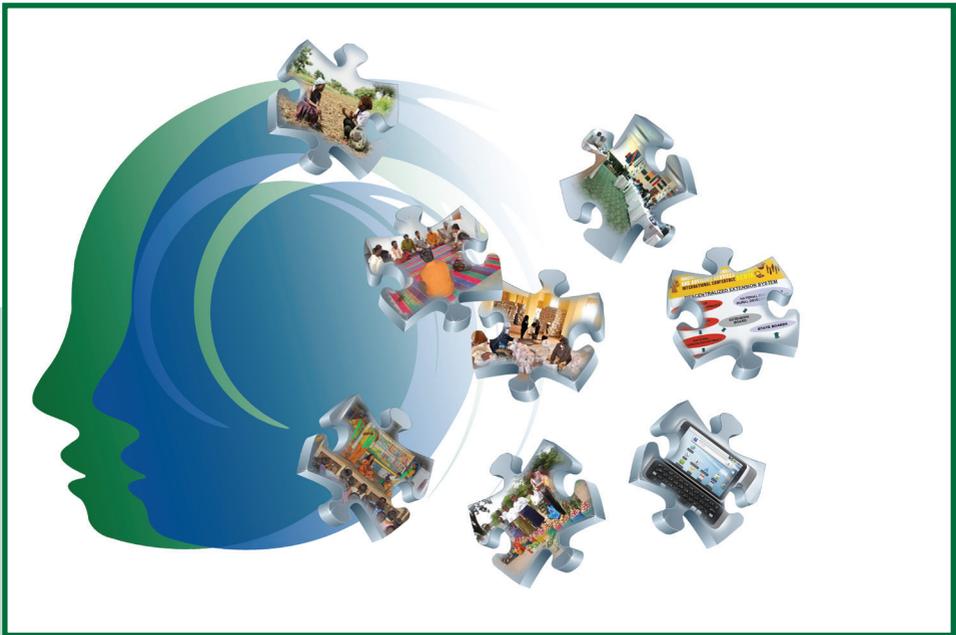




global forum for rural advisory services
forum mondial pour le conseil rural
foro global para los servicios de asesoría rural

Policy Advocacy for Rural Advisory Services



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In 2012 GFRAS developed the “new extensionist” document, which details the role that extension plays in an agricultural innovation system, and the strategies and capacities needed (at individual, organisational, and system level) <http://www.g-fras.org/en/activities/the-new-extensionist.html>. Based on this document the GFRAS Consortium on Extension Education and Training emerged to promote the new extensionist, mainly through training, curricula review, and research on extension.

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Contents

Policy Advocacy for Rural Advisory Services.... 1

Module overview 1

Module introduction..... 2

Study Unit 1: Introduction to policy advocacy.....4

Study unit overview..... 4

Study unit introduction 4

Session 1.1: Defining advocacy.....6

Introduction..... 6

Definition of advocacy 6

Different approaches to policy advocacy 7

Defining advocacy for RAS 10

Rationale for advocacy..... 10

Concluding remarks..... 11

Study Unit 2: The policy development process12

Study unit overview..... 12

Study unit introduction 13

Session 2.1: Understanding RAS policy environment14

Introduction..... 14

Understanding the situation 14

Identify policy issues 15

Key actors and institutions in advocacy 16

Analyse the policy environment 16

Conclusion	17
Session 2.2: The policymaking process.....	18
Introduction.....	18
Problem identification	18
Policy formulation.....	19
Policy adoption.....	20
Policy implementation.....	20
Evaluation.....	21
Conclusion	22
Session 2.3: Shareholder mapping.....	23
Introduction.....	23
Identify policy stakeholders.....	23
Map stakeholder influence and relationships.....	24
Define policy focus key time periods in the policy cycle	24
Identify key moments and mechanisms	25
Conclusion	26
Session 2.4: Identifying opportunities and barriers	27
Introduction.....	27
Technical and financial capacity constraints	27
Policy entrepreneurship	28
Targeting the policy process.....	28
Conclusion	29
Session 2.5: Fundraising: Mobilising resources	30

Introduction.....	30
Potential funding sources.....	30
Donors as your audience	31
General fundraising suggestions	32
Conclusion	32
Study unit 3: Mobilising for action: The policy advocacy strategy	33
Study unit overview.....	33
Session 3.1: Identifying policy problems, solutions and evidence	34
Introduction.....	34
Identification of policy issues and solutions	35
Means by which you can find evidence.....	35
Analysing the usefulness and appropriateness of the evidence.	35
Using the evidence in advocating	36
Conclusion	37
Session 3.2: Understanding your audience	38
Introduction.....	38
Defining an “audience for advocacy”	38
Analyse channels of influence.....	39
Reaching the audience.....	39
Conclusion	40
Session 3.3: Defining advocacy goals and objectives	41
Introduction.....	41

Goals with the desired result of any advocacy activity	41
Creating alliances to bring about the required change.....	42
SMART objectives.....	42
Conclusion	43
Session 3.4: Developing advocacy messages.....	44
Introduction.....	44
Advocacy vs BCC and IEC messages.....	44
Select the message for your audience.....	45
Select advocacy activities and communication tools	45
Conclusion	46
Session 3.5: The face of the advocacy campaign/ messenger/policy champions	47
Introduction.....	47
Assess your reputation	47
Assess your communication and social skills.....	48
Identify policy champions	48
Equipping the policy champions.....	49
Mobilising other support	50
Conclusion	51
Study unit 4: Policy advocacy engagement platforms and tools.....	52
Study unit overview.....	52
Session 4.1: Policy dialogues	53
Introduction.....	53

What is a policy dialogue?.....	53
Having an all-inclusive discussion	54
Linking research to policy.....	54
Timing of the policy dialogue	54
Conclusion	55
Session 4.2: Using the media for policy advocacy	56
Introduction.....	56
Press releases, media advisory or press statements	56
Social media	57
Broadcast media	57
Op/Ed	58
Webinars	58
Conclusion	59
Session 4.3: Plan to measure success	60
Introduction.....	60
Timelines and milestones.....	60
Assess your progress rather than the impact	61
The value of the advocacy initiative	61
Sustaining the momentum of advocacy.....	61
Setting clear goals and measuring progress.....	62
Conclusion	63
Glossary.....	64
Definitions	64

Abbreviations.....	66
Resources	67

1. Before you begin

1.1 General instruction

This module should be used in conjunction with the workbook provided. As you read through the module, you will find different visual features that are designed to help you navigate the document.



Figure 1: Icons used to highlight important information throughout the manual

The module makes use of keywords (difficult or technical words that are important for you to understand). To ensure that you receive the full benefit from the module, keywords will be marked the first time they occur and de-fined in a box containing the keywords symbol. Make sure that you read the definition of any words that you are unsure about.

1.2 Activities

Each session in the module will contain various types of activities to help you become knowledgeable and competent. The module contains three types of activities:

A **pre-assessment** is to be completed before reading through the module overview and introduction, and a **post-assessment** is to be completed once the entire module has been covered. This will measure the degree to which your knowledge has improved by completing the module.

Each session contains one or more **session activity** to be completed, in the workbook, where indicated in the module. These activities measure your ability to recall and apply theoretical knowledge.

At the end of each study unit a **summative assessment** needs to be completed. These assessments are longer than the session activities and will test your knowledge on all the work within the study unit.

1.3 Assessment Instructions

Keep the following in mind before doing any of the assessments:

- All assessments are to be completed in the provided workbook.
- The manual contains all relevant information you will need to complete the questions, if additional information is needed, such as the use of online sources, facilities will be made available.
- Work through the activities in a study unit and make sure that you can answer all the questions before attempting the summative assessment. If you find that you are not certain of any part of the training material, repeat that section until you feel confident.
- The summative assessment must be done under the supervision of your trainer at the end of your learning period.

Policy Advocacy for Rural Advisory Services

Module outcomes

After completing this module, you will be able to:

1. Define policy-focused advocacy:
 - Analyse policies that lie at the root of rural advisory services (RAS).
 - Identify the most effective way to use research and field data for policy prioritisation and policy advocacy.
 - Recognise the basic steps needed to create an advocacy strategy and the role of evidence in the process.
2. Know and apply tools for advocacy:
 - Identify the components of a policy advocacy strategy.
 - Develop a specific advocacy goal that is relevant to your work.
 - Identify key decision makers and influencers that can make your advocacy goal a reality.
3. Design strategic advocacy activities and targeted messaging to reach and influence decision makers:
 - Draft policy advocacy strategy and work plans to share and implement with colleagues.
 - Effectively advocate across multiple agencies and organisations for a position on a RAS issue.

Module overview

There are few global examples of validated national agricultural extension policies. Policies that affect the provision of agricultural extension and advisory services are more typically written in the larger context of policies for the agricultural sector overall. As

an extension professional, you are at the forefront of making development happen. You, therefore, constantly encounter situations where existing policy constraints development interventions or where new policies could better support development. While policy is not your day-to-day function, you are in better position to generate evidence in order to inform good policies and organise the relevant stakeholders in articulating policy needs to the relevant authorities.

Module introduction

This module will give you a better look at what advocacy is. This will be done through analysing the policies that make up rural advisory services (RAS). You will also get a better understanding of applying tools for advocacy as well as designing strategic advocacy activities.

This module provides a broadly accepted definition of advocacy and underscores RAS and/or extension advisory services (EAS) actors' unique positions and experience in policy advocacy. The module provides detailed steps, guidance and tools for developing and implementing an advocacy strategy. It complements the Strengthening RAS Actors' Capacity for Advocacy and Dialogue on Policy Reform and Action Good Practice Note. This module will help you understand how to organise evidence for policy action and most importantly, how you can support actors (including farmers) in contributing to the policy development processes.

During the 2014 Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS) Annual Meeting, Krishan Bheenick from the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation used a metaphor to describe the roles of RAS and policymaking. He stated that if agriculture is the highway, RAS can be seen as one of the lanes and policies can be seen as the signs along the road. These signs are not useful if the users of RAS services do not know how to use and interpret them. As a result, the role of RAS is not only to create and influence policies but also to design them in such a way that they speak to the needs

and understanding of the client. The following key points were stressed as influential to RAS policies:

- Strengthening RAS through general development and agricultural policies, which provide opportunities to prominently include RAS and may have a greater impact on the ground.
- Adapting linkages between RAS policies and other policies relevant to agriculture to the context and to each other.
- Ensuring coherence and coordination among RAS providers in a diverse RAS landscape.
- A positive feedback loop between policy influencers and policymakers.



Complete the pre-assessment in your workbook.

Study Unit 1: Introduction to policy advocacy

Study unit outcomes

After completing this study unit, you will be able to:

- Analyse policies that lie at the root of rural advisory services (RAS);
- Identify the most effective way to use research and field data for policy prioritisation and policy advocacy;
- Recognise the basic steps needed to create an advocacy strategy and the role of evidence in the process.

Study unit overview

This unit aims to present advocacy in a broad sense. Although there are many different ways to explain advocacy as a concept, this unit will focus on advocacy directed at changing RAS policies, positions or programmes.

This unit will also give an introduction to what advocacy is.

It will define advocacy and identify examples of advocacy activities. You will be given the tools to explain the differences and relationships between advocacy, awareness raising and lobbying approaches. You will further be able to identify and describe the basic elements of an advocacy strategy.

Study unit introduction

In RAS, advocacy for the rural poor is extremely important and a strong advocacy voice that represents the needs of rural communities must be in place to make certain that policy decisions that work to meet the needs of these rural communities are put into practice. As an extensionist, your unique knowledge of the needs of the rural communities that you serve means that

you are vital link in helping government policymakers consider all of the major implications of a new policy for rural communities.

In order for you to be able to advocate for policy changes, you will need to have an understanding of what advocacy is and how you can use it to change RAS policies, programmes and positions in order to benefit the communities you serve.

Session 1.1: Defining advocacy

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

- Explore the concept of advocacy as it applies to RAS.
- Discuss which basic elements of advocacy are currently used.
- Consider a conceptual framework for advocacy.

Introduction

In the RAS context, advocacy is in place to effect policy change or action and the ultimate target of any advocacy effort is to reach and influence those who hold decision-making power. It is the process of **deliberate**, persuasive communication in all activities using all the available communication tools, not a product. This process normally requires that you build **momentum** behind the proposed policy idea. This will require you to use all the approaches to policy advocacy available to you, including people advocacy, which requires you to build long-term relationships in the communities that you serve.

Deliberate: Something that happens with a specific purpose.



Momentum: A driving force that is gained by the development of a process.

Definition of advocacy

Advocacy in all its forms seeks to ensure that people, especially those who are most vulnerable in a community or society, are able to:

- Have their voice heard on issues that are important to them;
- Defend and safeguard their rights; and
- Have their views and wishes truly considered when decisions are being made about their lives.

As an extensionist, your role as advocate will be to examine policies, strategies and projects with rural-specific issues in mind. This is to ensure that the needs of the rural communities you serve are met and that no aspect of these policies, strategies or projects has a disproportionate effect on rural communities.

Different approaches to policy advocacy

There are different approaches that can be used when dealing with policy advocacy. Each of these approaches are good, but you must ensure that it suits the community and audience that you are trying to reach.

Advising

When asking and looking for advice, it is best to go to someone who is an **expert** in the field. An **advisor** is someone that will look at the situation of policy with **objectivity**. The experts will talk informally to the key groups or focus groups. They will then give suggestions and recommendations that they draw from their own experience on how to improve the policies in question. Advisors are the people that will influence the decisions that are made by the decision makers through the recommendations that they make, using their experience.

Expert: Someone who has the required knowledge and skills in a specific area.

Advisor: Someone that gives guidance on a specific topic to be covered by the policy.

Objectivity: Being able to be neutral.



Media campaigning

Knowing your audience is very important. If you know your audience, then you will know how to deliver the most **concise** and consistent message. Your message needs to appeal to your audience. One of the most important components of any advocacy campaign is media attention. There are some that will invite journalists to advocacy networks or events in order to ensure that their messages reach wider audiences. Having a media presence at an event means that someone will be interviewed about the event and it may mean that the issues will be aired and spoken about to a wider audience, making them aware of the issues faced by rural communities. To ensure that the main points are spoken about, the speaker must be skilled in delivering the 'one minute message'. A one minute message is a short message that is to the point. It means that the person delivering the message is able to provide all of the information that is needed to capture their audience and 'sell' the idea in one minute. The message must start off with a few important words about the current policy and then explain the changes that need to be made in a few words. The words that are used in this message must give the necessary details in the shortest way possible.

Concise: Specific and clear information presented in a few words so that the message is understood. 

Persuade: Causing someone else to believe something that you believe.

Lobbying

The main aim of lobbying is to **persuade** or influence the actions of government. Lobbying also aims to persuade policymakers or private corporations to ensure changes are made to existing policies. Lobbying is described as speaking directly to the audience, explaining the problems that exist, and proposing any solutions to the problems. Lobbying is also important for

influencing current policies, laws and programmes. It can be used when your audience is open to listening to your recommendations of potential solutions. Examples of lobbying are meetings, policy papers, petitions and briefing papers.

Activism

Activism is very closely connected to raising awareness and media coverage. The aim of activism is to place public pressure on as many people as possible in order to ensure that there is as much support as possible for their campaign for change to take place. This is done when the audience is **swayed** by the opinion of the public to make the changes to the policies. An example of activism is rallies that take place to bring attention to a situation. Another example is signing petitions to fix a problem.

Information, education, communication (IEC)

IEC is mostly done by service providers. Individuals or **segments** in a community are the target audiences. The main objective of IEC is to change behaviour and to raise awareness. There are certain strategies that are used in IEC, namely mass media campaigns, outreach to communities, sorting the audience and traditional forms of media. Measuring the success of IEC is done by making a change to the skills and knowledge of the audience and the community. Success is also measured through focus groups and service statistics.

Behaviour change communication (BCC)

BCC is an interactive process of any **intervention**. It involves individuals, societies or communities and is used to develop communication strategies. The objective of these strategies is to encourage positive behaviours.

BCC is used when you want to build relationships with people that believe in the changes that you want to encourage, and the organisations and potential communities that will help you make these changes. It is also used when you want to make a long-term campaign sustainable.

Sway: Ability to change someone's mind based on your opinion. 

Segments: Groupings of people.

Intervention: The action of stepping in so that there can be an improvement.

Broker: A key role player that provides feedback regarding the RAS within the AIS. Someone that negotiates or organises something on behalf of someone else.

Defining advocacy for RAS

Advocacy is important in both rural and urban settings and it needs to be done on an ongoing basis. This is so that there can be a positive influence on the policy environment. It is crucial that you as an extension actor are as effective as possible. For RAS, advocacy involves promoting, supporting and defending something of great importance. For GFRAS, advocacy is in place to draw attention to the role that it plays in the RAS environment. Advocacy is especially used in policies that influence rural development.

Rationale for advocacy

RAS plays an important role as the **broker** within the agricultural innovation system (AIS). This role includes providing feedback between the farmers, agri-business, researchers and educators in the system. RAS is critical to supporting people in dealing with any existing problems that they are facing in order to improve the livelihoods of rural people. Advocacy will go a long way towards doing away with poverty or issues surrounding malnutrition. RAS and policy advocacy have shown positive effects on the skills and knowledge, adaptation to new technology and productivity of rural communities, even when they are very under-resourced.



Complete Activity 1.1 in your workbook.

Concluding remarks

When approaching policy advocacy, it is important to remember the core functions of GFRAS, namely to provide a voice within global policy dialogues and promote improved investment in RAS, supporting the development and synthesis of evidence-based approaches and policies while strengthening the capacity of actors and forums. In doing so, you will ensure that policies reach the greatest number of actors whilst also better meeting their needs. The remainder of the module will look at how to promote advocacy and policy development built upon these functions.



Complete the summative assessment in your workbook.

Study Unit 2: The policy development process

Study unit outcomes

After completing this study unit, you will be able to:

- Explain what is meant by policy development and policymaking;
- Describe the different steps in the policymaking process;
- Identify policy stakeholders, policy cycles, power mapping techniques and key moments and mechanisms in shareholder mapping;
- Identify opportunities through understanding constraints, identifying policy entrepreneurs and policy process targeting;
- Provide examples of different fundraising methods.

Study unit overview

This study unit will look at what defines a policy and the role of RAS in identifying and analysing policies within the agricultural environment. You will learn about problem identification and policy formulation, adoption and implementation in order to define the entire **policymaking** process.



Policymaking:

A course of action dealing with a problem or matter of concern.

Shareholder (stakeholder) mapping will be used to identify those involved in the policy making process and how they should be incorporated within the development cycles. All of these factors will help in identifying barriers and opportunities in order to better use or raise additional resources through fundraising.

Study unit introduction

An important element in the success of any advocacy effort is a full understanding of the opportunities that exist for influencing the policy process – nationally, regionally, or locally. Policymaking occurs within a web of interacting forces, including:

- Multiple sources of information;
- Complex power relations; and
- Changing institutional arrangements.

It is important, however, to identify the various factors that affect policy development decisions so that appropriate strategies can be adopted to influence the policymaking process. Identifying these factors will help the network use its resources in a manner that maximises impact.

Session 2.1: Understanding RAS policy environment

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

- Understand the policy development process, complete a policy analysis and develop a policy intervention plan.
- Analyse political and legislative processes.
- Know when and how to enter the policymaking process.

Introduction

A **policy** is a plan that outlines the steps that need to be taken to achieve a specific goal. It consists of a set of regulations that have been accepted and adopted by the government as necessities to be complied with. A policy is designed to impact and influence the decisions that are made and the procedures that are adopted by the government. Policies are seen as the standard of how to perform the task set in front of a government. It is important to understand the policy development process so that, as an advocate, you can plan the type of input you need to have an impact on the final policy.

Understanding the situation

RAS wants to show support to the people in helping them deal with any problems that they are facing. It wants to help improve the livelihood of the people living in rural areas worldwide. The issues that the people in rural areas face are poverty and food associated issues, such as nutrition challenges.

RAS plays a vital role in providing feedback to the farmers, **agri-businesses** and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). A gap that can be recognised is that the advisory services need more

information. They are not able to help if they do not know about the situations. There is a need for information and evidence so that RAS is able to act on the information and engage with its clients as quickly as possible.

Agri-businesses: relating to agricultural products or services
Utilised: Making a practical use of something.



In 2009, the stakeholders of the African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS) came together to discuss the need for a global voice that could bring RAS to a global level. They wanted to help more people than simply those in their immediate surroundings. GFRAS is in constant and on-going discussions with all the agricultural development parties. It wants to see how the brokering role can be expanded in order to empower the farmers to ensure that they have a better livelihood. In 2013, GFRAS showed that the forum has played a vital role in RAS, affecting the agenda of international development institutions which are considered to be one of the largest donors to RAS.

GFRAS has noted that, even though the advocacy functions are working effectively, there is still a great need for the advisory capacity services to be improved on.

Identify policy issues

In the policy process, there is a negotiation that takes place between the role players by selecting one policy option from the available options. To make sure that the right policy is chosen, research data needs to be translated properly into information that will present the most appropriate solution. If the data and research do not get recorded properly or the data shows the wrong results, the policy idea will not be **utilised**. This will delay the implementation of the solution. The policy needs to include words that will persuade the leaders, advocates and the public of the influence that your data and research has.

Key actors and institutions in advocacy

Having key organisations or individuals of a community as **allies** can help you to achieve your advocacy objective. By leaving a key organisation or individual out of the decision-making process, you may have to revisit the decision or you could risk losing the ally.

The relationships that advocates develop play a larger role in **effective** and **efficient** advocacy. These relationships are between you and the decision makers, influential individuals and key audiences. The advocate will be labelled as credible if these ties are strengthened through trust and mutual support. The key institutions and actors are those that have the most influence and they will be your target audience.

Allies: People or organisations that helps you in an activity. 

Effective: Something that is successful in achieving an objective.

Efficient: Something that produces the maximum productivity.

Analyse the policy environment

The policy environment includes basic knowledge of the way that state institutions function. If you know how they function you will know how to **mould** your presentation of the new policy changes. This is important to know when you want to influence public policies. It is important to know national and international legislation that is applicable to the areas that are related to the group's policy.

Mould: An action of shaping the presentation to meet the needs of the meeting or policy. 

In order to analyse the problem properly, you need the correct and current information about the problem. Once you have the proper information, you are then able to find solutions. These

solutions then need to be presented in a way that is applicable to the environment that you want to affect. You need to identify the correct actors and influential individuals that will have the support of the group of people that need the changes to their policies.



Complete Activity 2.1 in your workbook.

Conclusion

One of the key points you should obtain from this unit is that a policy is a plan used to identify a course of action. For a policy to be effective, it is crucial to understand the situation that the policy is used in and how the changes in the policy will deal with any problems that the policy does not currently affect. To ensure that the policy is effective in an urban or a rural setting, it is best to proceed by identifying the policy issues, identifying the key influences and analysing the environment that the policy affects.

Session 2.2: The policymaking process

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

- Complete the problem identification stage of the policymaking process.
- Complete the policy formation stage of the policymaking process.
- Complete the policy adoption stage of the policymaking process.
- Complete the policy implementation stage of the policymaking process.
- Complete the evaluation stage of the policymaking process.

Introduction

Understanding the policymaking process can help individuals and organisations to decide whether they will become involved in developing or changing a policy and how to do it. Unfortunately, the policymaking process tends to be very complex, however, understanding the process can empower individuals and organisations to impact policies.

Problem identification

This is the first and most important step in the policymaking process. This stage can also be called the “agenda setting stage”. There are going to be problems in each situation and they all need your attention. It is best to **prioritise** any problems you may encounter according to urgency. Advocates will choose which problem to address. They will then try to get the target audience to recognise the problem and that it needs immediate action.

Prioritise:



Determining the order of doing a list of things according to the importance.

Some techniques for identifying which problem to address first, include:

- Making **spontaneous** choices;
- Generating ideas; and
- Researching and studying the issues.

Evidence can help you to decide which problems should be added to the agenda. If they provide options to the identified problems, the input of civil society organisations (CSOs) can be very influential. The better the evidence, the easier it is to influence public opinion.

Policy formulation

The second stage is solution formulation. After the problems have been identified and added to the agenda, the advocates should decide on the best solutions to a problem. It needs to be economically, politically and socially achievable. You do not have to agree on the solutions at this stage, but it is essential that there are solutions brought forward that will help solve the problem.

The evidence that is collected can be essential at this stage for the CSOs as it will establish their **credibility**. The evidence is used to establish or improve a positive reputation for the CSOs. The **theory of change** needs to be a key issue on how the proposed solution will measure on the **pro-poor** impact.

Also add note: For more information refer to the tools available on the Center for Theory of Change
<http://www.theoryofchange.org>



Spontaneous: Choices made on a sudden impulse.

Credibility: The quality of being trustworthy.

Theory of change: How and why change is expected in the specific context.

Pro-poor: Refers to economic activities aimed at stimulating growth and alleviating poverty.



Policy adoption

The third stage of the policymaking process is policy adoption. During this stage there needs to be a political will to act on the problem and its solutions. This is the central point of advocacy. During this stage you must meet with allies and decision makers in order to build awareness of the problems that can be addressed through adopting the policy.

You need to identify and approach the target institutions and decision makers, and prepare an influential and persuasive communication plan. The advocacy objective needs to be specific and measurable. This is so that you know if you have achieved the objective in the specific amount of time that you planned for.

Policy implementation

Part of the third stage of the policymaking process is the implementation stage.. All of this may overlap and usually provides a small window of opportunity that the advocate needs to seize. Understanding the decision-making process and having a well-defined advocacy strategy will help you to take full advantage of the opportunity.

Once the proposed solution is accepted, it moves to the higher level of decision-making, such as a committee or council. If it is rejected, it returns to the previous stage so that any necessary changes can be made.

Innovators:



People who introduce new ways of doing something.

Evidence will help CSOs translate any expert knowledge, practical experience or technical skills. CSOs have often been successful in the service delivery **innovators** line that informs broader governmental policy implementation.

Evaluation

This is the fourth and final stage of policymaking and is often not reached. Good advocates will always assess the effectiveness of any of their past efforts. In this stage, the advocate and the institutions will adopt the suggested changes to the policies. These changes are periodically evaluated by an objective third party. This third party must have access to the work of the organisation so that they can examine the alliances that are involved. Monitoring and evaluation helps to identify whether or not the changes to the policies have actually made improvements to the lives of the people that they were hoping to improve. After policy evaluation the lessons learned are used to identify new ideas for refining the policy, particularly for problem identification.

Figure 1 shows how and where evidence and evaluation data can influence the process of policy development. It also shows how policy recommendations can have an impact on the learning, adoption, productivity, sustainability, and welfare of the affected stakeholders.

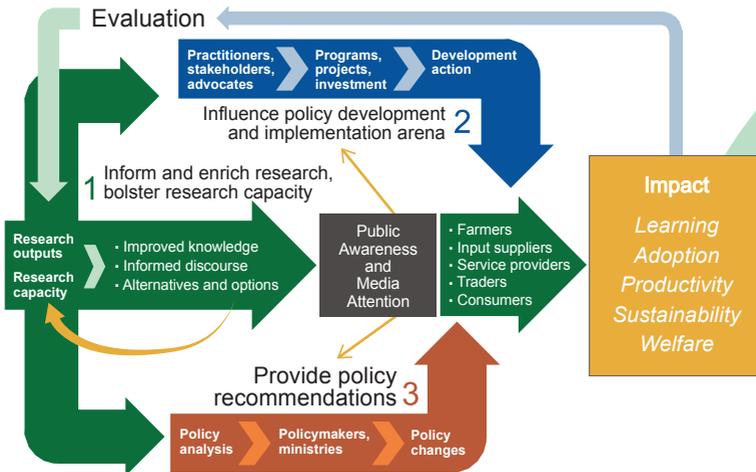


Figure 1: Evidence and policy influencing



Complete Activity 2.2 in your workbook.

Conclusion

You should have a look at the GFRAS Policy Compendium in your own time. The compendium is a tool set up by GFRAS to help bridge the gap between RAS field efforts and the RAS policy development. This tool covers many of the topics covered in this module and will help you to build on many of the core competencies you have learnt here.

Session 2.3: Shareholder mapping

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

- Identify policy stakeholders.
- Define the key policy focus time periods in the policy cycle.
- Understand power mapping.
- Identify key moments and mechanisms in shareholder mapping.

Introduction

Stakeholder influence **mapping** helps reveal what brings about changes in decisions and **prevailing** wisdom over time, and how they might be shaped in future. The process of visually mapping these changes provokes and encourages participants' experiences and ideas on further tools, approaches and tactics that can influence others.

Stakeholder mapping: The process of identify stakeholder and there influence on policy making.



Prevailing: When the wisdom that one person has is greater than someone else's wisdom on the same topic.

Identify policy stakeholders

Policy stakeholders are those people that have the decision-making power. Once the goals have been selected, the advocate must ensure that they are in direct contact with those that have the decision-making influence. To ensure that you have approached the correct people you need to understand the knowledge, attitudes and the principles of your target audience.

It may be a good idea, based on your research, to group and subgroup all of the **potential** stakeholders from the ones that have the most influence, to the ones that have the least influence. This will help you to recognise who is best to approach.

Potential:



The capacity to develop into something more in the future.

Map stakeholder influence and relationships

Being an advocate, you need to become familiar with the decision-making process. By doing this, you will be able to understand the process that you are trying to influence. The more you know about the system, the more power you will have to influence the people that have the power to change the policies. You need to list all of the influential decision makers and then rank the decision makers by importance. This is vital for your planning process. As an advocate, your ongoing task is to identify any important decision makers.

The formal process of making yourself familiar with the decision-making process and the most influential decision makers has many benefits.

One of the benefits includes knowing that the change is official and permanent.

For an example of stakeholder mapping refer to the Food and Agricultural organizations documentation on stakeholder groups at: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/003/w8623e/w8623e05.htm>



Define policy focus key time periods in the policy cycle

When you have meetings with the decision makers, it is best to keep it short and to the point. If the meetings are too long, people will be reluctant to attend. With new appointments, job shuffles or bringing in new partners, it is best to have all the needed decision makers at the meeting. If the meeting is long, they will not attend. If they do not attend then there they will be no formal and well thought-out decisions made. If the necessary decision makers are not at the meeting, then the decision will be

delayed or the wrong decision will be made. You need to ensure that the wrong decision does not become the new policy.

Identify key moments and mechanisms

The key moments and mechanisms are the five stages in the decision-making process.

- Stage one is where you generate any ideas or proposals that are within the decision-making body. These issues need to be put onto the agenda and the institution develops a proposal. The proposals all come from ideas generated from outside parties.
- Stage two is when you introduce the proposed solutions to the decision-making process. In this stage, you formally bring your proposal to the influencers that you need to persuade.
- Stage three is where the proposal that you have brought is debated, changed and discussed. Each of the aspects that you have highlighted as solutions to the problem are discussed and debated to ensure that all angles of the problem are addressed through your solution.
- Stage four is critical. In this stage, your proposal is both accepted and approved or it is rejected. There is a vote that takes place. In this stage, the decision makers reach a **consensus** or one of the decision makers makes the decision.
- Stage five is the last stage. This is when your proposal is implemented (if accepted). If your proposal is not accepted, then you need to return to the previous stage and start again. If it is rejected then there is a chance that there are a few things that will need to be changed before it can be accepted.

Consensus: When there is a general agreement reached.



Complete Activity 2.3 in your workbook.

Conclusion

You have learnt that being an advocate, you need to become familiar with the decision-making process. By doing this, you are able to understand the process that you are trying to influence. When you have meetings with the decision makers it is best to keep it short and to the point. If the meetings are too long it will discourage people from attending. Once the goals have been selected, the advocate must ensure that they are in direct contact with those that have the decision-making influence. The key moments and mechanisms are the five stages in the decision-making process.

Session 2.4: Identifying opportunities and barriers

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

- Identify and understand technical and financial constraints.
- Identify policy entrepreneurs.
- Know how to target the policy process.

Introduction

The complexity of RAS/EAS policy responses presents social, financial, cultural, and institutional barriers to policy making at multiple stages in the policy making process. These barriers reduce the effectiveness of RAS policy in achieving national goals. Identifying barriers to effective implementations of RAS policies provides opportunities to improve agriculture productivity and other outcomes.

Technical and financial capacity constraints

Technical and financial capacity constraints are not easily overcome. CSOs need to have an understanding of policy context and access to the **premises** and people so that they can gather as much evidence as they need

Premises: A  physical structure, like a building.

and ensure that the message is presented in a way that is acceptable to the target audience. This involves financial investments and a large variety of technical capacities.

There are constraints to both of these aspects and they limit the ability to use evidence effectively and engage with the policy processes. CSOs note that the influence of policy through

research and evidence collected is limited. They do not have enough funds to use and adopt the evidence that they have collected in the policy processes.

Policy entrepreneurship

The four styles of policy entrepreneurship will give you an indication of the way that CSOs engage in the policy process:

- Storytellers are able to create a narrative about a policy. Narratives are short and simple stories and they can be used to inform policy. By telling a story about a policy, policymakers are able to understand the more complex reality of the policy and its challenges.
- Networkers make connections with people of influence. Good networkers will have more policy influence than bad networkers because of the connections that they have to others. Good networkers are trusted and well-connected.
- Engineers will give a theoretical scenario and then will show the policymakers the scenario in practice. If it is shown in practice then there is a better chance that you are able to convince the policymakers of your proposals.
- Fixers are able to understand the political process and the policy. They know the perfect time to introduce the proposal and the perfect people to pitch the idea to. Fixer also understand that context is important and they know that if the solution is not applicable to the given situation then there is a great chance that the solution will not be accepted.

Targeting the policy process

There are some CSOs that prefer to act on their own rather than according to the policy process, and because of this no strategy is followed when actually engaging in the policy process. Not following a strategy will make the process inefficient and therefore nothing will change and the problems will remain problems.

The policy process has a **framework** (agenda setting, formulation, implementation, evaluation and underlying) and this framework can be used to ensure that the interventions are as influential as possible. This will ensure that the proposal has an impact and the solutions will have a better chance of being accepted.

Framework: A structure or outline of a process.



Complete Activity 2.4 in your workbook.

Conclusion

In this session, you have learnt that technical and financial capacity constraints are not easily overcome. There are constraints to both of these aspects and they limit the ability to use evidence effectively and engage with the policy processes. There are four styles of policy entrepreneurship and these will give you an indication of the way that CSOs engage in the policy process. The policy process has a framework (agenda setting, formulation, implementation, evaluation and underlying) and this framework can be used to ensure that the interventions are as influential as possible.

Session 2.5: Fundraising: Mobilising resources

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

- Identify potential funding sources.
- Explain whether donors can be part of the audience.
- Make general fundraising suggestions.

Introduction

The ability to mobilise resources is a valuable skill for advocacy networks. Access to financial resources expands the options available to the advocacy network and gives members the freedom to try new, creative, or even higher risk activities than would be possible with limited funds. No matter how much an advocacy campaign benefits from financial resources, it is entirely possible to launch a successful campaign with the resources and energy of network members alone. This session presents an overview of fundraising for advocacy. Networks that are committed to raising money to support their advocacy efforts should consider organising a separate workshop on fundraising, and engaging the services of a professional fundraiser as a resource specialist. Given the recent and rapid growth of the NGO sector and the scarcity of resources, fundraising is an area that requires considerable information and technical skill.

Potential funding sources

Funding is always a concern. In order to get important things done, funding is generally involved. Some examples of potential funding sources that can be used include:

- Grants that are given by private donors;
- Contracts that are approved by government;
- Donations made by individuals that want to help;
- Membership fees; and
- Donations from institutions or public corporations.

Donors as your audience

There are times when you will be required to petition donations directly from your audience. Certain things can be used to gain a positive response from the audience. These are language, the style used for the presentation, and the quality of the information used. It is important to let the audience know exactly how their donations will be able to help others, requiring the clear outlining of policy strategies.

The things that the audience generally like to see are:

- An efficiently run initiative;
- A policy that is financially stable and can provide budget information;
- A policy aimed at providing a number of successful key goals;
- A policy that can provide a good strategy for meeting these goals

A policy that meets all these criteria will best attract donors and aid the targeted communities.

Donations can come in the form of money, equipment, expertise, administrative support, or even labour.

There have, unfortunately, been cases where donors are afraid to commit to a project because of the agenda that other donors have attached. If the organisation gets a reputation for making deals with people who are not trustworthy because they always have agendas, it may chase away other potential donors.

General fundraising suggestions

Funding is necessary for the proposal to be accepted and the policy changes to be agreed upon. Some fundraising suggestions that can be considered include:

- Do research to see which types of businesses have donated to a similar cause to yours in the past.
- It is important to accept donations and grants that do not match any specific advocacy objectives that you have. This is done to avoid donors having control.
- It is important to match the donor's programmatic and ideological agendas with your advocacy objectives.
- You need to have a diverse funding base as your goal.

Qualified individuals need to be appointed that can lead the fundraising effectively.

Relationships are key to this endeavour. Ensure that you invest time and effort into securing your connections. This is important to maintain any support for advocacy efforts.



Complete Activity 2.5 in your workbook.

Conclusion

You have learnt that funding is always a concern. In order to get important things done, funding is generally involved. There are times that the donations that you get are from the audience that you are trying to persuade.

Certain things can be used to gain a positive response from the audience. Donations can come in the form of money, equipment, expertise, administrative support or even labour. Funding is necessary for the proposal to be accepted and the policy changes to be agreed upon and implemented.



Complete the summative assessment in your workbook.

Study unit 3: Mobilising for action: The policy advocacy strategy

Study unit outcomes

After completing this study unit, you will be able to:

- Explain how to plan and implement an advocacy campaign;
- Identify an advocacy audience and the channels of influence to reach them;
- Create advocacy goals, alliances and SMART objectives;
- Use activities and communication tools to create effective BCC and IEC messages for your audience;
- Understand how reputation effects selection and use of policy champions in mobilising support.

Study unit overview

This unit will look at how to identify policy problems using an evidence-based approach. In addition, you will learn how to identify the audience affected and how to understand them better, in order to develop a message that speaks to their needs. You will be shown how taking this into account results in a more flexible policy with clear future and present goals and objectives. Lastly, the module looks at equipping and training policy champions; individuals with skills or influence enough to ensure the success of a campaign or policy and add credibility to the message being delivered.

Session 3.1: Identifying policy problems, solutions and evidence

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

- Describe what steps are needed when planning an advocacy campaign.
- Craft an advocacy campaign action plan.
- Identify basic information that is needed in planning an advocacy campaign.
- Clarify the different types of advocacy strategies and reflect on the importance of each one with regard to a particular advocacy initiative.
- Collect information that will help in the implementation of different strategies.
- Define, analyse, and develop effective advocacy messages.

Introduction

By the end of this session, you will be able to differentiate between and define a problem, policy issue, and policy solution. You will further be able to identify a problem related to RAS that may require advocacy, to combine the issues around the problem, select a policy issue, and to suggest a policy solution based on the combination of the problem and identification of the policy issue. You will be able to describe the benefits, sources and methods of collecting supportive evidence or data, discuss ways of using data to develop evidence-based statements, and write an evidence-based statement.

Identification of policy issues and solutions

In the policy process, choosing an option for a policy is essentially a choice that is made by the various actors. There is a negotiation that takes place between these actors before making a choice. The choice is made by looking at the research and the data that is collected. This information must be presented in a format that is recognisable to the decision makers. By ensuring that all of the information that is used in the research is understood, the quality and the effectiveness of deciding on policy actions will be improved.

Means by which you can find evidence

When it comes to projects or individuals, CSOs can generate various sources of evidence. There are three resources that they use that are particularly helpful. These resources are:

- Research for Development: A Practical Guide (Laws, Harper and Marcus, 2003);
- START (Simple Toolkit for Advocacy Research Techniques) (Tweedie, 2005); and
- Participatory Research and Development (Gonsalves et al., 2005).

CSOs use think tanks. These think tanks are described as an organisational model with the main aim of delivering research-based evidence that is credible. The think tank also aims to deliver this research-based evidence and advice in the required format that is best for the policymakers. The think tanks have on many occasions been considered a successful feature of policy influence.

Analysing the usefulness and appropriateness of the evidence

To ensure that the evidence collected is useful and appropriate, certain characteristics need to be present. These characteristics are:

- **Availability:** Is there a good amount of evidence that already exists on a specific issue?
- **Accuracy:** Does the evidence that is used correctly describe what is being claimed?
- **Objectivity:** Was the source that the evidence came from objective?
- **Credibility:** How reliable is the evidence that is collected?
- **Generalisability:** Is the information general or is it case-specific?
- **Relevance:** Is the evidence that has been collected useful to what needs to be proven?
- **Practical usefulness:** Is the evidence that is collected realistic?

Using the evidence in advocating

Policy and practice needs to be informed based on the research-based evidence that is collected. The better the evidence that is utilised in policy and practice, the more it can help the policymakers in identifying the problems, understanding the causes of the problems, developing the best policy solutions, improving the policy implementation, and then monitoring the performance of the changes to the policies.

Collecting relevant evidence and using this evidence in a systematic way ensures the improvement of the policies. The systematic process of critical investigation, data collection, and codes relating to the development of policy and practice is important because it includes a research action. This research action leads to evidence and this is useful for advocating.



Complete Activity 3.1 in your workbook.

Conclusion

You have learnt that in the policy process, choosing an option for a policy is essentially a choice that is made by the various actors. The choice is made by looking at the research and the data that is collected. By ensuring that all of the information that is used in the research is understood, it will improve the quality and the effectiveness of deciding on policy actions. To ensure that the evidence collected is useful and appropriate, there are certain characteristics that need to be present. Policy and practice needs to be informed based on the research-based evidence that is collected. Collecting relevant evidence and using this evidence in a systematic way ensures the improvement of the policies.

Session 3.2: Understanding your audience

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

- Define what is meant by audience for advocacy;
- Analyse the channels of influence;
- Enumerate the types of audiences for Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) advocacy;
- Describe the role of primary and secondary audiences that religious leaders can target in their advocacy work.

Introduction

Advocacy is a targeted activity to influence policies and laws and, because of this, it is important to know which people or groups you need to approach. These are called “audiences for advocacy”.

Defining an “audience for advocacy”

For advocacy, there are various types of audiences, ranging from individuals to entire communities. With regards to advocacy campaigns, there may be more than one specific audience that is applicable. These audiences can include religious and community leaders, concerned parents, or even government and parliamentary leaders.

The key objective for making sure that there is effective advocacy is to focus on the audiences that will have the most impact on the decision-making process.

When looking at complex issues such as HIV and AIDS it is important to involve government and parliamentary leaders in order to help direct policy formation, acquire the cooperation of health organisations and spread awareness and support to the

affected communities . In most cases special interest groups should be identified. These are groups within an organisation that share your goal and normally include individuals with key skills and connections both at upper organisational levels and within communities.

Analyse channels of influence

There are two main channels of influence that can be found in the advocacy process. The first channel is described as the primary audience. The primary audience are the individuals and groups that are in a position to take the necessary action that is the focus of the advocacy campaign. They are the decision makers that have the main responsibility of planning and managing the programmes. These decisions are the main aim of the advocacy strategy.

The second channel is the secondary audiences. These audiences are those that have the impact to influence the primary audiences. The actions and opinions of the secondary audience are important when it comes to achieving the advocacy objective.

To understand this, let us look at the role of religious leaders in policy advocacy. Their ability to reach both primary and secondary audiences can make gaining their support essential to a successful campaign. They are able to advocate policies directly to their congregations, which include both secondary audiences in the form of voters who can lobby their leaders for change and primary audiences which can include the politicians themselves. Religious leaders such as Nobel Peace Prize winner Desmond Tutu, have used their influence to fight against HIV/AIDS, racism and poverty.

Reaching the audience

There are times where there is an overlap between primary and secondary audience members. The primary audience can also be considered secondary audience members if they are able to influence the other decision makers.

On the other hand, there are some secondary audience members that are against the objectives of advocacy. When you reach out to an audience, you need to make sure that the audience's influence has the right amount of impact on the decision-making process. You will need to use the right language to make sure that you reach and appeal to your audience since there is a better chance of them accepting the changes if the language you use appeals to them.



Complete Activity 3.2 in your workbook.

Conclusion

In this session, you have learnt that an audience can range from parents to other loosely-defined groups. With regards to advocacy campaigns, there may be more specific audiences that are applicable. There are two main channels of influence that can be found in the advocacy process and the decisions are the main aim of the advocacy strategy. Remember that there are times that there will be an overlap between primary and secondary audience members.

Session 3.3: Defining advocacy goals and objectives

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

- Describe what a goal does in any advocacy activity.
- Consider creating alliances to bring about a change.
- Identify SMART objectives.

Introduction

The goals and objectives of advocacy are to **facilitate** change and the development of new areas of policy. By end of this session, you will be able to state an advocacy goal and write a policy advocacy objective.

Facilitate: Help something to happen easier.



Goals with the desired result of any advocacy activity

A goal can be described as something that needs to be achieved so that there is progress and you can move forward. Goals for advocacy need to be SMART (specific, measureable, achievable, realistic and time-bound). An advocacy goal is usually seen as a long-term goal and will have a long-term result (3-5 years of advocacy work). The goal is not generally something that you can achieve using your network; it is considered to be external from your network.

The important points to note when it comes to goals is that they should be linked to your mission and vision statements, which help you identify the group of people you will need to approach as allies.

Creating alliances to bring about the required change

Alliances are formed through you building support for the network advocacy, which is critical to success. The more support there is, the higher the chance of success. The network members must ensure that they maintain a consistent form of connection to the alliances that they make around them.

Alliances are important because it allows the advocacy process to move along quicker. Once trust has been built between the advocacy member and the support base members, they will be more willing to influence the other role players to accept the changes that need to be made in the policies.

SMART objectives

SMART stands for specific, measurable and monitorable, achievable, realistic and time bound.

- **Specific:** This means that the advocacy member must use change-focused language rather than activity-focused language. There must be a clear and focused outline of the changes. Make sure that no **jargon** is used; this could be confusing to those that are not familiar with activity-related wording. Ensure that you are not **ambiguous** or using phrases that could have a double meaning.
- **Measureable:** Make sure that the when presenting the evidence, the numbers are manageable; this will make it easier to understand and process. The outcomes need to be measureable. When giving information about the people involved and the length of time it will take, make sure that all that you want to achieve is as exact as possible and ensure that it is credible.
- **Achievable:** The goals need to be as clear as possible. The goals need to be attainable and they should be practical. They should not be something that just look good theoretically but should be possible to achieve.

- **Realistic:** The goals need to be a true reflection of what can be achieved. The more realistic the goal, the more credible it is. It is credible because it shows the audience that you have thought it through and you know it is possible.
- **Time bound:** This means that the goals must be accomplished in a specific amount of time. There needs to be a clear timeframe for each goal that you have identified. The timeframe that you have allocated to each goal must be realistic. Generally the timeframe for an advocacy objective is 1-3 years.

Jargon: Special words that are only used when speaking about a specific topic. 

Ambiguous: Something that can have more than one interpretation.



Complete Activity 3.3 in your workbook.

Conclusion

In this session, you have learnt that you need to have goals that are aimed at something that you desire and that goals are linked to your mission and vision. Alliances are formed through you building support. The more support there is, the higher the chance of success. Once there trust has been built between the advocacy member and the support base members, they will be more willing to influence the other role players to accept the changes that need to be made in the policies.

Session 3.4: Developing advocacy messages

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

- Compare advocacy to BCC and IEC messages.
- Shape your advocacy message for your audience.
- Select advocacy activities and communication tools.

Introduction

Content is only one part of a message. Other non-verbal factors, such as who delivers the message, where a meeting takes place or the timing of the message can be as, or more, important than the content. In addition, sometimes what is not said delivers a louder message than what is actually said.

Advocacy messages are developed and tailored to specific target audiences in order to frame the issue and persuade the receiver to support the network's position. There are three important questions to answer when preparing advocacy messages:

- Who are you trying to reach with the message?
- What do you want to achieve with the message?
- What do you want the recipient of the message to do because of the message (the action you want taken)?

Advocacy vs BCC and IEC messages

Each of these activities (BCC and IEC) have similarities. They are all focused specifically on the awareness of specific issues. However, the main focus of BCC and IEC is on changing the behaviour of individuals whereas advocacy is aimed at change on a more collective basis of action and promoting social change. This change is mostly for community or district levels.

BCC and IEC are generally more well-known than advocacy. Throughout training it is very important to highlight the differences to ensure that all of the advocacy objectives and goals are advocacy-related and not BCC- or IEC-related.

Select the message for your audience

To ensure that your message is taken seriously and it has the right amount of influence, you need to shape the message that you offer to your audience. The message that is described here is the message that you want to get across to the audience. You need to ensure that your message is clear, compelling, accurate and short. When the message has been formulated you can refine the message so that it is as appealing as possible for your audience.

You must make sure that the message is relevant to the policy that you want to make a change in and that the message presents the most practical and realistic solutions to the problems that have been identified. You need to communicate the message simply; do not use big words to make it sound fancy, rather use words that your audience will understand and to make it easy for them to remember. The easier it is for the audience to understand, the easier it is for you to influence their decision.

Select advocacy activities and communication tools

Once the audience that you need to target is identified, the next step is for you to decide what the best form of communication to use to deliver your message is. There are various communication tools that you can use, including:

- Lobbying;
- Speeches;
- Workshops;
- Radio;
- TV interviews;
- Dramas or skits;
- Press releases;

- Networking;
- Flyers;
- Posters;
- Video messages;
- Social media;
- Websites;
- Meetings; and
- Mass actions.



Complete Activity 3.4 in your workbook.

Conclusion

In this session, you have learnt that the main focus of BCC and IEC is on changing the behaviour of individuals, whereas advocacy is aimed at change on a more collective basis of action and promoting social change. BCC and IEC are generally more well-known than advocacy. To ensure that your message is taken seriously and that it has the right amount of influence, you need to shape the message that you offer to your audience. You need to ensure that your message is clear, compelling, accurate and short. Once the audience that you need to target is identified, the next step is for you to decide what the best form of communication to use to deliver your message is.

Session 3.5: The face of the advocacy campaign/messenger/policy champions

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

- Assess your reputation.
- Assess your communication and social skills.
- Identify policy champions.
- Equip policy champions.
- Mobilise other support.

Introduction

It is a sad reality that even the best plans, with the noblest of intentions, will fall to the wayside if they are not clearly understood or unable to reach a large enough audience. In order to prevent this, it is essential to select individuals who are charismatic enough to grab the public or investors' attention in order to spread awareness of the problems faced. This session looks at the difference made by selecting the correct person for the job.

Assess your reputation

When an advocacy issue is made public, an organisation runs the risk of **reputation**, relationship or partnership damage. A risk analysis will help you to identify the best way to implement the most effective form of advocacy in a business. It will assess the impact that the advocacy will have on the community and the audience that has the power of influence in the decision-making process.

Reputation: The opinions that are believed and held by others about you.



The nature of the risks that are associated with reputation are the relationships that you build with your support base. Once that trust is destroyed, that support base will not give you the amount of impact that you need for your advocacy plea to be accepted. When you have a good reputation, it means that the audiences that you are trying to target will accept your changes more willingly on the grounds of your credibility.

Assess your communication and social skills

Before you can start with any advocacy, you need to start a network. This must include creating an identity, ensuring that you refine your communication skills through practice, and strengthening the decision-making processes and the necessary skills and resources.

A communication strategy must have the same amount of principles as any social marketing or advertising campaign. You must know your audience so that you know the necessary details to deliver a message that is adapted for them and for their needs. If all members of the network strive to deliver a clear and well-planned message, then the network will be more effective.

Identify policy champions

Identifying policy champions can be a challenging task.

Individuals need to be selected based on project needs.

The most well known example of policy champions are celebrity activists. These individuals are able to use their fame to raise money and awareness for important issues but are often not as involved at the policy formation level.

The reality is that policy champions are normal individuals who possess a combination of the following:

- Good social skills.
- Self motivation.
- Familiarity with policy issues and implementation.
- Connections to the policy audience in question.

Ideally, these individuals should be selected from the RAS policy advocacy group or even the affected community to ensure a clear understanding of the problem being addressed.

When it comes to UN ambassadors for policy, there are a few people that come to mind. The most well-known names include Angelina Jolie, Emma Watson, Yaya Touré, and Leonardo DiCaprio.

Angelina Jolie is a United Nations (UN) ambassador for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and focuses her advocacy efforts on addressing the various decision makers regarding issues around global displacement. 

Emma Watson has been appointed as a UN ambassador for Women's Goodwill. Her HeForShe campaign aims to empower young women and promote gender equality.

Leonardo DiCaprio is a UN Messenger for Peace with a special focus on raising awareness of the urgency of combating climate change.

Yaya Touré is a UN Global Ambassador. He is largely involved with youth organisations that strive to protect the forests of his native Ivory Coast.

Equipping the policy champions

In order to give objective feedback to policy champions, there need to be records and evaluations on the behaviour of the champions. There is however, always going to be a degree of **subjectivity**. In order to evaluate the advocacy effort, it is best to keep the bigger picture regarding your advocacy campaign in mind.

Subjectivity: Making a decision based on your own beliefs. 

For each project there are certain things that need to be evaluated. These are:

- The impact of the problem solving;
- The contribution of the empowerment of the group or society; and
- The consequences of the change.

If there is ongoing evaluation, then you will be able to measure any activities that are carried out and the advocacy efforts can be redirected. Receiving and giving feedback on advocacy activities will not only give the champions the opportunity to be praised for the good work that they are doing, but also give them the opportunity to fix what is not working. They will (from the evaluation and feedback) be given ways that they can improve and they will then be able to apply that to their next projects.

Mobilising other support

There will be times when using arguments and ideas to convince people is important. It is vital that when there is something that needs to change urgently, those that have been convinced will be there to support the change.

Assessing the main objective can be difficult though. It may be politically risky for people to openly support something if they are affiliated with a specific organisation or political party. With every new change that can be effected, it is best to ensure that there are allies around you that are openly allowed to support you.

Getting the message through to the public by using media can be seen as being transparent and can result in moral support. Finding these allies will help to keep your reputation credible and this can convince the decision makers that your campaign is indeed credible.



Complete Activity 3.5 in your workbook.

Conclusion

You have learnt that when an advocacy issue is made public, an organisation runs the risk of reputation, relationship or partnership damage. To combat this potential damage, a communication strategy must have the same amount of principles as any social marketing or advertising campaign. The nature of the risks that are associated with reputation are the relationships that you build with your support base. Once that trust is destroyed, that support base will not give you the amount of impact that you need for your advocacy plea to be accepted. When it comes to UN Ambassadors for Policy there are some people who serve as good role models. Finally, getting the message through to the public by using media can be seen as being transparent and can result in moral support.



Complete the summative assessment in your workbook.

Study unit 4: Policy advocacy engagement platforms and tools

Study unit outcomes

After completing this study unit, you will be able to:

- Use and identify tools in policy advocacy;
- Explain the role media types in policy advocacy;
- Measure the success of advocacy initiatives and maintain success.

Study unit overview

Selection of the most appropriate medium for advocacy messages depends on the target audience. The choice of medium varies for reaching the general public, influencing decision makers, educating the media, generating support for the issue among like-minded organisations/networks, etc. Some of the more common channels of communication for advocacy initiatives include press kits and press releases, press conferences, fact sheets, a public debate, a conference for policymakers, etc.

Session 4.1: Policy dialogues

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

- Select the most appropriate tools to deliver the advocacy message.
- Describe how to use policy dialogues.
- Identify which forms of media need to be used for the policy advocacy.
- Know how to measure success.

Introduction

Structured discussions about key policy issues can contribute to the development and implementation of effective RAS policies in a number of ways. These can include:

- Facilitating dialogue between people with different types of expertise and different perspectives;
- Bringing potential opposition into the policy development process;
- Exposing, clarifying, or resolving disagreements regarding the evidence; and
- Clarifying judgements that need to be made based on the evidence, thereby allowing policymakers and stakeholders to generate ideas and actions that can help to move the development and implementation of effective policies along.

What is a policy dialogue?

A policy dialogue is an organised and deliberate interaction between two or more actors about the allocation of values. These values will result in the new policy changes. Not taking the name into account, all policy dialogues have the same objectives and aims. These are:

- Bringing groups that are diverse to the same place for a discussion;
- Focusing on any common or planning problem that is in the interest of the majority;
- Having a policy lifecycle with a beginning, middle and end; and
- Formulating any practical and simple solutions to problems.

Having an all-inclusive discussion

There are certain characteristics that you need to take into consideration when you have an all-inclusive platform for discussion when the goal is to generate solutions to problems, namely:

- Participation must be equal between all parties.
- There must be an acceptance of the different views.
- Agendas need to be set by members.
- Research outputs must be given entry into policy.
- Information must be shared freely between all members.

Linking research to policy

When researching the changes for a policy, it is important to ensure that there is a link to the actual policy. By ensuring that there is a link, you are promoting equitable evidence. In linking the two together it can be highly beneficial to involve knowledgeable individuals from research institutes in the policy making process. They may not be able to represent any form of a stakeholder's **perspective** but they are able to provide expertise that is relevant in understanding the factors that have resulted in the problem.

Perspective:  Having a particular view on a subject. Your point of view on something.

Timing of the policy dialogue

Policy dialogue will happen at different times in the policy development process. There are times when the policy dialogue occurs at the beginning of the process, with the main aim of

clarifying the problem that is identified. There are other times that a policy dialogue will occur later on in the process. This may occur when the focus is on advantages or disadvantages of the implementation of the solutions. The timing of the policy dialogue will depend on the main aim of the policy dialogue.

If there is an urgent need to address a certain problem, the available timeframe will be smaller than in other situations. If the problem needs less time to implement the solution, then the timing of the policy dialogue will be earlier in the process. If there is a longer timeframe needed because there is no urgency, then it may be later on in the process.



Complete Activity 4.1 in your workbook.

Conclusion

In this session, you have learnt that there are certain characteristics that need to be taken into consideration when you have an all-inclusive platform for discussion when the goal is to generate solutions to problems. By ensuring that there is a link, you are promoting equitable evidence. Policy dialogue will happen at different times in the policy development process. If there is an urgent need to address a specific problem, the available timeframe will be smaller than in other situations.

Session 4.2: Using the media for policy advocacy

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

- Know what a press release is.
- Know the role that social media plays in policy advocacy.
- Know the role that broadcast media plays in policy advocacy.

Introduction

The media have a particular role to play in public advocacy initiatives, especially campaign-based approaches. Not all advocacy work uses the media, and a media-based approach carries risks as well as opportunities. The media can bring a mass audience, potentially increasing the profile and credibility of your initiative, but they can also bring bad publicity and may contribute to mobilising opposition as well as support.

Press releases, media advisory or press statements

A press release is the most common form of media used for communication and will generally include the following:

- Name of the organisation;
- Name and contact information;
- Headline;
- Dateline; and
- Body of text.

A media advisory is generally sent to inform a journalist about an event that is important for them to attend. It should be short and to the point. It can simply explain the importance of the event

and the details of when and where it is held.

A statement is a stand-alone quote. This quote will reflect the position of an organisation about a specific issue. A statement is useful when responding to developments or breaking news. It helps to clarify the position of an organisation.

Social media

Social media has become an innovative tool for ensuring that all of the role players are informed and it is the easiest way of mobilising communication in any form of advocacy effort. It is essential to have some form of social media platform that you can use as an advocacy platform. It has the potential to reach a vast amount of people at the same time. It includes features and platforms such as blogs, Facebook, Twitter, videos and other social networks.

Social media platforms such as Facebook or Twitter will allow you to reach more people than if you had to speak to them directly. On these platforms there is an opportunity for the people that you know to share your advocacy campaign with others that you would not have necessarily thought of contacting.

Broadcast media

Broadcast media can be just as important as social media. There are times when reading something is not enough to convince a potential target audience to accept your policy changes. There are certain sources that are important, such as:

- Radio: If something is broadcast over the radio a number of times, that information will remain in the minds of the people that you are trying to target. The more the information is aired on radio, the more people will hear it. There will need to be some research into radio as a broadcast medium. The main reason for this is so that you can get a better idea of when the best time would be for your message to air, so that it can reach your required target audience.

- **Television:** Similar to radio broadcasting, except that the information will be received in the form of a physical picture rather than a word picture that is painted through listening to the information. It may be the best form of advocacy but it can be the most expensive, especially if the information is aired at peak broadcasting times.
- **Online sources of information:** This can be in the form of videos on Youtube. It has the benefit of being readily available to audiences on a global scale. A disadvantage of this could be that the people sending the links to a broadcast could be considered as spam and therefore people will generally ignore these.

Op/Ed

Op/Ed is short for the opposite editorial page. It is a great way of shaping the opinion of the public about a problem that has been identified. Publications that have longer articles (or a higher word count per article) are perfect for all the organisations that want to go into more detail. This is essential when the problem is complex and needs to be explained in greater detail.

Webinars

Webinars are web-based seminars. They can be a presentation, workshop or seminar that is available using the web. This can be done using video conferencing software. The most beneficial feature of a webinar is that it has an interactive element. You are able to receive and discuss the information in a real time setting. You are also able to share video and audio in a webinar. It can be a two way transmission that allows there to be an interaction between the presenter and the audience.



Complete Activity 4.2 in your workbook.

Conclusion

In this session, you have learnt that social media has become an innovative tool for ensuring that all of the role players are informed and it is the easiest way of mobilising communication in any form of advocacy effort. Broadcast media can be just as important as social media. Op/Eds are a great way of shaping the opinion of the public about a problem that has been identified. A webinar is also useful as you are able to share video and audio. It is effective because it can be a two way transmission that allows there to be an interaction between the presenter and the audience.

Session 4.3: Plan to measure success

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

- Know what a milestone is.
- Assess your progress.
- Demonstrate the value of the advocacy initiative.
- Sustain momentum.
- Know how to set clear goals and how to measure them.

Introduction

Advocates often define success as achieving their advocacy goal. Policy change and implementation, however, can take a long time. The final part of an advocacy strategy is to develop a plan to track progress toward achieving your advocacy goal. Advocacy progress is often measured in terms of outputs and outcomes. Outputs measure

productivity—usually **quantitatively**—and show that the activities you planned actually happened. Outcomes, on the other hand, measure effectiveness, and capture the effects or changes seen because of your activities.



Quantitatively:

Measuring something according to quantity, rather than quality.

Timelines and milestones

Timelines are the time that will be needed to achieve the different goals. These timeframes need to be realistic so that the change that is needed is actually realised. It is important to estimate the time required so that you can estimate the cost that will be involved. This will include the data collection and the methodology used to collect, analyse and present the data that has been collected.

Milestones are the different places in the process that you can use to measure progress. Monitoring and evaluation plans need to be developed so that you can assess whether your timelines are realistic and achievable in terms of the progress and the milestones that you want to reach.

Assess your progress rather than the impact

Monitoring and evaluating the problem and the implementation of the solution is one way of keeping the members of a community informed about the progress you are making. In an on-going process, you can keep the community up to date on which goals you have achieved to get to a specific milestone.

This progress needs to be linked with activities and specific dates so that you can get a clear picture of the impact that these activities are bringing about. By monitoring the activities, you can gather the necessary information to measure the impact of your advocacy campaign.

The value of the advocacy initiative

To make sure that you are still on target and that there is still value for the users, you need to revisit your advocacy plan. If you revisit this plan, you will know which goals you have achieved and how much progress you are making. Some people emphasise the value of contribution and not attribution. This serves as a reminder to you that evaluation can only sometimes be attributed to change and the advocates' actions. Data makes and defends this statement by mentioning that advocates also contribute to the change process.

Sustaining the momentum of advocacy

For you as the advocate to **sustain** any form of momentum, it is vital for you to receive constant feedback. By receiving feedback, you are able to effect change because you can improve more and more with every piece of constructive feedback.

Sustain: To keep the progress going at the same pace as it is going at the current moment.



Setting clear goals and measuring progress

By measuring how many goals you have achieved, you know whether you have been successful or not. It is important for the goals to be measurable and clear. If the goals are clear, then you will know exactly what you need to achieve and if you know exactly what to achieve, you will be able to measure the progress that you are making in terms of achieving the goals. The more goals that are achieved, the more successful you are because you are fulfilling the purpose of the advocacy campaign.

There are five main things to remember when thinking of clear and measurable goals. These are:

- The goals that you set must motivate you;
- The goals need to be SMART;
- The goals must be written down;
- There must be an action plan on how to achieve the goals; and
- Perseverance is key.



Complete Activity 4.3 in your workbook.

Conclusion

In any advocacy effort, timeframes need to be realistic so that the change that is needed is actually realised. Milestones are the different places in the process that you can use to measure progress. Monitoring and evaluation plans need to be developed so that you can assess whether your timelines are realistic and achievable in terms of the progress and the milestones that you want to reach. If you revisit this plan, you will know which goals you have achieved and how much progress you are making. Advocates know whether they are successful by measuring how many goals they have achieved.



Complete the summative assessment in your workbook.



Complete the post-assessment in your workbook.

Glossary

Definitions

Word	Definition
Advisor	Someone that gives guidance on a specific topic.
Agri-businesses	A group of institutions that deal with agriculture.
Allies	People or organisations that help you in an activity.
Ambiguous	Something that has more than one interpretation.
Broker	A key role player that provides feedback regarding the RAS within the AIS. Someone that negotiates or organises something on behalf of someone else.
Concise	Specific and clear information presented in a few words so that the message is understood.
Consensus	When there is a general agreement reached
Credibility	The quality of being trusted.
Deliberate	Something that happens with a specific purpose.
Effective	Something that is successful in achieving an objective.
Efficient	Something that produces the maximum productivity.
Expert	Someone who has the required knowledge and skills in a specific area.

Word	Definition
Extension	Another name for RAS.
Facilitate	Help something to happen easier.
Framework	A structure or outline of a process.
Innovators	People who introduce new ways of doing something.
Intervention	The action of stepping in so that there can be an improvement.
Jargon	Special words that are only used when speaking about a specific topic.
Momentum	A driving force that is gained by the development of a process.
Mould	An action of shaping something.
Objectivity	Being able to be neutral.
Perspective	Having a particular view on a subject. Your point of view on something.
Persuade	You cause someone else to believe something that you believe.
Policy	A plan that outlines the steps that need to be taken to achieve a specific goal.
Potential	The capacity to develop into something more in the future.
Premises	A physical structure, like a building.
Prevailing	When the wisdom that one person has, is more than someone else on the same topic.
Prioritise	Determining the order of doing a list of things according to the importance.

Word	Definition
Quantitatively	Measuring something according to quantity, rather than quality.
Reputation	The opinions that are believed and held by others about you.
Segments	Something that has been divided up into separated pieces.
Spontaneous	Something done on a sudden impulse.
Subjectivity	Making a decision based on your own beliefs.
Sustain	To keep the progress going at the same pace as it is going at the current moment.
Swayed	Ability to control a discussion.
Utilised	Making a practical use of something.

Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Description
AFAAS	African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services.
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations.
GFRAS	Global Forum for Rural advisory Services.
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus.
NGOs	Non-governmental Organisations.
RAS	Rural Advisory Services.
UN	United Nations.
UNHCR	United Nations Refugee Agency.

Resources

The following resources were used in writing this manual:

- <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c56.html>
- <http://www.unwomen.org/en/partnerships/goodwill-ambassadors/emma-watson#sthash.fqZ6Lr87.dpuf>
- <http://www.un.org/climatechange/summit/2014/09/secretary-general-designates-leonardo-di-caprio-un-messenger-peace/>
- <http://www.unep.org/gwa/ambassadors/yaya/#sthash.AMtlHu1I.dpuf>
- <http://www.managementstudyguide.com/broadcast-advertising.htm#>
- https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newHTE_90.htm
- "Becoming an Effective Policy Advocate: From Policy Practice to Social Justice" By Bruce Jansson
- UNICEF Advocacy Toolkit http://www.unicef.org/evaluation/files/Advocacy_Toolkit.pdf
- PATH's Stronger Health Advocates Greater Health Impacts: A workbook for policy advocacy strategy development http://www.path.org/publications/files/ER_app_workshop_workbook_unfill.pdf
- Menstrual Hygiene Day Website <http://menstrualhygieneday.org/>
- CARE International Advocacy Handbook <http://www.care-international.org/UploadDocument/files/CI%20Global%20Advocacy%20Handbook.pdf>
- WaterAid Policy, Practice and Advocacy website <http://www.wateraid.org/policy-practice-and-advocacy>
- Sharma, R. 1997. An Introduction to Advocacy: Training Guide. Washington, DC: Academy for Educational Development.
- Avner, M., & Smucker, B. (2002). The lobbying and advocacy handbook for nonprofit organizations: Shaping public policy at the state and local level. Amherst H. Wilder Foundation
- Daly, J. (2012). Advocacy: Championing ideas and influencing others. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

- Lavis JN, Boyko J, Oxman AD, Lewin S, Fretheim A: SUPPORT Tools for evidence informed health Policymaking (STP). 14. Organising and using policy dialogues to support evidence-informed policymaking. *Health Res Policy Syst.* 2009, 7 (Suppl 1):S14.
- SEAP website: <http://www.seap.org.uk/im-looking-for-help-or-support/what-is-advocacy.html>
- Kaye, L.W. & Butler, S.S., 2011. *Gerontological Social Work in Small Towns and Communities*. Binghamton, NY. The Haworth Social Practice Press.
- Norfolk RCC: http://www.norfolkrc.org.uk/wiki/index.php?title=Rural_Advocacy
- <http://mission-minded.com/how-to-craft-your-one-minute-message/>

Other modules of the New Extensionist modules are:

1. Introduction to the New Extensionist
2. Extension Methods and Tools
3. Extension Programme Management
4. Professional Ethics
5. Adult Education for Behavioural Change
6. Knowledge Management for RAS
7. Introduction to Facilitation for Development
8. Community Mobilisation
9. Farmer Organisational Development
10. Value Chain Extension
11. Agricultural Entrepreneurship
12. Gender in Extension and Advisory Services
13. Risk Mitigation and Adaptation

Other related modules developed by GFRAS are on:

- Evaluation of Extension Programmes
- **Policy Advocacy for RAS**