effective negotiation" given below were suggested by a trainer on advocacy working in a northern European country. Discuss as a group:

In your cultural context, would you query any of these?

Are there others you feel it is important to add?

- **Clarify the goal:**
  Be clear about the outcome you want. Will this solve the problem? Is it realistic?
- **Know your target:**
  Which aspects of the other person's values, knowledge and experience can you draw on to bring them closer to your position?
- **Consider the best place and time**
- **Be direct and clear:**
  Describe the problem to the other person; be explicit about what you want; use "I" statements to say what you think and feel
- **Acknowledge the other person:**
  Use active listening to fully understand them, and demonstrate that you understand; leave the other person space
- **Use consistent body language:**
  Keep your voice calm and regular, relax your shoulders, be conscious of what your demeanour and tone are indicating
- **Bargain or problem-solve:**
  "This is what I need. If I give you X, what are you prepared to offer?"

Now summarise with colleagues a list for your context.

- Now practise these skills through role-play, using the approach suggested in Tool 10.

Devise a scenario from a context your team will be familiar with.

Here is an example:

The lobbyists:
You are a delegation from the national Education Campaign Alliance. You are visiting a group of Ministry of Education officials, to persuade them to agree to a visit by the minister of education to meet members of a community who have set up their own school, using the language of people in that region. You intend to influence the minister through this visit to take seriously issues of local language teaching and community management of schools, through demonstrating the successes of the village project.

The officials:
You are resistant to the idea of a visit, because it will expose the failings of national education policies.

- Divide into groups of three or four. Half the groups play the role of lobbyists, half play the decision-makers.
- Prepare to play the role. Take 15 minutes to choose your arguments, consider your approach, and divide up responsibilities for who will say what.
- Pair a group of lobbyists with a group of officials, and run the role-play for up to 10 minutes.
- Then swap team roles. Prepare for the other role, and run the role-play again.

Lobbying for children affected by conflict

Save the Children has worked for many years in Sri Lanka, both in the capital and in the areas affected by the protracted civil conflict. It has gained a reputation for consistently taking a neutral position, and working for the interests of children. It has built relationships with education officials at many levels, and so has been able to lobby for changes that will reduce the difficulties faced by children who are internally displaced because of conflict. For instance, the regulations require school children to present a birth certificate to verify age, and to wear uniforms. Children who had to flee suddenly naturally do not have these, and so have been barred from registering at schools in the new area. Officials have now agreed to lift these regulations.

The media

Working with the media is a vital part of any advocacy work. You may think of the media primarily as a potential vehicle for your strategy, but they are also influential in their own right. Educating the media about your issue is essential if you are going to use them to spread your message.

Media work is one of the best ways of influencing public opinion, but you need to acquire the skills appropriate to the task. Providing the media with information and easy-to-read research results is fundamental. On television and radio you should use simple and direct language to communicate complex problems.

Target those parts of the media which are most appropriate in your local context. For example, if you are trying to reach the general public and they get their news from newspapers rather than the television or radio, target the newspapers. Analyse which media have the greatest influence over your targets, the decision-makers.

When using the media it helps to have a few well-placed friends who are sympathetic to your work. They may be able to give you advice on how best to use the media and how to get your message heard. (They will also be able to act as key informants during your review and evaluation exercises – see below.) It is important, for example, that your media items reflect the tone and style of the format you hope to use.

Your media strategy must be planned. It is easier to build a media presence around a specific event and over a limited time frame – perhaps in the run-up to an election, for example. You should plan to make the most of any such opportunities through the use of press conferences, press releases, newsworthy events such as public marches, etc. Remember that the media may not be interested in your detailed policy analysis but may be interested in what it means for individual children. Children are often seen as good subjects for the media, and you may be able to generate effective human-interest angles with children's participation – but remember the ethical issues when involving children in media work.

Getting the media interested

Oxfam thought about various low-cost media stunts to use during their "Education Now" campaign. These included leaving empty school desks (one for each country) outside government buildings; producing oversized report cards for national governments to be presented at the start of the school year; wasted ink – making a connection between governments signing up to support basic education and the results of their failure to do so by spilling "ink" from a giant inkwell, etc. These kinds of activities can generate media interest, though you need to be aware of local sensitivities when thinking about what is possible.

It is more difficult to think of ways of sustaining your message in the media over a longer term. This will depend on the persistence and creativity you use in presenting your message to the media. Do not think only of news coverage. Perhaps, for example, you know of a columnist, freelance journalist or academic who would be prepared to write a newspaper or magazine article on your issue. Another approach might be to set yourself up as a source of information on a given subject. This will ensure you retain close contacts with the media.

Partnerships

As we have seen above, building partnerships can be one of the most difficult yet rewarding dimensions of your advocacy work. There are many advantages to working in partnerships or networks:

- You have an opportunity to share expertise, knowledge and lessons learned
- You may gain access to other resources, such as funding
- Several groups speaking with one voice are likely to be taken far more seriously than if each group worked separately
- Working within partnerships or networks increases moral support and bolsters solidarity
- Partnerships with or between young people are a good way to ensure their voices are heard
- Working in partnerships is also a first step towards strengthening civil society and furthering the social change process which many see as a central goal of advocacy work.

The word "partnership" suggests a relationship between equals, though different partners may bring different contributions to the advocacy work. But whatever the nature of the relationship, partnerships begin with a common vision of your core agenda. If this is missing, the partnership will almost certainly fail at a later date. It is vital that you share your change objectives and reach agreement on basic concepts which relate to your work. Partnerships and networks develop over time if transparency and shared responsibility are maintained.

A variation of the idea of partnership is to build networks. Here the function tends to be more information-sharing than joint-action, but that in itself can be empowering. Networks among local groups help to develop consensus such that they are later able to operate collectively and wield real influence. Each group can tap the expertise of others, and support each other to put their solutions into practice. Being part of a

network can provide opportunities for the exchange of experiences, or for reflection and planning around your change objectives

Collaborating for greater effect

In the Philippines a coalition of different partner organisations was established in 1998 in response to issues concerning early childhood care and development (ECCD). The coalition's objectives were: to maximise learning from experience across organisations; to have an input into policies on ECCD and primary education; and to respond to the issues emerging from a World Bank-sponsored project on ECCD. This project had been approved without any consultation with NGOs or international organisations already working in the field, with the exception of UNICEF. One indicator of the coalition's success is that it now has representation on the national steering committee for this World Bank project.

One potential danger of working in networks is that they absorb all your energy; another is that you find you are spending your time preaching to the converted. Networks are there to help you achieve your change objectives, and your focus should remain on getting your message heard by your primary audience. There is also the risk of losing organisational profile – and perhaps future influence – if you are subsumed among a lot of other agencies.

Creating ways for people to act

Some of the most important stakeholders may have no experience of taking action to press for change. Where there are few effective civil society groups, you may need to act as a catalyst. You can start by encouraging like-minded groups of people to act together. Obvious examples are families, teachers, children and adolescents. Once they are brought together to discuss what they want to change they may well begin to organise themselves into associations, and there is a role to be played in facilitating this process. Another role might be in helping improve or extend services and infrastructure.

Working with children and young people poses special challenges. Many adults need to learn – or re-learn – how to be with children in ways that encourage them to open up and be confident to say what they think and to act. But children also spur adults to create opportunities for more imaginative approaches, which draw on children's natural

spontaneity and capacity for enjoyment. Adult facilitators may find it as helpful as children do to have structured activities to start this process. Well-tested approaches include:

- cultural and traditional activities. Music, art, dance, etc. can create ways of building the confidence and skills children need in order to take an active role in civil society. Using cultural forms that are familiar to children gives the greatest chance of everyone being involved, and adults in the community can act as the resource. Often those with least formal education will be the greatest fund of traditional activities.
- the child-to-child methodology. This developed first in relation to health education issues, but is so effective that it has been widely used in many countries on any issue that children can be involved in. Children themselves research an issue, pool their findings and analyse them, and then plan how they will take action within their community. It is called "child-to-child" because children are the vehicle for communicating important understandings to other children. The adult role is critical: adults are facilitators, creating the structure which allows all this to happen, but not determining outcomes.
- "Theatre for development". This is an exceptionally useful tool. It creates a framework for groups that usually no one listens to – such as poor communities, or children – to explore what they think, to gain the confidence to articulate their views and present them to others in an engaging form.

Theatre for development

Save the Children together with many NGO partners has explored the use of theatre for development with children in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal.

- *The first stage is a training session of several days for adults in the facilitating organisations. Its main purpose is to help participants understand the importance of facilitating a process in which the children can do things themselves, rather than being directed by adults.*
- *There is an open agenda, and the children come up with an issue that is important to them. These are often a surprise to the adults. Several groups of children in slum areas in Karachi, Pakistan, said that the critical issue for them was the effect of illicit drug dealing and drug addiction in their families. This was not an issue the NGOs had chosen to be active on, so if the adults had been in charge it would probably not have come up.*
- *Initial exercises helped children lose their shyness and begin listening and responding to each other.*

Theatre for development (cont)

- *Then by taking roles and acting out encounters they explored what each of the players in the given situation would feel and how they would act.*
- *Finally, they put together elements of all the role-plays to evolve a drama which they presented to others.*

Observers were astonished at the children's complete involvement in their roles, and their moving portrayals of the often complex emotions they had witnessed in their families and community.

The more economically deprived or socially marginalised the community, the more difficult it will be for people, whether adults or children, to take and sustain active roles. We talk of people in this state as being "disempowered", by which we mean that their power to improve their own lives (which all human beings potentially have) has been taken away from them by a long history of being oppressed by their life circumstances, and having their interests ignored by those in authority. Here the role of a community mobiliser is critical. The French term *animateur* is a good one, for it implies helping people find the life that is within them. If you are planning such a process you need to recognise that it will be slow, and that to get meaningful results requires the building up of trust over a long period

Active roles for children in schools

On Page 24 we discussed the success of the Escuela Nueva (New School) programme in Colombia. What made it so popular? The Fundación Volvamos a la Gente which runs the programme encourages child-centred, active learning. The curriculum is based around children's daily life, with flexibility for different contexts. School activities are rooted in the local community. For example, schools might work with agricultural calendars, family records, maps of the surrounding area, etc. The schools also have "school governments" which introduce students to civic and democratic attitudes and behaviour. Children are organised in committees which are often linked to community groups and projects. It is hoped that the children, by taking an active role in the functioning of civil society, will develop a positive habit of a lifetime.

Different approaches for different actors

The approaches you adopt will be geared towards specific targets or influentials. The following tool provides a way of thinking systematically about which approaches might be suitable in each case.

TOOL 13: CHOOSING APPROPRIATE APPROACHES

Make a final list of the targets and influentials you wish to include in your advocacy strategy.

Take a blank sheet of paper for each key target or influential. On this you are going to create a table of the factors you need to take into account, and your decisions about approaches for that particular actor. (The example below – "Most effective approaches in the past" – suggests one way to set this out.)

- Decide what are the key characteristics of these individuals and groups in relation to both policy creation and implementation. For example, if local government is the target, you might note that they are not involved in designing policy, but they are centrally involved in implementing policy.
- Next, from your experience or that of your partners, identify which strategies have been most effective in influencing them in the past. If you can give details of a specific example of a successful strategy (even if it is not in the educational sphere), so much the better.
- Make some conscious decisions about the kind of style you will adopt. It might be:

Co-operative
for example, working with government to find solutions

Persuasive
presenting evidence in the hope of getting your targets to recognise the merits of your arguments

Confrontational
forcing an issue on to the agenda through mass mobilisation, media campaigns, etc.

Which of these is most appropriate for your context?

In the example below, we have split the analysis between policy creation and policy implementation since there seemed to be a clear distinction between the two, both in their respective characteristics and in the advocacy approaches adopted for them. Adjust the criteria to fit your own context.

Most effective approaches in the past:

Actor & Local Context e.g. Central government in India

	Key characteristics	**Advocacy approaches**	**Style**	**Specific examples**
Policy creation	– Policy led by the centre – Bureaucratic process	– Building international pressure (campaigning) – Critiques and debates in civil society (media)	– persuasive – confrontational but constructive	– child labour
Implementation or practice	– lack of political stability – division between political leaders and communities – bottlenecks in bureaucracy	– building on personal contacts (lobbying) – building on public commitments made by politicians (lobbying and campaigns)	– co-operative – confrontational	– violence against women – implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

TOOL 14: STRATEGIES FOR EACH TARGET AND INFLUENTIAL

- Begin by listing again the targets and influentials you need to convince.
- Write in the specific decision or action you need from each.
- Write in the specific change you want to bring about in their attitudes or knowledge.
- Add in the kinds of advocacy approaches and/or activities that you believe will best bring about this change.

Here is an example from Pratham

Target or influential	**Change or action you need from each**	**Advocacy approach / activity to help bring about the change**
Municipal teachers for 6-to 10-year-olds	Improved self image	– improve the environment by painting walls, fixing furniture, etc. – offer non-financial incentives related to performance – provide opportunities for personal development
	More effective teaching methods	– show alternative models and their effectiveness – involve children and parents in planning
	Greater motivation (even though teachers are relatively well paid)	– generate greater interaction with parents and children – devolve decision making – devise an assessment system for good and bad practice – encourage school leadership

Drawing up an implementation plan

You now have all the elements needed to plan your advocacy strategy. You need to put them together in such a way that they reinforce each other over time and make the best use of your finite resources. Here is one example of the way you might think about phasing.

TOOL 15: PHASING ACTIVITIES

Here is an imaginary scenario, following on from the example in Tool 9:

Your target:
The minister of education, who needs persuading about the value of consulting children in curriculum development .

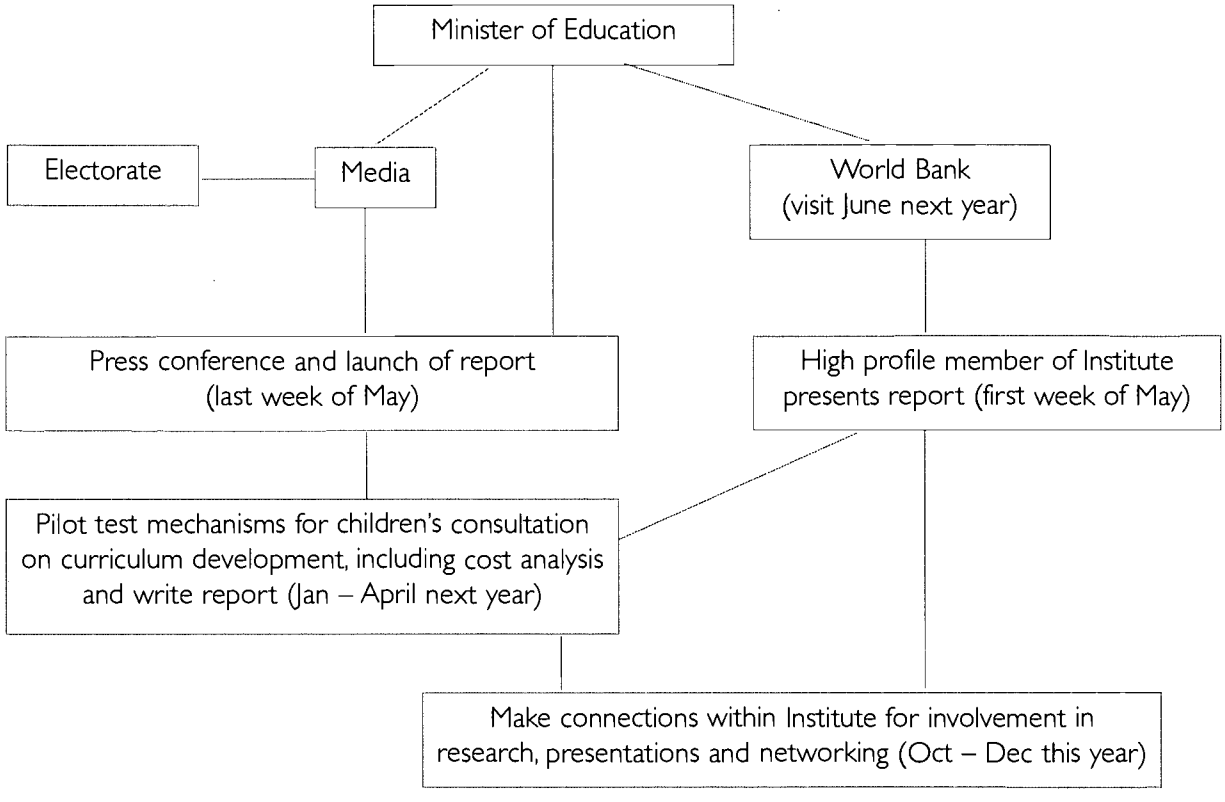
An event around which to plan:
High-level representatives of the World Bank are planning a visit to your country in June of next year. They could be a channel of influence to reach the minister.

Your influentials:
To reach the World Bank representatives, you plan to work mainly through the Civil Society Institute on Education which you think will have much more influence than if you approach the Bank directly.

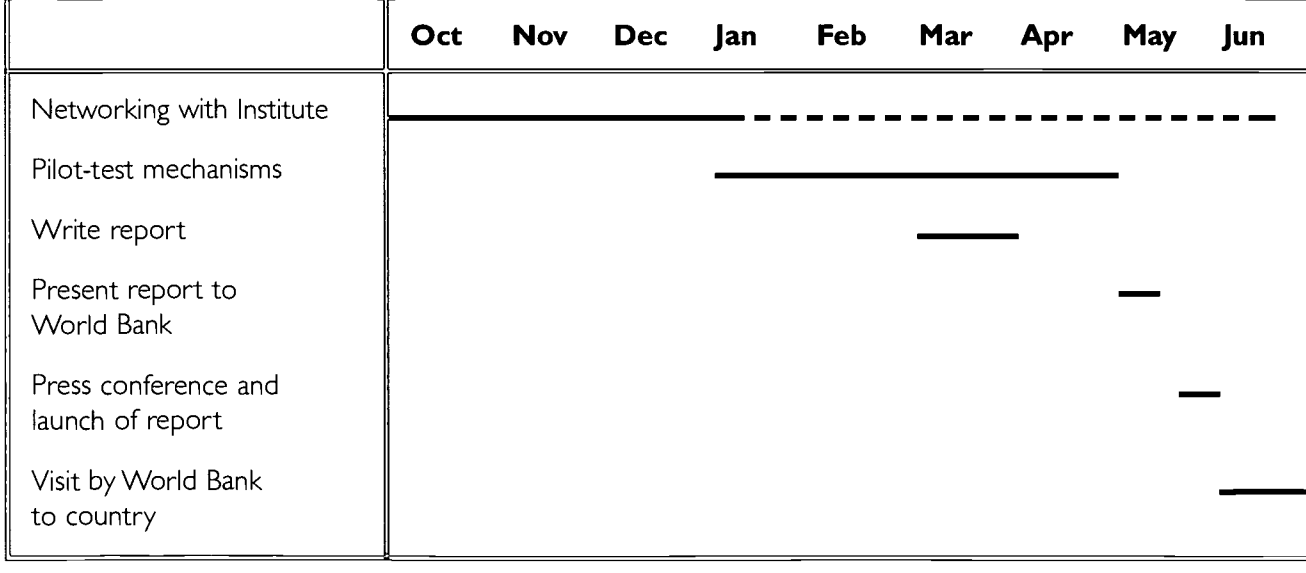
What you decide to do:
You must start building personal links with Institute members immediately. The aim is to get them to produce a report which supports the idea of consulting with children when developing the new curriculum. This must be ready at least one month before the visit. You will need a high-profile member of the Institute to present the report to the World Bank around this time. You will have to organise a launch and press coverage to increase the impact of the report in this country. This should take place the week before the visit.

To make the report persuasive, it should include concrete examples showing where such consultation has brought benefits in other countries. It should also describe how the consultation mechanisms might be done in this country and an assessment of cost. To do this, you need to run a couple of pilot research projects, preferably with a member of the Institute being on the research committee.

It may help if you map this out visually. You can do this in any way that clear to you. It might look something like the chart on the next page:



Alternatively, to see how your whole timeframe fits together, you can use a diagram like this one:



TOOL 16: WHAT RESOURCES? WHO WILL IMPLEMENT?

You now need to put together something that shows practically how all this is going to get done. Again you can use your own tools, but a simple summary might look like this:

What do we need to do?		**By when?**	**Who will do it?**	**What funds are needed?**
Output	**Activities**			
1. Networking with Institute	1.1 Monthly meetings 1.2 Send updates	14th each month 26th each month	Marie Sita	Transport Duplication + postage
2. Pilot-test mechanisms	2.1 Design approach 2.2 Negotiate sites 2.3 Implement 2.4 Evaluate mechanism 2.5 Determine cost of replication	11th January 20th January 10th March 20th March 22nd March	Sita with Institute rep. Marie Sita + Marie with Institute rep. As 2.3 As 2.3	Communication costs Communication costs Transport, meals, accommodation, equipment Office running costs only
Etc.				

6 Building in responsiveness

Why evaluate?

Reviewing and evaluating your advocacy work is essentially no different from evaluating any other form of work, and it is equally important. You review so you can learn how things are going, and adjust accordingly. What makes evaluating advocacy work more challenging is the fluid nature of this work and the difficulty of linking particular pieces of advocacy with future changes in policy or practice. Advocacy work rarely has a beginning, a middle and an end. Look back at the diagram of the advocacy cycle in Section 1. Reviewing and evaluating your work is what keeps the cycle moving.

Evaluation can cover two main areas of investigation:

- It can assess the level of success in achieving the change objective, and/or
- It can help us learn lessons that will make our ongoing work more effective.

There are also two main sets of people with an interest in knowing what emerges from the evaluation. The internal group are those who have been working on the advocacy. The main focus here may be on learning how to increase the impact of your continuing or future work. The external group are those who have not been directly involved. Your evaluation may also be of interest to funders, who tend to be interested in results rather than the process you are developing. In this context an evaluation report may be a piece of evidence – a justification – for ongoing advocacy work. There may be others seeking to do advocacy in related areas who could learn from your experience when designing their own advocacy activities. You may thereby inspire and empower others.

Although we might talk about internal and external reasons for evaluating work, the evaluation itself is no different. You do not have separate evaluations for internal and external consumption. It is important that your evaluations are honest. Even if your evaluation indicates limited success, this is still worth sharing with others, particularly if you can show *why* you think you were not as successful as you hoped. In an evaluation you are not trying to prove a success: you are trying to assess an intervention as objectively as possible.

Assessing levels of impact

It might be useful to think through your possible achievements in terms of impact in the following areas:

Policies, programmes and practices

Did you have an impact on the work of policy-makers and/or education-providers, which might include government, NGOs, the private sector, the World Bank, etc? Your impact might have been on changes to the curriculum, management of schools, drafting of legislation, etc.

Attitudes

Did you have an impact on the attitudes of managers or key people, decision-makers, corporate leaders, bureaucrats, politicians, etc?

Educational outcomes for children or others

For many organisations this is the most important arena for assessing impact. You could look at attainment levels, attendance levels, issues of inclusion, the views and opinions of children themselves: are they satisfied with any changes which have come about? What about their levels of self-esteem? There is a danger of making assumptions about the views of children. If your assessment includes looking at the impact of your work on children it is important that you make the effort to find out what the children themselves think.

Civil society

Have you increased the knowledge base or increased the skills within civil society? Have you helped legitimise civil society, given it a voice? Have you helped enhance the organisational capacity of institutions to participate in policy-making and implementation?

Democracy

Has accountability and transparency been enhanced? Has there been increased participation by people in general? What about social responsibility, for example in the corporate sector? Have ideas of citizenship been strengthened?

You could chart these simply, as in this example:

TOOL 17: CHARTING OUTCOMES

Level of progress	Description	Example
Outputs	Events held Reports published Meetings organised References in the media	° Was the press conference run on the day you had planned? ° How many journalists came from the newspapers you had targeted? ° How many copies of the report were taken?
Outcome	What happened as a result?	
Impact	What effect did these outcomes have on your ultimate change objective?	° In his speech to Parliament the following week, did the education minister quote some findings from the report? ° In the steering committee meeting the following month, did he request a working group be set up to investigate the feasibility of including children's groups?

How to evaluate

There are various methods you can use in your review process. When choosing a method you should be aware that there is always a trade-off between the rigour with which you do this assessment and the resources available. The important thing to keep in mind is that evaluation is about learning, about improving our advocacy in response to experience. Choose an approach that ensures that what we learn changes what we do. Some of the more common methods are:

Baseline and follow-up surveys

The best way to show change is to compare the situation before and after you began work. If, for example, you have good information on attendance rates at school by children from a minority group both before the date your advocacy work started and afterwards, many audiences will find this convincing evidence of your impact.

You can collect survey information on a range of measures, such as attainment rates, the levels of knowledge of those being educated and the attitudes held by stakeholders. However, you must choose carefully the information you collect, since the work required can be very expensive in terms of both money and/or person-hours. You should only gather information that you are sure you will actually analyse and use.

Key informants and focus group discussions

An alternative to the quantitative survey approach is to rely on a more qualitative approach, such as the judgements of a small number of people who have been in a good position to assess your impact. Such key informants (who may also have been among your targets or influentials) could give subjective judgements about how effective you have been. For example, journalists may be able to give you feedback on how the media is interpreting the importance of your message; bureaucrats may give you insight as to whether the opinions of politicians are changing. A similar approach would be to bring together informants into so-called focus groups where they can discuss their assessments collectively. Such an approach allows you to gather the views of more people at a single time and to hear whether individual views are agreed with or challenged by others.

Issues concerning review and evaluation

Whatever approach you take, there are a number of issues that you need to bear in mind as you design your evaluation and interpret the results:

The problem of attribution

How do you link what you did (as opposed to all the other things that were going on) to the change that has happened? How do you know how important your particular contribution was? It may be that what you did a decade ago is only now starting to have an impact. This is a problem for doing your evaluation, but there is another dimension to consider. Attribution often becomes a political issue. Who was responsible for bringing about change? Does it matter if a particular politician takes the credit?

Real vs. apparent change

For example, has the existence of a new law really changed anything? Has it been properly implemented? Always try to look at real impact. You may feel very pleased with the amount of work you did, but what was the impact? Measuring your efforts is not the same as measuring your impacts, but you might want to measure them anyway. It could be a good lesson for others to learn if you conclude that "we did all this, and it still didn't have an effect!", particularly if you think you know why you had so little effect.

Direct vs. indirect impact

You may or may not have achieved your objectives, but there will be other impacts you have had. Perhaps these in themselves are justification enough for considering your work successful. For example, perhaps you have not achieved your policy change objective, but you have enabled a range of civil society groups to develop a much better understanding of the policy process and to be much better prepared to take forward their own advocacy in the future.

Unexpected outcomes

The Health Action Schools project in Pakistan discovered that teaching practices in its pilot schools had improved, even in subjects unrelated to health. The techniques introduced to teach health awareness were being used in the teaching of other subjects. This impact was an unexpected bonus.

Objective vs. subjective impact assessments

Matters of judgement are just as important as objective impact assessments. If, for example, you want to measure changes in civil society, it is valid to make your own judgements, or to use those of key informants. You will probably find it useful to look at various kinds of assessment – both objective and subjective – to do a complete review of your work. Whichever methods you use, it is important that you are transparent about how you did the evaluation.

Ladder of Participation

There are ways of trying to measure subjective judgements more systematically. For example, an NGO in Peru was working with a child-to-child programme looking at self-esteem, etc. A commonly used tool, the Hart "Ladder of Participation", was used showing various levels of involvement that people term "participation". The children were asked to express at what level on the ladder they thought they were when participating in the project. The children did the exercise and the results showed different levels of participation among the group. This was one way of systematising subjective judgements.

Involvement of the audience

It is often a good idea to involve your audience in the monitoring and evaluation process. The external reason for doing review and evaluation is to share learning. The involvement of allies and key informants during the evaluation itself is one of the best ways of promoting this sharing process. Elements of your audience may also be better placed to make neutral judgements about the effectiveness of your work.

Sharing your results

Even if your audience is not directly involved in your evaluation process, you need to think about how to share the lessons you have learned. It does not matter how good the quality of the study or how excellent the design of the final report if it is not noticed, read and acted upon by the people who should know about it. There are many creative ways to get your results heard. Perhaps you could publish a case study, or make a presentation at an appropriate meeting. You could put information on web-sites of individual organisations or networks. Perhaps you could create interactive tools that allow the user to select the information they need.

Appealing visual approaches such as videos, television programmes, advertisements or photographs might stimulate a more emotional reaction, which is often necessary for action to result.

Videos presenting results — *The Aga Khan Foundation in Pakistan, for example, produces videos of its work on the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme. Similarly, Save the Children's Sialkot Child Labour Project in Pakistan also produced a video and media pack explaining its work.*

And finally... the "reality check"

The "reality check" is time spent thinking about whether your proposed strategy is realistic and appropriate. It might include thinking about the following issues (though there are sure to be others):

- Are you ready to put a strategy in place? Are you clear about your change objectives? Do you have evidence and solutions in place? Do you know your audience? Do you have good contacts among your influentials? Do you know what activities you want to carry out? Have you decided what style of advocacy you want to use?
- What are you expecting from your partners? Are you sure of their motives and goals? Do they enhance your credibility? What will happen if they drop out of the picture?
- What resources – financial, technical or in terms of human resources – are available? What are the implications for your strategy? Are there other sources of funding, or ways of accessing the technical ability you need? Perhaps you need to build some training activities into your plans.
- How will you co-ordinate and monitor the different approaches you are using? There are likely to be several processes going on at the same time. Do you have a plan for integrating them and ensuring you do not get bottlenecks?
- Are there any risks? How will your activities affect the reputation of your organisation? How might it affect your funding if you do other activities? Might you lose valuable staff ? Might other current partners no longer wish to work with you? What can you do to mitigate any negative outcomes that are possible?
- What would you do if...? What are your alternatives, contingency plans or fall-back positions? It is important to have flexibility built into your strategy. External conditions may change, and you may then need to rethink your strategy. This should not come as a shock, but as something you expect to happen.

Your advocacy work is likely never to reach a conclusion. Even if you achieve your initial change objectives, there will always be another advocacy challenge to take up. The encouraging news is that change does happen and that you can make it happen, just as others are doing across the world.

Appendices

Advocacy in practice: two case studies

This section gives two case studies in a little more detail, to show how organisations in different contexts have gone about the advocacy process, often finding their own solutions to the difficulties they encountered. The first example concentrates on principles and processes, the second shows how solutions were found and the strategy implemented.

Foro Educativo, Peru

creating a broader education debate

Foro Educativo is an organisation originally set up by academics to influence education policy. It is concerned with developing the participation of civil society, including children, in education policy-making. Foro Educativo attributes its success to three strengths:

- The organisation brings together technical and academic issues with political issues. This means it looks at policies from a pedagogical standpoint, whilst understanding the political process that creates education policy
- It realises there is a direct relation between the degree of social consensus reached in society and the quality of dialogue achieved with the state. Consequently, it focuses on social mobilisation achieved not through pronouncements but through debate and consultation in order to reach consensus
- It sees itself as a social connector, catalysing and facilitating discussion in civil society and transforming it into a political orientation that serves everyone.

The process of elaborating policies allows for participation throughout. Initial documents are prepared by teams of educational specialists. The documents are subsequently discussed by other experts to enrich the proposals and to improve their technical quality. At the same time events are organised – National Dialogues for Education – at which documents are presented to elements of civil society and others, such as NGOs, local governments, pedagogical institutes, etc. These events initiate social mobilisation and develop legitimacy for the proposals. Final versions of the proposals, which combine technical clarity with social support, are subsequently drafted. These proposals are then shared, debated and negotiated with government. This is accompanied by a media strategy aimed at increasing social mobilisation behind the issues. Clearly, it is impossible to adopt all the different perspectives which come out of a full debate with civil society. For Foro Educativo, however, increased awareness and ownership of the proposals are an important benefit of encouraging civil society participation in the process at this stage.

Foro Educativo has identified seven actors that can be consulted. These are: social and state agents (i.e. representatives of interest groups, institutions of the civil society with influence in decision-making, such as corporations, media and churches); specialists, including those of the state; regional representatives from different parts of the country; teachers; adolescents and children; parents; international organisations; public opinion. There are specific approaches to each of these actors, with a view to meeting four objectives: to identify the views and needs of that group; to incorporate expertise; to motivate political decisions; to validate the proposal in specific contexts (e.g. regions, the classroom, etc.).

Foro Educativo places a strong emphasis on gathering evidence to evaluate the implementation of education policies. It does so through a network of information, analysis and follow-up of education policies – RECREA. This network shares information among the stakeholders, and particularly encourages the participation of children, teachers and education authorities. A bimonthly newsletter, Contato Foro, is distributed via this network to teachers and education authorities. This provides information, but it also constitutes a way of collecting local evidence and views, ensuring that stakeholders can be heard at a national level.

Over the long term those working in advocacy on education recognise that there are high and low points, times when work is progressing well and other times when you seem to be making no headway. One of the lessons learned is that it is important to seize useful opportunities which present themselves. This involves gearing up to make the most of an important meeting, or an election. The Foro Educativo experience is an interesting example of how you might plan for such an opportunity.

- Foro Educativo's aim for a forthcoming election in Peru was to get education on to the election agenda. Using the mapping tool it started by thinking about three targets: the president, and two opposition party leaders. It soon realised, however, that only one of these three had any real interest in its message. What interested all three seemed to be popularity – understandably so during an election period. Consequently, Foro Educativo decided on a strategy of targeting the campaign managers, who had the power to put education on the agenda of the election. Foro Educativo then built up a real interest in its message.
- One influential was the press. Foro Educativo planned to keep education on the agenda by providing accessible, forceful information throughout the campaign period. It considered hiring a marketing company to help present this information in the most effective ways, both to the press and to society at large. During an election public opinion is a strong influence, and Foro Educativo planned to make the most of

this by using the powerfully persuasive tool of children's voices. Foro Educativo's contacts also allowed it to have a say in the design of opinion polls, another powerful influence on campaign managers. A final idea to bring together all its allies and present a united front involved organising a social policy conference. This was to include UNICEF and other key influentials, and it was to be held just before the election using a convenient date, such as the anniversary of the CRC.

The Foro Educativo approach to advocacy work is rooted in the Latin American context where the challenge in emerging democracies is to develop innovative policy proposals. Powerful central governments remain the key actors with regard to implementation. In South Asia, by contrast, many would say there is no shortage of good policy proposals. What is lacking is the resources as well as efficient bureaucracies to put policies into practice. The challenge in this context is to demonstrate that solutions involving other actors can work more effectively.

Pratham, India

getting young children into school

Pratham is an organisation (a trust) created in response to a need. It was estimated in 1994 that at least 100,000 children in the city of Mumbai were not learning. Half of these attended school only irregularly, and the other half did not attend school at all. There was general consensus about what a solution might comprise: decentralisation; increasing local accountability; moving from an emphasis on teaching passive students to one of active learning by doing; introducing support systems as an integral part of schooling for urban poor; involving parents, and recognising the rest of the community must own the problem and the solution. Pratham was set up to bring about change on the ground, its change objective being that all children should be in school regularly and learning by 2000.

Pratham brought together government, business and the voluntary sector in a societal mission. It was shaped by the attitude that education policies and practices are those of the state and not just the government. It is up to citizens to help make them work: "Pratham has always functioned with a view to increasingly involve people in its action." "People" are often automatically interpreted as the underprivileged. That the underprivileged have to participate in the action of changing their lives is true. However, lack of education affects not only the underprivileged, but the entire society. Hence, involving the very top of society is also important. It is really a question of linking the top of society and the bottom.

In order to do this Pratham started with a pre-school programme. The governmental agencies do not provide for pre-school education. However, private primary schools, which cater for nearly half of Mumbai's population, all have two years of pre-school learning, and the underprivileged see the need for it. Pratham took on the issue. But, instead of trying to influence policy through traditional methods, it chose to prepare a plan to universalise pre-school education (by filling gaps) on the strength of private donations. Over the last four years it has opened 2,800 such centres, which were to grow to about 4,000 by August 1999, and practically every child aged 3–5 would have a pre-school centre. This satisfied a need/demand of people (most pay a modest fee of about $0.5 a month) and also helped in creating a huge city-wide network which now works to bring children back to school. It has also made policy-makers sit up and take notice. A major strand of Pratham's influence has been achieved through showing everyone what poor children are capable of. Also, the fact that such a huge task has been accomplished through non-governmental efforts aided only by local funds has attracted many people from the top. The original strategy of linking the (policy-influencing) top to the (eager to perform) bottom has succeeded. Now it is a matter of skilfully steering this potent force into influencing policy and the functioning of government.

Pratham's strategy involves demonstrating solutions that work on a large scale. It was estimated that from a standing start in 1995, universal pre-school education (for over 70,000 children) would be realised by December 1999. Over 10,000 children aged 6–10 were expected to have been enrolled by the same date.

When attempting to demonstrate large-scale solutions you are rarely able to start working at a macro level. More commonly, you have to develop a way for your solution to grow from relatively humble beginnings. This was the case with Pratham: it started small, working on programmes in a limited number of schools and only for certain age groups. The initial funding came from UNICEF and some municipal and corporate trustees. Expansion was rapid, and it was dependent on the idea of expansion and intensification of ownership of the change objectives both by the business community and individuals in society, and by the slum communities where most of the children lived.

Pratham started with a programme on early childhood education. The programme grew through the strength of its support among the stakeholders on the ground (teachers, children, communities). For the programme to work, and for expansion to happen, these actors had to accept the Pratham message, and be prepared to take on responsibility for helping to make the programme work.

A similar process was going on with the corporate sector. Individuals in the business community spread the message by word of mouth. This worked to such an extent that ICICP, India'a largest private financial institution, became sponsor for the whole programme.

The key to both processes of expanding support was that Pratham occupied the role of facilitator, remaining as transparent and accountable as possible, and letting the various actors own the problem and work out the solutions for themselves.

Pratham is a good case study for illustrating how to think of success and failure. To begin with, Pratham does not use the term "failures" but instead, "weaknesses", because "there is still time to strengthen these factors and to achieve the desired goals". It has encountered many setbacks, often due to factors over which it has had no control. For example, the departure of key politicians at crucial moments has happened on several occasions. Pratham has also faced difficulties in working with teachers, but it remains positive and has thought of new approaches to make progress, as it explains:

"Pratham had not succeeded in directly influencing the community of teachers. All our efforts to change teaching-learning methods were viewed with suspicion and an attitude of 'here come the outsiders to tell us how to work and to increase our burden'. However, last year we instituted two major programmes which directly help ease the teachers' burden (some say we are doing their job). One programme is of remedial learning for children in the municipal schools who lag behind. In the other programme a community volunteer works with the school four hours a day. Her/his job is to engage students in story-telling and educational games if the teacher is absent. If no teacher is absent this Friend of the Children (Balsakhi) helps those children who lag behind. Another task is to contact parents whose children have problems. Both these programmes work directly in the school premises and new teaching–learning methods and activities which are fun are used with inexpensive learning aids. Once the teachers accept the Balsakhi as someone who genuinely helps, we find that the teachers are influenced by the methods she uses. We observe that the teachers are accepting Pratham a bit better and hope to achieve a breakthrough shortly."

One of the difficulties in planning to do advocacy work lies in the finance. How do you know you will be able to fund your strategy? One answer is to tailor your strategy to fit within the funding you are certain you will obtain. A more positive approach, though risky, is to plan to raise the necessary funds as you progress. Pratham is an example of the latter approach:

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"By February 1999 the organisation was getting ready to launch the next year's programme. The required funds of $1.1 million were not promised by anyone. In May we set in motion a fundraising drive, which has effectively ensured the rupee equivalent of $750,000 to date. We still need another $350,000. This money has to be raised. We know we can do it, but at the same time we have worked out a plan for working all projects on about 75% of their projected costs. Thus, we know that we can complete the programme even if we fall short of funds.

This kind of planning is quite different from the method based on starting work after funds are assured. Our plans are really broad objectives to be met within a deadline. The resources for these are raised as we go along and not in advance. It is a deliberate style of functioning which keeps every segment of Pratham on its toes. What is crucial is the attitude of going out and achieving the maximum one thinks achievable within a time limit."

List of examples

topic	organisation	country
Two approaches to improving access	Pratham TAREA	India Peru
What makes a good teacher?	Education working group	Pakistan
Listening to those who use the schools	Save the Children	Ethiopia
Building on a common aim	Education Campaign Coalition	Ghana
Why are Roma children disadvantaged?	Save the Children	East/Central Europe
Balancing objectives with an open agenda	Aspiration Project	Bangladesh
Showing that it works	Escuela Nueva	Colombia
Policy or implementation		Nepal
A network on education		Philippines
Integrating children with disabilities	Save the Children	Lesotho
Lines of influence	Health Action Schools Pratham	Pakistan India
Adapting the message	Pratham	India
Children know more than adults think they do	Save the Children	Mozambique
Children evaluating changes that affect them	CENDHEC	Brazil
Working children speak for themselves	Working Children's group	International
Can communities find their own solutions?	SIDH	India
Teachers and refugees	Refugee Project, Croydon	UK
Teachers and minority languages	Lancashire teachers	UK
Do teachers know what changes are needed?	Aga Khan Foundation	India, Kenya
Where are the teachers?	Education working group	Pakistan
Improving pre-schools, empowering women	Save the Children	Palestine
Understanding the other point of view	Pratham	India
Internal and external influencing	PREAL	Latin America
What makes for success?	MV Foundation	India

topic	organisation	country
Research, action and influencing	IED, Aga Khan University	Pakistan
The invisible influence of the World Bank	Ação Educativo	Brazil
Did anyone read that publication?	Save the Children	England
Challenging exclusions	Race on the Agenda	UK
What goes into planning a campaign?	Oxfam	International
Lobbying for children affected by conflict	Save the Children	Sri Lanka
Getting the media interested	Oxfam	International
Collaborating for greater effect	ECCD Network	Philippines
Theatre for Development	Save the Children	South Asia
Active roles for children in schools	Fundación Volvamos a la Gente	Colombia
Unexpected outcomes	Health Action Schools	Pakistan
Ladder of participation		Peru
Videos presenting results	Aga Khan Foundation	Pakistan
Advocacy in Practice	Foro Educativo	Peru
	Pratham	India

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Working for Change in Education

A handbook for planning advocacy

This handbook is for any group seeking to bring about improvements in the education provided for children, especially community groups, policy and research institutes, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). It is a practical guide on how to do advocacy on education, from local through to national and international levels. Whilst this handbook focuses on education, it is a valuable resource that is relevant for anyone interested in advocacy work in any sector.

Save the Children's experience demonstrates that non-governmental and other groups can have a greater influence on the direction of educational change if they have a well thought out advocacy strategy. The handbook offers a detailed framework for planning advocacy, alongside case studies and workshops for training or to facilitate analysis.

Ideas for the handbook were put together by a group of NGO representatives from across four continents who met in Recife, Brazil, in July 1999. The meeting was hosted by Save the Children UK, an international NGO which works in education in 60 countries, in partnership with a range of national and local groups.

Handbooks provide practical solutions and innovations to children's rights and development work. They are aimed chiefly at policy-makers and practitioners.

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