

CONSTITUENCY BUILDING

Different types of participation

Because participation can be time-consuming, as most democratic processes are, participation is sometimes tokenistic only. The below table explains how to recognize various types of participation and ensure that you engage in interactive participation.

Making participation work

Participation is empowering only when those who participate make decisions and choices. Active participation at all stages of advocacy results in lasting success, both in terms of empowerment as well as social change. The following are some points to consider in making participation work:

Build constituency capacity

This is a key intervention to building effective community participation. Rather than a —rubber stamp—consultation, building the capacity of your constituency, so that they can articulate their needs and decide on their strategy, is a key to long-term success. Capacity building in your advocacy strategy can include teaching constituents about their rights, political processes and about participation.

There are many methods you can use to build the capacity of constituents including workshops using participatory action learning methods, producing popular booklets, comic strips or even making use of art and theatre.

Build the community

In the initial stages of advocacy planning, community capacity building is a key intervention to assist the community in setting up a structure of representation. Leadership skills, democratic governance and organizing are key elements of such a structure, and it is extremely important that it includes women and youth and represents.

Marginalized people in the community. Later on, this structure can be used as the point from which to build further skills in the community.

Value diverse perspectives

Ideally everyone should have a voice in deciding the direction of the campaign, though at times a small group may need to work out details. Differences and disagreements may arise and may result in conflict. It is crucial to manage this process so that there is unity in diversity. For community members to have ownership over the advocacy means that their voices and opinions are heard and respected. Debating issues in a constructive way presents an opportunity for learning new things.

Generating decent solutions requires a combination of practical know-how and theoretical expertise where different kinds of knowledge are considered and valued. Marginalized communities have the knowledge of firsthand experience, yet they often need more information to make good choices and formulate arguments. On the other hand, researcher advocates may have theoretical and factual knowledge, but they will not usually have the

perspective or understanding of local problems that Community people have. It is only through working together that this can be overcome.

Type Characteristics

Token participation	People sit on official committees, but they have no real power.
Passive participation	People participate as recipients of information. They are told what has been decided or happened. Their responses are not listened to.
Participation for material gain	People participate by being consulted or answering questions. External agents define problems and information gathering processes and control the analysis. The agents are under no obligation to include people's views.
Functional Participation	People participate at the request of external agencies to meet predetermined objectives
Interactive Participation	People participate in joint analysis and development of action plans. Participation is seen as a right not just the means to achieve project goals. There is also shared decision-making.
Self-Mobilization	People participate by initiating actions independently of external institutions. They develop contacts with external institutions for the resources and technical advice

Use participatory needs assessments

Participatory community needs assessments and research enable grassroots groups to be involved in assessing their situation and choosing the issues and solutions to the problems that

affect them. Because they live with the issues, they have better insights about why a problem exists and how to solve it. They also have the emotion and motivation to push for change.

Involve constituents

It is particularly important for constituents that is, those most affected by the problem, to be involved in choosing and analyzing the issue, exploring strategies, leading meetings, speaking in public, and organizing events. This builds their confidence and skills and ensures greater ownership of the advocacy campaign. Also include community members in your internal organizational working groups. This is key to your organization legitimately representing a community.

Build trust.

Trust emerges through open communication and respect for different skills and perspectives. Some groups outline participants' responsibilities in a pact or agreement. In this pact, constituencies mandate leaders to act on their behalf during fast-paced moments of advocacy when full consultation is impossible.

Work in small groups

Whenever possible, try to work in small groups, these smaller groups allow for each individual to speak more easily. Be conscious that gender, age, and other factors make it difficult for some people to voice their opinions. Come up with strategies that will address these dynamics and be fully participatory and inclusive.

Schedule time for planning

Allocate adequate time for planning moments for education, consciousness-raising and building organization.

APPENDIX A: USING THE MEDIA

The specific news strategies frequently used by media advocates include building professional relationships with journalists, creating news, linking issues with breaking news, and using paid advertising selectively.

Cultivating Relationships

Journalists need information and ideas for stories with importance to the local community.

Advocates need to think of themselves as sources for these stories. To be a good source, it is necessary to have expertise, credibility, reliability, and timely information as well as a broad knowledge of an issue. A source should be able to point the journalist to others who can add to the story and provide sufficient background to cover key points, including the points of opposition.

Creating News

Issues that concern large numbers of people, raise broader community issues, involve conflict, controversy or injustice are potential news stories. Every day, news outlets have a "news hole" to fill, and there always is more news than can be covered. The more interesting, important, and easy to cover a story is, the more likely it is to be covered.

Linking to Breaking News

Every day, there are stories in the news to which advocates can link their issues. Sometimes breaking news can be anticipated.

Evaluation - The basic question of the impact evaluation is whether the policy being advanced was actually adopted. However, media advocacy inevitably is only one of several important factors that contribute to achieving the desired change. Evaluation questions in media advocacy revolve around three points:

- Did the issue get on the media agenda?
- Did the issue get framed from the policy perspective?
- Did the media coverage advance the message?

Basic outcome issues include whether

- (1) the issue was placed on the public agenda,
- (2) it put pressure on and mobilized key decision makers, and,
- (3) the policy was enacted or the change occurred.

APPENDIX B: GUIDELINES FOR SUCCESSFUL COALITION BUILDING

A coalition is a group of individuals and/or organizations with a common interest who agree to work together towards a common goal, often to carry out a particular campaign. Coalition goals are as varied as coalitions themselves, but often contain elements of one or more of the following:

- Influencing or developing public policy, usually finding a specific solution to a specific

problem

- Changing people's behavior
- Building a healthy community

Reasons to Form a Coalition Include:

- To address an urgent situation
- To empower elements of the community—or the community as a whole—to take control of their future
- To obtain or provide services
- To bring about more effective and efficient delivery of programs
- To pool resources
- To increase communication among groups and break down stereotypes
- To revitalize the energies of members of groups who are trying to do too much alone
- To develop and use political clout to gain services or other benefits for the community
- To create long-term social change

Questions to Ask When You Are Thinking About Building a Coalition

- What would your unifying issue(s) be?
- What resources could come from other organizations?
- What obstacles might you encounter?

APPENDIX C: ANALYZING LEGISLATION OR POLICY

Questions to ask

The following list of questions may help you analyze a policy statement or piece of legislation:

- Who benefits from this legislation or policy (if anyone)?
- Who loses (if anyone)?
- What will be the consequences five years from now of enforcing this?
- How does the legislation or policy affect marginalized groups?
- Is this something ordinary people can understand?
- Who supports this law/policy, and why?
- How did this issue first come to the notice of decision-makers?
- What is the financial cost?
- Can it be enforced? If so, by whom, and how?
- What is the penalty if you don't obey this law/policy?
- Does the law/policy violate the UN Declaration of Human Rights or any other convention signed by your country?
- Is the law/policy consistent with your own country's Bill of Rights and/or Constitution?