



## **READING 4.1: ADVOCACY SCENARIOS**

### **SCENARIO #1**

Your education alliance has a reputation for its success in lobbying for changes in education policy and service delivery. Your strengths are alliance building with grassroots organizations and organizing protests and marches. Your organization also has strong links with parent-teacher organizations across the country. Recently, your organization identified the usefulness of using budgets as a tool to support your advocacy for improved equity in education across the country. You also want to advocate for fee free schools for less advantaged communities.

### **SCENARIO #2**

Your organization, a local NGO, is a member of a national poverty alleviation campaign. Your organization wants to push for citizen participation in local government budget planning and for greater budget accountability at local government level. The government does not have a formal public participation policy and has never included civil society in their policy planning processes.

### **SCENARIO #3**

You are a research think-tank that specializes in monitoring government budgets. You have a reputation of producing credible research; however, you do not engage in persistent advocacy nor do you have links with campaigns and NGOs outside of your area of research. Over the last seven years, your organization has consistently made submissions to the legislature's finance committee in response to the budget tabled in parliament. You have developed a very good relationship with this committee, the national Department of Finance and some key sub-national departments of finance, too. In this year's budget government is

proposing a substantial increase in the defense budget to purchase military vehicles. (Your country is not at war, nor is there the threat of war.) After the tabling of the budget, the members of the legislature refused to pass the budget. After numerous negotiations with the president of the country and the speaker of the legislature, the legislature was forced into early recess. Hence, the budget has still not been passed.

#### **SCENARIO #4**

One year ago your organization developed a draft advocacy strategy for the decentralization of mental health delivery. For the past year, you have researched and collected tons of information needed as evidence to support your strategy. However, over the last three months, there have been substantial changes in the executive, the legislature and key departments like the department of finance. The prime minister was fired for alleged corruption, the legislature was dissolved and the new legislature is being sworn in. Many of the top officials in the department of finance, whom your researcher has worked with, have resigned.

#### **SCENARIO #5**

Your organization conducts HIV/AIDS budget monitoring. During a recent investigation you discovered that despite government's very progressive program of action for HIV/AIDS, governments' budgeting for the implementation of this program is inconsistent with the plan. It appears that there is no link between the program and the budget. Your investigation also showed that, since the inception of the program five years ago, the Budgeting Department in the Department of Health has failed to provide adequate budget plans for the implementation of the program. The Department of Finance has several times expressed their disapproval at the poor management of the budget process within the Department of Health. The country's largest HIV/AIDS social movement has discussed with your organization the possibility of legal action.

## SCENARIO #6

Three months ago your organization, a research think tank, was alerted by a member of the legislature who alleges that funds for a government program set up for maternal health have been misused. The member alleged that these funds have been diverted from the Department of Health to a private, anti-abortion organization with links to a different, senior member of the legislature. Your organization investigated the matter and found that the allegation is in fact true.

## READING 4.2: SETTING AN ADVOCACY OBJECTIVE

- The five elements of an advocacy strategy are as follows:
  1. Strategic Analysis
  2. **Advocacy Objective**
  3. Stakeholder Analysis
  4. Advocacy Message (Development and Delivery)
  5. Schedule
- An advocacy objective should set out very clearly **WHAT, WHO, WHEN, HOW, and WHERE**. It needs to state:
  - **WHAT** action civil society wants government to take;
  - **WHO** in government needs to take this action (and **WHO** will benefit from this action);
  - **WHEN** this action should be taken (i.e., at what stage in the budget cycle);
  - **HOW** this action should be taken (i.e., how the change you're proposing can be implemented); and
  - What geographical areas will benefit from this action (**WHERE**). The “where” should indicate the area(s) that have the most need, i.e., where the problem that you are trying to address is most critical (e.g., urban slums in the capital city.)
- The more information and evidence you have about your issue, the political/social/ economic context, the opportunities available for engagement, and the actors involved, the clearer your objective is likely to be.
- Your advocacy objectives should be SMART. That is, each objectives should be:
  - S** – Specific
  - M** – Measurable
  - A** – Achievable
  - R** – Realistic/Result-oriented

## T – Timebound

### **SPECIFIC**

- Specify an action you want government to take.
- Be as clear and specific as you can. For example, it is too vague to set a goal to provide decent primary health clinics for all. Rather, set a specific goal to prioritize the construction of primary health clinics in rural villages where there is the most need.
- Your objective should not be a statement of the problem. It should be a statement of the solution that you would like to see implemented by decision makers.

### **MEASURABLE**

- Be as exact as possible. You must be able to measure the change that you're advocating for.
- Provide the numbers, so that you can evaluate your achievements at the end of your campaign.
- It is not sufficient to state that government should “speed up its construction of health clinics” or “build more health clinics.” An increase in the number of health clinics can be very, very small and not what you are advocating for. Government could build 10 additional health clinics and still meet such a vaguely stated objective.
- There's an old saying that states: “Be careful what you wish for, it may just come true.” Therefore, clearly state the number of goods, structures, or services that you want government to deliver.
- Keep in mind that not all problems can be solved simply by increasing service delivery, e.g., discrimination against girl children.

### **ACHIEVABLE, REALISTIC/RESULT-ORIENTED, AND TIMEBOUND**

- This is the ART in SMART.
- Making your advocacy objective achievable, realistic/result-oriented, and timebound

means linking it directly to the stages in government's budgeting, planning, and service delivery cycles:

- Consider what is possible in the current context and what can realistically be achieved.
- Always set a timeframe for the objective: this financial year, over the next three years, by 2015.
- State how government can achieve the increases or improvements in service delivery that you are proposing.
- Keep in mind that not everything can be changed immediately. Existing programs and budgets are often rigid due to political compromises and legal obligations.
- **Describe the end result (IMPACT) and not what you plan to do (ACTIVITIES).**
  - How will people's lives be different because of your advocacy?
- For big and long-term goals, think about **progressive realization**. (For example, if you want the government build 200 new primary health clinics, propose the following: build 70 health clinics by the end of 2012, build another 70 by the end of 2013, and build the remaining 60 by the end of 2014.)
- Partners in a coalition will probably not commit to objectives that are too far out of reach.



## READING 4.3: OTHER ELEMENTS OF AN ADVOCACY STRATEGY

### STAKEHOLDERS

- A constituency is made up of individuals and organizations that will join you in your advocacy efforts. Having a constituency for your advocacy is critical, since it adds legitimacy, power, and credibility.
- Allies are those who can provide some support to you and your advocacy.
- Opponents are those who will be against your advocacy campaign, either because they stand to lose something or because they disagree with you.
- The decision makers are also referred to as “audiences” and are divided into two major groups:
  - The **primary audience** is essentially those groups and individuals who can give you what you are asking for in your advocacy objective, i.e. the decision makers. They are also the people who have the formal power to make the change that needs to happen.
  - The **secondary audiences** are groups who are able to put pressure on the primary audience.

### MESSAGES

- An effective advocacy message:
  - Presents a possible solution & action
  - Draws on evidence
  - Uses facts & numbers creatively and accessibly
  - Recognizes the political environment and opportunities
  - Is simple & brief
  - Uses real life stories & quotes
  - Adapts the message to the medium
  - Encourages audiences to take action



## **THE MESSENGER**

- The messenger should be familiar with the advocacy objectives and the message.
- Even when there are different messengers, there should always be one unified message.
- Groups conducting budget advocacy have drawn on legal, economic, and media experts as messengers in their campaigns. In some countries, economists carry weight on the issue of the public budget, and some groups have used them as messengers for their campaign.
- The campaign can create and build the messenger: the more public exposure they receive, the more they will be recognized as experts and public figures.

## **THE MEDIUM/MEDIA**

- Conducting budget advocacy demands reaching a diverse audience. This requires strategic thinking about how the message will be delivered. Some ways to reach a wide range of people include: print, electronic, and social media; grassroots media, such as community theatre, puppetry, visual arts, and songs; public meetings/discussions; workshops; public hearings; rallies; protests; boycotts; strikes; etc.
- The choice of media should take into consideration the experience of staff within the organization, as well as the audiences, the political environment, and the opportunities available.

## **SCHEDULE**

- Budget advocacy is directly linked to the stages of the budget process. Different decisions are made at different stages of the budget process, and it is important to intervene before the decisions you want to change are being made.
- Budget advocacy requires year-round commitment. There will always be more than one stage of the budget process being implemented simultaneously; knowing when the different stages are taking place will help to strategically plan which staff members will intervene and whom to target.
- The experience of organizations has shown that, generally, finance officials initially disregard the budget work produced by civil society. Convincing officials of the seriousness of the work, demands that research and information is produced in a credible, accessible and timely manner.





INTERNATIONAL BUDGET PARTNERSHIP  
Open Budgets. Transform Lives.

Module 4: Budget Advocacy (Part 1)

## READING 4.4: NETWORKS, COALITIONS, & ALLIANCES

### DEFINITIONS

- An **alliance** is generally defined as a short-term relationship among organizations aimed at achieving a specific goal or outcome.
- A **coalition** is generally seen as a more formal collaborative structure that involves a long-term relationship among its members.
- A **network** is a more flexible association between groups that come together around a common idea or goal and that share information and ideas.

In practice, these definitions are used interchangeably. What matters is that all of them imply a more powerful, united voice for achieving change.

(Source: VeneKlasen & Miller, *A New Weave of Power, People & Politics: Action Guide for Advocacy and Citizen Participation*, 2002.)

### WHY ARE COALITIONS AND ALLIANCES IMPORTANT FOR BUDGET WORK?

- The budget is not usually perceived as a “natural” foundation for social action. But for budget analysis to have an impact it must be used STRATEGICALLY!
- Budget information by itself does not lead to political change.
- Coalitions/Alliances are able to increase the social and political value of budget analysis. They add a tried & tested advocacy strategy to a new cause.

### KEY ELEMENTS FOR BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL BUDGET-RELATED COALITION OR ALLIANCE

- Be clear about the advocacy issue that you want to have an impact on.
- The issue must be directly relevant to all of the groups involved.
- Ensure that everyone involved knows and understands the advocacy issue.
- Conduct clear planning and set priorities.
- React to opportunities, drawing on the strengths of all of the parties in the coalition.
- Constantly follow up on new and past events.
- Set timeframes to achieve specific tasks and objectives.

Module 4: Budget Advocacy (Part 1)

- Make sure parties in the coalition/alliance are clear about their roles and responsibilities.
- Evaluate progress along the way and adapt the advocacy strategy as required.

## POTENTIAL ALLIES

- Potential allies include communities, groups, and populations who are:
  - directly affected by the issue.
  - naturally interested in the issue.
  
- Potential allies also include communities, groups, and populations that can:
  - add strength and value to the coalition and alliance.
  - open access to power brokers.
  - bring in more support for the issue.

## LETTING GO: WHEN AND WHY IT IS IMPORTANT?

- Identify and acknowledge the moment when the advocacy objective has been achieved and the work of the coalition has come to an end...and let it go!
- If other issues emerge and the collaboration was positive, you may think about reconstituting the coalition.
- When the objective has been achieved, coalition members can & should continue working together **IF** they continue to share common issues and the need for collaboration still exists.