

# **HOW SHALL WE GO ABOUT DOING SOCIAL ADVOCACY?**

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## **1. Definition**

Citizen centred advocacy is:

- an organized political process that involves the coordinated efforts of people to change policies, practices, ideas and values that perpetuate inequality, prejudice and exclusion; and strengthens citizens' capacity as decision makers and builds more accountable and equitable institutions of power.

## **2. Implications**

- ✓ Engaging institutions of governance to empower the marginalized
- ✓ Creating and using spaces available within the system
- ✓ Using knowledge strategically
- ✓ Using skills and opportunities to influence public policy
- ✓ Bridging the gap between micro-level activities and macro-level policy initiatives
- ✓ Adopting non-violent and constitutional means

## **3. Key features**

- ❖ Rooted in a world vision: a just, sustainable, dignified, inclusive, vision of the world that points to life together
- ❖ Deeply grounded in the broken reality of the poor and excluded
- ❖ A process and a tool for social transformation towards equality and justice

## **4. Challenges**

- ✓ Mass mobilization alone is not enough.
- ✓ Need for engaging experts, socio-political thinkers and public leaders for influencing the decision makers through raising critical questions, presenting possible alternative policies based on the universal values of justice and equality and to make the voice of the voiceless heard in the 'quarters of power'.

## **5. Elements necessary for sustainable change/transformation**

- ✓ Intense and broad public support
- ✓ Appropriate legal, institutional and political structures
- ✓ Decision makers convinced of the need to change

## **6. Strategies necessary for developing advocacy actions**

- ✓ Research and documentation – analysis of situations of poverty and injustice which
- ✓ includes direct field work with people and communities
- ✓ Developing relationships with key decision makers and centres of power and creating
  - ✓ opportunities for direct interaction between people and power holders
- ✓ The definition of policies – based on the problems and the possible alternatives
- ✓ Lobbying – direct action aimed at specific aspects and concrete themes
- ✓ Media work – testimonies, facts, reports, proposals, readiness to name and shame
- ✓ Narratives/stories - personal stories, case studies and victims telling their stories.

## **7. Elements to be added in the strategy for a formal advocacy campaign**

- ❖ Demonstrations
- ❖ Marches
- ❖ Alliance building
- ❖ Use of mass media and communication
- ❖ Social mobilisation
- ❖ Public education
- ❖ Monitoring/evaluating using specific indicators

## **8. An appropriate particular strategy in an advocacy work will help to:**

- ✓ Assess the situation of power, the available capacity and resources and possible point of departure
- ✓ Select achievable goals to start the work

- ✓ Develop an action plan including how to use the available resources and capacities of the people and identify actions, tactics and tools
- ✓ Record small successes, unexpected opportunities emerged

## **9. Eight basic elements/questions for an effective strategy in advocacy work**

- 1) Objectives – what do we want?
- 2) Public – who has the power to make this possible?
- 3) Diagnosis – what is possible?
- 4) Strategic action plan – how do we get started?
- 5) Solidarity group – with whom to spearhead the work?
- 6) Mobilization – how to widen pressure power?
- 7) Media linkage – how to make the issue visible, amplify power and add pressure power?
- 8) Evaluation – How do we know if the plan is working correctly?