European Youth Forum
Advocacy Handbook

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youth forum

Acknowledgements

European Youth Forum

Rue de l'Industrie 10

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Youth Forum

Advocacy
Handbook

Foreword

As a membership-driven organisation, we base our policy and advocacy work on our member organisations' contributions, thus it is of utmost importance to ensure that our members have the relevant tools and capacity to support such processes. In the past years there has been an increasing demand for tools and development in the area of advocacy, including guidelines and publications that members can access and use according to their needs.

This handbook has been developed with a vision to primarily support our member organisations in their efforts to deliver advocacy actions on local, national and international level. It aims to serve our members and other youth organisations as a manual providing information on different formats of advocacy and contains a set of practical tools to plan, implement and evaluate an advocacy process. It contains information for those trying to understand the policy and advocacy world, who want to see change and influence policy makers.

It was developed by young advocates for young advocates with contributions from different youth organisations. We hope you will find it useful and resourceful on your road of changing the systems around you and promoting a greater engagement of young people in decision making processes.

Enjoy the read!

European Youth Forum

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Introduction

An Advocacy Handbook Tailored to Your Needs

Youth organisations across Europe share a vision: to empower young people and fight for their rights. As most youth organisations are super busy, this vision translates into many missions and activities. Among these activities, for organisations at all levels, advocacy is having an ever more important role. It is essentially the process through which non-profit organisations gather support and fight for change with decision-makers.

Youth organisations with their characteristic enthusiasm and energy can be the strongest advocates for their own cause. However, the complex ecosystems in which they evolve can be hard to navigate and guidance is often missing.

This is where this handbook comes in.

It has been designed with your daily reality in mind: predominantly volunteer-based human resources, tech and digital-savviness, unstable financial resources, a constant need for the continuous learning and development of your members, and your unmatched capacity to mobilise and unleash the creative energy of youth activists.

In this handbook you will find the keys to engage in meaningful advocacy action: core concepts you need to master, practical frameworks you can follow to plan your actions, do's and don'ts to avoid the most common mistakes, and inspiring examples from the NGO sector.

This handbook doesn't aim to be fully comprehensive. It would have required hundreds of pages to do that which would have rendered it unusable as a handbook. That is why we have added a list of additional resources and definitions so you can explore and dig deeper in order to become an expert in all advocacy-related topics.

We hope this handbook will take pride of place on the bookshelf of your organisation and be drawn out every time you engage in advocacy work or organise a training course on the subject for your members!

The handbook is divided into three parts which you can use independently depending on your level of knowledge, your capacities and your needs.

Part 1 - Step-by-Step Advocacy Planning

Each youth organisation's context is completely unique, therefore we cannot provide you with definitive answers which you can use to successfully achieve change. What we can do is guide you through the right questions and offer you tools for answering them. This part will guide you through the defining of your vision, to the selection of the actions you will implement to achieve change, and it will support you in formulating your problems and opportunities in the right format. This is the goal of this first section.

Part 2 - Pick and Choose Your Actions

When it comes to implementing your advocacy action, the good news is that you don't need to reinvent the wheel! Civil society organisations, including youth organisations, have designed plenty of successful methods to fight for change. Having knowledge of the available options for your actions will save you a lot of time which you can instead use to innovate and bring these ideas a step further. This part will provide you with numerous good practices from different civil society sectors which you will be able to easily relate to.

Part 3 - Definitions and Concepts

As much as we wanted to provide a practical tool which you could immediately use to plan your next big campaign, we are aware of the diversity of our readers. Some are experienced and would be able to use such a tool straight off but others are new activists, and would struggle without a full understanding of advocacy, what it means and how it works. This is why we have included in this last part some necessary background, theory, definitions and key concepts. We have kept this information to the strict minimum and encourage all readers, experienced and less experienced, to go through this material in order to guarantee a smoother understanding of the first two parts of this handbook.

Step-by-Step Advocacy Planning

"Enough is enough! Something needs to change!"

As a youth organisation activist this is a feeling you probably encounter on a daily basis. It is a necessary one. It is the feeling that will channel your energy towards change and fuel the fight for your cause!

This feeling is at the very foundation of all advocacy processes. But once the anger triggered by an unjust situation or a violated right has passed, questions start to come:

What is the current situation?

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How do I prove the current situation is bad?

↓

How can I change this situation?

↓

What does the ideal situation look like?

↓

What solutions can I bring forward?

↓

Am I the only one thinking there is a problem?

↓

Who has the power to change the situation?

↓

What do I do to get their attention and convince them to act?

↓

How do I make my point of view heard in society?

↓

How can I see if I actually triggered change?

A full advocacy process consists of answering all these questions in a structured way. This is so you and your organisation can plan and implement a series of actions that will lead to a positive change for young people at the political and societal levels.

This is what we are going to help you with in this first part through the following 10 step process:

1. Define your vision and your goals - what needs to change?
2. From problems to solutions - models, models and more models!
3. Do your research - facts and data.
4. Map your ecosystem - stakeholder power mapping.
5. Craft your message - framing, storytelling and narratives.
6. Get your message out there - working with the media.
7. Build, engage and activate your community - power to the people!
8. Plan your actions.
9. Monitor and evaluate - measure the change you created.
10. Upgrade your skills - competences for advocates.

Define your vision and your goals
– what needs to change?

Your organisation may have a very clear vision and mission, maybe you are fighting for a change that is very concrete and well-defined. If this is the case you are lucky and you can probably skip the first step.

But most often, you will find it difficult to pin down exactly what is wrong, what needs to change: it might at first be a vague feeling that something is wrong or it could be the accumulation of unacceptable individual situations. This first step is very much about putting your thoughts together in a structured way about the problem at hand.

Answering some standard questions can be very useful:

*   What is the problem you want to tackle?
*   Why is it a problem?
*   Is what I am seeing the actual problem or the symptom of another underlying problem?
*   What is causing the problem? What are the underlying structures and belief systems that support this dysfunctional state?
*   Who are the individuals or groups affected by the problem?
*   What would the ideal situation look like for these individuals or groups?

From this very first layer of reflection, you can already draw a big picture vision of the change you want to achieve. Try to describe in one sentence the change that your advocacy actions should lead to.

In order to remain at the level of the big picture but also structure your thoughts a bit more, you can use the iceberg model.

The Iceberg

a tool for guiding
systemic thinking

events ———————— **react**
What just happend?
Catching a cold.

patterns / trends ———— **anticipate**
What trends have there
been over time?
I've been catching more colds
when sleepling less.

underlying structures ——— **design**
What has influenced the patterns?
What are the relationships
between the parts?
More stress at work, not eating well,
difficulty accessing healty food
near home or work.

mental models ————— **transform**
What assumptions, beliefs and values
do people hold about the system?
What beliefs keep the system in place?
Career is the most important piece
of our identity, healthy food is
too expensive, rest is
for the unmotivated.

To summarise

Step 1:   Brainstorm about the big questions of your problem.

Step 2:   Formulate the problem as a change-oriented question.

Step 3:   Draw up and fill your iceberg.

From problems to solutions – models, models and more models!

You've asked yourself a series of broad questions and that's a very good start. Yet, it's still all a bit fluffy and cloudy: a lot of your answers are going to be based on assumptions you haven't yet clarified.

This is what this second stage is about: structuring your thoughts towards a more systematic approach to the problem at hand.

Advocacy textbooks, handbooks and toolkits are filled with models you can use to help you with this step. Here are three that we think are particularly relevant and easy to use.

PEST Analysis

PEST is a broad fact-gathering activity aimed at figuring out the external factors impacting your issue. It stands for Political, Economic, Sociological, Technological. The results of a PEST analysis are very valuable for identifying the different possible causes of a problem.

Political	Economic	Sociological	Technological
Stability of government	Economic growth	Demographic influences	International influences
Potential changes to legislation	Employment rates	Lifestyle factors	Changes in information technology
Global influences		Culture changes	

Problem and Objectives Tree

problem's impact on society

harms on direct beneficiaries

effects on involved parties

main problem that beneficiaries suffer from

problem's position or involved parties

main causes of the problem

The problem tree is an effective reflection and visualisation tool to analyse the causes and effects of the main problem(s) you have identified.

At the centre of the tree, its trunk, represents your main problem which you should have identified by now.

Below the trunk, the roots represent the causes of your problem: there can of course be several causes and they can have several layers. They answer the question; "why is your problem happening?"

On top of the trunk stand the branches and leaves, they represent the further effects of your problem. They answer the question "what is the impact of the problem on people and groups?"

Start by writing the problem in the trunk.

Then, use cards or post-its to identify and articulate the causes you can identify.

Follow this by writing down the concrete effects and impacts of the problem on individuals and target groups.

At this stage your tree will be full of negative statements. The last stage consists of turning all of the negative effects and impacts into positive statements: often using terms like increase, improve, decrease, etc.

SMART Objectives

From this big picture thinking, you can go to specifics and try to define precise goals for your advocacy process. Try to formulate the desired change in the form of the famous SMART objectives:

- Specific: what needs to change and for whom?
- Measurable: How can the change be measured? For example; how many people will be impacted and how?
- Achievable: is the change realistic considering the context and your capacities?
- Result-oriented: what are the concrete steps that can and will lead to change?
- Time-bound: do you already have a broad and realistic time frame for when the change should happen?

To summarise

Step 1: Gather your team with a lot of post-its and flipcharts for a fun reflection session.
Step 2: Brainstorm and fill the PEST framework.
Step 3: Brainstorm and draw the problem tree.
Step 4: Define your SMART objectives.
Step 5: Debrief and share a summary paper with your members.

Do your research – facts and data

Before diving into action, it is important that you do some serious research on your issue. Building a better understanding of the problem at hand and its potential solutions, will be beneficial on several levels. First and foremost it will help you shape your proposal and actions in a more relevant and targeted way.

By engaging in research and therefore a learning process about the issue, you will build your own expertise which will come in handy particularly when you need to exchange information with partners and stakeholders at the later stages.

This expertise is necessary on two levels. At the level of the individuals involved in your advocacy campaign, and by extension, at the level of your organisation. Ensuring that you have a strong knowledge of the issue available for your members and for the external stakeholders will increase the legitimacy of your organisation.

What sort of information should you look for?

- Who are the individuals and groups working on this issue? (for the following step)
- How do they frame the problem? What sort of narrative is already being used?
- What are the key striking statistics connected to this problem?
- Which initiatives similar to what you are proposing have been tried or advocated on before?
- What are the arguments for the change you desire to see?
- What are the arguments against such change? Or which have been delaying any change from happening?

You can collect information in many ways, but if resources are lacking and you cannot engage in a full-blown research process, you can still gather a lot of valuable information:

- No problem is entirely new: you will be able to find existing policies, research already done, or advocacy work led by other NGOs in other parts of the world on your topic.
- Talk to your target group. If you work on a topic that affects young people, engage with them to collect information about their situation, their perception of it, and their ideas to solve it.

To summarise

Step 1: Research your issue, collect policies, academic papers, and media and civil society knowledge.

Step 2: Prepare a fact sheet: note down the key issue, the key numbers, collect testimonies, stories and arguments from both sides.

Step 3: Prepare a more comprehensive knowledge folder for your members.

Step 4: Share this knowledge with your members and organise a learning meeting with them.

Map your ecosystem – stakeholder power mapping

Any advocacy action requires cooperation, communication and/or confrontation with a wide diversity of individuals or groups who have an interest, or a stake, in the action you are undertaking. These individuals and groups are called **stakeholders**.

Before engaging in any action, you must clearly understand who the stakeholders, who are related to the problem you seek to address are, and how they relate to the problem and its solution.

Your first task here is obviously to make a comprehensive list of all the stakeholders around you (see Part 3 for the categories of stakeholders), for example: other youth organisations and their networks, decision-makers at your level of action, the target group, and the beneficiaries.

Drawing a mind-map can be a relevant way to present all the stakeholders and a fun exercise to do with your members.

Once you've drawn up this list, you can go one step further by analysing each of them. You can place them on different continuums to decide how you should engage with them:

- Are they directly affected by the problem or not?
- Do they care a lot about your problem or not? Why?
- Do they have a lot of resources they can dedicate to help you solve the problem?
- Who can influence them directly or indirectly and why? And what sort of arguments are they likely to respond to?
- Do they have a high level of, or little power to influence change?
- Are they supportive of your cause? Can you consider them as allies or opponents?

Answering all these questions should help you define your relationship with each of the different stakeholders.

A very common framework to decide where to focus your efforts towards the different stakeholders is the Power/Interest Matrix.

+

meet their needs

Engage and Conult
Increase/ maintain
level of interest

Aim is to move them
to the right

Could be a risk to
your idea

key player

Manage closely

Involve in projects and
decicions

Engage on a regular
basis and work to
maintain the
relationship

low priority

Monitor

Communicate
generally to keep
updated

Aim to move to the
right

keep informed

Make use of interest
through involvement

Consult on their area
of interest

Can be a supporter/
ambassador

influence/power of stakeholder

– **interest of stakeholder** **+**

Once you have drawn your matrix, the next step is to fill it in:

- For each stakeholder identified as high priority, you should try to define how they can be influenced and who and what has an influence on them?
- For the stakeholders identified as low influence and low interest, you should of course dedicate less time and resources to try and engage them.

To summarise

Step 1:   Make a list of all the stakeholders around you who are connected to your issue.

Step 2:   Analyse them and put them in the grid.

Step 3:   Figure out who and what has an influence on their positions and actions

Craft your message – framing, storytelling and narratives

At the core of every advocacy process lies communication. Ultimately, advocacy is about convincing individuals and groups in power to initiate policy change through various communication-centered actions.

You must craft messages that will not only be seen by your key stakeholders but that will also result in a change of belief (adopting your cause, your vision) and a change of behavior (championing, implementing or taking part in a policy change, changing a vote).

Unfortunately, there is no magic recipe to crafting a good message, such messages come with experience. A good message is only good if: it creates the desired impact, it is remembered, it emotionally triggers its audience, it makes the audience change its mind or act. There are a few tricks that can help you shape a relevant message.

Frame your core message

You want your audiences and targets to consider your point of view from the beginning of the process. For this you want to carefully select the language you will use for your main messages or slogans. For example, one of the most famous examples of framing is the fight regarding abortion in the USA, the frames used are: 'pro-choice' versus 'pro-life'. Both frames provide strong narratives for the abortion debate.

Talk to the heart, head and hand

Heart: How can you make your desired audience care about the topic? What emotions can you trigger? What tone will you use? Hope, anger, fear... these should be reflected in your messages.

Head: What facts and figures can be striking for your audience? What concrete and practical solution can you bring through your message?

Hand: What can your audience do? What call to action do you include in your message?

Understand your audiences

It's common sense but often forgotten: don't speak to a fresh activist and an experienced politician in the same way. Understand the interests, knowledge and availability of your different audiences in order to shape specific messages that fit each one. For example, a quick fire emotional message for

your supporters on social media or a several pages brief for a journalist making a long editorial piece. You must be ready to tailor your message.

Test your message

There is nothing like a real world test of your message to see its effectiveness. Gather your members and test their reaction to the different messages of your campaign, but not only. Test your messages on audiences not related to your work to see if they understand and are moved by your message - family members can be a great testing ground.

A message is more than a piece of text

Don't forget that your message is not just a piece of text: images, videos, sounds can be part of the message as well. To ensure you will be able to develop a powerful campaign, you should think about the non-textual elements that your messages could be accompanied with.

Famous message framing

Message framing is at the core of successful advocacy campaigns but not only: political campaigns, public relations and marketing are also avid users of message framing.

Some of them became famous for being particularly ingenious... but not necessarily for good causes!

Torches of freedom

In 1929, Edward Bernays, the father of modern public relations and marketing, was tasked to help cigarette manufacturers increase their sales among women despite the strong taboo of women smoking at that time.

He crafted the frame "torches of freedom" for cigarettes. He hired a group of women to light their "torches of freedom" together during a large parade as a symbol of emancipation, and called the press in advance about the action.

The amount of cigarettes bought by women quickly rose after that.

Pro-life versus Pro-choice

Possibly one of the most famous framing battles in modern political debate. Abortion is sadly a heavily contested issue across the world and women still need to fight for their right to abortion, in particular in the USA.

In the USA, both sides of the debate have found powerful frames for the debate: pro-life against pro-choice.

If you imagine a person with no idea about this debate suddenly being thrown into it you would realise how it works. As a first approach, no one would want to be labelled "anti-life" or "anti-choice." These frames are perfect examples of ways to try to draw the terms of the debate to your side before the content.

Global Warming, Climate Crisis or Climate Change

Climate crisis, climate disaster, climate change, global warming, climate breakdown... The field of climate action (or inaction) is one of the most heated debates if you want to witness an unfolding framing battle.

In 2003, USA Republicans and the Bush administration started to actively switch from *global warming* to *climate change*, as the latter term was deemed less frightening and more effective to maintain the status quo.

Greta Thunberg has been relentlessly using the term *climate crisis*, the only term possibly creating the necessary sense of urgency in people's minds.

In 2019, The Guardian newspaper updated its style guide and communicated about this update to reflect the emergency of the crisis and to answer the calls from scientists and activists. Bush's change of framing in The Guardian. The Guardian's change of vocabulary.[1]

Death Tax VS Estate Tax

Another example coming from the USA, where the polarised bi-partisan system is a fertile ground for such framing battles.

The tax on property inheritance in the USA has been labelled, fairly neutrally, the *Estate Tax* by the Democrats. While the Republicans, who have been fighting against it, have nicknamed it the *Death Tax*, an obviously powerful frame to create a sense of dislike towards a specific tax. Death Tax or Estate Tax - Business Insider.[2]

We have identified six successful methods being used to craft powerful messages.

1. **Killer facts.**
   Oxfam is pretty good at these, however, there are only a few good ones - and to be successful they need to connect primarily with your emotions. Perhaps one of the best ever: "eight men own as much as half the world". It works not because it is eight, or ten,

1   https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2003/mar/04/usnews.climatechange
2   https://www.businessinsider.com/death-tax-or-estate-tax-2017-10?r=US&IR=T

or 42. No one ever remembers the actual numbers. That doesn't matter. What they do remember is the feeling of shock and anger at the scale of inequality.

2. **Stories.**

   Stories are very powerful at shifting opinions. Not least because it is how we remember things. How often would you share a story with your family, versus sharing a fact? 'Women poultry workers in the United States work in such terrible conditions they have to wear nappies/ diapers because they are not allowed time to go to the toilet'. That one came from Oxfam America's report[3], but was told to me by my father who was appalled. He had read it in the UK newspapers with no reference to Oxfam.

3. **Phrases.**

   Instead of inheritance tax, death tax. Foreign aid versus life-saving aid. A Financial Transaction Tax or a Robin Hood Tax? The rich or the wealthy? Words matter. The genius at doing this is Frank Luntz. His book[4] on this is brilliant.

4. Simple arguments that are seemingly self-evident.

   Immigration is out of control, the country can't cope. It is wrong that billionaires pay lower rates of tax than their secretaries.

5. **Humour.**

   Ridicule is a great way of belittling opponents and changing common sense. By making you laugh at the absurdity, it engages again with your emotions.

6. **Images.**

   Karina, a poultry worker in the US, is unable to hold her children's hands because of a permanent injury sustained from many hours of repetitive work.

To summarise

Step 1:   Prepare a list of heart, head and hand arguments to support your cause.

Step 2:   Prepare three different one-minute pitches: for your members; for a policy-maker; for a journalist.

Step 3:   Test your messages with people who know your issue, and with people who don't.

Step 4:   Create a powerful iconography to go with your texts.

Step 5:   Train your members to be able to share the different pitches.

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3   https://s3.amazonaws.com/oxfam-us/www/static/media/files/Lives_on_the_Line_Full_Report_Final.pdf

4   https://www.apdoo.org/judyweiss/Luntz%20words%20that%20work.pdf

Get your message out there – working with the media

The way information is produced and consumed by citizens, and therefore the way people form their beliefs and opinions has changed dramatically in recent years. Traditional media (TV, press, radio) don't anymore hold the power they used to in terms of shaping public opinion. However, they still play an important role in this cognitive market. Traditional media can be an important tool to give a strong echo to your message and your campaign, and to attract policy-makers' attention.

While shaping your advocacy campaign, you must take into account the opportunities traditional media offer you. But it is not an easy task, in particular as an NGO with limited resources, you will likely not have a full press and media team to work with.

Competition for attention: say something new

The biggest factor for attracting media attention is the novelty of your message. Journalists like to report on something new: a new story or a new angle to an existing story. What can you provide that gives them this element of novelty?

The other key elements of newsworthiness are:

- Is there a shocking element, a surprise? Revealing a scandal, an injustice, a powerful testimony... Anything memorable will increase your chance to get picked up by the media.
- Is your topic part of a trend? Is your topic part of a broader societal trend? For example, in 2021, it was easier to attract attention to climate change than it had been in the past.
- Is your topic accessible and easy to understand for all? Not only should you be able to provide easy-to-digest messages, but they should also appeal to enough people to gather mainstream media attention.

Don't forget that most journalists are on social media as well. It might depend a lot on your specific cultural context but in many countries, 'Twitter', is a particularly popular channel for journalists. Tweets with mentions of journalists can be a very good way to get noticed!

Traditional ways to engage with the media

Write and send a press release:

- You can easily find good examples of how to write press releases online (see also the Plan International checklist below for guidance). They need

to be: short, to-the-point, containing a newsworthiness element, a quote, an image, a catchy title, etc. Journalists immediately discard the vast majority of press releases they receive, simply because of the quantity that land in their mailbox. Your best chance is to follow-up on the phone with the key journalists you want to target.

Get an interview in a newspaper, radio or TV:

- Interviews, if well-prepared, are the holy grail of media presence as you can directly pass on your message.
- If you land an interview, the key is to prepare it well! This checklist[5] by Plan International in their 'An Advocacy Toolkit' on page 119, covers all the important elements you should have in mind. If you have followed all the steps of this guide so far, it should be a piece of cake!

  Increasingly, the new media landscape (YouTube, blogs, podcasts, etc.) can also be a relevant place to share your message. The new media landscape will usually attract niche but very well informed and active audiences which can become active supporters (see point 7 - Community building).

Write an OpEd:

- Many newspapers offer the opportunity to write OpEds, opinion pieces not written by the editorial team but by external contributors. These OpEds can be a very relevant tool for passing on your message. Enquire directly to the newspapers about the possibility.

Invite journalists to your events and actions:

- Inviting journalists to report from an event you organise is necessary media-relation work in any advocacy campaign, but it requires a lot of effort. Make sure the journalists are well-identified during the event. They need to be given all the necessary background information before the event, and you will need to accompany them during the event to ensure they see the key moments. By being with them, you can facilitate dialogue with any key personalities at the event.
- Overall, you must think about media relations as a long-term effort. Seek to have exchanges and meetings even when you don't have a news-worthy story to share. Such meetings are useful for simply building relationships and help you to understand better what can be of interest to the journalists.

5   https://issuu.com/planinternational/docs/english_toolkitlores

Step 1: Refine your 1-minute pitch for journalists.

Step 2: List the key moments and hooks of your campaign which can be of interest to journalists.

Step 3: Map the media consumption of your target audience: which channels are they using?

Step 4: Map the relevant media in your ecosystem and gather journalist contacts.

Step 5: Follow-up any email to journalists with a phone call.

Step 6: If you land an interview, prepare a list of possible questions and answers in advance.

Step 7: Map and connect with new media channels relevant to your cause (YouTube, blogs, podcasts).

Build, engage and activate your community – power to the people![6]

Community management, digital mobilisation and organisation, and community organising... as a modern campaigner and advocate you might hear these terms more and more regularly. And for good reason, they are at the core of recent successful advocacy campaigns.

They all take into account that communication is not a top-down process anymore, but that citizens at the grassroots level can have a powerful voice and role in every advocacy campaign.

Mobilising and engaging your active communities will help you on several levels:

- To mobilise more people for your high-profile actions.
- To multiply your resources and diversify your skill set thanks to volunteers.
- To reach new audiences you wouldn't be able to reach with your own channels.
- To increase pressure on decision-makers.

The traditional engagement ladder (or engagement funnel, depending on the way you look at it) is a good tool to understand what this is all about.

6   Read further: Rules for Revolutionaries - How big organising can change everything.

Stage	Relationship	Engagement
Awareness	People know about your issue, campaign, NGO	Inform them and get them to sign up for your communication channels, newsletter, etc.
		Send them broad messages so they understand the issue
Understanding and consideration	People have a more advanced knowledge and are actively looking into the issue	Send more advanced information, invite them to an event, invite them to a closed channel for discussion
Supporters	People display a first layer of active support	Ensure they like more of your posts, flag your news to them, encourage them to sign a petition
Promoters	People actively share your content or participate passively at some of your activities	Encourage them to join events, like a public debate or a march, to re-share a petition on their own channels, to take up a small responsibility
Activist	People take an active role in your advocacy efforts	They are equally engaged online and offline, can lead small activities like a stand at a fair, know well your message, and can recruit more people
Leaders	People take a leadership, strategic role	You can give them team leadership roles, or strategic roles if your campaign is spread out (central planning of a big goal but decentralised implementation)
		They are active recruiters and can train new people

Many youth organisations, due to their being volunteer-based and the fast internal climb of the ladder function, already follow this model without formalising it.

The goal for your organisation or your advocacy campaign should be to develop a structure that allows it to welcome people at every level of the ladder, and has processes to help people climb the different steps.

How can this be achieved?

- By having solid common foundations: a shared vision, mission and values. You have to ensure that the vision, mission and values of your campaign or your organisation are made very clear to every person who wants to engage with it, and that all these elements are known by your members from the very beginning of their engagement.

- By designing tailored roles and actions: not everyone has the time to spend one day per week on your campaign, and not everyone has the skills to answer a journalist's questions. But everyone should have the space to contribute. You should foresee a wide range of roles for people who are at different levels of the ladder - from the smallest of actions to leading whole areas of your campaign.
- By setting collaborative transparent spaces for dialogue and ideas, and by having clear internal communication processes: your communities will only climb the ladder if they know they have a real space to exchange, can contribute with ideas, and be heard. Regular structured and inclusive meetings and online spaces like Slack or Discord can be a good starting point. Your active members should have a sense of clarity regarding who to talk to and who they can expect information from.
- By offering learning and growth mechanisms: if people feel welcome and engaged they will want to climb the ladder of engagement in your campaign. But they might feel stuck by a lack of skills or knowledge. You will need to foresee mechanisms through which they can develop the necessary skills and knowledge to grow. For example, through peer-learning sessions between members exchanging skills.
- By celebrating not only the victories, but their engagement as well: many members will join your cause not expecting anything in return, but long advocacy campaigns require motivation to stay high on the long run. Sharing a drink at the end of a meeting, organising small social gatherings, making nice gadgets for your active members, or helping them with the recognition of their newly learned skills, all of these can be powerful and simple tools to keep the motivation high.

To summarise

Step 1:   Draw your own engagement ladder and indicate what each layer means for your campaign.

Step 2:   Design an engagement charter that expresses your vision and mission for your supporters, the roles, structures and rules for cooperation.

Step 3:   Design a participatory engagement and dialogue space with your supporters, utilise both online and presential approaches.

Step 4:   Plan actions that supporters at all levels can engage in.

Step 5:   Work out how you can give a leadership role to your most active supporters.

Step 6:   Design a learning, growing and reward plan for your supporters.

Plan your actions[7]

Advocacy encompassees a diversity of actions: some purely communication-based such as media relations and some much more event-based, such as organising large protests and rallies.

To lead a successful advocacy process you will need to decide which actions you will want to lead. Plan them in good time and organise your financial and human resources to implement them efficiently. Also anticipate what can go wrong.

Sounds familiar? As a youth organisation member it should! These are the basic requirements of any project management process.

Drawing up long task lists, smart calendars and realistic budgets are the core steps at this stage.

Detailed task lists will allow you to allocate and share responsibilities. They will also help you to anticipate the competences you will need in your team, as well as the resources, time and money required.

Timing your actions is both a project management and a strategic task in advocacy. Of course, you want to plan your activities to allow enough time for their smooth running and according to your capacities, but you also want to take into account the political calendar around you. Success of advocacy actions is often closely tied to stages in a policy-making process, such as the final vote of a law, or the political calendar, such as elections. It is crucial to take into account both these elements of timing in your plan.

No need to tell you the importance of well-planned, risk-inclusive and regularly updated and monitored budgets in any project. Keeping an optimistic and a pessimistic balanced budget of your incomes and expenses, and ensuring that the responsibility and monitoring is shared among several persons is one of the best overall risk management approaches you can take.

To summarise
Step 1: Make a list of possible actions you can implement (Part 3 of this handbook can help you with this).
Step 2: Draw up a calendar of your campaign: political milestones, activities.
Step 3: Prepare a budget for your actions.

7   Resources: CoE Tkit on Project Management: https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47261197/tkit3.pdf/63828fe8-4022-4944-9459-32ac0c8b6fbf

Step 4:	Make a list of your needed human resources and skills to successfully lead these actions.
Step 5:	Draw up task lists and specific timelines for each of your planned actions.
Step 6:	List the common risks to be avoided for each activity (Part 3 of the handbook can help you with this).

Monitor and evaluate – measure the change you created[8, 9]

Monitoring and evaluation are both processes aiming at measuring aspects of your actions against pre-established criteria in order to improve, change or adjust what you are doing. They are closely interlinked but refer to specific parts of your action.

Monitoring primarily refers to the continuous process of keeping track of what you are doing while you are doing it.

Evaluation primarily refers to the measure of the final success of your action.[10]

Very often, youth organisations lack the resources to engage in meaningful monitoring and evaluation processes. Monitoring and evaluation require using resources to collect and analyse data, for example surveys to evaluate a change of public opinion or interviews to evaluate actions and attitudes of decision-makers following an advocacy campaign. Using these resources is very often perceived as being inefficient and diverting resources that could be used for the advocacy actions themselves. However, in youth organisations, monitoring and evaluation of advocacy actions should not be overlooked. Particularly given the high turnover in many organisations' leadership, which often means the loss of institutional memory. Monitoring and evaluation allows for organisational learning and avoids repeating mistakes generation after generation, and has the ultimate goal of implementing more impactful advocacy actions.

In advocacy, monitoring plays an important role for adjusting your strategy. Advocacy often happens in dynamic and unstable environments. Circumstances can change quickly, new opportunities might arise. You need to be able to

8   UNICEF Advocacy Toolkit. https://resources.peopleinneed.net/documents/22-unicef-advocacy-toolkit-companion.pdf

9   Save the Children. Monitoring and Evaluating Advocacy. https://www.open.edu/openlearncreate/pluginfile.php/128097/mod_resource/content/1/Monitoring%20and%20evaluating%20advocacy.pdf

10   UNODC - Why Monitor and Evaluate. https://www.unodc.org/pdf/youthnet/action/planning/m&e_E_0203.pdf (page 8/9 for a interesting metaphor on Monitoring / Evaluation difference)

monitor this on a regular basis to adjust your course of action and seize these new opportunities.

Finally, monitoring is a way to ensure flexibility. The impact of your actions might be difficult to anticipate and sticking to a fully fixed plan from the beginning, even if it is obviously failing, might not be the best strategy. By regularly evaluating your actions and their successes (or failures), you leave the door open to necessary changes of plan.

In an advocacy process, monitoring and evaluation consists of measuring:

- If the actions took place as planned, with sufficient quality and efficiency.
- If the direct goal assigned to these actions was achieved.
- If the desired political and societal change happened as a result of the actions.

In the third part of the handbook, we propose a few basic indicators of success for the outcomes of your actions.

To summarise

Step 1:   Make a list of activities you want to organise, their short-term outcomes, and expected long-term impact.

Step 2:   Define measurable criteria for the success of each of the items on the list.

Step 3:   Define methods to collect data and measure if you met these criteria.

Step 4:   Collect data to evaluate if you achieved success.

Step 5:   Share the learning with your members so you can improve in the future.

Upgrade your skills – competences for advocates[11]

Your organisation probably suffers from the same difficulties as most other youth organisations: a very high turnover of your members. If you have the chance to have a well-established secretariat, the knowledge and skills might remain solidly anchored in your organisation. But if you are a volunteer-based organisation, chances are you will often need to regularly upgrade the skills and knowledge of your members.

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11   Fiscal Note: 70 Experts Share Their Best Lobbying and Advocacy Planning, Strategy, Skills and Training Tips. https://fiscalnote.com/blog/70-experts-share-their-best-advocacy-planning-strategy-skills-and-training-tips

You should envision these skills at the level of your organisation or team: does my team possess all the necessary skills? If not, where can I find new members with the right competences? Or can I provide training for my team to develop the lacking skills?

Skills for advocacy and campaigning will also require this regular updating!

The following list is not exhaustive but provides you with a good start...

Communication skills:
- Writing press releases *for successful media outreach*.
- Producing social media *to engage your audience in a digital campaign*.
- Graphic design skills *for impactful visual communication*.
- Video editing skills *for videos that people will actually watch and share*.
- Public speaking skills *to make the case for your cause during events*.
- Networking skills *to develop new relations with journalists and policy-makers*.
- Framing and storytelling skills *to provide a successful big-picture story for your campaign*.

Political skills:
- Negotiation skills *to convince policy-makers when meeting with them*.
- Analytical and legal skills *to draft sound policy proposals or amendments*.
- Policy paper writing skills *to write engaging briefs for your audiences*.
- Research skills *to create solid background analysis of your issue*.
- Knowledge of institutions and stakeholders *to navigate efficiently the political landscape*.

Project management skills:
- Event management skills *to successfully organise public events, protests, etc*.
- Budget planning skills *to avoid financial trouble when running your actions*.
- Time management *to optimise your resources and plan strategically*.

Leadership and people skills:
- Volunteer management skills *to engage the communities around you*.
- Training skills *to develop the skills of your active members*.
- Listening skills *to be able to hear the other side's arguments and engage with politicians*.

To summarise

Step 1:   List the skills and knowledge you need for a successful
            advocacy campaign.

Step 2:   Gather existing resources to develop basic knowledge among your
            members and ensure it is sustainably available in your organisation.

Step 3:   Organise internal training courses to develop these skills on
            a regular basis with new members.

Step 4:   Plan with leaving members so that they share their skills with
            new members.

Pick and Choose Your Actions

You have now prepared for action. You know what your end goal is, you know the steps it will take to get there, and you have mapped your ecosystem. You know who your friends are, who your opponents are, you know who holds the power to change, you know the resources you can mobilise to act, and you know when there will be windows of opportunity.

It's now time to go out there and act!

Lucky you! Civil society organisations have been fighting for political change for a long time and there is a wealth of knowledge and experience you can draw from when it's time to go on the political battlefield.

You'll find in this part of the handbook a menu of actions. For each of them we share considerations about the opportunities and risks they present.

These actions are not happening in an abstract void. Your role will be to assess their relevance to your own context: their scale, their timing, the resources they require and their specific associated risks. If you carefully went through Part 1, this exercise should be easier.

By sharing this menu of actions, our hope is also to give you the space for innovation. By gaining time and energy in thinking about what actions are available to you, you can dedicate more resources to shaping them in a new and more impactful way.

To make this part as easy to use as possible, we've presented each action with the same format:

What is it? A short description of what it actually means.
Who are your targets? Who are the main targets of such an action.
When should you use it? Where does it fit in the process.
What resources should you mobilise? What resources; time, human or financial you should foresee being needed.
How can you measure success? Pointers on how to ensure the evaluation of your action.
What are the risks? What are the main obstacles you will face and how to avoid them.
Think further! Some reflections to make you think beyond the action itself.
Get Inspired! Great examples of organisations who successfully used that specific type of action.

Get up and get together

1. Organise a protest

What is it?

Organising a form of static or moving public gathering in the public space to draw attention to your topic and to your demands.

Who are your targets?
- Your active supporters and the general public - to join in the protest and show support.
- The media to report on your protest and amplify your message.
- Decision-makers whom you want to be impressed by the public support you have.

When should you use it?
- At the problem recognition, agenda setting, or adoption phases.
- When you want to attract broad media attention to your problem and encourage people to take further action.
- When you have access to a large enough audience.

What resources should you mobilise?

Protests traditionally require a high level of resources to be organised. You need time to prepare and mobilise. You must ensure security and authorisation. You need to have enough staff and volunteers to ensure smooth organisation and implementation. The preparation needed to ensure high visibility (banners, media attention) is also time and money consuming. You must ensure you have solid capacities to organise a protest.

How can you measure success?
- The amount of people joining your protest.
- The media attention during and after your protest.

What are the risks?
- Low attendance while media attention is high will hurt the credibility of your cause.
- Security and legal risks are high when organising a protest. Any security problems that arise will also harm your reputation.
- Lack of media attention lowers drastically the impact of a protest.

Think further!
- You don't have to do it alone! Large protests are often organised in coalitions.

- Protests don't have to be massive: think about Greta Thunberg who started her protests alone or the mass bicycle protests disturbing car traffic with rather low attendance.
- How can you further mobilise people who joined your protest? (sign up for news updates, sign a petition, etc.)

Get Inspired!
- Greta Thunberg and Fridays for Future's Climate Marches: a movement that radically changed the conversation about the climate crisis. School Strike Australia.[12]
- Critical Mass bike protests: the 30-year old movement organises regular open-to-all mass urban cycling rides to promote cycling as the best means of urban transport.
  Critical Mass.[13]

2.   Hold a conference, a public meeting, a festival...
What is it?

Organising a public meeting with all the relevant stakeholders: decision-makers, experts, your target group and the general public.

Who are your targets?
- Policy-makers
- Media
- General public

When should you use it?
- At all the stages except for the problem recognition phase and the adoption phase.

To organise a meeting that actively involves decision-makers and other stakeholders, you need your problem to already be on the agenda. Therefore it might not be relevant to organise conferences too early in the process. You need to raise awareness first through a large audience (protests, media attention) and through individual channels (reports, meetings) before organising meetings.

Public meetings will usually serve for rather broad discussions, to compare different points-of-view or opinions. These meetings might not be as relevant at the adoption stage when, for example, the details of new policies are being discussed.

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12   https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/may/21/school-strike-for-climate-thousands-take-to-streets-around-australia

13   https://www.theguardian.com/environment/bike-blog/2011/dec/02/critical-mass

What resources should you mobilise?

As a youth organisation, you are probably familiar with organising various types of public meetings and events. Holding meetings as part of an advocacy process doesn't change much from your usual organisational reality.

How can you measure success?

- Number of attendees
- Level of speakers (high priority stakeholders from your power mapping)
- Media attention
- Follow-up engagement with decision-makers (contacts gathered, individual meetings planned)

What are the risks?

- Your conference is too inward-looking, leading to limited impact. Civil society organisations tend to engage the already convinced usual-suspects. You should seek to ensure that your meeting addresses audiences who have an interest in learning more or the power to trigger change.
- A lot of investment in terms of time and resources for little impact.

Think further!

- Don't forget to apply all the relevant good practices in successful event and meeting management which you can find in other YFJ toolkits and handbooks.
- Public meetings are usually a good space to give a meaningful voice to the final target group you are working with and for.
- You might not be able to organise events, but keep an eye on events organised by others on your topic, where you can speak to express your position and meet with key stakeholders.

Get Inspired!

The European Youth Forum's 'YO!Fest', organised since 2009, is a political youth organisation festival which has helped connect young people and policy makers and kept youth issues high on the agenda in Europe.

3. Organise a stunt in a public space

What is it?

Organise an action in a public space that will attract attention because of its innovative, shocking or daring nature.

Who are your targets?

- Media
- General public

When should you use it?

- This is particularly relevant at the problem recognition phase as an awareness raising tool but it can be used in a targeted way until the adoption of a policy proposal.

What resources should you mobilise?

High visibility stunts are as much about the event itself as they are about the media visibility. Therefore you should not only ensure you have the capacity to pull off the stunt itself, but also that you have the capacity to attract various media who will relay your event.

How can you measure success?

- Extent of the reach on social media
- Media attention

What are the risks?

- Legal risks are very high. Often, to reach a high-level of media attention, you will need to push the boundaries of what you are ready to do. You also need to make sure your actions are complying with the law.
- Low visibility. Considering the high level of competition for the public's attention, stunt and high-visibility actions must really stand out and be out of the ordinary to attract a meaningful level of attention.

Think further!

- What material can you bring to distribute or fun activities can you organise to attract and engage people who come to observe your stunt or high visibility action?

Get Inspired!

- Greenpeace has organised many famous high-visibility stunts. In 2019, Greenpeace activists climbed up a number of European institution buildings to highlight the lack of climate action. Greenpeace Protesters.[14]

4.   Hold a stand in a public event, festival, etc.

What is it?

Keeping an information stand at a public event, a festival, etc. Very often, music festivals or fairs organised by local authorities will allow NGOs to hold stands to promote their activities and campaigns. This can be a relevant action to touch the general public.

14   https://www.brusselstimes.com/belgium/83473/in-pictures-greenpeace-protesters-set-eu-council-building-on-fire-climate-change-fire-banners-europa-building-eu-council-summit

Who are your targets?

General public

When should you use it?

As an action targeting the general public, you can make use of it at any moment of a campaign or policy-making process.

What resources should you mobilise?

- You will need to ensure you have sufficient visibility materials (posters, flyers) and plan your human resources so there is always someone present, to inform passers-by and or to organise activities to engage passers-by.

How can you measure success?

- Number of people who visited your stand.
- Numbers of information and campaign materials you distributed.
- Number of people who signed up for further action.

What are the risks?

- Wrong type of audience. Make sure the expected audience of the event you will be joining matches the audience of your campaign, or adapt your message to make it fit.
- Low attendance and low interest. If you join a fun event, you must ensure to have a fun message for people to engage with.

Think further!

- How can you ensure you will further mobilise the people who visited your stand?
- Can you promote your stand before the event?
- Can you invite a personality to your stand to attract more people?

5.   Set up a petition

What is it?

Asking your supporters to sign a petition calling for a specific action to be taken by decision-makers.

Who are your targets?

- General public

When should you use it?

- Petitions are a broad-use advocacy action which can be helpful at any stage of a policy or campaign process.

What resources should you mobilise?

Setting up a petition is not resource-consuming in itself. In particular in the current digital world, there are plenty of platforms which can help you with the process. Communicating and disseminating your petition as well as relevantly following-up on it with your supporters will require more resources.

How can you measure success?

- Number of signatories
- Delivery to high level-decision makers

What are the risks?

- High competition. Petitions have become a very standard advocacy tool which is sometimes overused. It can be difficult to pierce through the noise.
- Low engagement of signatories. Petitions are an example of "clicktivism" that requires a low level of engagement from participants and therefore their credibility can be considered as low by decision-makers, even when high numbers of people have signed.

Think further!

- Do you have a very clear and realistic call-to-action in your petition? Are you making a clear demand?
- Can you get support from public figures to endorse and share your petition?
- What do you want to do with your petition once you collect a certain amount of signatures: publish it in the press, deliver it to decision-makers, etc.? You should think about the follow-up from the beginning.
- How can you further engage your signatories in other actions? Signing a petition is a small action but you can try to get your signatories to become more engaged afterwards.

Get Inspired!

- AVAAZ successful petitions.
  AVAAZ.[15]

6. Publish a report on the problem and the reasons why a change is needed

What is it?

Publish a report highlighting the problem you are looking to address explaining the reasons why a change is needed.

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15   https://secure.avaaz.org/page/en/highlights/

Who are your targets?
- Policy-makers who need quick access to information.

When should you use it?
- When you want to initially raise attention to a problem in the public sphere (problem recognition / agenda setting). When you need your problem to be acknowledged by decision-makers.

What resources should you mobilise?
Collecting and analysing data, writing, communicating and disseminating your report can be demanding. However, it varies a lot depending on your access to pre-existing data and your knowledge about the issue you are trying to highlight.

If resources allow, consider seeking external help for the building of your report.

How can you measure success?
- Number of readers of your report
- Number of key stakeholders made aware of it
- Media attention
- References to your report in other documents or legal documents

What are the risks?
- Your report is shelved and never read or used right after being published.
- Your resources to collect quality data and information are not sufficient, resulting in a poor report which can hurt your credibility.

Think further!
- How can you ensure your report is read by your target? Combine it with direct contact to decision-makers and don't think of your report as a stand alone action.
- Embed a communication strategy for your report at a very early stage (launch, high-level support, media contacts, etc.).

Get Inspired
- European Youth Forum's 2021 "Beyond Lockdown: the 'pandemic scar' on young people". This is a report that raises awareness about the deep social, economic, and also mental health challenges young people are facing as a result of the Covid-19 crisis.
Beyond Lockdown.[16]

16   https://www.youthforum.org/news/beyond-lockdown-the-pandemic-scar-on-young-people

7. Publish an academic research or study

What is it?

Publish an academic or research report on the topic you are seeking to address. A general report as presented above should remain evidence-based but can also be value-based. In contrast, the aim of an academic or research report is to cast an objective light on your issue through solid research methodology.

Who are your targets?

- Policy-makers specifically in charge of your issue.

When should you use it?

- At the agenda-setting or formulation phase, when your issue is already being considered but you need solid facts and knowledge to inform the decision making-process.

What resources should you mobilise?

As a youth organisation, it is unlikely that you will have the in-house capacity to carry out solid research activities. You can consider externalising the work to research institutes - which will result in a potentially high financial cost. Ideally you can partner up with a research organisation already working on your topic. For example; PhD students looking for research topics.

How can you measure success?

- Number of readers of your research
- Number of key stakeholders made aware of it
- Media attention
- References to your research in other researches or legal documents

What are the risks?

- Your report is not scientifically robust enough and will harm your credibility. The purpose of an academic or research report is to present unbiased evidence and information regarding the issue at hand. Therefore, you must be careful in ensuring that the research questions and the proposed research methodology are sound.
- Your research is too infused with your ideological stance and loses credibility.
- Your research is shelved and never read or used.

Think further!

- How do you ensure your research is read by your target? Combine it with direct contact to decision-makers and don't think of your research as a stand alone action.

- Embed a communication strategy for your research at a very early stage (launch, high-level support, media contacts, etc.).
- A piece of academic research can be the basis for a more value-based publication, consider synergies between both.

Get Inspired!
- Erasmus Student Network's annual survey: a yearly survey-based study analysing the challenges in international student mobility.
  ESN Survey.[17]

8.   Respond to public consultations

What is it?

Modern policy-making processes often include a stakeholder or public consultation phase to which you can provide an input or a response. These consultations can take various forums: public meetings organised by institutions, online questionnaires or calls for open contributions.

Who are your targets?
- Institutions.

When should you use it?
- In the case of consultations, you are dependent on the timeframe imposed by the relevant institution or decision-maker.
- They will often happen at the formulation stage to get proposals from stakeholders on the table.

What resources should you mobilise?

Engaging in consultations will usually require a lot of preparation work within your organisation. You will need to gather data and establish clearly your position and any proposals you have. In a way, this is similar to preparing a report on the issue you are working on.

How can you measure success?
- Considering that consultations are an external process, it is very difficult to concretely measure the success or impact of your input.

What are the risks?
- A successful consultation process will attract a lot of responses, and therefore your response might be lost in a sea of others.

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17   https://www.esn.org/ESNsurvey

Think further!
- You need to monitor closely the different policy-processes you are interested in to ensure you don't miss opportunities for any consultations.
- Consider publicising your responses to a consultation on your communication channels to give it broader visibility.

9. Write amendments to a law proposal

What is it?

Writing precise demands regarding a law-making process under the form of amendments.

Who are your targets?
- Policy-makers in charge of a specific piece of legislation.

When should you use it?
- Towards the end of the formulation stage or at the beginning of the adoption phase of the policy-making cycle.
- When a potential law is being very concretely shaped and discussed, you can seek to intervene by shaping very precise amendments that you think would improve the law proposal.

What resources should you mobilise?

This action requires that you invest in a very strong and precise knowledge of the technicalities of the law and policy-making process in general but also of the specific law/policy you are trying to influence in particular. In order to be credible, you need sound legal/policy understanding in order to be able to shape amendments that can be included 'as they are' in the law proposal.

You will need to invest time in follow-up meetings with the decision-makers you are targeting and to have previously built a trusted relationship with them.

How can you measure success?
- The number of your amendments, if any, that passed into an adopted law/policy proposal.

What are the risks?
- Loss of credibility if your proposals are not relevant or legally sound. You can only engage in this type of action if you are certain that you can put together credible proposals.

Think further!
- A common practice is to send your amendments to all policy-makers involved in the legislation, however, this is a strategy that is mostly

counter-productive. You need to target specific law/policy-makers who are willing to take ownership and truly defend your proposals.

- Sending your amendments to the law/policy-maker directly in charge of the legislation can be an effective method if you have already established a relationship with them.

10. Set up a monitoring tool and monitor a situation
What is it?
Setting up long term monitoring tools to assess the situation and changes in your field of action. These tools can be updated live or following annual reporting mechanisms around specific indicators.

Who are your targets?
- Media
- General public
- Policy-makers

When should you use it?
- This is relevant at the problem recognition and at the monitoring and evaluation phases.

What resources should you mobilise?
Setting up an effective monitoring mechanism is an all-encompassing advocacy activity and therefore is a costly endeavour: data-collection, data-visualisation, launch, media attention, needs continuously updating, and needs events to publicise the results.

How can you measure success?
- Quantitative use of your tool
- Media attention and use of your tool

What are the risks?
- Lack of updates. Setting up a monitoring tool can be a very powerful way of attracting attention to an issue, but it requires regular updates and needs constantly updated data, you must ensure you have enough capacities to keep the tool alive.
- Low quality of the data. You must also ensure that the data that feeds the tool is of high quality. Low quality data will harm your reputation.

Think further!
- How will you ensure high quality data collection? How often will it be updated?

- Can you crowdsource the data-collection and make your tool participatory?

Get Inspired!
- The European Youth Forum's Youth Progress Index 2021, is a tool to measure and visualise the quality of life of young people around the world. It provides solid data for youth organisations to complement their advocacy actions and to give substance and evidence to their messages. It is produced every two years to keep up its monitoring value for evidence based policy making.
Youth Progress Index 2021.[18]
- CIVICUS Monitor is a tool that provides quantitative and qualitative data on the state of civil society and civic freedoms around the World. Its data is updated constantly through a network of 20 civil society organisations. It is a powerful tool for global advocacy and accurate news and data about freedom of association.
CIVICUS Monitor.[19]

The Political Tour

11. Send letters to policy-makers
What is it?
Sending a letter to a policy-maker to get their direct attention.

Who are your targets?
- Policy-makers.

When should you use it?
- Sending a letter can be used at every stage of the policy-making process.

What resources should you mobilise?
Writing and sending a letter to decision-makers is a low resource activity in itself but can be complemented by other activities. These can include gathering high-level co-signatories to increase credibility or distributed letter sending by citizens. These will require more coordination but remain financially low-cost activities.

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18 https://www.youthforum.org/topics/youth-progress-index

19 https://monitor.civicus.org/

How can you measure success?
- Response rate to the letter
- Number of meetings as a follow-up
- Number and influence of co-signatories

What are the risks?
- Low response rate: policy-makers are swamped with requests. Sending a letter without appropriate preparation or follow-up will rarely lead to significant results.

Think further!
- You can complement the activity in several ways:

  - Publishing the letter and publishing the answer you might receive.
  - Informing the media and trying to publish your letter as an opinion piece.
  - Organise coordinated letter sending by your active community.
  - Publishing the letter on social media and tagging relevant stakeholders.
- To increase your chances to trigger a reaction, learn about good practices in this type of communication: tell a story, make a clear demand or call to action to the person you address the letter to, etc.

Get Inspired!
- In 2021, the European Youth Forum sent alongside over 100 other signatories a letter to ask for the reform of fiscal frameworks, at the start of our joint work on the economic governance review. Fiscal Framework.[20]
- In 2019, the European Youth Forum sent a letter to all the Council of Europe's foreign ministers in the defense of the youth sector activities. This letter created attention on the threat faced by the youth sector in the midst of budget restrictions within the Council of Europe. Council of Europe Budget Cuts.[21]
- In 2016, over 100 organisations sent a letter to the EU High Representative to change the EU global approach to migration. While the member states did not reject the EU proposal as requested, the letter led to multiple meetings with HRVP Mogherini and leading Commission staff to discuss the topic over the next year. EU Approach to Migration.[22]

20 https://www.youthforum.org/news/new-european-wide-coalition-to-reshape-our-fiscal-framework

21 https://www.youthforum.org/news/open-letter-of-the-european-youth-forum-to-ministers-of-foreign-affairs

22 https://www.ecre.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Final_Joint_statement_110_signatories.pdf

12. Meet directly with individual policy-makers

What is it?

The most traditional form of lobbying and advocacy: meeting directly with decision-makers to explain your problems, your solutions, make your demands, and call them to action.

Who are your targets?

- Policy-makers.

When should you use it?

- There are reasons to meet with policy-makers at every stage of the policy-making process.

What resources should you mobilise?

Meeting with decision-makers is not resource-consuming in itself. However, you should dedicate enough resources in preparing for your meetings: gathering knowledge and data, polishing your message, anticipating how the conversation can go, doing a background research on the person(s) you are meeting with.

Meetings can be time-consuming as you address one single person at a time. Therefore, you should seek to prioritise according to your stakeholders power-mapping.

How can you measure success?

You can decide to meet with policy-makers for very diverse reasons, hence measuring the success of your meetings will depend a lot on the goals you assigned to those meetings. You can seek to measure if the person you met with changed or adapted their position or actions as a result of meeting with you.

You can also seek to measure if you strengthened a partnership or gathered new relevant information for your work.

What are the risks?

- Loss of credibility if you are not well-prepared. Direct meetings are usually a privileged mode of advocacy as it allows you to pass your message directly to a key stakeholder in the policy-making process. But you can potentially put your credibility at stake during a direct meeting.
- Not managing to pass your message across if you are not well-prepared. You must ensure that you have clear demands and a very precise goal when meeting with a policy-maker.

Think further!
- There are a lot of tips out there on how to prepare for meetings with decision-makers and how to conduct these meetings.
- Know in advance the amount of time you will have to present your message and demands.
- Do some background research about the positions, professional and personal interests of the person(s) you are meeting with.
- Come ready with precise demands and a compelling message.
- Know that the person you meet with will very likely also meet with people opposing your views.
- Don't spend too much time proving your credibility as an organisation, come quickly to your message.
- Come ready to present both rational and emotional arguments.
- Be clear about the possible follow-ups on both sides: what will come after the meeting?

13. Get candidates to sign a pledge in a campaign

What is it?

Getting several policy-makers to publicly endorse a position in order to be able to hold them accountable in the future.

Who are your targets?
- Candidates in elections.

When should you use it?

This can be ideally used at the early stages of a policy-making process as policy-makers will often subscribe to rather large pledges but not necessarily to detailed proposals. It can be particularly relevant for building cross-party support for an initiative and therefore ensure peer-pressure among decision-makers.

What resources should you mobilise?

This type of action requires a lot of time as you will need to identify a lot of potential targets and engage in dialogue with all of them.

You will need to build a platform to showcase your pledge and the support it receives. It can be as simple as a letter with signatories, but can also be more complex, such as a dedicated platform where the photos of signatories are shown.

How can you measure success?
- Number, diversity and level of the signatories.

What are the risks?
- Polarisation of your issue if you only get support from one end of the political spectrum.
- Low number of signatories harming the credibility of your issue.
- Lack of follow up and accountability once the pledge is signed. Candidates might be tempted to satisfy a broader part of their electorate by signing generic pledges, but keeping them accountable afterwards is particularly difficult.

Think further!
- This type of action is particularly relevant at the time of electoral campaigns.

Get Inspired!
- In 2021, the European Youth Forum asked European policy-makers to sign a pledge to defend social rights of young people in the midst of the pandemic. It gathered high-level support from European Commissioners and Members of the European Parliament. Defending Social Rights During Pandemic.[23]

14. Get a seat at the table
What is it?
Ensure your organisation is formally involved in a policy-making process. Modern policy making very often seeks to involve civil society in the implementation and evaluation process of various policies. Your organisation can seek a formal role at these stages.

Who are your targets?
- Policy-makers
- Institutions

When should you use it?
This is particularly relevant at the formulation, implementation and evaluation phases.

What resources should you mobilise?
Resources can be mobilised in two main ways around this type of advocacy:

- First, ensure you get a seat at the table. For example, advocate for an advisory body to be created around the implementation of a policy issue (which can be done through other methods).

23   https://www.youthforum.org/news/youth-rights-must-be-at-the-heart-of-social-europe

- Next, advocate for your organisation to be involved in this advisory body (often done through building your legitimacy through direct meetings with decision-makers).
- Finally, once you have a seat at the table, ensure you participate meaningfully by attending and participating meaningfully in meetings and consultations.

These activities can mobilise very diverse levels of resources depending on the depth of the role your organisation is playing.
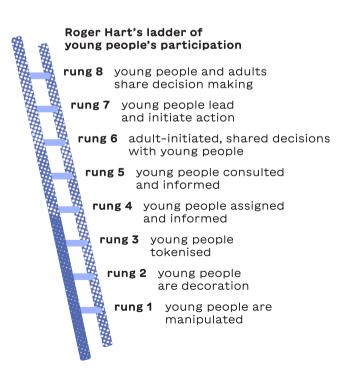
How can you measure success?
- Space you are given to make proposals.
- Depth of your participation in the policy process.

What are the risks?
- Tokenism is the most well-known risk in this type of advocacy action. You might be given a seat at the table just to 'check a box' but not be given any meaningful way to contribute to the process.

Think further!
- If you are given a seat at the decision table, how can you ensure this is not just tokenism?
- How can you ensure institutions and decision-makers give a more meaningful role to young people and youth organisations in decision-making?

Roger Hart's ladder of young people's participation

rung 8   young people and adults share decision making

rung 7   young people lead and initiate action

rung 6   adult–initiated, shared decisions with young people

rung 5   young people consulted and informed

rung 4   young people assigned and informed

rung 3   young people tokenised

rung 2   young people are decoration

rung 1   young people are manipulated

Get Inspired!

- Since 1972, the Council of Europe was a pioneer in the participation of young people. Through the Advisory Council of Youth of the Council of Europe and its co-management system, elected members of youth organisations sit on an equal footing with government representatives to decide on the Council of Europe's youth policies.
  Advisory Council on Youth.[24]

15. Organise a field trip for relevant stakeholders

What is it?

Organising a field trip or visit for policy-makers to highlight the reality of a problem or show them possible solutions.

Who are your targets?

- Stakeholders to whom you want to raise an issue.

When should you use it?

- At the problem-recognition stage in order to raise awareness among decision-makers or at the agenda setting stage to ensure policy-makers are aware of possible solutions you are advocating for, and what they look like 'on the ground'. For example, organising a visit for policy-makers to a non-formal activity you organise because you think non-formal education should be better funded in your area.

What resources should you mobilise?

While welcoming policy-makers on your projects and activities, or organising visits of other grassroots initiatives you want to highlight is not costly in itself, it can be time-consuming. You need to carefully prepare the visit with the guests, you need to accompany policy-makers closely during their visit to ensure they gain the right information and knowledge and you must ensure there is a follow-up with them.

How can you measure success?

- Number and relevance of the stakeholders who participated in your field trip.
- Follow up meetings and contacts created.

What are the risks?

- Policy-makers using the opportunity for their image. You must try to control the media narrative around your event and not let policy-makers use it to profile themselves.

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24   https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/advisory-council-on-youth

- Low concrete feedback from policy-makers. You must ensure you have a plan for follow-up and debrief with the policy-makers you invited.

Think further!
- Field trips are a good opportunity to build strong relationships with policy-makers as you engage them in your activity. However, they are time-consuming for the policy-makers, so you must ensure you make them worth their time.
- Field trips are also a good opportunity to meaningfully engage grassroots actors and citizens in your action by giving them a real voice towards policy-makers.
- It can be particularly relevant if you can target a policy-maker you know is already friendly to your cause and can champion it.
- Frame it for the policy-makers as an opportunity to gain exposure and political credibility on a topic but remain in control of the narrative.

Partners and Piloting

16. Build a coalition of organisations
What is it?
Pool resources with other civil society organisations to strengthen your influencing and negotiating power.

Who are your targets?
- Other civil society organisations with overlapping visions and goals.
- Policy-makers who need to see that you represent a broad sector of society.

When should you use it?
- At the early stages of a policy-making process (problem recognition, agenda setting), so that you can weigh in more strongly than you would otherwise be able to.

What resources should you mobilise?
Building a coalition on a specific advocacy topic doesn't have to be highly cost-intensive, however for a functional coalition, you need to plan enough human resources.

Internally, regular joint meetings and joint communication channels are important to make the coalition function properly.

Externally, you must build a simple brand so that the coalition can be easily recognised through various communication channels.

How can you measure success?
- Number of active organisations in the coalition.
- Percentage of organisations actively sharing the coalition content.
- Media attention for the jointly created activities and content.

What are the risks?
- Lack of active participation from some organisations in the coalition. Organisations need to have a real interest in the coalition to actively engage. Making this common interest very clear from the onset is crucial to the success of a coalition.
- Organisations in a coalition will rarely have perfectly matching interests and goals. Being transparent about these divergences is also a key to success.

Think further!
- Building a coalition is an intermediate tool in advocacy: it is a signal sent to policy-makers but it also serves a purpose for organising further activities and putting pressure on individuals or institutions in a coordinated way.

Get Inspired!
- The European Youth Forum is in itself a historic coalition of youth organisations.
- The Erasmusx10 Campaign was a coalition-based series of advocacy and communication activities coordinated by youth and education organisations aiming at securing a higher budget for the new Erasmus+ programme. The coalition itself was an action to demonstrate the strength of the sector fighting for Erasmus+. Erasmus Coalition.[25]
- Generation Climate Europe is a coalition of youth organisations pushing for stronger action from the EU on climate issues. The coalition gives weight to demands by organised youth civil society. Generating Climate Europe.[26]

25   https://lllplatform.eu/what-we-do/erasmus-coalition/erasmusx10-campaign/

26   https://gceurope.org/

17. Organise a real-life experiment of your proposal

What is it?

Organising an experiment in real circumstances of the policy-change you want to see developed further.

Who are your targets?

- Broad spectrum action to raise attention.

When should you use it?

- From agenda-setting to formulation.
- A real-life experiment will ideally take place when a problem is already identified so it can attract interest, but it must happen early enough so that it's results can be incorporated into any policy formulation.

What resources should you mobilise?

Organising a real-life experiment is of course a very broad category and there-fore depending on your proposal it can require very diverse resources. In any case, it will always be a resource-intensive activity both financially and in terms of human resources.

Note as well that you will need to invest not only in the trial itself, but also in its evaluation and monitoring to be able to communicate about its results.

How can you measure success?

- Success of the experiment in terms of impact
- Media attention
- Policy-makers attention
- Uptake of your proposal included in the final policy proposal

What are the risks?

- Your experiment doesn't show the desired outcomes. By trying out the change you want to see happening, you of course open yourself up to unexpected results. You must be ready for different outcomes than what you planned for.
- You cannot implement sufficient follow-up of the experiment. An exper-iment is worthless without evaluation and conclusions. You must plan from the very beginning for these two crucial steps.

Think further!

- If your experiment is successful, how will you ensure the success is communicated to the relevant stakeholders?
- How will you prove the success of your experiment?

Get Inspired

- In 2014, Animafac (a student network, member of the French Youth Council CNAJEP) partnered with a university to experiment with a new status for students, 'NGO leader student'. This was done in order to allow for these students to receive adapted schedules and exams, similar to those offered to high-level sport students or students with a part-time job. The experimentation was a success and led to a new law establishing this status at the national level.
  NGO Leader Student.[27]

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27 https://www.animafac.net/actualites/animafac-sorbonne-nouvelle-experimentent-statut-responsable-associatif-etudiant/

Definitions and Concepts

Basic definitions: advocacy, lobbying or campaigning

The three terms, **advocacy, lobbying and campaigning**, cover largely over-lapping realities. They all relate to the deliberate process of achieving change in public policies through individual or group-led civil society or citizen move-ments, outside of elections.

However, each term is used in specific contexts that you should know, in order for you to be able to adequately plan your actions.

Advocacy
Advocacy is the encompassing term for all actions and activities carried out by civil society, business or other stakeholders, influencing those who have the power to make decisions about developing, changing and implementing policies.

These decisions can be related to political, economic and social institutions.

This can include for example advocating for a new budget line for an action programme, passing or preventing a new law, a change in governance of a certain institution, or a specific policy action programme.

Lobbying
In practice, lobbying and advocacy are often used interchangeably. The under-standing of each term however can vary depending on who is using them or the cultural context.

Lobbying is often specifically used to describe advocacy actions carried out by private sector stakeholders such as businesses or trade associations fighting for the specific interest of their companies or sectors. As such it is contrary to the term advocacy, used for actions carried out by civil society organisations advocating for rights of a specific target group, and thus more seen as 'lobbying for a good cause'. In certain cultural contexts, the term lobbying is used with a negative connotation.

Lobbying can also be used to describe one specific type of advocacy action: direct meetings with politicians and decision-makers (originally in Parliaments' lobbies, hence the term 'lobbying'').

Campaigning

Campaigning refers to a set of advocacy methods and activities seeking to achieve change specifically through public mobilisation, awareness-raising and community organising. Campaigning always seeks the involvement of a large number of individuals or groups. Campaigning also refers to carefully planned and interlinked activities around public mobilisation.

Public Policy Cycle[28]

The public policy cycle is a very commonly used framework to visualise and understand how policies are drafted, implemented and evaluated.

In an advocacy perspective, understanding the basics of the public policy cycle allows you to understand when and how to act for maximum impact. Each stage contributes to which policy decisions will ultimately be taken and how they will be implemented. Thus, each stage is an opportunity for influence.

Problem recognition

A public policy cycle can only start to address a topic if a problem is identified. Advocacy can start at this stage by helping to identify and frame a specific problem: gathering data about a problem (how many people are affected, how is it affecting their lives, etc) and sharing such data with individuals or groups that can act or help trigger action (decision-makers, media, general public). These are the necessary first steps.

If there is no perceived problem, there won't be a policy to try to solve it.

While this is a very early stage of the policy making process, you can already suggest some broad solutions and make them known to policy-makers. Indeed, convincing policy-makers that viable solutions exist to your problem increases the chances of it being even addressed.

Agenda-setting

Very closely related to the previous stage, the agenda-setting stage is the process of deciding which problems will be addressed by decision-makers. Due to the amount of resources (time of mandate, public budget, etc), only certain problems will be addressed, debated, and acted upon. There is competition between problems to gain space on the agenda.

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28   Lumen - The policy making process. https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-politicalscience/chapter/the-policy-making-process/

To make it to the agenda, you need to attract attention once more: meeting with decision-makers to convince them that your problem is important enough to be addressed right now, convincing them that action is needed, mobilising public opinion, using public figures to support you, and attracting media attention.

Policy formulation

Your problem has been identified and made it to the policy-making agenda. Policy options must now be formulated. This is where your role as an expert on the topic can come in handy. Your first hand experience with the problem, your access to people affected by the problem, your access to and knowledge of the data, the solutions you have already designed, are all assets you should seek to share with policy makers.

You must be aware of who is in charge of formulating the policy options and what are the starting positions: politicians themselves or their assistants, or expert civil servants? It is crucial to know who to address, and it is crucial to know which existing relationships you can exploit effectively.

At this stage you must be ready to both work through more classic lobbying (e.g. direct meetings with or targeted mailings to decision-makers) and continue mobilising the public to support your solutions or oppose any adversaries' solutions.

Policy adoption

Once a policy option has been formulated, it must be adopted by the legislative institutions. Here again you can act by following different avenues to maximise the chances for the policy proposal to be successfully adopted:

- Bring your expertise to amend the draft formulated policy.
  You can for example bring precise amendments to policy-makers with whom you have developed a trusted relationship. Alternatively, you can mobilise citizens to send amendments to their own representatives.
- Convince potential opponents.
  You can meet with policy-makers you know who might still be hesitant to vote for the policy you wish to see adopted, or once again, mobilise citizens so that they directly address their representatives for your cause.
- Mobilise the media and the general public to pressure decision-makers.
  It is likely that the policy you are concerned with will gain media attention at the policy adoption stage. This is a relevant moment to actively seek media attention for your specific vision of that policy.

Policy implementation

Implementation is the process of actually enacting the agreed solution. This stage raises a lot of new hurdles: are the bodies in charge equipped with the right resources and expertise? Is the agreed policy translated into actions that are clear and understandable for the individuals or group implementing it? Can it fit within other existing policies?

Advocacy also encompasses actions designed to support the successful implementation of policies. As a civil society organisation, a common advocacy action is to seek a formal or consultative role in the implementation of the policy along with the public authorities. For example, if a new policy involves a specific budget to solve the problem, your organisation can ask to be involved in budgetary decisions to ensure their efficiency.
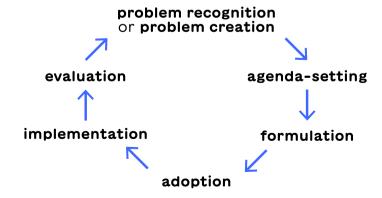
Policy evaluation

Policies are evaluated regularly to determine if they are effectively achieving their assigned goals, if they should be continued, improved, or interrupted.

As a civil society organisation, you can also play an important role: by advocating for certain evaluation criteria or for measurement and data collection methods or by providing data coming directly from the grassroots.

Your role can be similar to your role in the implementation phase as a consultative organisation for the evaluation.

Alternatively, you can invest resources in doing your own evaluation, which can serve as a basis to re-shape or raise a new problem and start a new cycle. If civil society was not involved in the evaluation process, carrying out your own evaluation can be an effective method to provide an alternative opinion to the one provided by the public authorities.

problem recognition
or problem creation

evaluation   agenda-setting

implementation   formulation

adoption

Stakeholders

Stakeholders can be grouped into categories to facilitate your planning:

Civil Society Organisations

This broad term represents the realm of non-profit and non-governmental organisations working for the causes of general interest. They are most often politically independent. Youth organisations are a part of this category. In practice, you will find different terms covering a similar reality: civil society organisations, non-governmental organisations, non-profit organisations, or associations.

Their role often consists of pursuing a vision for society that serves the common interest. Their missions are manifold and are composed of providing-services and advocacy actions.

Social movements / semi-organised civil society

More recently, a new type of stakeholder gained important ground in public debate: social movements and semi-organised civil society. They are a reaction to the distrust and disappointment towards long-established organisations and an answer to citizens' appetite for less formal involvement in civic life.

These movements are particularly present in the climate movement. 'Extinction Rebellion' or 'Fridays For Future' currently being the most iconic representatives.

Their functioning, type of actions and type of engagement towards policy-making processes are different from the ones of traditional civil society organisations and therefore justify them being placed in a different category. They are usually more distrustful towards public authorities and are organised around much less centralised governance models. As such, it is often more difficult for these new movements to engage in productive dialogue with decision-makers.

Target groups

Target groups are the people directly affected by the problem you seek to address and solve. Target groups can represent their own interests, for example when youth organisations are advocating for the rights of all young people. However, target groups can also be marginalised young people, other minorities or people who have less opportunities to be in the driving seat of advocacy processes.

As a civil society organisation seeking to represent interests or solve problems of a specific target group, you should seek to meaningfully and actively involve them at each stage of your advocacy actions, especially those who are more marginalised.

The meaningful involvement of your target group is not only a prerequisite to ensure the change you are aiming for is an actual need of your target group but it also serves to increase your legitimacy and help you stay in touch with the field reality of your issue.

Policy-makers and decision-makers

Policy makers and decision-makers are the individuals (elected politicians, civil servants) or groups (political parties, parliamentary groups) who hold the formal power to initiate or influence directly, a policy-making process and make the change that you seek happen. They are particularly important to any advocacy process that seeks to achieve change through public policy, which is the case for most youth-led advocacy actions.

It is particularly important to understand their specific individual and group interests or motivations and to be able to trigger these in order to put pressure on them to act. For example, their interest or motivation could be accountability towards their constituents, ambition for re-election, willingness to leave a legacy, or a genuine interest in your cause. Get to know as much as possible their interests and motivations for action before engaging with them.

Media

Traditional media (TV, press, radio) are still powerful despite the growth of new channels of information and communication. Investing time in understanding how, as a youth organisation, you can gain access to the media is a valuable investment.

Their importance is manifold. Traditional media, in particular at the national level, still contribute heavily and influence what is discussed and what public opinion is encouraged to care about.

As a result, decision-makers still consider main media topics to be a reflection of public opinion concerns and therefore can be influenced by them.

General public

It is worth keeping in mind the general public as a coherent stakeholder. What is the general public's attitude towards your problem? Can you engage large segments of the population (e.g. around an online action or get them to protest)? At which stage of the process do you need to gather wider support? These are questions worth exploring if you seek to involve a wider audience.

Business and trade associations

The private sector, represented by businesses and their trade associations, is usually a powerful player in many advocacy processes. In particular if they touch upon economic or labour issues.

Messages

A message is a piece of information addressed to an individual or group, which has an effect on the attitude, behaviour, knowledge, values and/or actions of the individual or group being exposed to it.

A large part of any advocacy effort is about shaping messages and putting everything in place for that message to achieve a concrete and measurable change of belief or behaviour among the individuals or groups exposed to it. The following grid helps you ask yourself the right questions when building a message.

Stages	What is it about?
1) PROBLEM	What is the issue here? Why do you need to send a message?
2) STAKEHOLDERS	Who are the individuals and groups involved? What are their interests? Are they friends or opponents? Can you mobilise them around your message?
3) ARGUMENTS	What is your specific and concrete solution to the problem? What are your arguments for this solution?
4) SOLUTIONS	What needs to be done to solve the problem? What is the desired end result?
5) TARGETING	Who are you speaking to or trying to speak to? Who is your message supposed to reach? Are you targeting the individuals or groups directly responsible for shaping the decisions you want to affect (policy-makers, decision-makers) or are you targeting them indirectly through their allies or through public opinion?
6) TIMING	Is the message potentially newsworthy and therefore needs special timing? Is there a specific hook that will help make the message more visible / impactful?

7) MESSAGING TONE	What is the tone of your message (serious, light-hearted, inclusive, friendly, combative, policy content-oriented, emotional, solution oriented, etc)?
	How does it reflect the points 1 to 5?
8) MESSENGER	Who is the real / perceived messenger? Your organisation, its leaders, its members, an opinion leader, a large group, an expert? Depending on who the perceived messenger is, your message will be received differently by the target.
9) SUPPORT / FORM / FORMAT	What form is the message taking (a text, a video, a speech, short, long, etc)? What format has the most chance to be seen and understood by the target? *[very often interdependent with **channelling**]*.
10) CHANNELLING	What are the most impactful communications channels?
	appropriate media [video, press release, article]
	appropriate channels [Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, SMS, WhatsApp, Telegram, phone]
	Which channels are used by the target audience?
11) NOISE / UNWANTED IMPACT	What can disturb your message? What can make it miss its target? What can influence it in a way that it reaches an unwanted target? What circumstances could make it poorly received or understood? How can you ensure it is not a poor argument?
12) EXPECTED CHANGE(S), IMPACT(S), EFFECT(S)	What is the desired end result? (This should correlate with why you needed to send the message).
	What would be different if you hadn't sent this message? How can you measure any impact? Is the problem being solved and is your solution being implemented?
13) RESOURCES	What resources are needed to send the message effectively? (effectively: the optimal ratio between resources, impact and noise). How much time, money or material resources do you have to invest to ensure your message achieves its expected impact?

Do's and Don'ts

Do's

- Use data and facts to back your case, and make sure you know how to use them in your specific context.
- Know the position, interests, knowledge and motivations of your interlocutor or target.
- Know the counter-arguments to your vision.
- Be focused on a clear demand for change.
- Test your messages and campaigns before going public.
- Adjust your message to the knowledge and interests of your interlocutor or audience.
- Become an expert on the issue you are fighting for.

Don'ts

- Don't use only facts and data, real life experiences and grassroots experiences create powerful messages.
- Don't speak about too many issues in an advocacy action, less is better.
- Don't claim anything if you are not sure your facts are trustworthy. It is better to say that you will check and come back to someone if you don't know, doing this will make you more appreciated.
- Don't be confrontational or threatening if you expect your interlocutor to rally to you.
- Don't meet and engage only people who already agree with you.
- Don't spend your whole time justifying your credibility towards the decision-maker, build a powerful message instead.
- Don't feel disappointed by the slow pace of change. As youth organisations, our advocacy efforts are often a long-haul effort.