

## How to develop an advocacy campaign

This section provides the 'how to' in building gender and media advocacy campaigns. It outlines the steps to developing campaigns and gives tips and insights on how to engage with and use the media. One of the gender and media advocacy issues examined in this section is lobbying the media to develop gender policies and guidelines.

### **Objectives:**

To take activists through the various steps for building a gender and media campaign

To provide tools that can be used for developing gender and media advocacy campaigns

To provide tips and insights on how to engage and build a relationship with the media

To highlight the various approaches to monitoring and evaluating advocacy work

## Chapter One: Where to begin?

### 1. Plan what you want to do...

If you want to make an impact with any gender and media advocacy strategy or campaign, planning is a crucial first step. There are many issues and areas of concern for gender and media advocacy, therefore activists have to narrow the focus.

Remember, the goal of advocacy is to bring about change. This does not happen overnight and requires not only planning and research, but also time, energy and resources.

When initiating an advocacy activity, it is important to make strategic choices about where to direct your energies and to look for strategic entry points.<sup>24</sup>

Planning can help activists to:

- Use resources (often limited) efficiently
- Minimize the element of surprise
- Build commitment and a cohesive vision among those involved in advocacy to speak with a strong and united voice
- Help to focus energies.

### Key questions for advocacy planning

- What aspects of gender and the media will be tackled and why?
- How do you ensure that the aspects identified are also the priorities of your primary audience?
  - Who are you targeting?
  - What change do you want to see?
  - Are you best placed to work on this, and if so who else is working in this area? • Are you duplicating efforts or adding value?
  - How can you add value?<sup>25</sup>

Advocacy planning is defined as the development of the following<sup>26</sup>:

<sup>24</sup> An Advocacy Guide for Feminists, Young Women and Leadership, Awid, No. 1, December 2003

<sup>25</sup> Colleen Lowe Morna and Lene Overland, Getting Smart, strategic communications for gender activists in Southern Africa, published by Gender Links and Women's Media Watch, 2002 <sup>26</sup>

**An overall change strategy** – a long-term plan that embodies your vision, and reflects where you are, where you want to go, and how you get there.

**A campaign** – a medium-term plan with activities aimed at influencing the policy environment and public opinion. The activities are intended to achieve some of your advocacy strategy objectives.

**Tactics, actions or activities** – short-term activities within a larger change strategy, designated for a specific moment or opportunity. These could include research and media work to shape the campaign and capture the attention of people in power in relation to your issue.

**Impact assessment** – continuous monitoring through the advocacy campaign in order to adjust, modify or change the plans according to the situation or information that comes along the way.

## 2. Know what you want to achieve

An advocacy campaign should begin with well-defined and measurable goals and objectives.

- A **goal** is defined as a forward-looking and ambitious statement of what is to be achieved over the long-term, e.g. reducing the objectification of women as sex objects in the media.
- An **objective** is an incremental and realistic step towards achieving the goal, e.g. developing gender portrayal guidelines for the media.

The objective must specify the changes to be brought about and should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound).<sup>27</sup>

Several questions that can help to create SMART objectives include:

- Do qualitative or quantitative data exist to show that reaching the objective will improve the situation?
  - Is the objective achievable, even with opposition?
- Will the objectives gain the support of many people? Do people care about the goal/objective deeply enough to take action?
- Will you be able to raise money or other resources to support your work on the goal/objective?
  - Can you clearly identify the main audiences? What are their names or positions?
  - Is the goal/objective easy to understand?
- Do you have the necessary alliances with key individuals or organizations to reach your objective? How will the objective help to build alliances with other NGOs, leaders and audiences/stakeholders?

Strategy and Technique Development, edited by Flor Caagusan, Institute for Popular Democracy, Manila Philippines

<sup>27</sup> Making a Difference Strategic Communications to end Violence Against Women, Jenny Drezin and Megan Lloyd-Laney, editors, UNIFEM 2003

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- Will working on the objective give people opportunities to learn about and become involved with the decision-making process?<sup>28</sup>

## **Gender and Media Advocacy in Practice! Planning and Setting Goals**

To illustrate how the information on planning and setting goals can be put into practice, let us take the following example.

### *What's the issue?*

You are a group concerned about the issue of gender violence, and believe that the media does not cover this issue often, and when it does cover stories on gender violence, they are usually sensational, portray women as victims or as having provoked the violence perpetrated against them ( in stories of sexual violence, some media may allude to the woman's appearance, how she was dressed, or of her doing something which is considered 'not appropriate' in terms of gender stereotypes like drinking alone in a bar, for example). Or, your local airwaves are filled with songs which contain lyrics which perpetuate violence against women and girls blasting daily on the radio.

In deciding how to approach the media on this issue, as a group you decide to build a campaign on gender violence in the media.

### *What is the angle/focus of the campaign?*

Gender violence in the media can be tackled from several angles. A few that could be considered in a gender and media campaign on this issue include among others:

- The playing on radio of popular music (either foreign or locally-produced songs) that contains lyrics and language that denigrates women and condones and perpetuate violence against them
- Gender violence is not considered a newsworthy topic for the media and is seldom reported on as an issue which is central to the protection of women's human rights
- Women only make news when they have been raped, beaten or abused by a partner

In designing your campaign at the planning stage, you choose one angle to focus on in order to be able to develop clear objectives, and to ensure that you engage with the media in a dialogue and process to bring change.

So, for our example, the **focus** of the campaign is: **to improve the quantity and quality of coverage on gender violence in the media.**

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<sup>28</sup> Adapted from SARA/ED: An Introduction to Advocacy Training Guide cited in Making a Difference Strategic Communications to end Violence Against Women, Jenny Drezin and Megan Lloyd-Laney, editors, UNIFEM 2003

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*What is the goal of the campaign?*

Given our focus, the **goal** is to shift the media's coverage of gender violence from that of a sensational news event to an issue of human rights and justice.

*What is the objective of the campaign?*

*Main objective:* To improve the quantity and quality of coverage on gender violence in the media

Specific objectives: There could be three objectives to reach the overall objective:

- To train journalists on how to report on gender violence
- To develop guidelines for the media on how to report on gender violence
- To illustrate to editors and journalists the gaps and gender biases in media reports on gender-based violence

In short good planning entails:

- Identifying the media house(s) or companies that you wish to lobby.
- Deciding on what method will be used (i.e. telephone calls, letters/faxes/e-mails or face-to-face meetings)
- Preparing your position
- Mobilizing a network of supportive organizations, groups and individuals.
- Establishing a relationship with media regulatory bodies<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Whose perspective? A guide to gender-sensitive analysis of the media, Women's Media Watch Jamaica, 1998