

# Influencing Public Policy: Public Policy Advocacy

Brian Tamuka Kagoro

# Influence Public Policy

- To influence is to affect or alter by indirect or intangible means
- Capacity to alter certain condition or development
- Influencing policy entails systematic understanding of policy, through policy analysis and engagement.
- Policy can be influenced at all levels of policy cycles.
- Policy can be influenced through systematic analysis and advocacy

# What is policy Advocacy?

- Public policy advocacy is the effort to influence public policy through various forms of persuasive communication and actions.
- Public policy includes statements, policies, or prevailing practices imposed by those in authority to guide or control institutional, community, and sometimes individual behaviour.

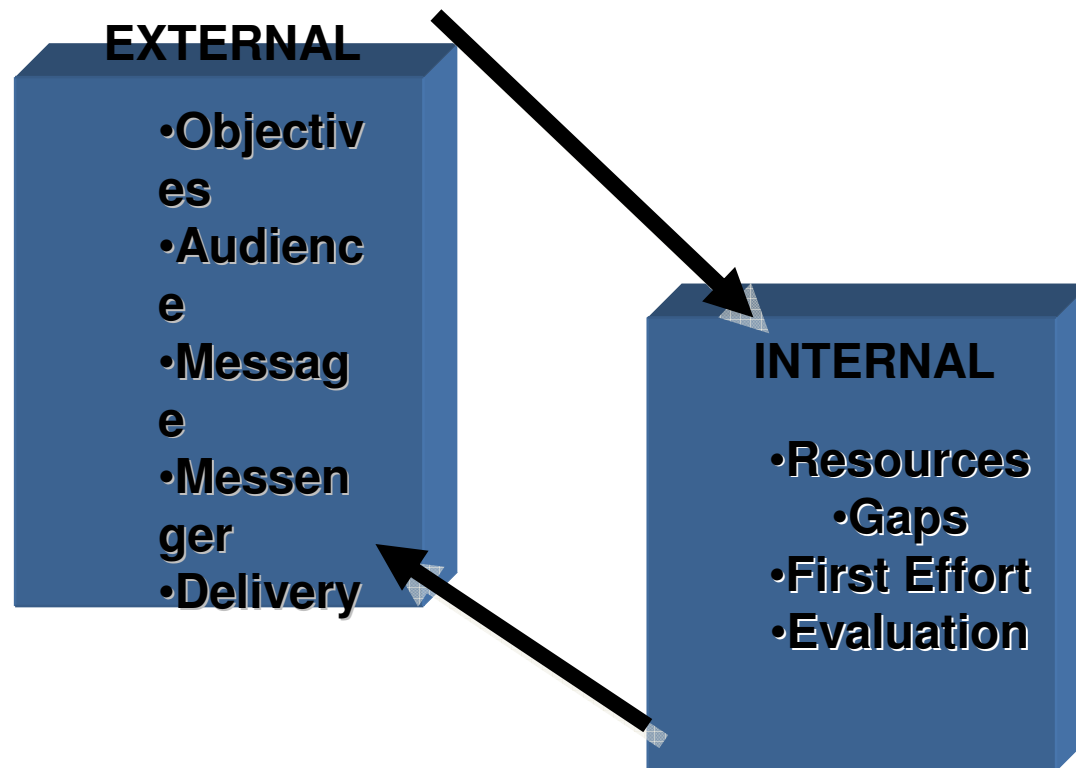
# Developing Advocacy Strategy

- One of the most common confusions in the development of advocacy strategy is the difference between "strategy" and "tactics."
- Tactics are specific actions -- circulating petitions, writing letters, staging a protest -- which are the building blocks of advocacy.
- Strategy is something larger, an overall map that guides the use of these tools toward clear goals. Strategy is a hard-nosed assessment of where you are, where you want to go, and how you can get there. At its heart, effective strategy is rooted in nine key questions:

## Look and define your environment

- In strategy development you need to review and understand your space and environment:
- There are two environment in advocacy:
  - External
  - Internal

# Looking Inward and Outward



# External Environment

**1 Objectives:**  
What do you want to do?

**EXTERNAL  
ENVIRONMENT**

**2. AUDIENCES:** Who can give it to you? –  
Legislature, Media, etc

**3. Messages:** What do they need to hear?

**4. Messenger:** Who to they need to hear it from? Experts, NGOs, Communities?

**5. DELIVERY:** How can we get them to hear this?  
Lobbying, social actions, mixture etc

# Looking Outward

## 1. OBJECTIVES: What do you want?

Any advocacy effort must begin with a sense of its goals. Among these goals some distinctions are important. What are the long-term goals and what are the **short-term goals**? What are the content goals (e.g. policy change) and what are the process goals (e.g. building community among participants)? These goals need to be defined at the start, in a way that can launch an effort, draw people to it, and sustain it over time.



# Looking Outward...

## **2. AUDIENCES: Who can give it to you?**

Who are the people and institutions you need to move?

This includes the those who have the actual formal authority to deliver the goods (i.e. legislators). This also includes those who have the capacity to influence those with formal authority (i.e. the media and key constituencies, both allied and opposed). In both cases, an effective advocacy effort requires a clear sense of who these audiences are and what access or pressure points are available to move them.

# Looking Outward....

## 3. MESSAGE: What do they need to hear?

Reaching these different audiences requires crafting and framing a set of messages that will be persuasive. Although these messages must always be rooted in the same basic truth, they also need to be tailored differently to different audiences depending on what they are ready to hear. In most cases, advocacy messages will have two basic components: ***an appeal to what is right and an appeal to the audience's self-interest.***

# Looking Outward

## 4. MESSENGERS: Who do they need to hear it from?

The same message has a very different impact depending on who communicates it. Who are the most credible messengers for different audiences? In some cases, these messengers are "experts" whose credibility is largely technical. In other cases, we need to engage the "***authentic voices***" who can speak from personal experience. What do we need to do to equip these messengers, both in terms of information and to increase their comfort level as advocates?

# Looking Outward....

## **5. DELIVERY: How can we get them to hear it?**

There is wide continuum of ways to deliver an advocacy message. These range from the genteel (e.g. lobbying) to the in-your-face (e.g. direct action). Which means is most effective varies from situation to situation. The key is to evaluate them and apply them appropriately, ***weaving them together in a winning mix***

# Looking Inward..

## **6. RESOURCES: What have we got?**

An effective advocacy effort takes careful stock of the advocacy resources that are already there to be built on. This includes;

- past advocacy work that is related,
- alliances already in place, staff and other people's capacity,
- information and political intelligence.

In short, you don't start from scratch, ***you start from building on what you've got.***

# Looking Inward...

## **7. GAPS: What do we need to develop?**

After taking stock of the advocacy resources you have, the next step is to identify the advocacy resources you need that aren't there yet. This means looking at alliances that need to be built, and capacities such as outreach, media, and research which are crucial to any effort.

# Looking Inward...

## **8. FIRST EFFORTS: How do we begin?**

What would be an effective way to begin to move the strategy forward? What are some potential short term goals or projects that would bring the right people together, symbolize the larger work ahead and create something achievable that lays the groundwork for the next step?

# Looking Inward.....

## **EVALUATION: How do we tell if it's working?**

As with any long journey, the course needs to be checked along the way. Strategy needs to be evaluated revisiting each of the questions above (i.e. are we aiming at the right audiences, are we reaching them, etc.) It is important to be able to make mid-course corrections and to discard those elements of a strategy that don't work once they are actually put into practice.



# Developing and maintaining Advocacy Coalition

When they work well coalitions can add great power to your cause. When they work poorly, coalitions can be a gut-wrenching exercise in needless conflict.

# Why Coalitions are Valuable

- Coalitions help advocacy campaigns develop a stronger public image, bring together diverse resources and ideas, and avoid duplication of effort.
- They can link together groups working locally, statewide or nationally on an issue and give your opponents a way to negotiate with you.
- They also create exchanges between newer advocates and more experienced ones and provide moral support when things get tough.

# Forming Coalitions

- The most important decisions that a coalition makes are in the beginning.
- What goals will it set for itself?
- Who will it seek to include and who won't it include?
- What kind of structure will it create to facilitate its work?
- How the coalition answers these questions at the start will determine most of what will come later.

# Creating effective Coalition structures

- The least formal coalitions are "networks", lists of organizations that don't meet together but do share information (through newsletters, etc.).
- More formal are "ad hoc coalitions", in which one organization may take the lead, but with no formal membership or structure.
- As coalitions get more formal they may create membership criteria, begin holding regular meetings, and elect their leaders formally, etc. As a rule, it is best to adopt a structure with the least formality necessary to get the job done.

# Dealing with Tensions and Conflicts

- Tensions are inherent in coalition work. The goal should not be to squelch them (which is usually impossible anyway) but to manage them, by addressing constructively the issues involved and not letting conflict get so out of hand that conflict becomes all that the coalition is about.
- Effective organizing requires a mix of ingredients. Learning how to mix those ingredients together is step one of effective political action.

# The Organisers

- At the heart of any organizing effort is "the organizer", the person who takes chief responsibility for putting all the pieces together and keeping them together.
- The organizer's work can include any part or all of the following: recruiting people; helping the group define its goals and strategies; keeping people motivated; managing the work tasks; managing conflict; teaching newcomers; and being the spokesperson.

# Outreach and Recruitment

- In some cases who ought to care about an issue is clear (a neighborhood in search of a stop sign).
- Most issue campaigns are not so local and recruiting involves first approaching those with a direct stake in the issue parents, professionals, students, immigrants, etc.
- Often this is easiest to do by working with established groups where these people already come together.

# Meeting and Decision making

- In some cases who ought to care about an issue is clear (a neighborhood in search of a stop sign).
- Most issue campaigns are not so local and recruiting involves first approaching those with a direct stake in the issue parents, professionals, students, immigrants, etc.
- Often this is easiest to do by working with established groups where these people already come together.



# Coordination of Work to be Done

- All of the projects a group decides on need to be divided up into the specific tasks involved and delegated to the people who will carry them out – research, writing, calling, fundraising, etc.
- All these tasks need to be prioritized and then matched with people able and interested in doing them. The organizer needs to follow-up and make sure all these jobs get done.