

evidence, messages,  
**CHaNGE!**

Advocacy is an organized attempt to change policy, practice, and/or attitudes by presenting evidence and arguments for how and why change should happen.

An  
Introductory  
Guide to  
Successful  
Advocacy



OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS

**Open Society Institute**  
400 West 59th Street  
New York, NY 10019 USA  
Office of Communications  
(1) 212 548 0668

**Open Society Foundation**  
100 Cambridge Grove  
London W6 0LE, United Kingdom  
Office of the International Advocacy Director  
(44) 207 031 0226



OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS

# CONTENTS

- 01 PREFACE
- 02 INTRODUCTION
  - 02 HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE
  - 03 ADVOCACY
- 04 CHECKLIST: To Advocate or Not To Advocate
- 05 SECTION 1: Planning and Implementing Advocacy
  - The Advocacy Cycle**
  - 06 STEP 1: What problem do you want to solve? Identify and analyze the issue.
  - 07 STEP 2: What do you want to achieve? Set the goal and objectives.
  - 08 STEP 3: Whom do you need to influence? Identify the decision makers.
  - 11 STEP 4: : Define the message and the “ask.”
  - 14 STEP 5: When should you say it? Set your timeline.
  - 15 STEP 6: How will you do it?  
Assess resources, choose tactics, and implement your plan.
  - 18 STEP 7: How will you measure success? Monitor, evaluate, and share.
- 22 SECTION 2: Getting Started!
- 24 GLOSSARY
- 24 BIBLIOGRAPHY

## Acknowledgments:

*An Introductory Guide to Successful Advocacy* was written by Rachel Aicher, Fiona Napier, and Russell Pickard. The authors thank Akwe Amosu, Aryeh Neier, Ricardo Castro, Heather Grabbe and Open Society Institute – Brussels colleagues, Zoe Hudson, Gregor Meiering, and Radu Motoc for their substantial contributions.

# PREFACE

As part of ongoing discussions with many colleagues on the Open Society Foundations’ role in advocacy and what kinds of change are most amenable to advocacy, we have developed this guide as a basic, introductory resource. It is aimed at activists and NGO staff considering doing advocacy perhaps for the first time. There will be those who know everything in this manual already!

This guide outlines important, basic steps to ensure that your advocacy is as effective as possible. It draws on learning within the Open Society Foundations’ network, especially the experiences of our advocacy colleagues, as well as resources from other organizations.

Understanding of and engagement with advocacy varies from one organization to another. Here is a description that I hope helps clarify what we mean by advocacy:

*Advocacy is an organized attempt to change policy, practice, and/or attitudes by presenting evidence and arguments for how and why change should happen.*

As advocates we should always be clear about the values and principles which inform our reason for taking a particular stand. Key to delivering effective advocacy is the evidence we can gather, the messages that we present, and, of course, clarity about the impact that we achieve.

## Fiona Napier

*International Advocacy Director*

This guide is designed to support the advocacy efforts of the Open Society Foundations' grantees and partners. It offers some basic tools and lessons learned for those considering conducting advocacy.

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

THE CHECKLIST helps you decide whether or not to advocate on a particular issue.

SECTION 1 ADDRESSES planning, implementation, and measuring impact. It is based on the seven steps of the advocacy strategy cycle.

SECTION 2 PRESENTS an easy-to-use questionnaire for planning advocacy.

A user-friendly glossary provides easy-to-understand definitions of key terms in order to ensure that all users of this advocacy guide develop a common understanding of the approaches it outlines.

This document is interspersed with simple tips, examples, and ideas in different color text:

### GUIDE:

Directs you to useful tools or templates, or gives handy tips.

### EXAMPLE:

Gives examples of Open Society Foundations' and others' best practice in advocacy.

### KEY IDEA:

Explains a key theoretical idea behind advocacy work.

## ADVOCACY

### KEY IDEA:

**Advocacy is an organized attempt to change policy, practice, and/or attitudes by presenting evidence and arguments for how and why change should happen.**

At the heart of advocacy is the assumption that change can happen through building awareness, presenting evidence and arguments for why change should happen, and engaging people who have the power to make those changes.

Advocacy efforts can involve a mix of different activities, including direct lobbying; funding organizations that do advocacy (not the subject of this manual); coalition building; strategic litigation; and media outreach.

Organizations using this manual should ensure that their activities comply with the particular laws and regulations applicable to them.

Advocacy can be local or national or more international or global in scope.

### KEY IDEA:

**In each setting, you need to consider the legal context within which you are operating to ensure that any advocacy undertaken does not conflict with your charitable status.**

There are different levels of advocacy. At the Open Society Foundations, they can be categorized as follows:

- **Global initiatives:** promote change across multiple countries; numerous network entities involved; deploy full range of program and foundation assets (e.g., promoting extractive industry transparency standards around the world).
- **Regional and continental initiatives:** promote change across a region; several network entities involved; deploy selected range of program and foundation assets (e.g., Roma education rights in Europe; fighting for HIV and AIDS treatment for marginalized groups in Africa; challenging ethnic profiling in Europe; tackling forced child labor in Central Asia).
- **Single-country initiatives:** focus on a specific problem in a country; primarily one network program or national foundation drives the campaign (e.g., surveying patient views in Romania to get national health insurers to agree to cover costs of home-based palliative care).
- **Crisis response:** react to specific, sudden emergencies; may need to mobilize many assets very quickly (e.g., arrest of staff; election-related violence in Kenya). Although this manual doesn't provide detailed guidance on crisis advocacy, this may be a topic for a future guide.

## CHECKLIST: To Advocate or Not To Advocate

It is important to have a clear and compelling reason to begin advocacy.

Even if an issue is squarely within your mission and mandate, you might decide not to take it on—perhaps because it is well covered by others, or because you don't have the right assets in place to be effective.

### GUIDE:

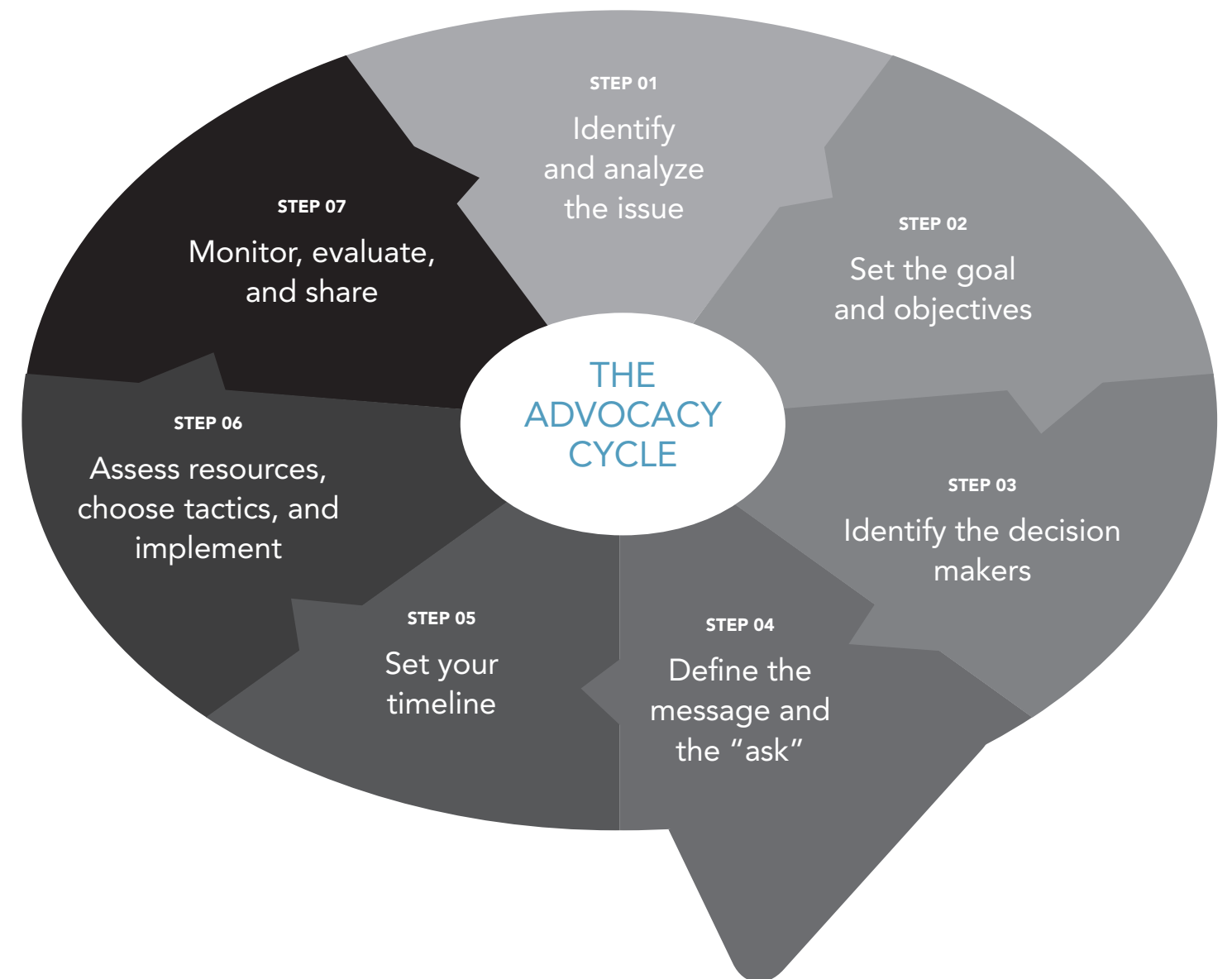
#### KEY CRITERIA WHEN CONSIDERING ADVOCACY

- Is this issue in line with your mission? Which values and principles underlie your reasons for taking a particular stand?
- Is there a reasonable chance of success at improving the problem you wish to address? And is advocacy the best approach for this? Besides advocacy, what other approaches (research, strategic grantmaking, capacity building) could make a difference?
- Do you have the credibility, a clear position backed up by evidence, and the expertise you can bring to this issue?
- Will advocacy in your name add value? Do you have something unique to say? Or are there other organizations already covering this issue?
- Are you sure that this work will not undermine or contradict work by other parts of your organization or key partners of yours?
- What risk is there that engaging in advocacy in your organization's name will put the security of staff, partners and projects at risk?

## SECTION 1: Planning and Implementing Advocacy

### THE ADVOCACY CYCLE

The advocacy strategy cycle below outlines the steps for successful advocacy.



## SECTION 1: Planning and Implementing Advocacy

THE ADVOCACY CYCLE

Step 1

What problem do you want to solve? Identify and analyze the issue.

Effective planning is at the heart of successful advocacy. It is worth spending time at the beginning deciding what you want to achieve and who will do what.

Understanding the problem is the first step in developing an advocacy strategy. Asking the following questions and conducting some solid background research will help.

- What problem do you want to address?
- Is this problem widespread across many settings or is it confined to a specific locality or country?
- What is the *root cause* of the problem?
- What evidence do you have of this problem?
- Who are the other actors addressing this problem? What is their approach?
- Can you present compelling evidence and recommendations (usually summarized in a short paper) for tackling the problem?

Getting this issue onto the agenda of decision makers, especially if you want to get the attention of international decision makers, will require you to present a suitably persuasive and comprehensive argument which details the causes, effects, and proposed solution based on authoritative evidence and, if possible, a wide variety of sources.

### KEY IDEA:

If you are going to conduct advocacy, especially at the international level, you'll need solid evidence showing that this is an important problem and that existing policies are not working. You'll also need strong evidence to reinforce your proposed solution.

Once you have established the causes and effects of the problem, decide what you want to achieve by defining the Goal and Objective.

### GOAL:

A vision for the future; what you hope to achieve in the medium to long term.

### OBJECTIVE:

A specific outcome that you hope to achieve in the short term, representing progress toward the goal.

### KEY IDEA:

The **goal** is the broader vision of the future that you want to bring about, and the **objective** is a more specific change which you can fairly easily assess over time.

Objectives should be SMART:

Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound.

### EXAMPLE:

**GOAL:** To ensure the Hungarian government takes decisive action in responding to the upsurge in hate speech by politicians and law enforcement officials and the accompanying increase in violent attacks against Roma.

### OBJECTIVES:

- To convince the UN Commissioner for Human Rights and key influential governments to make public statements condemning the attacks and calling on the Hungarian government to halt these attacks.
- To persuade the heads of the main political groups at the European Parliament to sign a declaration deploring the use of racist language towards the Roma in the context of the upcoming European elections.
- To ensure that Hungarian political parties refrain from using racist discourse in the upcoming elections.

It may take many years to achieve a goal, and circumstances almost certainly change in the interim. Advocacy strategies should typically last from one to three years, and be updated at least annually in order to take any changes into account.

THE ADVOCACY CYCLE

Step 2

What do you want to achieve? Set the goal and objectives.

## SECTION 1: Planning and Implementing Advocacy

### THE ADVOCACY CYCLE

#### Step 3

Whom do you need to influence?  
Identify the decision makers.

Advocacy involves influencing people with the power to effect change: these decision makers are your primary targets.

#### GUIDE:

##### IN THINKING ABOUT HOW TO APPROACH A DECISION MAKER:

- What is their background? What are their values?
- Who do they listen to? Can you reach these people?
- What arguments will persuade them?
- What obstacles do you need to overcome in order to persuade them?
- How should the arguments be presented? (summary report: widespread press coverage; and/or a high level dialogue in private?)

##### IF YOU ARE MEETING A DECISION MAKER IN GOVERNMENT OR A LARGE ORGANIZATION YOU SHOULD:

- Know what the individual's organization is already doing on your issue.
- Know what the individual's role is in setting that policy.
- Understand the limits to his or her ability to effect change.
- Anticipate the decision maker's questions and challenges so you can tailor recommendations appropriately.

It may happen that, for various reasons, you cannot get direct access to these decision makers or you may need to work with others who are better placed to influence them. Sometimes, it may be more effective NOT to approach the key decision makers directly. Rather, consider who and what influences them, and focus your effort on enlisting the support of people who will shape their decisions: A private company might be most responsive to its shareholders. An elected representative in many democracies may take into account the opinions of his or her constituents. An EU bureaucrat may be swayed by hearing from an expert on your issue. An entrenched, powerful elite in a country is often more open to engagement from private sector interests, or direct approaches from other governments.

#### EXAMPLE:

The government of Uzbekistan's leadership is the primary target of the campaign to end forced child labor in the Uzbek cotton industry. Boycotts of Uzbek cotton by private companies—precipitated by shareholder groups concerned by human rights abuses—appear to have been effective in influencing the Uzbek government's decision to ratify key international conventions against child labor. Thus, shareholders and cotton industry executives were relevant audiences for this campaign, as some of them in turn became advocates for change.

Often there are multiple influences on the decision maker. These can vary from family members, friends, and advisers to particular civil society groups, media pressure, and public opinion. To succeed, it is important to know who these influencers are: gauge their knowledge of the issue, find out their current opinion, and consider any personal or political interests that might influence their views. In communications terms, these influences on a decision maker are sometimes called the 'target audience.'

#### GUIDE:

##### PATHWAYS OF INFLUENCE AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

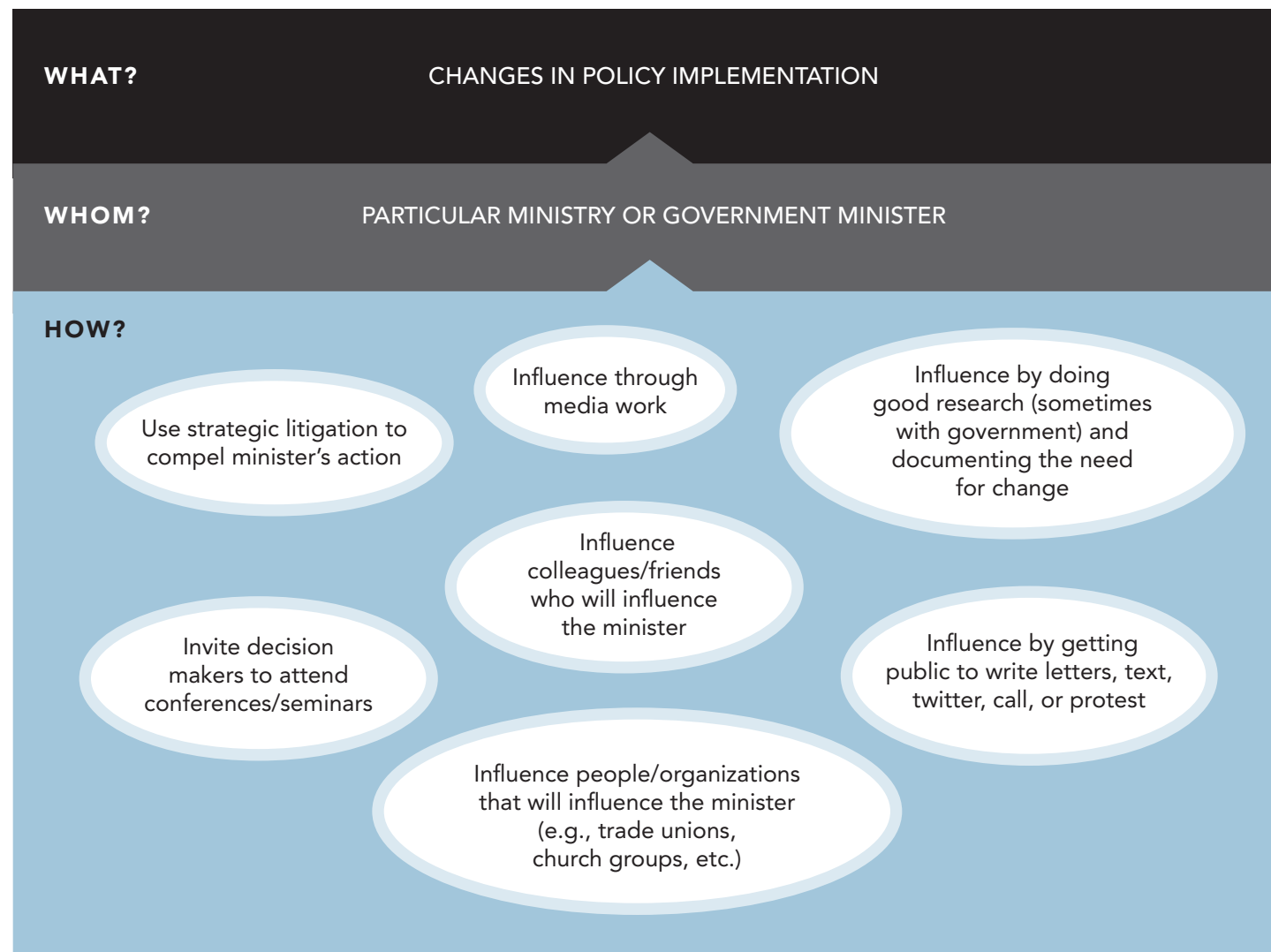
The pathways of influence approach helps teams develop conceptual clarity about **whom** they are trying to influence, **how** they will go about this (given the activities and strengths of partners and other agents), and **what** they should monitor to assess progress.

**The diagram on the next page illustrates a hypothetical example of pathways of influence for putting pressure on decision makers.**

Of course, situations vary: in the case of repressive regimes especially, the pathways of influence outlined on the next page may not be effective or applicable. More often, either international influence through private sector investment or direct government to government engagement can be more effective.



## SECTION 1: Planning and Implementing Advocacy



Your message describes the problem, offers compelling or new evidence, and presents why you think people and policymakers should care. Good messages are short, clear, and persuasive.

Your “ask” is a clear, tailored request or recommendation for what needs to happen to address the problem. The ask may be different for different decision makers, as it needs to relate to what policies or practices they can change. Very often advocacy can fail because of not tailoring the ask to what policymakers can actually do.

### EXAMPLE:

The Open Society Justice Initiative’s report *Ethnic Profiling in the European Union* backs its clear **message** that ethnic profiling is “pervasive, ineffective, and discriminatory” with simple and clear **asks** for its target audiences. These include the following:

#### Asks for the European Union

- Outlaw ethnic profiling at the European level by adopting a framework decision defining ethnic profiling, making clear that it is illegal and providing safeguards against it.
- Ensure that data mining does not rely on ethnic profiling by providing guidelines for national authorities on adequate safeguards against ethnic profiling in data mining operations.
- Support gathering of statistics on ethnicity and law enforcement practices.
- Fund collaboration between police and minority communities through research, pilot projects, and dissemination of best practices.

#### Asks for national governments

- Amend national legislation to incorporate an express prohibition against ethnic profiling.
- Establish a requirement of reasonable suspicion for all police stops.
- Speak out against discrimination and ethnic profiling.
- Gather data on law enforcement and ethnicity.

THE ADVOCACY CYCLE



Define the message and the “ask.”

## SECTION 1: Planning and Implementing Advocacy

THE ADVOCACY CYCLE

Step 4

Continued.

### GUIDE:

WHEN CRAFTING YOUR MESSAGE FOR POLICYMAKERS OR OTHER AUDIENCES, CONSIDER THESE QUESTIONS:

- What evidence can you show or refer to on the problem?
- Do you have a clear ask and recommendations?
- Are your messages concise and tailored to the decision maker and target audience you want to reach?
- How will your message resonate with their values, overcome obstacles to change, and motivate them into action?
- Are your messages consistent with your advocacy objectives?

Be sure to draw on colleagues, grantees, and other partners for input on crafting the right message and for help gathering data to strengthen your argument.

### EXAMPLE:

Following attacks on freedom of expression in The Gambia—culminating in public death threats made by the president against journalists and human rights defenders—the Open Society Foundations’ African Union (AU) advocacy director led an effort to press for a strong regional and continental response. The **message** was that the threats violated The Gambia’s regional treaty obligations and put human rights defenders and staff at the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR), headquartered in the capital Banjul, at risk. The **objective** was to get African leaders to condemn these threats and reaffirm their commitment to rights protection in The Gambia. The specific **asks** were:

- To the AU: move the ACHPR if The Gambia continues to close democratic space in the country.
- To the Pan-African Parliament: organize a delegation to assess the current state of human rights in The Gambia.
- To the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS): reject the Gambian proposal to reduce access to the ECOWAS Court of Justice.
- To the Gambian government: withdraw threats to human rights defenders and restore basic freedom of expression rights.
- To human rights NGOs: boycott the next session of the ACHPR if it is held in Banjul.

The way in which you present the message is also important. What is the best way to deliver your message? Who are your best messengers?

### GUIDE:

WHEN WRITING A BRIEF FOR POLICYMAKERS, BE SURE TO:

- present evidence of the problem, preferably from a variety of credible sources;
- briefly summarize the existing policy and why it is insufficient; and
- provide a clear outline of your proposal to change policy and what it would achieve.

If you are trying to influence government policy on a particular issue around service provision, and officials recognize that there is a problem to be solved, bear in mind that governments often look at policy change through the following lenses:

<i>Effectiveness</i>	Will this alternative solve the current problem? In what time frame?
<i>Efficiency</i>	Considering money and social impact, do benefits outweigh the costs?
<i>Equity</i>	Is there a fair distribution of costs and benefits?
<i>Feasibility</i>	Is there a suitable political, administrative, and legal framework in place to implement this?
<i>Flexibility</i>	Can this plan be modified, if needed, to suit other situations or allow for improvement?
<i>International Reputation</i>	How will this policy change affect international relationships or commitments that matter to this government?

Advocacy to government, particularly on issues such as health, education, and other forms of service provision, is most effective when you can quantify (in terms of both monetary and social costs) as many aspects of your recommendations as possible.



## SECTION 1: Planning and Implementing Advocacy

THE ADVOCACY CYCLE

### Step 5

When should you say it?  
Set your timeline.

Timing is everything in advocacy. A government official or politician can be more likely to pay attention to your message if you frame it within the context of an upcoming policy decision, major summit, or election—or a brewing crisis.

It is equally important to be fully aware of the timetables underpinning the day-to-day policymaking processes of the targets you identify in Step 3. By establishing your added value in such day-to-day situations, you will also increase the chances of being listened to at times of significant decisions or major summits when many other voices are clamoring to be heard.

Keeping an advocacy calendar that includes relevant events and deadlines will help you deliver the right message to the right person at the right time. Looking at this calendar, you can then set an implementation timeline that makes the most of upcoming opportunities.

#### EXAMPLES:

To feed into one of the monthly meetings of European foreign ministers and change an EU position on a particular country or issue means you must reach out to key contacts well in advance. Texts of the communiqués can be agreed several weeks before the actual meeting.

To influence the outcome of scheduled business at an African Union summit you must begin planning at least two, and ideally four, months in advance. This allows you to identify the decisions that will be taken at the summit, convene potential NGO allies, and agree on an advocacy strategy, leaving enough time to build support for your plan.

To influence the Universal Periodic Review process at the UN Human Rights Council, you must submit your materials six months in advance of the session. This means planning eight months in advance of the review, so that you can gather everything together and make a compelling case.

Every advocacy initiative requires expertise, funding, and compelling evidence. Do you have the staff, budget, and information that you need to succeed?

Keep in mind that needs may change as your efforts progress, and you may need to be flexible to adapt to new developments. Be prepared, at short notice, to take advantage of new developments and the opportunities they bring.

Once you have a sense of the resources at your disposal, choose your tactics. This builds on the thinking you've already done to analyze the problem, identify your targets, and define your "ask"—never jump straight to tactics. The six approaches below are particularly important.

#### 1. Lobbying to change policy

Lobbying involves formal activities aimed at influencing public officials, and especially members of a legislative body, on particular legislation. Usually, it involves meeting with these decision makers directly. To succeed, prepare short, clear briefing packs that present practical solutions that decision makers, once persuaded, can take forward. Provide compelling evidence or testimony showing the need for change. Have a clear agenda for each meeting, and follow up afterward with agreed action points.

#### EXAMPLE:

Starting in 2004, the Open Society Institute worked for the passage of a legal aid law in Kyrgyzstan. The foundation helped create a concept paper on legal aid reform, form a working group to draft a legal aid law, study other countries' experiences, and organize broad public discussions and a series of articles to raise awareness of the proposed new legal aid system. After all these efforts, the Kyrgyz Parliament adopted the legal aid law in 2009 and the president signed it into law.

#### 2. Influencing practice

Often laws or correct policies may be in place, but they are not implemented due to lack of political will, resources, or know-how. Influencing practice often involves working with practitioners in health care, education, law enforcement, etc., to change current practice to meet accepted norms. Training, exchange visits, and identification of positive role models can be helpful.

THE ADVOCACY CYCLE

### Step 6

How will you do it? Assess resources, choose tactics, and implement your plan.

## SECTION 1: Planning and Implementing Advocacy

THE ADVOCACY CYCLE

Step 6

Continued.

### EXAMPLE:

An NGO survey showed that injecting drug use was widespread in Moldovan prisons. This was presented to senior officials at the Department of Penitentiary Institutions, who were then persuaded to lead a pilot harm reduction initiative. As positive results emerged from the project, and with support from senior officials, attitudes among resistant staff moved from opposition to support.

### 3. Litigation

Litigation involves using the court system to push for change by challenging laws and institutions. It can take place at the national, regional, or international level.

### EXAMPLE:

The European Roma Rights Centre and the Open Society Foundations spent eight years litigating on behalf of 18 Roma children in the Czech Republic seeking to end the widespread practice of segregating Roma, regardless of their intellectual abilities, into “special” schools for children with learning disabilities. In 2007, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that such school segregation is unlawful discrimination. It sets an important precedent for further litigation and advocacy to secure equal rights for Roma and other minority groups.

### 4. Issue campaigning

Campaigning involves mobilizing public support to press decision makers for change. Examples of campaigning include demonstrations, asking people to write to their elected representatives, email petitions, and stunts to earn media attention.

### EXAMPLE:

In 2008, the Open Society Institute, grantees, and the Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights and Freedom gathered presidential signatures calling for the release of Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners held by Burma’s junta. Over 100 former presidents and prime ministers petitioned the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, who responded by urging the junta to release the prisoners and initiate a genuine dialogue with the opposition.

### 5. Media outreach

The media is a powerful tool to develop public awareness at the local or international level and can be a very effective enhancer of advocacy work. It includes printed publications, radio, television, and the Internet. Think about what stories will motivate people to support your cause. The most effective media outreach is part of a broader communications strategy crafted to reinforce your advocacy objectives.

### EXAMPLE:

In 2009, UNESCO began discussions to award the “Obiang Prize,” sponsored by Teodor Obiang, the authoritarian president of Equatorial Guinea, whose government has a terrible record for human rights abuses and corruption. The Open Society Foundations coordinated a coalition of local and international NGOs to privately call on UNESCO not to award the prize because it would undermine UNESCO’s credibility and allow Obiang to whitewash his international reputation. When private advocacy efforts failed, the coalition publicly condemned the move, which generated extensive media coverage, forcing UNESCO to postpone its decision in June 2010.

### 6. Capacity building

This is not actually advocacy but preparing for advocacy. However, we list it here because it is an important prerequisite for or accompaniment to advocacy work in many settings. Developing skills and building the structures needed to carry out more effective advocacy can be more powerful and sustainable in the longer term.

### EXAMPLE:

The Media Alliance of Zimbabwe in 2008 brought together Zimbabwean lawyers and international advisors to help draft new legislation and guide policy development. The Open Society Foundations contributed research on public broadcast media and expert staff assistance.

A well-developed advocacy strategy can minimize unintended consequences when situations such as the following occur:

- A government ends cooperation with a country program engaged in capacity building due to public statements another part of your organization makes about a sensitive issue.
- Following successful litigation, the campaign does not have follow-up policy recommendations, and the campaign flounders as the target government fails to implement critical changes.
- Advocates focused on using a major UN event to draw attention to their cause are caught off guard when the government in question decides not to attend.

### EXAMPLE:

The Uzbek government surprised members of the Uzbek cotton campaign when it did not register to attend the International Labour Organization’s (ILO) 2009 conference. ILO procedures meant that in Uzbekistan’s absence, the agenda could not include forced child labor issues in the country. The government did send junior representatives to the meeting at the last minute, but by then it was too late to change the agenda. Lesson learned: do not assume that governments will attend UN meetings, especially if they want to avoid confronting a difficult issue.

## SECTION 1: Planning and Implementing Advocacy

THE ADVOCACY CYCLE



How will you measure success? Monitor, evaluate, and share.

Of course you want to know if you have been successful, and if your advocacy has achieved the objectives you set at the beginning. Advocacy is notoriously difficult to monitor, however, and even more difficult to evaluate. Change often takes place over the long term, and it can be unpredictable. Successes are difficult to attribute to specific advocacy actions due to the complex nature of the processes and institutions involved. Outright success, in the sense of achieving all the objectives of an advocacy strategy, is rare.

Despite the challenges, it is usually possible to develop a short and clear set of indicators against which you can monitor and evaluate progress.

- Keep indicators simple so they're relatively easy to monitor.
- Check that the indicator measures are what you want them to be.
- Ideally the indicators should be measurable over time by different people.

Some examples of indicators are given in the table on the next page.

### GUIDE:

#### Measuring impacts in advocacy—examples of indicators

OBJECTIVE	INDICATORS OF PROGRESS TOWARD OBJECTIVES	INDICATORS OF IMPACT (AS AGAINST ORIGINAL OBJECTIVE)
<b>1. POLICY CHANGE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidelines for search procedures changed by the city police departments</li> <li>• Revision of detention policy to guarantee detainees access to lawyers</li> <li>• Drug laws revised to reduce disparities between crack and powder cocaine sentencing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Increased number of members in a coalition of organizations calling for change, or the number of new advocates</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Increased dialogue about and attention to the policy that needs to be changed, e.g., increased number of press articles or public statements by elected officials</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Changed opinion (whose?)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Changed rhetoric (in public/private)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Undermining activities from target and target's allies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Changed policy</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Change in legislation—enacted when?</li> </ul>
<b>2. PRACTICE CHANGE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changing police stop and search practices</li> <li>• Ensuring armed forces observe UN 1820 on sexual violence</li> <li>• Rolling out inclusive education techniques</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Increased dialogue about and attention to the practice that needs to be changed among practitioners as well as policymakers and broader public</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Changed opinion of one or two leading practitioners in their field</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pilot practice change model initiated and/or exchange visit/training initiated</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Senior level discussions on implementing practice change, evidence that external advice is actively sought and used</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Policy/legislation change implemented</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Budget is allocated to roll out</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> High quality personnel in charge of implementing policy</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of monitoring and enforcing practice change (guidelines, orders, standards, inspectorates)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of penalties being handed out for not implementing policy</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (and in the very long term) positive change in people's lives as a result of the policy/legislation change</li> </ul>
<b>3. ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR CHANGE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Countering discrimination against LGBTI, Roma, disabled groups, migrant groups</li> </ul> <p><i>NB: This is an enormous subject area about which much experience abounds; this table simply offers some generic indicators which may be useful to measure change.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Greater awareness of individual rights and the power systems that withhold rights</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Changed rhetoric in public and private</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Change in citizens' skills, capacity and knowledge to mobilize and advocate on their own</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of nurturing emerging leaders</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of new groups mobilizing who are self-organized</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Public and actionable recognition of rights by decision makers.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Spokespeople from these groups feel able to engage in public discourse without fear or prejudice</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Leaders of these groups are accountable to their constituencies</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Participation of leaders in policymaking processes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Positive change in people's lives as a result</li> </ul>

## SECTION 1: Planning and Implementing Advocacy

THE ADVOCACY CYCLE

Step 7

Continued.

### KEY IDEA:

**Monitoring** is the continuous assessment of progress over time.

Monitoring allows you to do the following:

- Hold yourselves accountable: Are you doing the things you said you would in your strategy?
- Follow progress toward your stated objectives.
- Recognize when you may need to adjust your initial strategy for better results.

### KEY IDEA:

**Evaluation** is the periodic assessment of the relevance, performance, efficiency, and impact of a piece of work with respect to its stated objectives.

Evaluation takes place at a specific moment, usually midway through or at the end of a strategy period. Whereas monitoring is generally limited to internal actors, evaluation should ideally include external actors as well. With the benefit of hindsight, evaluations can provide very useful lessons learned for what you should do differently next time.

These are the main questions you should be asking in any evaluation:

- To what extent did you achieve your objectives?
- What factors contributed to your successes and failures?
- Which specific initiatives worked, which did not, and why?
- Did your ways of working help or hinder progress?
- What needs to be changed as a result of this evaluation?

In the absence of a single, commonly agreed framework for measuring advocacy impact, monitoring key indicators and surveying stakeholders offers a reasonably effective way forward.

Because of the nature of advocacy work, there are a number of challenges in measuring success which need to be taken into account:

- **Attribution:** It is very difficult to attribute responsibility for observed changes in policy. It may be better to acknowledge the collective nature of advocacy work and focus less on questions of attribution. Advocacy is increasingly being carried out in networks or coalitions. You need to look at how organizations are working together for a common purpose and monitor and evaluate the NGOs' most appropriate role in this.
- **Co-option:** Advocacy targets (for example, some governments) use sophisticated public relations techniques to persuade the public of their good intentions, but have no intention of making real changes in practice.
- **Lack of self-criticism:** A common desire to talk up success and play down failure.

- **Lack of straightforward feedback from stakeholders:** including targets and allies, or grantees, on the impact of advocacy because of political relations. For example, it is not always in the interests of the government or a company to say the campaign was effective.

Interestingly, sometimes monitoring itself can also be used for further advocacy purposes.

### EXAMPLE:

During the conference to approve the 1994 UN Protocol on the Use of Inhumane Conventional Weapons, NGOs assessed how well each government delegate contributed to efforts to protect civilians from the use of weapons, in particular through banning land mines. Delegates were then ranked according to how well they had performed during the conference each day. At the end of the day, the delegates rushed to the notice board to see how they ranked. The press also had access to the rankings, and it worked very well as a campaign tool to exert pressure on government behavior during the conference.

Impact monitoring is also essential to avoid being co-opted. Advocacy targets can adopt the right rhetoric without changing their practice, and it is important to keep checking whether policy change is really implemented on the ground.

The lessons you learn through monitoring and evaluation should be shared widely within your organization to add to its valuable font of knowledge and experience.

- What worked well, and why?
- What was less effective, and why?
- What would you do differently next time?



## SECTION 2: Getting Started!

Once you have identified the problem you would like to address, the questions below act as a quick guide through the different steps of the advocacy strategy cycle detailed in Section 1.

### QUESTION 01 What is your ultimate goal?

A goal is a vision for the future. A goal is what you hope to achieve in the medium to long term by focusing on a particular strategic priority. It may take decades to achieve. Environments can dramatically change, however, so a concrete advocacy plan should last no more than two years.

#### EXAMPLE:

The strategic priority area of promoting human rights, justice, and citizen security in country X might have a goal of “building the capacity of civil society to hold government accountable.”

### QUESTION 02 Will advocacy and/or public outreach help achieve this goal?

- Is this issue in line with your mission? Which values and principles underlie your reasons for taking a particular stand?
- Is there a reasonable chance of success at improving the problem you wish to address? And is advocacy the best approach for this? Besides advocacy, what other approaches (research, capacity building) could make a difference?
- Do you have the credibility, a clear position backed up by evidence, and the expertise it can bring to this issue?
- Will advocacy in your name add value? Do you have something unique to say? Or are there other organizations already covering this issue?
- Are you sure that this work will not undermine or contradict work by other entities or key partners of yours?
- What risk is there that engaging in advocacy in your organization’s name will put the security of staff, partners and projects at risk?

### QUESTION 03 What are your specific objectives?

Objectives are the specific outcomes the foundation or network program expects to achieve in the short term that will represent progress toward the goal. Objectives are not activities, they are the expected results of such activities. They are most useful when they are as specific as possible. They will determine whether you have been successful or not in the end. If you can’t explain your main objectives in a few clear and precise sentences, are you really ready to do advocacy on this issue?

Objectives may include the following:

- To change or create a new policy. If so, which policy?
- To ensure that an existing policy/international convention/commitment is properly implemented and/or resourced
- To counter discrimination against marginalized groups

### QUESTION 04 Decision Makers: Who has the power to give you what you want?

Identifying the right decision makers will help you target the appropriate audiences for your advocacy and communications activities later on.

- What is their background? What are their values?
- Who do they listen to? Can you reach these people?
- What arguments will persuade them?
- What obstacles do you need to overcome in order to persuade them?
- How should the arguments be presented? (summary report: widespread press coverage; and/or a high level dialogue in private?)

### QUESTION 05 Target Audiences: Who else must you reach to achieve your objective?

In addition to targeting a head of state, think through what other specific groups or people you can reach in your advocacy efforts who will influence the decision maker. These might be EU or AU policymakers, members of parliament, other heads of state, and national public opinion leaders.

- What do you want your target audience to know?
- What do you need them to do?
- What does your audience already know and do about the issue at hand?
- What messages does your audience best respond to?

### QUESTION 06 What are your messages?

A set of core messages will help articulate your advocacy objective and should be consistent with your overall strategy. The questions below will help you formulate your messages:

- Do you have a clear ask and recommendations?
- Are your messages concise and tailored to the decision maker and target audience you want to reach?
- How will your message resonate with their values, overcome obstacles to change, and motivate them into action?
- Are your messages consistent with your advocacy objectives?

### QUESTION 07 What evidence do you have to support your messages?

- What facts, research, testimony, or other information do you need to back up the messages and recommendations?
- How will you gather this evidence, and will you have it by your deadline?

### QUESTION 08 Timing: When can you influence the decision makers?

- Are there key visits, important meetings, policy review sessions, or court case decisions where this issue will or could be discussed?
- Which of these moments present the best opportunities to make your case?
- What is your timeline for specific actions? Key dates, deadlines.

### QUESTION 09 Do you have enough resources to implement your strategy?

- Who else will you work with in your organization to do this?
- Who else will you work with outside your organization to do this?
- What support would you like from advocacy and communications colleagues in developing or delivering your strategy?

### QUESTION 10 How will you measure success?

- What do you consider the likelihood of at least complete or partial success?
- What are the concrete benchmarks along the way to achieving success? It is worth measuring these.
- What systems do you have in place or need to put in place to measure the success or failure of your strategy?
- What changed along the way that meant you had to change tactics or revise your objectives?
- If you had to give one piece of advice to other advocates at the end of delivering this strategy, what would it be?

## GLOSSARY

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

**ActionAid.** *Critical Webs of Power and Change: Resource Pack for Planning, Reflection and Learning in People-centered Advocacy.* Johannesburg: 2005.

**Advocacy Associates,** *OSF Advocacy Toolkit.* London: July 2009.

**Bakewell, O.; Adams, J.; and Pratt, B.** *Sharpening the Development Process. A Practical Guide to Monitoring and Evaluation.* Intrac Praxis Guide No. 1, 2003.

**Coates, Barry and David, Ros.** "Monitoring Advocacy." 2000. [draft article]

**Cohen, David; de la Vega, Rosa; and Watson, Gabrielle.** *Advocacy for Social Justice: A Global Action and Reflection Guide.* Virginia: Kumarian Press, 2001.

**International Crisis Group.** *The Conflict Prevention Toolbox.* Brussels. [unpublished]

**Open Society Institute Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative.** *Writing Effective Public Policy Papers.* Budapest: 2002.

**Oxfam.** *Advocacy Toolkit.* [unpublished]

**Save the Children.** *Advocacy Toolkit.* 2007.

**WaterAid.** *The Advocacy Sourcebook.* London: 2007.

- Advocacy:** Advocacy is an organized attempt to change policy, practice, and/or attitudes by presenting evidence and arguments for how and why change should happen.
- Agenda:** an outline listing the main topics to discuss during a meeting with policymakers, a planning team, or a coalition.
- Ally:** an individual or organization committed to helping achieve your goal.
- Ask:** a clear, tailored request or recommendation to decision makers for what needs to happen to address a problem.
- Audience:** the person or group of people you are trying to reach with your message. In advocacy, this may be your decision maker or people who can influence your decision maker.
- Campaign:** a connected series of actions designed to bring about a particular result. A campaign is often part of a broader advocacy strategy. In this context, it usually refers to an effort to mobilize the public to achieve change.
- Coalition:** a group of organizations working together to achieve a common goal.
- Constituency:** residents of an electoral district whom an official is meant to represent; people involved in or served by an organization or representative.
- Credibility:** having the trust of others so that they will believe and value what you have to say.
- Evaluation:** a formal assessment of whether a project has met its objectives.
- Goal:** a vision for the future; what you hope to achieve in the medium to long term.
- Indicator:** evidence that something has changed over time.
- Input:** resource required to carry out an activity, such as staff, volunteers, funds, and data.
- Impact:** the outcome of an activity; its effect.
- Legislate:** to make or enact laws.
- Litigation:** engaging in legal proceedings to challenge laws and institutional practices.
- Lobby:** to conduct activities aimed at influencing public officials and especially members of a legislative body on legislation.
- Media:** organized systems to deliver information to people such as radio, television, newspapers, magazines, newsletters, and the Internet.
- Message:** a statement that aims to persuade others to support your solution to a problem.
- Monitoring:** the systematic and continuous assessment of progress.
- Objective:** a specific outcome that you hope to achieve in the short term, representing progress toward the goal.
- Policy:** a plan, course of action, or set of regulations, or governmental or institutional approach to an issue.
- Power Analysis:** an examination of who has the power to deliver the change you wish to see.
- Problem Tree Analysis:** a particular technique for synthesizing and visualizing information about a problem.
- SMART:** specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound.
- Target:** the person or group of people who can bring about the policy change that you hope to achieve, and upon whom your advocacy effort ultimately focuses.

This guide describes charitable activities undertaken by the Open Society Foundations in New York and other U.S.-based organizations in accordance with regulations applicable to 501(c)(3) organizations. It also describes activities carried out and funded by the Open Society Policy Center, a 501(c)(4) organization, or foreign entities financed by non-U.S.-sourced funding.

Design by Ahlgrim Design Group.

2010.