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EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK
CENTRE FOR ASIA PACIFIC
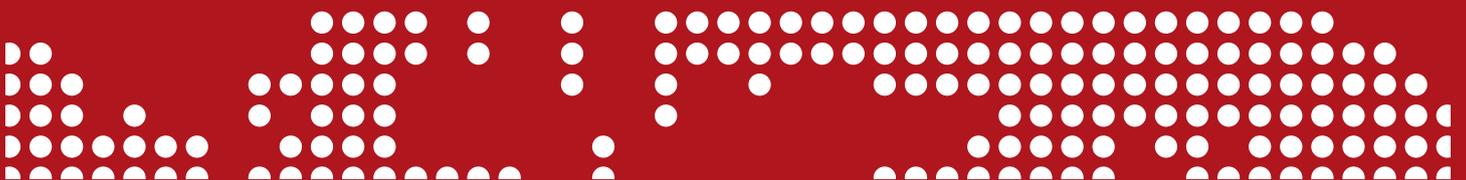REFUGEE STUDIES

Advocacy Toolkit

for Diaspora Organizations

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

About DRC

Founded in 1956, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) is Denmark's largest international NGO, with a specific expertise in forced displacement. DRC is present in close to 40 countries and employs 7,500 staff globally. DRC advocates for the rights of and solutions for displacement-affected communities, and provides assistance during all stages of displacement. DRC supports displaced persons in becoming self-reliant and included into hosting societies. DRC recognises diaspora as crucial transnational civil society actors. DRC has since 2010 engaged directly with different diaspora actors to facilitate and strengthen their constructive engagement in countries of origin, transit and residence. You can read more about DRC Diaspora Programme at drc.ngo/diaspora

About ADSP

The Asia Displacement Solutions Platform is a joint initiative of the Danish Refugee Council, International Rescue Committee, and the Norwegian Refugee Council, which aims to contribute to the development of solutions for populations affected by displacement in the region.

Drawing upon its members' operational presence throughout Asia, and its extensive advocacy networks in Europe and north America, ADSP engages in evidence-based advocacy initiatives to support improved outcomes for displacement-affected communities. As implementing agencies, ADSP members work closely with displaced populations and the communities that host them and are therefore able to contribute a distinctive, field-led, perspective to policy and advocacy processes which can sometimes be removed from the realities on the ground and concerns of those living with, and in, displacement. By coming together under the aegis of the ADSP the three member agencies – global leaders in innovative policy and programming – commit to collaboration in order to achieve improved outcomes for displacement affected communities in the region. You can read more on our website adsp.ngo/

About the consultants

Dr. Nora Jasmin Ragab is an independent migration scholar, with a research interest in exploring the intersections of diaspora mobilization, conflicts, and socio-political dynamics of displacement. Her academic work often lies at the interface of research and policy and seeks to inform institutions and stakeholders, including the German development cooperation (GIZ), the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), UN Agency for Migration (IOM), and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD). Nora is passionate about the development of methods and concepts to promote spaces of self-organization and civic organizing. She is a lecturer at IES Abroad, where she teaches courses on diverse range of migration related topics and the international politics of the WANA region. Together with Eleni Diker, she developed the series of diaspora toolkits, on diaspora fundraising, community outreach and networking and alliances building.

Eleni Diker has 10+ years of experience in the field of migration, both as a researcher and practitioner. In her previous role at UNU-MERIT/Maastricht University, she designed and conducted policy-relevant research studies and educational programs in the field of migration. In her early career years, she worked for several years at the UN Agency for Migration (IOM) in Istanbul and she co-founded the first Turkey-based NGO that uses sports and body movement as a tool for social empowerment. Together with Dr Nora Jasmin Ragab, she developed the earlier series of this toolkit on diaspora fundraising, community outreach and networking and alliances building. She is currently a Peace Fellow at Chulalongkorn University's Rotary Peace Center and works at Oxfam Novib in the Hague as an Impact Measurement and Knowledge Specialist.

THE AIM OF THE TOOLKIT

The Danish Refugee Council engages civil society actors rooted in and/or with direct ties to the Global South, and therefore considers diaspora transnational civil society actors an integral part of the civil society they work with. This toolkit – part of a broader series of toolkits – have been developed to offer practical guidance to diaspora actors in different areas: (1) Diaspora Fundraising, (2) Community Outreach (3) Networking and Alliances Building and (4) Advocacy.

Diaspora communities, organisations, and individuals are increasingly vocal and influential, advocating for social, economic, and political change in their country of origin, the country of residence and in the international sphere. This toolkit provides practical guidance for diaspora organisations in their advocacy work.

Section 1 begins with a brief introduction by providing the definition of advocacy and highlighting its relevance to the diaspora. The section also presents an overview of the different approaches to advocacy and key concepts to consider before engaging in advocacy work.

Section 2 outlines the main steps in developing an advocacy strategy, consisting of prioritising advocacy issues, analysing the external context, setting the theory of change, goal, objectives and indicators, defining the target audience, developing the core message, selecting the right approach and planning monitoring, evaluation and learning. The section also provides examples of tools with step-by-step descriptions and templates to guide diaspora actors in the multi-stage process of developing an advocacy strategy.

Section 3 provides examples of methods that can be used at different levels of advocacy, including local, national, and transnational levels. The section presents a detailed description of selected methods that can be used to conduct advocacy with specific focus on their relevance for diaspora communities. The selected methods elaborated in the section are: making use of inside track, making use of international mechanisms, using (social) media and promoting/protesting countries of origin.

Section 4 discusses the potential risks that may occur throughout the project cycle of an advocacy campaign with a specific focus on the risks of diaspora advocacy in fragile contexts. The section also offers tools and strategies to navigate these challenges and minimise risks.

Section 5 addresses the often-overlooked aspect of emotions in advocacy work and presents some tools and guidance focussing on the role of self- and collective care.

Section 6 offers conclusions and recommendations to diaspora actors and organisations in their advocacy.

Finding your way through the toolkits

Relevant tools and guidance

In these boxes you find relevant tools, step-by-step guidances or templates that help you to develop your advocacy strategy and action.

Relevant concepts and approaches

These boxes explore definitions of different concepts or important theories and approaches relevant for advocacy work.

Case examples

These boxes illustrate the topics by exploring real cases and best practices.

Additional resources

These boxes offer additional resources on the topic, such as toolkits or training resources.

SECTION 1 - WHAT IS DIASPORA ADVOCACY?

Diaspora advocacy calls attention to the political or humanitarian plights of their communities in their origin countries. Through their advocacy, diaspora groups, organisations and communities seek to influence, engage, inform or sometimes pressure governments of the country of origin and residence for policy change. Diaspora actors may engage in humanitarian advocacy to improve protection for communities in emergency contexts by calling for implementation of the humanitarian imperative. Such advocacy actions often seek to amplify people's voices, to ensure that responses are appropriate to people's needs and rights and to ensure that they respect humanitarian principles or engage in efforts to challenge power structures within the humanitarian system. In the context of residence, diaspora actors may raise awareness of the challenges faced by migrant and refugee populations, challenge structures of racism and discrimination, and are increasingly seen as important actors in decision-making processes, hence fostering representation of migrant interests in the political process.

Advocacy can be defined as a process of supporting and enabling people to express their views and concerns, access information and services, defend and promote their rights and responsibilities, and explore their choices and options in life[1]. Advocacy in that sense, can be understood as an organised effort to influence social or policy change, whereby action can be directed towards both political decision-makers or society as a whole. Outcomes of advocacy, hence, may aim for change in policy and practice, change in public attitudes or behaviour, change in the political system/processes or to empower disadvantaged groups.

Advocacy can be realised through different activities and tools, which are influenced by the approach used. If the cause is less confrontational and the diaspora has access to decision/makers, approaches that seek for policy change from inside may be used, through advising or lobbying efforts. In contrast, more confrontational policy questions, that aim at empowering and amplifying voices of more marginalised segments of society or that have an oppositional stance, require advocacy actions, such as media campaigning or activism that produce outside external pressure through raising awareness or encouraging action among the broader public.

Figure 1: Different approaches to advocacy
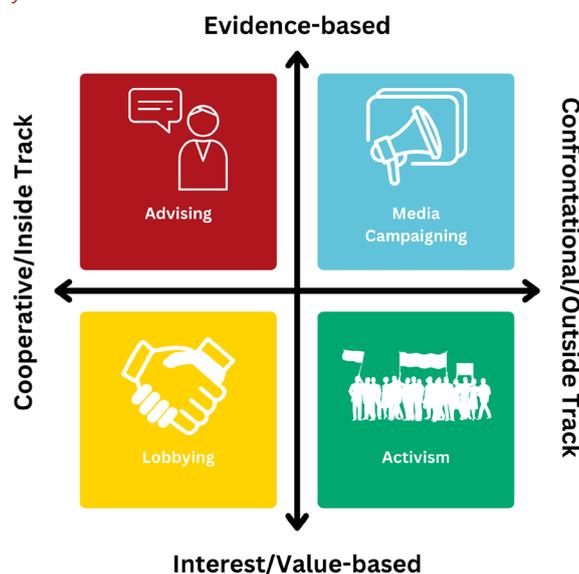
Source: Adapted from Young & Quinn (2012), p. 28

1   Advocacy Focus (n.d,). What is Advocacy? Retrieved from: https://advocacyfocus.org.uk/services/understanding-advocacy/

1. Advising: Aims at changing policy from inside by producing (commissioned) research studies, policy papers or other evidence-based policy advice to inform decision-makers about a certain policy question or problem. Given that the policy advice is guided by a specific ideological agenda, the advocacy process seeks to sell ideas developed through the research to push decision-making processes in a specific direction.

2. Lobbying: Seeks to ensure being present and visible during government and public discussions with attempts to influence decisions made by the government, through for example face-to-face meetings with decision-makers, or through speeches in Parliament. Given that lobbying aims at changing policy from inside and requires access to powerful people, it is therefore often less confrontational in nature.

3. Media Campaigning: Aims to raise awareness or encourage action among the general public on a particular policy problem or issue to increase public or external pressure on decision makers needed to achieve results. These can be realised for example through press statements or articles targeting conventional media outlets (e.g. radio, television, or newspapers) or online campaigns, using new digital tools and social media sites that inspire change and amplify advocacy efforts.

4. Activism: Plays a critically important role in promoting participation and human rights both in the context of origin country and the country of residence, often aimed at amplifying the voices of marginalised segments of society. Common approaches include petitions, public protests and demonstrations, posters, and leaflet dissemination. Especially when the cause is more confrontational and the ability to influence through the inside track is blocked, activism provides alternative avenues to promote a certain value set.

Relevant concepts and approaches

The language of 'advocacy'

The term 'advocacy' may have different connotations in different contexts within the wider political and historical conjunctures. In some countries, the word "advocacy" may not be welcome. It is important to ensure that your terminology is culturally appropriate.[2] For example, some organisations, like Oxfam, use the word "influencing" or "engagement" instead of advocacy.

An outside approach is often more confrontational, using tools such as protests or strikes to challenge those in power, whereas an inside approach is more collaborative, engaging with decision-makers, hence seeking change from within. In conducting advocacy campaigns, most organisations do not use only one approach to realise their efforts, but often combine different actions to leverage their influence for policy change. Think, for example, of a humanitarian diaspora organisation. This organisation may use social media campaigns to raise awareness of the humanitarian crisis in the country of origin and takes part in demonstrations to call upon decision-makers in the country of residence to put pressure on the government in the country of origin. The same organisation may conduct evidence-based research informing international humanitarian actors and lobby for localisation of aid at international summits. Using different approaches can be a strategic choice to achieve advocacy objectives. However, in the context of conflict-affected diasporas, the diversification of approaches may also be the result of a reactive mode in which diaspora groups feel the urge to address the multitude of needs arising from the conflict. In addition, there is no one-size fits all approach i.e., what works for one diaspora group in one context may not work for another group due to historical, relational, structural, and cultural differences.

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2   VSO (2009). Participatory advocacy: A toolkit for VSO staff, volunteers and partners.

Legitimacy and Accountability

Legitimacy and accountability are key concepts to consider before engaging in advocacy work.

Legitimacy: "Are we a legitimate actor/organisation to advocate for this issue? Do we have the legitimacy to talk on behalf of the (diaspora) communities we represent? How will our intentions be perceived by other actors?" It is crucial to reflect on these questions together with the team before engaging in advocacy. When it comes to representation, there are simple questions to ask i.e." Have they asked us to advocate for them? Have they had a chance to provide inputs on our position as their advocates? Are they happy with our advocacy strategy?"

The aspect of legitimacy is also important when engaging with decision-makers/policymakers. We need to be prepared to respond to them when they ask, "Who are you and why should I listen to you?"[3]

Accountability: When engaging with decision makers or other stakeholders on our cause, we must be ready to answer questions around our organisation's overall governance and structure, our donors, and how we engage with the communities affected by our advocacy work. While we work towards holding decision-makers accountable for their actions, we must also make sure that we remain accountable to the people affected by our work. For example, ensuring transparency in the evidence base used in advocacy, providing opportunities for engagement of stakeholders and members of target communities in establishing the advocacy priorities and strategy are some of the measures to ensure accountability. Furthermore, making sure that there are well-functioning feedback mechanisms that feed into impact measurement and overall learning are some of the practices that must be in place.[4]

Who advocates for whom?

Advocacy can be categorised by who does it. Advocacy work can be done by those directly affected by the issue **(by the people),** by a mix of affected and non-affected groups **(with the people)** or by non-affected groups on behalf of affected groups **(for the people)**. The advocates affected directly by the issue are often the most legitimate actors to take action, while for mixed groups, it is vital to ensure that the actions are guided by a shared set of values and understanding of the issue and the context. Advocating on behalf of others often requires more caution, as it may raise questions around legitimacy.

For diaspora actors, it is often a mix of all approaches. Diaspora advocates can be members of the communities affected by the issue or they may advocate for members of their communities elsewhere, either in origin countries or in other countries of residence. For example, if there is a security and safety concern that prevents communities in the country of origin or other countries of residence from mobilising and speaking out, diaspora members may want to take action on their behalf. While they are not directly affected by the issue, diaspora actors may be better positioned to influence and use this leverage to support affected groups. However, important to keep in mind for diaspora actors is the possibility of being disconnected from the actual reality in their countries of origin. Given the physical and mental distance, diaspora members can potentially unintendedly cultivate alternative imaginations of social change, which may not necessarily correspond with local aspirations in their homeland. In that case, it becomes vital to continuously engage in consultations with affected local communities and incorporate their inputs into programming in a systematic manner.[5]

Relevant concepts and approaches

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3   Ross, J. (2013), Advocacy A Guide for Small and Diaspora NGOs.

4   Hammer, M., Rooney, C. & Warren, S. (2010). Addressing accountability in NGO advocacy Practice, principles and prospects of self-regulation.

5   VSO (2009). Participatory advocacy: A toolkit for VSO staff, volunteers and partners., Ross, J. (2013). Advocacy A Guide for Small and Diaspora NGOs.

SECTION 2 - DEVELOPING AN ADVOCACY STRATEGY

The following sections provide practical guidance for diaspora groups, organisations and individuals to develop and implement an advocacy strategy. Advocacy processes can be thought of in five different stages as illustrated in Figure 2. Each step in the process of establishing an advocacy strategy helps to answer a range of key questions, which is summarised in the following table. These steps will be discussed in detail in the following sections**.**

Figure 2: Establishing an advocacy strategy

Table 1: Steps and tools to establish an advocacy strategy

Step	To identify...	Tools
Prioritise issues	What is it that you want to/can change?	Issue choice matrix Problem Tree
Assessing the external context	What is the problem?	SWOT analysis Force Field Analysis Allies and Opponents Matrix
Setting the theory of change, goal, objectives	How will change happen?	Logframe
Defining target audience	Who do you want to influence?	Power analysis
Developing core message	What is your message to your key audience?	Values, Problem, Solution, and Action - Human rights messaging
Selecting the right approach	How do you want to influence?	
Monitoring, evaluation, and learning	What is the impact of your work?	OECD DAC Criteria (Evaluation)

2.1. Prioritise issues

There are often too many issues that need addressing. However, one needs to prioritise issues based on resources, networks, interests and experience. Particularly for small organisations or organisations that are new in the advocacy field, it is a good idea to review existing strategies and narrow down the advocacy focus to one or two changes where one's organisation can make a larger impact with existing resources.

The number of issues that can be effectively tackled through advocacy will depend on resources. If you attempt to address every issue that is considered 'important', there is a risk of changing nothing.[6] Therefore efforts need to focus where the impact will be most significant. Effective advocates are consistent in their priorities and they are ready to compromise on less important issues to achieve maximum impact.[7] The Issue Choice Matrix is a tool that can help to identify and prioritise issues.

Tool 1: The Issue Choice Matrix[8]

The issue choice matrix is a tool to identify the advocacy issue where we can make the most impact, by ranking the issues according toa set criteria. The following table provides an example of a set of questions that might be considered for ranking issues. Every organisation has different priorities, and the list of questions that form the criteria may change depending on the issue and context.
Method:

1. Discuss the first advocacy issue and go down the list of each criteria.
2. Rate the issues against each criteria, from 1 to 5. If you think one criterion is more important than the other, give double points to that aspect, and rate from 1 to 10.
3. Add up the points. The issue that has the most points is the one that should be prioritised.

Table 2: Issue Choice Matrix

Criteria	Advocacy issue 1	Advocacy issue 2	Advocacy issue 3
Likelihood of success			
Potential for organisation to make a difference			
Aligns with organisation's area of expertise			
Possibility of building alliances with other actors			
Potential to involve those directly affected by the issue			
How passionate we are about the issue			
Total			

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6   VSO (2009) Participatory advocacy: A toolkit for VSO staff, volunteers and partners.

7   Ross, J. (2013). Advocacy A Guide for Small and Diaspora NGOs.

8   VSO (2009) Participatory advocacy: A toolkit for VSO staff, volunteers and partners.

Tool 2: Problem Tree[9]

In most cases, social problems are so complex that advocacy can only address a single aspect of a broader social issue. A problem tree analysis is a commonly used exercise across different fields to analyse the causes and effects of a certain issue, problem or conflict. It can be used both before and after identifying the main issue. It may help identify the issue whereby you can have the most impact or it can be used to better understand the causes and impacts of the core issue at hand. This exercise is best carried out in a participatory workshop with 6 to 8 people, using flip chart paper.

Method:

1. Draw a picture of a tree on a large sheet of paper, including its roots, trunk and branches. Put down one of the core problems in the trunk of the tree.
2. Distribute post-it papers to participants and encourage them to write a key factor related to the core problem.
3. Invite participants to stick their post-it notes on the tree: on the roots, if they think it is a root cause of the core issue, on the trunk if it's an aspect of the core problem, and on the branches if they think it is a consequence/effect of the problem.
4. Connect causes and impacts, with arrows showing how they contribute to each other
5. If there are multiple priority issues, repeat the same exercise for the other issues. If you have completed several trees, facilitate a discussion on how the different trees interact. For example, are there common causes to different problems? What are the similar patterns?
6. Following this discussion, you can use the trees to identify the potential areas of intervention, where you can have the maximum impact. The following questions can be used to facilitate a discussion: Given who we are and our scope of work, our capacities and resources, where can we make a difference? Will our intervention focus on alleviating the negative consequences or addressing the root causes? How can we best get to the core issue/problem?

Problem Tree
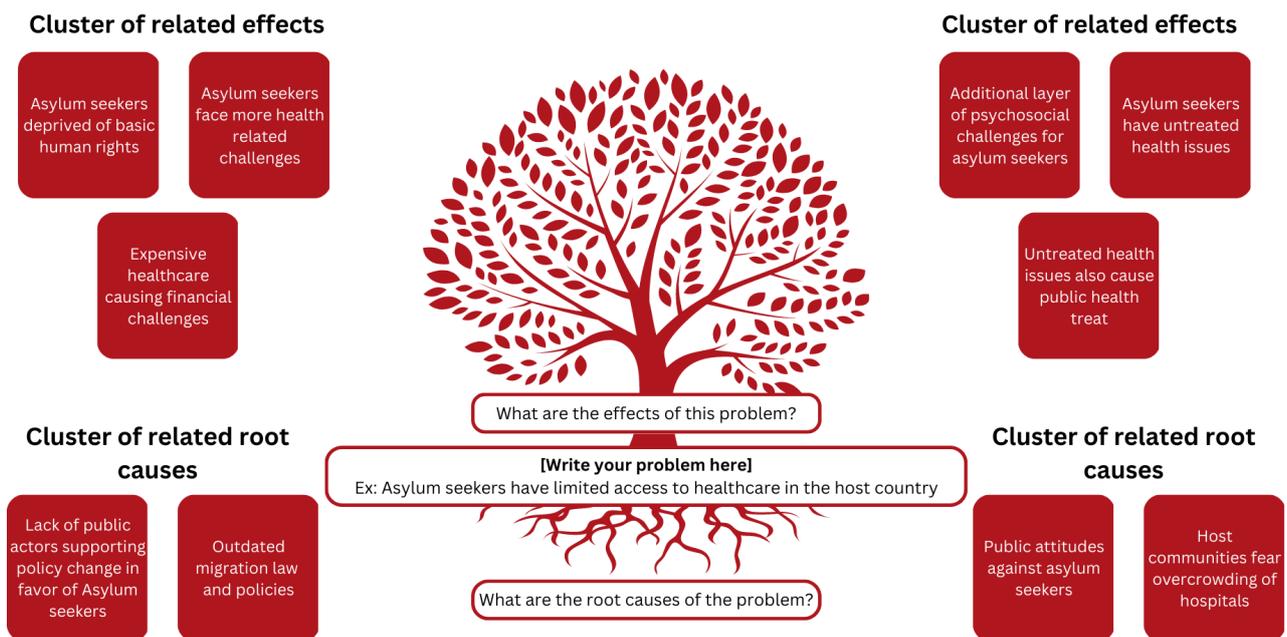
For more information on Problem Tree, see: ODI (2009). Successful Communication, A Toolkit for Researchers and Civil Society Organizations. Overseas Development Institute (ODI). (p.12) Retrieved from: https://cdn.odi.org/

Additional resources

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9   Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), 2017, Conflict Analysis Framework: Field Guidelines and Procedures.

Figure 3: Problem tree diagram example

Cluster of related effects

Asylum seekers deprived of basic human rights

Asylum seekers face more health related challenges

Expensive healthcare causing financial challenges

Cluster of related effects

Additional layer of psychosocial challenges for asylum seekers

Asylum seekers have untreated health issues

Untreated health issues also cause public health treat

What are the effects of this problem?

[Write your problem here]
Ex: Asylum seekers have limited access to healthcare in the host country

Cluster of related root causes

Lack of public actors supporting policy change in favor of Asylum seekers

Outdated migration law and policies

What are the root causes of the problem?

Cluster of related root causes

Public attitudes against asylum seekers

Host communities fear overcrowding of hospitals

Source: Created by authors based on template retrieved from Mural, accessible at: https://www.mural.co/templates/problem-tree-analysis

2.2. Assessing the external context

Context analysis

Once you identify the priority issue(s) you want to address and you know what you want to change, the next step is to find out "How will that change happen?". The answer to this question depends on the context you operate in and the issue you want to tackle. The ability of a diaspora organisation to influence policy as well as the scope and form of advocacy work depends on the target country's political, economic and social context.[10]

Especially, diaspora groups who come from less democratic countries and who position themselves in opposition to the government of origin, may see little avenues for collaboration and, hence, engage in more confrontational actions to call out injustices. The public discourse present in the country of origin may further shape the avenues for advocacy. In some cases, origin country actors might frame the diaspora as a distant member of the national community and see emigrants as 'hero and saviour of the nation', while in other cases those in exile might be perceived as troublemakers and traitors. When avenues for direct participation in the country of origin are close (e.g., in authoritarian regimes), diaspora actors may capitalise on the opportunities of expression and organising in the residence country to indirectly influence decision-making towards their cause. In the country of residence, some diaspora struggles are seen as more legitimate while for other diaspora groups the inside track is closed, often depending on the foreign policy stance of the country of residence, but also racist structures that value certain identities over others. Finally, institutions like the United Nations or the European Union, international non-governmental

10   Kathleen N. (2010). Voice After Exit: Diaspora Advocacy. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.

organisations (INGOs), and international humanitarian and human rights regimes can provide a platform for advocacy where diaspora actors can mobilise support and call for action and international recognition of their cause.

Figure 4: Levels of diaspora advocacy
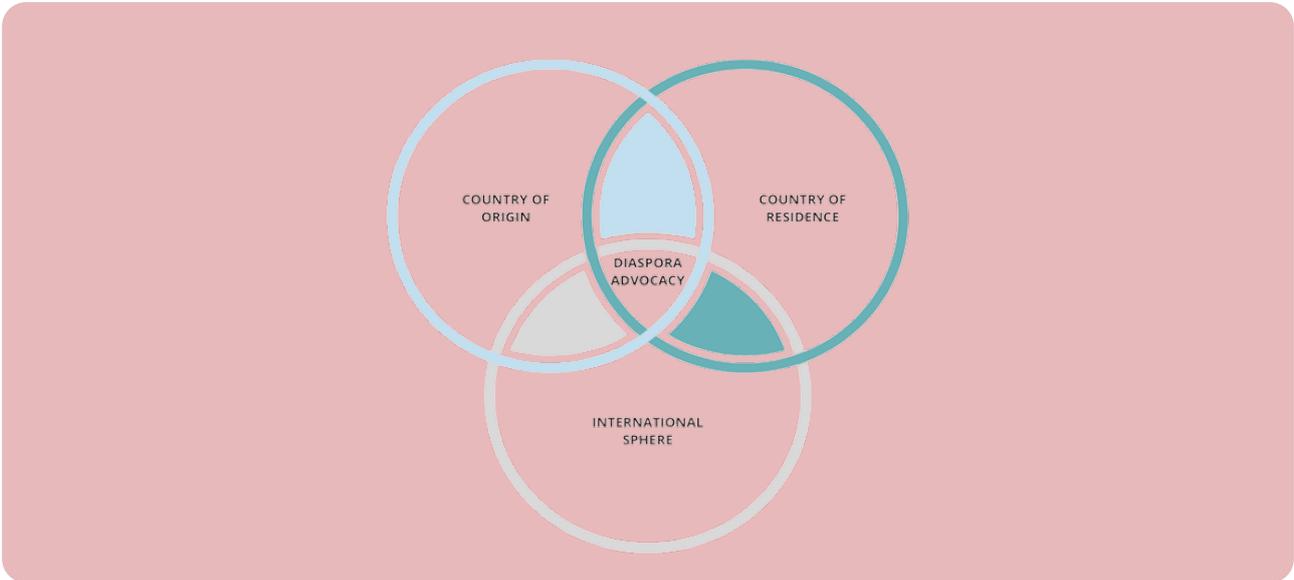
Thus, a crucial first step is to analyse the context surrounding your issue. Context analysis should be distinguished from conflict analysis: context analysis seeks to understand the broader situation, including all economic, social, and political factors, while conflict analysis focuses deliberately on the issue (or the conflict) itself to diagnose the root causes, actors involved, and the impacts of the conflict.[11]

Tool 1: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis

SWOT analysis is a common method used by organisations and companies to develop a full understanding and awareness of all the factors involved before they decide on any new strategy. For example, an organisation can undertake SWOT analysis to determine if it has the capacity to address a specific issue within the next year, by evaluating the internal and external context.

*Table **3**: SWOT analysis*

Strengths	Look at strengths (of the group/organisation/coalition, of the larger environment for addressing this issue)
Weaknesses	Evaluate weaknesses (of your group, organisation or coalition, of the broader context for addressing this issue)
Opportunities	Identify external opportunities that will work in favour of your campaign
Threats	Identify external threats that will work against your cause

Source: National Democratic Institute, SWOT Analysis for Advocacy Campaign

11   GPPAC (2017). Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict

Tool: Force Field Analysis

Another useful tool to conduct a context analysis is Force Field Analysis. It can be used by advocacy actors to analyse the broader social, political and economic environment that impacts the issue and goal. It allows us to assess and visualise the driving and hindering/restraining factors of an advocacy issue. The key assumption behind this tool is that any proposed change will have opponents and allies, and the key to achieving change is to shift the strength of force on each side in favour of the allies.[12]

Method:

1. State in one sentence the desired future - what do you want to achieve?
2. Make a list of forces driving and restraining the desired change.
3. Facilitate a discussion on the forces listed, agree on how critical/significant they are. You can do this by assigning scores between 1 and 5, with 5 being the most critical.
4. Draw a diagram showing the forces for and against change. You can indicate the significance or strength of each force by drawing different size bars/arrows (See Figure 5).

Force Field Analysis

For more information on Force Field Analysis, see: Mind Tool. Force Field Analysis- Analysing the pressures for and against change.

Retrieved from: https://www.mindtools.com/

Additional resources

Figure 5: Example of force field analysis

Forces of change (driving force)

Financial contributions of diaspora

Circulation of democratic norms and political remittances

Enhanced democratic legitimacy

Migrants right to vote at embassies

Forces against change (restraining force)

Cost

Fear of exile vote

Lack of support from resident citizens

VSO (2009) Participatory advocacy: A toolkit for VSO staff, volunteers and partners.

Mapping the players

Key to understanding how change will happen is knowing who will be involved in change, who has the power to make decisions in relation to your issue, and who is in the best position to influence them. This step also involves mapping out your potential allies and opponents. For any advocacy, human and financial resources are crucial - but alliances and connections with influential people is also invaluable.[13] Successful advocates are those who are able to build and maintain relationships that help them influence behaviours and policies in favour of their issue.[14]

For diaspora organisations, the kinds of organisations/institutions to include depend on the scope of your advocacy: do you target change in the country of residence to give more rights to migrants? Do you target change in a specific region in the country of origin to stop violations of women's rights? You need to make a list of all the institutions and individuals associated with the desired change. Some of the key stakeholders that you may want to include in your analysis are:

1. Decision-makers (major relevant power holders at global, regional, national or local level)
2. Advisors to decision-makers
3. Influencers in traditional and new media
4. Private sector
5. Civil society organisations
6. Religious and community leaders
7. International donors and international organisations
8. People disadvantaged by the issue
9. Allies
10. Opponents
11. People undecided on the issue (who you may be able to influence)

It is important to remember that you primarily want to influence people, not institutions. Thus, you need to do additional research in order to identify individuals within organisations and institutions who may be in favour of the change you desire. For example, if you discover that a local newspaper is an influential actor, you may investigate which individual(s) working at this local newspaper you need to influence. In order to influence people and organisations, a precondition is to understand their position, interests, motivations, priorities (rational, emotional and personal) and pathways to influence their opinions. You also need to uncover the relationships and tensions between different actors. If you better understand the positions and interests of different actors, you can make more strategic decisions in terms of the channel and tone needed to reach them.[15]

There are several tools available to support the development of a thorough picture of these players, their positions and interests as well as the power relations among them i.e., Decision and Influence Mapping, Allies and Opponents Matrix, and Other Player Analysis.

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13   Newland, K. (2010=. Voice After Exit: Diaspora Advocacy. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.

14   VSO (2009) Participatory advocacy: A toolkit for VSO staff, volunteers and partners.

15   ibid.

Tool 1: Allies and Opponents Matrix

An Allies and Opponents Matrix can be used to identify and categorise supporters and opponents of your advocacy issue. It also helps to identify those that are undecided about the issue, which makes them a potential target.

Method:

1. As in the Power Mapping tool, brainstorm all the organisations, institutions and individuals that are interested in your issue. Include all actors that have a stake in the issue, either for or against your argument.
2. In a participatory setting, place the actors in the below chart. During this discussion, you need to assess how much influence each actor has on the issue.
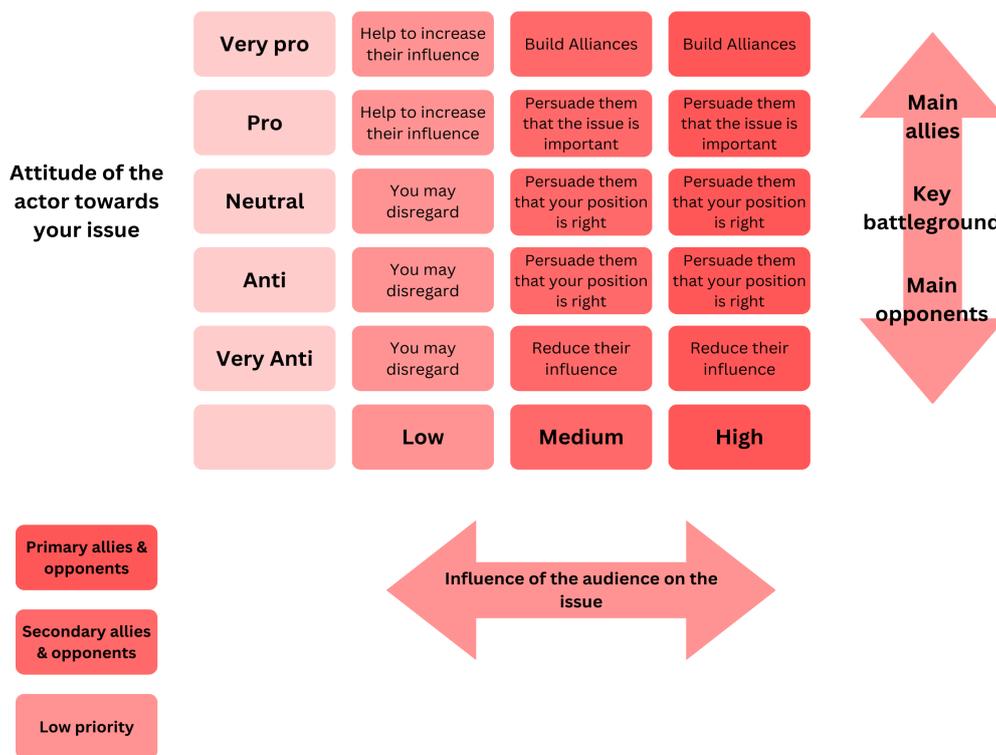
Figure 6: Allies and Opponents Matrix

Source: Adapted version from VSO (2009) Participatory advocacy: A toolkit for VSO staff, volunteers and partners (p. 85)

This exercise will reveal your primary and secondary allies, as well as those you may disregard while working on your strategy. For example, if you are advocating for refugee rights in your country of residence, one of the very anti actors could be an ultranationalist civil society organisation. However, if this organisation only has a small constituency, their engagement on the issue may not be worth worrying over. It is therefore important to visualise the intersection of influence and attitude towards the issue to identify which actors you must aim to influence, and in which way.

Once you complete this exercise, you can now discuss which influencing strategy is most appropriate and where you can have maximum impact. For example, the actors that have high influence and a s "very pro" stance towards your issue are your primary allies, and you may want to build alliances with these actors. Whereas, for those organisations with a very pro stance but low influence, a potential strategy is to work towards increasing their influence. Depending on where the actor is placed in the chart, different strategies of engagement can be put into place (See Figure 6).

Relevant tools

Tool: Spectrum of allies

Another tool to map different actors is the Spectrum of Allies developed by George Lakey, Training for Change. This tool is particularly useful for mapping actors and designing engagement strategies with regards to a particular issue, action and campaign or goal. By narrowing the focus to a specific issue, it encourages more optimistic and realistic efforts in building alliances for your action or campaign. Further information on this tool can be found in the second toolkit of this series: Networking and Alliance Building toolkit for diaspora organisations, Danish Refugee Council: https://drc.ngo/media/uhddmq0q/drc_diaspora_networks_alliances_toolkit_2021.pdf

2.3. Setting the theory of change, goal, objectives and indicators

The steps discussed so far were actions that had to be undertaken as part of the analysis stage to feed into your strategy and action plan. After careful selection of the priority issues where you have the most impact, and, drawing on the thorough analysis of the context and key players, you are now ready to develop your advocacy strategy. The first step is to develop your theory of change, goal(s), objective(s) and indicators of success and place them in a logical framework.

Theory of Change

Behind every advocacy effort there is at least one theory of change, although sometimes it is unstated, implicit or unexplored. A theory of change is a set of beliefs about how change happens. To develop your theory of change, you need to ask four simple questions:

1. What is the overall change we want to make?
2. What are the pre-conditions for that change?
3. What is your contribution?
4. What does progress look like?

When you answer these questions, you will develop the logic behind your advocacy. Theory of change links activities and results. They are often presented as "if, then" statements, which could look like the following:

If diaspora groups gain skills and understanding of advocacy techniques, **then** the host country public becomes more aware of human rights issues in diaspora groups' countries of origin. **Because gaining skills and understanding advocacy techniques will help** diaspora groups to effectively influence the public and decision-makers about human rights issues in their countries of origin.

Assumptions

When you develop a theory of change, you will need to make assumptions. Assumptions are ideas or arguments that are considered to be true or certain without evidence, in other words, "assumptions are the unproven connections between different levels".[16] However, it is important to keep in mind that assumptions involve a degree of risk. For example, an advocacy campaign to raise awareness of youth on refugee rights may want to do this through high school teachers who have access to youth. However, an assumption made here is that high school teachers are unbiased, therefore, well-positioned to sensitise high school students. The assumptions take for granted that teachers will be willing to advocate for refugee rights. A common mistake is to make assumptions about how change will happen. Therefore, we need to repeatedly ask ourselves "Why" to make sure that assumptions are valid. For example, do you have cultural assumptions about behaviours and attitudes? (e.g., dialogue leads to better relationships). Why do you believe that dialogue leads to better relationships? Or, for example, you may assume that greater transparency will lead to better governance. However, in some contexts, it may well lead to well-publicised corruption. It is therefore crucial to make your understanding of how and why you think things will work a certain way in your intervention explicit.[17]

Developing your theory of change

Bond is a UK-based network of civil society organisations providing useful resources to help organisations influence governments and policymakers at national and international levels through collective advocacy. Bond provides a simple and accessible guide which can help develop your Theory of Change:

Theory of change for advocacy and campaigns: https://bond.org.uk/resources/theory-of-change-for-advocacy-and-campaigns/

Checking your assumptions

For more guidance on checking your assumptions, see: Cheyanne Church and Mark M. Rogers, 2006, Designing for results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation In Conflict Transformation Programs.
https://www.sfcg.org/Documents/manualpart1.pdf

Additional resources

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16   Church, C. & Rogers, M. (2006). Designing for results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation In Conflict Transformation Programs

17   Ibid.

Setting the goal, objectives, and activities

Goals, objectives and activities must all be linked to your theory of change in that they represent the changes you hope to achieve. It is important to articulate clear goals, objectives and activities with logical links to your theory of change in order to increase the chance of achieving positive results. Objectives and goals are sometimes used interchangeably, however, they refer to different things and what level of change they refer to varies by organisation.

Goal: Your goal is what follows your "Then" statement in the theory of change. The "goal" refers to the highest level of change you hope to achieve through an intervention. Your goal is linked to the impact you want to make.

Objectives: Your objectives must describe the changes to happen for you to reach your goal. There are often multiple objectives that serve to achieve a goal. Your objectives are linked to the outcome of your advocacy work. For example, if your objective is to strengthen diaspora actors to advocate for policy change regarding discriminatory laws towards refugees in countries of residence, an outcome would be a more equitable and inclusive migration policy.

Activities: Activities are what follows your "if" statement in your theory of change. Activities are the concrete methods you will use to achieve your objectives. They could be protests, social media campaigns or podcasts and will result in tangible outputs.

In the following example, increasing awareness of the host country's public on human rights issues in the country of origin is the highest level of change that we want to achieve, and is therefore our goal. Our objective that will help us reach our goal is to effectively influence the public and decision makers about human rights issues in the country of origin. Gaining skills and understanding advocacy techniques represent our activities that help us reach the objective of effectively influencing public and key decision makers.

If diaspora groups gain skills and understanding of advocacy techniques, then the host country public becomes more aware of human rights issues in diaspora groups' countries of origin. Because gaining skills and understanding advocacy techniques will help diaspora groups to effectively influence the public and decision-makers about human rights issues in their countries of origin.

Figure 7: Project components
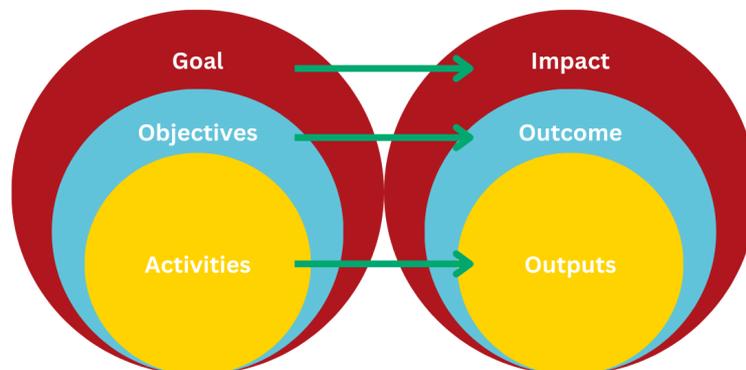
Source: Adapted from: Foundational Design & Monitoring training session by Jessica Baumgardner-Zuzik, from Alliance for Peacebuilding as part of Rotary Peace Fellowship programme. October 2022.

It can be a complex process to connect the pieces of your programming together in a logical manner, but when conducted in a participatory process, it will help produce a shared understanding of what change you want to bring and how. Engaging in this process is crucial for the monitoring, evaluation and learning activities. Fortunately, there are very useful tools that can help to create this framework.

Tool 1: Logframe

Logframe provides a valuable tool to highlight the logical linkages between the different components of an advocacy project. It helps link together a project's theory of change, goal, objectives, activities and impact, and presents the entire logic of a program in one table. It allows us to track whether actions serve the theory of change. It helps practitioners to improve the planning, implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation of projects. The following template can be used to record your advocacy goal, objectives, and activities. The indicator column reflects your indicators of success, which can be used to monitor your progress (see next section).

Table 4: Logframe template

THEORY OF CHANGE: If … then … because …					
	Impact	Indicator	Data collection method	Target	Assumptions/Notes
Goal					
	Outcome	Indicator	Data collection method	Target	Assumptions/Notes
Objective 1					
	Output	Indicator	Data collection method	Target	Assumptions/Notes
Activity 1.1.					
Activity 1.2.					
Activity 1.3.					
	Outcome	Indicator	Data collection method	Target	Assumptions/Notes
Objective 2					
	Output	Indicator	Data collection method	Target	Assumptions/Notes
Activity 2.1.					
Activity 2.2.					
Activity 2.3.					
	Outcome	Indicator	Data collection method	Target	Assumptions/Notes
Objective 3					
	Output	Indicator	Data collection method	Target	Assumptions/Notes
Activity 3.1.					
Activity 3.2.					
Activity 3.3.					

Creating a set of indicators to measure impact

To measure impact, you will need to create indicators that correspond to the elements of your project (See Table 2, column 3). Your indicators should give an in-depth understanding of change. One way of creating indicators is organising a participatory workshop to agree on the focus of the analysis, define concepts and create short-term, intermediate and long-term indicators based on the theory of change. For example, if your goal is to increase labour market access of refugees in your country of residence, a **short-term indicator** could be the number of people contacted with your core message and the number of people who took action because of your campaign. The **intermediate indicators** could be the number

and type of supportive statements made by policy makers. To assess more **long-term** results, a possible indicator could be the extent to which facilitating refugees' labour market access is prioritised in a new policy.

Additional resources

Indicator guidance

Save the Children's open education session on "Monitoring and evaluating advocacy and campaigns" provides detailed guidance on how to create indicators to successfully monitor and evaluate advocacy. It can be accessed here: https://www.open.edu/openlearncreate/mod/resource/view.php?id=53739

Additional resources

Eirene Peacebuilding Database

In this database, you can find more than 3,300 indicators that are compiled together from publicly available peacebuilding resources. You can search for indicators based on country, field and program activities. If your organisation is engaged in peacebuilding or if your advocacy issue is linked to a conflict, this is a great resource to help you figure out potential indicators to measure your impact. It is completely fine to use pre-used indicators in your programming if it fits well with your theory of change.

You can reach the database via:
https://www.allianceforpeacebuilding.org/eirene-peacebuilding-database

2.4. Defining the target audience

The main target audience will often be decision makers and the individuals, organisations and institutions who can influence them. Decision-makers are often the primary audience, and they could include the country's President, the Prime Minister, ministers, parliamentarians, mayors, religious leaders (depending on their roles in different contexts), donor organisations, UN agencies, other multilateral organisations and community leaders. Influencers are often considered as a secondary audience, and they may include other diaspora organisations, civil society organisations, opinion leaders, the media, international leaders, religious leaders, celebrities, social media influencers, teachers, professors and researchers.

It is important to note that your target audience is different to your stakeholders. While stakeholders are people and organisations that are related to your issue in some way, target audiences are those who are in a position or have the power to bring about change.

The identification of targets should be guided by the question "Who has the power to make change happen?". Tools such as power analysis can help you to find out who your primary and secondary audiences are.

Tool 1: Power Analysis[18]

Power analysis is a useful tool to identify 1) who you need to target to bring about change and; 2) who can influence your key targets. It is different from stakeholder mapping or allies and opponents matrix as power analysis is only concerned with actors that can directly or indirectly make change happen.

The tool assumes that for any proposed change there are some stakeholders in favour of and some against. With this tool, we can visualise the relative power and relationships between different targets that can affect your issue and campaign. As with all the tools, it is best done in teams as a participatory exercise.[19]

Method:

1. With your team, brainstorm and make a list of all key institutions/organisations/groups and individuals relevant to your issue. Also include your own group so it's clear how to proceed with your advocacy strategy.
2. Discuss how important each institution/organisation or individual is. Then discuss:
    a. Do they agree or disagree with you on this issue? (level of support)
    b. How much power/influence do they have over your issue? (level of influence)
3. Draw axes with influence/power in one axis, and support (whether they agree or not) in the other axis.
4. Plot each player on the axes, depending on their level of influence and support for your cause.
5. Identify the level of contact/relationship between each circle. Draw arrows in different sizes to reflect the degree of potential influence between actors. For example, take note of where one organisation can encourage another to do something or if they collaborate on certain programs.
6. Formulate 'learning questions' in order to further improve your power map to feed into your strategy (e.g., check your network to see if you have connections with anyone from those institutions)

Figure 8: Power analysis and potential engagement strategies

_____
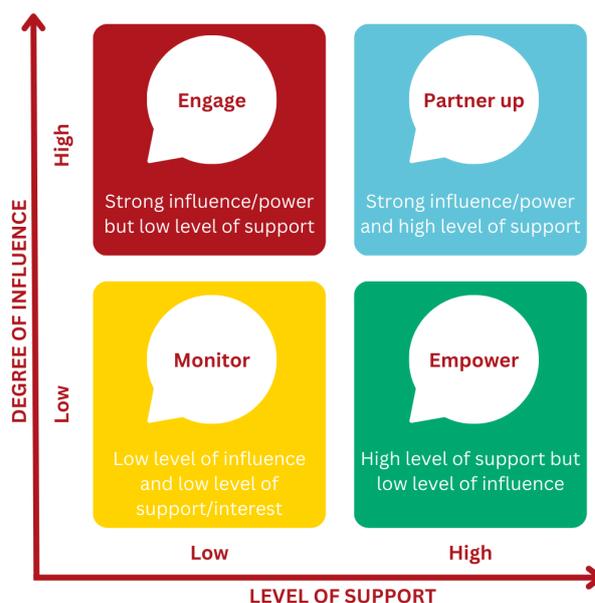
18   Also called Venn Diagram, Systems Mapping or Chapatti Diagram

19   Tang, A. (n.d.). Power Mapping and Analysis. The Commons: Social Change library. Retrieved from: https://commonslibrary.org/guide-power-mapping-and-analysis/

The position of the individuals, organisations or institutions on this axis can help to determine your strategy of engagement. For example, if the organisation has a high level of influence and high level of support, a useful strategy is to join forces and build alliances with them. Or, if the organisation/individual highly supports your cause but does not have a strong influence on the system, you can think about ways with which to build their capacity and how to empower them to become stronger players in the system. You may not want to target those actors with a low level of support and low degree of influence, as they most likely will not be willing or able to contribute to the change you want to achieve. However, as contexts tend to be dynamic, you may want to keep an eye on them, to monitor if their position is changing over the course of your campaign or project.[20]

Power analysis tool

For a more detailed discussion and visualisation of the Power Analysis Tool, see: Networking and alliance building toolkit for diaspora organisations, Danish Refugee Council: https://drc.ngo/media/uhddmq0q/drc_diaspora_networks_alliances_toolkit_2021.pdf

The Beautiful Trouble Toolbox: https://www.beautifultrouble.org/toolbox/#/tool/power-mapping.

Commons Social Change Library: https://commonslibrary.org/guide-power-mapping-and-analysis/

Additional resources

Various and dynamic forms of power

Power comes in different forms in different contexts, thus, identifying your primary and secondary audience may not be a straightforward process. Hidden and invisible forms of power may go unnoticed in your power analysis. You need to think about the cultural norms and beliefs that may underlie policies and practices, and, go beyond the usual suspects and think about people behind the scenes.[21] For example, in authoritarian states with neoliberal economic policies, a small group of wealthy elite may have more influence over decisions than opposition parties. Also, it is important to keep our power analysis up to date - the degree of influence and support of actors may change over time, as well as the power dynamics among them.

Relevant concepts and approaches

2.5. Developing the core message

Once you have identified the people or organisations/institutions that you need to influence to bring about change, you then need to work on a core message that will convince your audience. A core message should present a strong argument for change. It must answer the following questions, in an accessible and concise manner:

1. What do you want to achieve?
2. When do you want to achieve it?
3. Why is the change important? (support with evidence, statistics and information)
4. How will the change happen?

20   Ragab, N.J. & Diker, E. (2021). Networking and alliance building toolkit for diaspora organisations, Danish Refugee Council: https://drc.ngo/media/uhddmq0q/drc_diaspora_networks_alliances_toolkit_2021.pdf

21   Save the Children, Advocacy and Campaigning: Identifying and influencing advocacy targets https://www.open.edu/openlearncreate/mod/resource/view.php?id=53741

Remember advocacy messages are not just about disseminating information to your audience, they are also about persuading and influencing them. Infographics are useful to show evidence, but you need strong messaging to get to your audience and persuade them.

If you have a diverse audience, you need to remember to tailor your message depending on chosen target audiences. People in decision-making roles rarely have time to read lengthy emails coming from unknown addresses - you need to think about creative ways of making your message relevant, persuasive and memorable.[22]

Your core message should ideally include a statement of problem and the desired action, evidence based on statistics and data and an example of the affected groups.

Example: Oxfam's core message on ending violence against women and girls

Oxfam's advocacy campaign to stop violence against women and girls provides a good example of a powerful core message.

Say 'Enough' to violence against women and girls

"Every minute of the day, violence is devastating the lives of millions of women and girls around the world. It is a global crisis, already affecting one in three women in their lifetime, devastating their lives and fracturing communities.

Violence against women and girls knows no boundaries of geography or culture - but those living in poverty face higher levels of abuse. It is rooted in the inequality between men and women that women and girls face throughout their lives.

Some believe that violence toward women and girls is not their business. Some believe it is even normal. Many don't challenge it – even if they think it's not acceptable.

But everywhere in the world, people are standing up and speaking out. Women's rights organizations are already saving lives in tackling violence against women and girls. We stand with them to call for all women, men, girls and boys to say 'Enough' to violence against women and girls.

Together we can change these harmful beliefs. What is learned can be unlearned."
To read more: https://www.oxfam.org/en/take-action/campaigns/say-enough-violence-against-women-and-girls

Case examples

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22   Ross, J. (2013). Advocacy A Guide for Small and Diaspora NGOs.

Tool: Values, Problem, Solution, and Action (VPSA) - Human rights messaging
The Opportunity Agenda has designed a simple human rights messaging formula called VPSA: Values, Problem, Solution, and Action.

Figure 9: Human rights messaging

VPSA - Human rights messaging

VALUE	PROBLEM	SOLUTION	ACTION
The human rights message	**The human rights violation or abuse**	**The change being sought**	**The steps to address the violation**
Leading with values creates broad points of agreement and shared goals. Reflect - why your audience should care?	Being explicit about the problem creates a sense of urgency and connects your values and individual stories to broader systems and dynamics. Document and describe.	Solutions give audiences a sense of hope and motivation. Connect them to the problem and make clear where the responsibility for change lies.	Actions give the audience a concrete next step that they can picture themselves doing, and creates a feeling of agency. Reflect - what can your audience concretely do?

Source: Adapted from The Opportunity Agenda (n.D). A Communications Toolkit.

How to ensure effective public communication on migration? Value-based approach to awareness campaigns

There are several studies published by advocacy groups and practitioners on how to ensure strategic and effective messaging on migration. A key recommendation highlighted in many of these studies is communicating with a focus on values of the target groups. The basis of the value-based approach lies in Schwartz's psychological theory of "basic human values" which lists 10 basic human values.[23] Some scholars used Schwartz's value system and European Social Survey to predict the association between these values and attitudes towards immigration.[24] [25] These studies found that people with values such as universalism, benevolence, stimulation and self-direction are more likely to indicate positive attitudes towards migration whereas population groups which dominantly value security, conformity, tradition and power are more likely to view migrants negatively.

Turning to the link between values and public communication, past studies found that messages with a value-basis that aligns with the values of the target group are more likely to elicit sympathy among the audience. On the opposite, messages that emphasise values that clash with the values of the audience would elicit antipathy. Then, if the aim of our awareness campaign is to positively change public attitude towards and perceptions of migration, a key lesson is to communicate on migration using a value-base that is associated with anti-immigrant attitudes, such as security, conformity, tradition and power. In this case, those who are already pro-immigration, will be indifferent to the messaging, while those who are opposed to immigration on a moderate level may be convinced via the messages framed around their own values, therefore a shift can be observed towards a more pro-immigration stance.[4] If the values align with what the pro-immigrant audiences already uphold, then the messaging will only energise further the pro-immigrant groups, while eliciting antipathy among those who already have negative views about immigration, thus, increasing the polarisation in the society.

Interestingly, a review of 98 pro-migration campaigns in Dennison's (2019) review shows that value-based approach is rarely used by pro-immigrant campaigners, while anti-immigration campaigns often adopt this approach.

Relevant concepts and approaches

23   Dennison, J. (2019). What policy communication works for migration? Using values to depolarise.

24   Davidov, E. & Meuleman, B. (2012). Explaining attitudes towards immigration policies in European countries: The role of human values. Journal of Ethnic & Migration Studies 38:757–775.

25   Sagiv, L. & Schwartz, S. (1995). Value priorities and readiness for out-group social contact. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 69:437–448.

2.6. Selecting the right approach

There are often multiple pathways to change, but you need to select the right (mix of) approaches that have the greatest likelihood of leveraging the desired change. Here, you need to ask yourself: "Which advocacy methods are most effective and appropriate for the change we want to achieve?"

There are many different methods diaspora organisations can use, ranging from direct lobbying to public demonstrations, use of media, to organising awareness raising events. These methods are discussed in detail in Chapter 3, while this section will focus on how to select the methods that are more likely to yield positive outcomes. Some key recommendations are listed below:

1. Check your internal capacities: make an internal assessment of your organisational capacity, for example with a Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis (see p.9 for SWOT analysis)
2. Be cautious about the potential risks associated with each approach - if you operate in an authoritarian context, you may not want to take the risk of calling people out to the streets. At the same time, in countries where civil society has a limited space, you may consider more high-level lobbying rather than public campaigning. Because if there is limited space for civic engagement, public campaigning may not be effective.
3. Check your power analysis: do you know individuals that are in a position of power or influence?
4. If you use a combination of different methods, make sure they complement each other. For instance, if you will organise a policy seminar and run a public campaign, make sure that the campaign begins before the seminar so that the seminar builds on that momentum of the campaign. If there are different teams undertaking the advocacy action plan, it is important to ensure that they regularly meet and update each other to maintain that complementarity.[26]

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26   VSO (2009). Participatory advocacy: A toolkit for VSO staff, volunteers and partners.

2.7. Planning monitoring, evaluation and learning

Monitoring, evaluation and learning are different but interrelated processes.
Monitoring is the assessment of the program's effectiveness over time. It is a continuous process of data collection and analysis of data that allows us to track progress towards objectives over time. To be able to do this, you will rely on the set of indicators that you established to help you measure your progress, make adjustments and ensure that your program does no harm.[27] (See Section 2.3 - Creating indicators)
Evaluation is a more in-depth process that takes place at a particular point in time and makes an assessment of the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of programmes.[28]

Resources

Oxfam's "A Quick Guide to Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) in Fragile Contexts" provides an overview of guiding principles that must be considered in developing MEAL processes in fragile contexts. The toolkit can be accessed here:

https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/a-quick-guide-to-monitoring-evaluation-accountability-and-learning-in-fragile-c-297134/

Additional resources

Learning is bigger than the sum of monitoring and evaluation (M&E). While M&E helps to track progress and evaluate the performance in different aspects and learn from it, there are other ways of learning, such as peer-to-peer learning sessions, sharing best practices, and organising listening sessions to hear about the challenges faced during an advocacy campaign. In advocacy work, it is important to keep the human connection. Research shows that the number of social movements is increasing over time - more and more people mobilise for their cause, but the success rate is diminishing.[29] One possible reason is the increasing share of digital mobilisation over time, which potentially leads to loss of the social skills of actually doing something together. It is therefore important to have that physical space to share and learn from each other, create learning opportunities with other diaspora organisations, allies, and affected communities.

A learning strategy must be designed at the beginning of every program - once your theory of change, goal, objectives, activities and success indicators are set. Learning is key for advocacy groups to improve their influencing strategies and maximise their impact. To achieve continuous learning and improvement, you need to translate experience into information and make it accessible. Making knowledge accessible is a form of empowerment itself.

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27   Oxfam. (2013). A Quick Guide to Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning in Fragile Contexts. https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/a-quick-guide-to-monitoring-evaluation-accountability-and-learning-in-fragile-c-297134/

28   The OECD DAC Network on Development Evaluation (EvalNet) has defined these criteria, which is widely used by civil society organisations. For further guidance, see: https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm

29   Chenoweth, E. (2020). The Future of Nonviolent Resistance, Journal of Democracy, 31(3), 69-84.

SECTION 3 - METHODS AND TOOLS FOR ADVOCACY IN ACTION

3.1. Making Use of the Inside Track

The political influence that diaspora actors leverage through activities such as lobbying and advising the country of origin and the country of residence has been widely documented. For example, after years of significant pressures from the diaspora, Mexico granted non-resident nationals the right to vote in 2005[30]. In the context of Nigeria, while unsuccessful in securing the right to vote in general elections, Nigerian diaspora groups have petitioned the Nigerian government for extraterritorial voting rights and have used the issue of voting as a key point in testing the government's commitment to diaspora engagement[31].

Yet, less democratic, and more authoritarian origin-country regimes often tend to provide fewer avenues for direct political influences, especially when the legitimacy of the government is contested by diaspora actors. A fragile political context, with high instability, weak political institutions and high levels of corruption, or personal experience of government repression, often generates mistrust towards political processes, limiting the willingness to engage with the government in the origin country[32].

In these contexts, diaspora groups may reach out to country of residence governments to influence the political process indirectly. The Chilean and Argentinian diasporas, for instance, lobbied European governments to apply universal jurisdiction laws when former members of the regime accused of gross violations of human rights entered the territory of the host country[33]. Kurdish diaspora groups' active lobbying efforts have contributed to the recognition of Saddam Hussein's Anfal campaign, that targeted Kurdish villages, as genocide by the Swedish, Norwegian, and British government in 2012–13[34]. However, the sphere of influence depends above all on the extent to which the position of the diaspora advocates is in line with the foreign policy stance of the country of residence and what priority the issue has on the political agenda.

Lobbying or advising by directly targeting lawmakers and other government officials with the goal of changing laws and government policy can be a central tool for advocacy, especially when the cause is based more on cooperation, rather than confrontation. In the context of origin countries, approaching embassies and high commissions or diaspora offices and ministries can be a good starting point for lobbying efforts. In countries of residence, the foreign office or ministries of economic cooperation, may be targeted for indirect influences on the origin country's political processes. For causes related to migrant´s rights, the ministry of interior, as well as local government authorities might be critical focal points. Targeting key institutions like the European Union and bodies of the United Nations to influence the decision-making process presents another alternative avenue for advocacy.

30   Turcu, A., & Urbatsch, R. (2015). Diffusion of Diaspora Enfranchisement Norms: A Multinational Study. Comparative Political Studies, 48(4), 407–437.

31   Binaisa, N. (2013). Nigeria @ 50: Policies and Practices for Diaspora Engagement. In M. Collyer (Ed.), *Emigration Nations* (pp. 226–251). London: Palgrave Macmillan.

32   Ragab, N. & Antara, L. (2018). Political Participation of Refugees. The Case of Afghan and Syrian Refugees in Germany, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Stockholm.

33   Mey, E. (2008). *Briefing Paper: Cambodian Diaspora Communities in Transitional Justice*. International Center for Transitional Justice: New York.

34   Baser, B., & Toivanen, M. (2017). The politics of genocide recognition: Kurdish nation-building and commemoration in the post-Saddam era. *Journal of Genocide Research, 19(3), 404–426.*

Face-to-face meetings

In pursuing lobbying efforts, organising face-to-face meetings with decision-makers can be a highly effective way to influence policy change.

Preparing for the meeting

Choosing the main message you want to deliver. Often, we are driven by a portfolio of needs and demands, and we want to use the opportunity to articulate as much as possible to show the importance and complexity of our cause. This risks that your message gets lost in the details and you may end up with little success. Choosing the message you want to deliver, knowing the particular issue in depth, but also being familiar with opposing views and having arguments in response to them is crucial to achieve policy change.

Knowing the decision-maker: Doing some research to better understand the decision-maker´s current stance on the issue, statements, and party positions, as well as the different institutions' programs and policy related to the issue, can help you to align your message(s) accordingly and to frame your (counter-) arguments.

Preparing one-pagers or a leave-behind product: Documents that present your policy position, including key facts and stories that support your message, as well as your contact information, ensure that your main points can be used and followed-up after the meeting.

A one-pager is a document that summarises the main message, your solutions to the problem and the action you hope to see, and should follow a concrete structure and format:

1. **A strong title** that clearly states what your ask is and that clearly shows the main benefit of your demands.
2. **A summary of your cause** in three main points (in bullet form or in subheads) that describe **1) the problem, 2) the impact, and 3) the ask**. You can flesh out each of the points with 3-4 sentences, where you put facts, figures, and statistics to bolster arguments.
3. **A paragraph that highlights your solution(s)** and offers a concrete plan of what should happen next.
4. **A conclusion with a call-to-action** that clearly states which concrete actions you would like to see.
5. Your contact information

A 'leave-behind' is a printed communication material that provides key messages. It follows a similar logic as the one pager, as it illustrates the problem, solution, and a call for action, yet uses visuals and infographics to support messaging.

During the meeting

Structuring the discussion with pre-assigned roles: To make sure that your message is delivered clearly and to show that you are prepared and well-organised, it is advisable to pre-assign roles and try to adhere to a structure to perform a powerful presentation.

1. **The host** introduces the participants, provides a brief summary of organisations present and thanks the decision-maker for the meeting. You can also highlight some favourable positions the

decision-maker has already taken in relation to your cause, to create a friendly and open climate. The host may also take notes of the meeting for internal record-keeping.

2. **The spokesperson** then delivers the overall background and purpose of the meeting and will facilitate the discussion.

3. **The priority messenger** opens the discussion by framing the key message(s) to convey, also taking a position and identifying any relevant legislation or policy.

4. **The storyteller** supports the message by showing how the policy affects people's real lives. The story should connect your priorities, the policymaker's priorities and the priorities of the affected people.

5. **The data provider** outlines memorable statistics to emphasise your points and is prepared to offer additional information, facts and data if required.

6. **The spokesperson** then makes a specific request for legislative or policy action. If the decision-maker seems supportive, they ask for a specific commitment.

7. **The host** concludes by thanking the decision-maker for hearing your concerns. You can also hand out the prepared documents (one pager, leave behind) and highlight that you are open for follow-ups.

Figure 10: Face-to-face meeting structure

The Host	Primary Spokesperson	Priority Messenger	The Storyteller	The Data Provider
introduces all participants in your group and thanks the policy or decion-maker for their time.	delivers the overall background and purpose for your visit, and who guides the conversation for your group	delivers the key messages you want to convey with regard to specific policies or needs.	provides the "real world" context about the issue by sharing stories of constituents directly affected by the policy.	supplies the facts and figures tat support the emotional side of your issue.

Source: Adapted from Advocacy & Communication Solutions (2015) Key Tips for Meeting With Policymakers

After the meeting

Debrief immediately. Debriefing right after the meeting when memories are still fresh will help you to avoid forgetting valuable aspects of the meeting. Reflecting what went well and what needs to be improved in the future will help you to identify learnings for successful advocacy techniques for the future.

Following-up with a thank-you note: You can highlight an expression of appreciation, restate, and reinforce your message and any verbal commitments made by the decision-makers and include additional information if promised in the meeting.

Tracking response and action: You should stay connected and track if decision-makers took any action in response to your requests. If they took favourable action, you could thank them and spread the success through your communication channels. In case of inaction, you may want to request an explanation or discuss if you want to put outside pressure to ensure accountability.

Writing letters to decision makers

While face-to-face meetings are valuable in creating more personal relations with decision-makers, which in turn may help to deliver your message and secure support more easily, it also requires access to those in power. Writing letters to decision-makers presents another easy and cost-effective way to express your opinion(s) and get your message(s) across. You can distinguish between two types of letters:

Lobbying letters are addressed directly and only to the relevant decision-makers (primary targets), and aim to mobilise support for your cause from within the government or institutions.

Open letters are shared with a wider public audience to garner public support for a cause and are usually published in some forum, e.g., on your web presence, a newspaper, or an email list.

Who is your target audience?

Before writing the letter, the first step is to identify your primary target. Knowing the target is not only crucial for personalising your letter, but also helps to select the best way, topics and messages to influence decision-makers. Section 2.2 offers practical guidance for mapping out who your potential allies and opponents are. The following questions can help you in the decision who to target:

1. Who has the power to make the change you are seeking?
2. Do you have somebody in your team who had previous contact or relations to the decision-makers
3. What is their current position on the issue? And how does it align or conflict with your cause?
4. Are the decision-makers open to support your cause and create pressure from within the government? Are they open to external pressure and if so, from whom?
5. What are the best ways to influence them?

Sometimes it can be a wise decision to write to a secondary rather than primary target, especially when those in power might be difficult to reach and/or you have a close relationship with a person (e.g., advisory to the decision-making) that is able to influence them.

To get your message and position across, you need to ensure that your letter follows a coherent structure. Keeping your letter short – one page – will have more impact than a longer one. Next to the formal requirements, including the official's name, title, address, your contact information and the date of the letter. A letter usually maintains the following components:

1. **Introduction paragraph:** says why you are writing the letter, e.g., in response to a public statement, with reference to a specific development/event, with regards to an upcoming meeting, or to follow up a previous request. You need to make clear for whom you are speaking and what has prompted you to do so.
2. **Main body:** develops your argument, backing it up with concrete and credible information, facts, figures, specific cases, quotes, relevant legislation.

3. **Concluding paragraph:** states what concrete action you would like the official to take, for example: granting a meeting, stating their position, asking questions in parliament, contacting a particular minister or government leader on your behalf, inviting you to address the issue in a hearing.

Relevant tools and guidance

Practical tips for letter writing

1. **Personalise the letter:** The most effective letters are individually written and add a personal touch. Even if you use templates found online, you should phrase the letter in your own words and perspective.
2. **Remember the audience:** Letters should address the target's interests and concerns directly. You need to make clear how they will benefit from your suggestion and point out a goal that is important to the recipient(s) and that can be attained by taking the action you call for.
3. **Encourage influential people in positions of authority to write** letters can help to amplify your cause. One well-argued statement from an influential person or group can have more impact than hundreds of letters.
4. **Mobilising supporters to write or sign**, especially in cases of open letters**,** needs efforts to collect signatories. This can include, spreading sample letters and addresses in your newsletter, posting letters on your websites/social media profiles, organising letter-writing evenings, or setting up tables and inviting members of the public to sign letters.
5. **Ensure representation of marginalised groups**, by making it explicit that you invite people from different backgrounds to write letters. This not only helps you to increase the number of letters, but also demonstrates that your cause is supported by a wide cross-section of society.
6. **Providing templates or text "building blocks"** that contain the main points the letter needs to include, so that your team and our supporters do not have to draft letters from scratch.

3.2. Making Use of International Mechanisms

International human rights regimes can provide a platform for advocacy where diaspora actors can mobilise support and call for action and international recognition of their cause. As part of your advocacy strategy, you can evaluate whether to bring the matter to the attention of an international or regional human rights body. There are numerous international mechanisms that exist to support in pressuring origin country governments and other key actors to protect the human rights you want to ensure.

Opportunities for advocacy range from the submission of information to United Nations treaty bodies or committees, to using international mechanisms to garner media attention, boosting local advocacy efforts.

Engagement with the United Nations

The United Nations recognizes the importance of partnering with civil society and offers several opportunities for civil society engagement. Finding avenues for advocacy and to navigate the international system may take some time and effort. Identifying and reaching out to organisations that already interact with the UN can help to get some guidance.

PILnet – Legal Assistance

PILnet works towards creating opportunities for social change by unlocking law's full potential. With programs in Europe & Eurasia, Asia, and at the global level, the organisation aims to reclaim and reimagine the role of law so that it works for the benefit of all. Through their Legal Assistance Programme, PILnet offers free legal assistance from expert lawyers to help organisations to advance their missions and protect their operations. Legal support includes advice and advocacy, research, analysis and drafting, and training.

Website: https://www.pilnet.org/

Additional resources

The UN NGO Liaison Unit and UPR Info also provide information and assistance to interested civil society organisations (see Box below for more information).

Applying for consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC): A consultative status with the Economic and Social Council provides non-governmental organisations (NGOs) access not only to ECOSOC, but also to its many subsidiary bodies, to the various human rights mechanisms of the United Nations, ad-hoc processes on small arms, as well as special events organised by the President of the General Assembly.

Registering at the Integrated Civil Society Organizations (iCSO) System: The Integrated Civil Society Organizations System provides online registration of general profiles for civil society organisations, including address, contacts, activities and meeting participation. It facilitates the application procedure for consultative status with ECOSOC, and assists accredited NGOs in submitting quadrennial reports and in designating representatives to the United Nations.

Additional resources

NGO Liaison Unit

The NGO Liaison Unit is the focal point for matters on relations between the United Nations and civil society. The main functions of the NGO Liaison are based on ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31 that sets out the arrangements for consultation with NGOs. Among others, the Unit provides information, assistance and guidance to representatives of NGOs on opportunities for engagement with the United Nations and on issues under consideration by appropriate United Nations bodies.

Email: unog.ngo@un.org
Website: https://www.ungeneva.org/en/practical-information/civil-society#section-1279

UPR Info

UPR Info is an international non-profit and non-governmental organisation based in Geneva, Switzerland, that aims at amplifying the voice of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) by supporting their advocacy efforts to address human rights violations within their country, a UN Member State under UPR review.
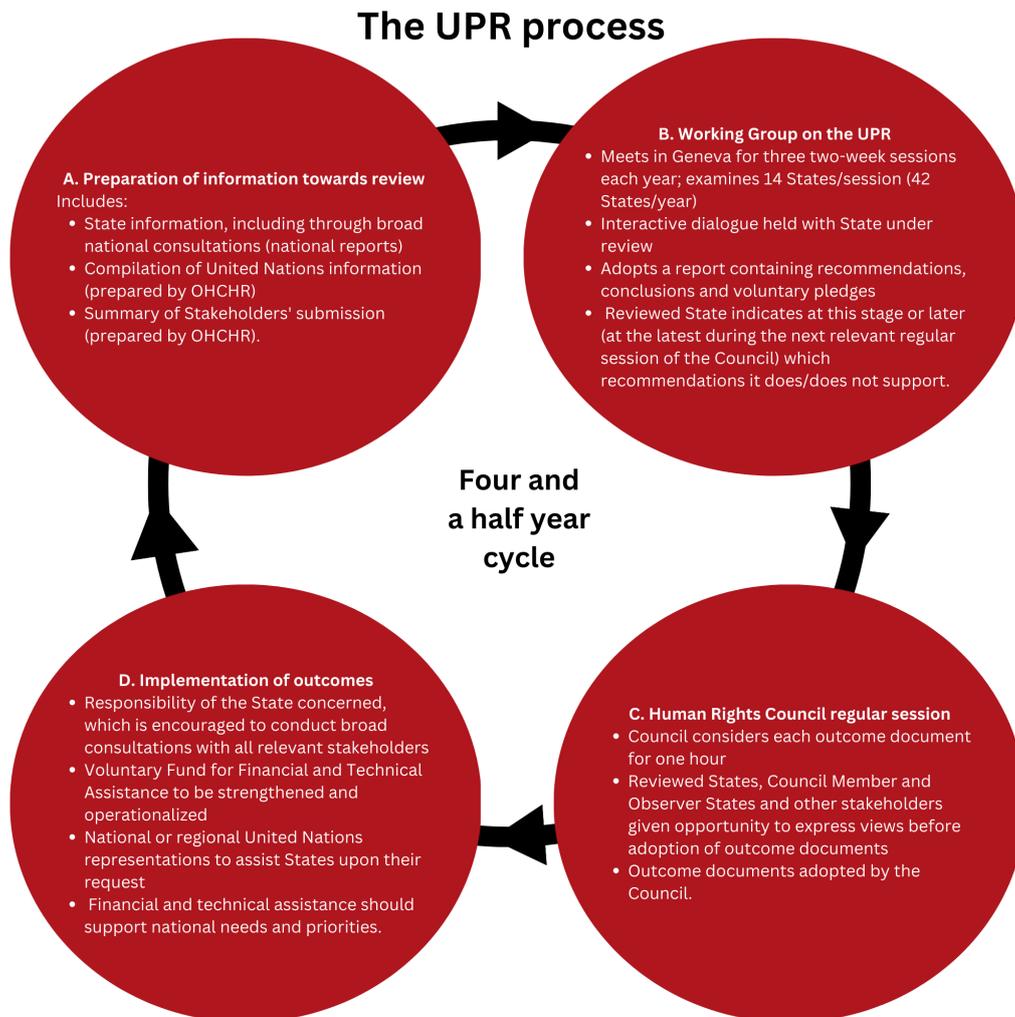
Email: info@upr-info.org
Website: https://www.upr-info.org/en

The Human Rights Council and the Universal Periodic Review

Through a mechanism called the Universal Periodic Review, the Human Rights Council reviews, on a periodic basis, the fulfilment by each of the 193 United Nations Member States of their human rights obligations and commitments. The UPR process consists of several stages, and each stage offers civil society organisations multiple opportunities for engagement.

Figure 11: The UPR Process

The UPR process

A. Preparation of information towards review
Includes:
- State information, including through broad national consultations (national reports)
- Compilation of United Nations information (prepared by OHCHR)
- Summary of Stakeholders' submission (prepared by OHCHR).

B. Working Group on the UPR
- Meets in Geneva for three two-week sessions each year; examines 14 States/session (42 States/year)
- Interactive dialogue held with State under review
- Adopts a report containing recommendations, conclusions and voluntary pledges
- Reviewed State indicates at this stage or later (at the latest during the next relevant regular session of the Council) which recommendations it does/does not support.

Four and a half year cycle

D. Implementation of outcomes
- Responsibility of the State concerned, which is encouraged to conduct broad consultations with all relevant stakeholders
- Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance to be strengthened and operationalized
- National or regional United Nations representations to assist States upon their request
- Financial and technical assistance should support national needs and priorities.

C. Human Rights Council regular session
- Council considers each outcome document for one hour
- Reviewed States, Council Member and Observer States and other stakeholders given opportunity to express views before adoption of outcome documents
- Outcome documents adopted by the Council.

Source: *OHCHR | UPR*

Before the review

Participating in consultations for the national report. Governments are supposed to consult with civil society as they prepare their national report for the UPR. You can lobby the government to set up consultations and can provide the government with relevant information about human rights issues, either as a formal part of a consultation process or more informally.

Submitting a stakeholder report. You may also prepare and submit a "stakeholder report" to the Human Rights Council, either individually or as part of a joint stakeholder report to provide real-life examples of the government's failure to respect human rights obligations. There are certain guidelines that need to be followed when drafting and submitting the report.

Case examples

Fallacies not Facts

On 28 January 2022, Syria's session of the Universal Periodic Review was held before the Human Rights Council as part of its third cycle review. In this session, the Syrian government submitted its national report in addition to the compilation report submitted by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the summary of stakeholders' submissions. On 30 June 2022, the final outcomes of the reports of this round were adopted. The session was concluded with a reference from the Syrian government to the progress made by Syria in protecting human rights despite facing exceptional external challenges.

The Syrian Legal Development Programme (SLDP) and We Exist conducted a critical legal study to refute the government's argument based on the obligations of international law and the proven and documented context at the international level of the ongoing violations in Syria.

You might persuade the country of residence to make recommendations related to your cause when your country comes up for its next Universal Periodic Review.

During the review

Holding a press conference. Whether you attend the session or not, the review may offer you a 'hook' to hold a press conference about the review, issue a press release highlighting any key recommendations or any relevant statements from the government delegation.

Hosting a side event. In case you decide to attend the session in Geneva, you can use the opportunity to organise side events, for example, to publicise your stakeholder reports or discuss any recent developments relating to issues of concern.

Attending the interactive dialogue. Only civil society organisations with ECOSOC consultative status can be accredited to participate in the plenary session of the Human Rights Council as observers in Geneva, and anyone can watch the dialogue via live webcast. You can share recommendations as they are made on the floor via your social media channels to support advocacy efforts.

After the review

Lobbying the government to support recommendations. You can lobby the origin country government to support recommendations and to make voluntary commitments.

Addressing the Human Rights Council during the plenary session. In case you have consultative status, you may address the Human Rights Council during the one-hour portion of the plenary session when it adopts the report of the working group. The Council allocates twenty minutes of the adoption session for oral statements from civil society actors.

Releasing a written statement. You can release a written statement about the outcome of the review and advocate for specific steps ensuring the implementation of accepted recommendations.

Making a submission of information to the Special Procedures

The special procedures of the Human Rights Council are independent human rights experts with mandates to report and advise on human rights from a thematic or country-specific perspective. The experts report annually to the Human Rights Council, and the majority of the mandates also report to the General Assembly. Any individual, group, civil-society organisation, inter-governmental entity or national human rights bodies can submit information to the Special Procedures, to offer insights on specific human rights violations (https://spsubmission.ohchr.org/). When deciding to submit a report, you need to adhere the following requirements:

1. the communication should not be manifestly unfounded or politically motivated;
2. the communication should contain a factual description of the alleged violations;
3. the language in the communication should not be abusive;
4. the communication should be submitted on the basis of credible and detailed information;
5. the communication should not be exclusively based on reports disseminated by mass media.

Submitting information to special procedures is generally accessible to civil society actors, and collecting information and using it to promote transparency in the human rights record of governments can be an essential advocacy strategy. Yet, collecting credible and detailed information needs not only access to relevant data, but also research skills, time and human capital.

Resources and toolkits

International Service for Human Rights. (2015) A simple Guide to the UN Treaty Bodies provides human rights defenders and NGOs with a broad overview of the UN human rights treaty body system and its functions to support their effective engagement.

The Health and Human Rights Resource Guide is designed to be a resource on how to apply a human rights-based approach to health issues for advocates and practitioners worldwide. The Practical Guide for Civil Society offers information about accreditation, attending the session, access to the public gallery, requesting a room for an Information Meeting, documentation and resources, participation in general, as well as the technical guidelines for stakeholders' submissions.

You may also want to evaluate whether regional mechanisms such as the Inter-American or African Commissions on Human Rights can contribute to your efforts.

Additional resources

3.3. Making Use of Media for Advocacy: From Press releases to Online Posts & Podcasts

Making use of media is an essential part of advocacy campaigns, as strategic use can help to raise awareness of your issue, mobilise support and solidarity for your cause, and influence policy makers for the desired social change. In your advocacy you can make use of different types of media:

1. Earned media refers to coverage received through word of mouth or as a result of reaching out to the media and is often considered the most 'credible' form of media advocacy. It often requires efforts such as press conferences, press releases, or invitation of journalists to your events to raise awareness about your cause and work. Earned media can take the form of newspaper articles on activities, TV and radio coverage or social media posts from traditional media and key opinion leaders.
2. Owned media refers to the content that you create or distribute through channels that you control. In addition to your website, emails and blog posts, this also includes communication via social media channels (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube).

The table below summarises the main tools, roles, benefits and challenges for each media type:

Table 5: Benefits and challenges of different media tools

Media Type	Tools	Role	Benefits	Challenges
Earned	Articles generated by a news event Pitching a story to a journalist through a press release Organising a press conference	To generate debate in public dialogue To raise awareness of the issue, causes and solutions	High credibility; Earned media seen as less biased. High impact Potential for wider reach	Limited control over the story Can also result in negative coverage Sometimes hard to reach Hard to measure response or impact
Owned	Websites Email (Newsletter) Blog Social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, You-Tube) Mobile text message Podcasts	To raise awareness To engage and mobilize the audience to take action.	Ability for two-way relationship with audience Potential to go viral Messages are shared peer-to peer, Authentic messengers	Takes time to scale and cultivate an audience Conversation is not controlled but rather facilitated Needs dedicated people to post and respond on daily basis

Sources: Adapted from GRSP (n.D.) Media Advocacy Toolkit.

Earned media offers the opportunity for wider reach and higher credibility, hence enabling you to raise awareness of your cause within the broader public. At the same time, it can be hard to get access to more established media outlets, in particular if your cause is not high on the political agenda. Diaspora media may be easier to connect with and more willing to cover a story because of pre-existing audience interest in the issue. Diaspora communities around the world have established new media networks and institutions for producing and distributing unique programming for their target diaspora audience. Diaspora media can be used not only to influence policy, but also to inform community members about human rights issues and galvanise them to take action.

Febrayer - The Network of Independent Arab Media Organisations

Febrayer is a Berlin-based alliance of leading media organisations in the Middle East and North Africa that has grown organically since 2016 and has strengthened the work of independent, critical and progressive media in the region in order to provide people with reliable information and compelling narratives and to hold the institutions of power accountable. Febrayer aims to support individual media organisations under its roof to expand their audience and influence. It strives to build a new community around the network in Berlin (and the diaspora in general) that includes writers, researchers and journalists, who are invested in producing knowledge that is socially and politically engaged in the region at present.

Case examples

How to Write a One Pager

Attention-Grabbing Headline
- A catchy headline needs to grab the attention of journalists and readers
- The headline must convey the essence of your message
- Keep it short, to the point and in an active voice
- Put it in bold and large font

Lead Paragraph
Place the most important points at the beginning:
- Who does the announcement involve or affect?
- What is new (or "newsworthy")?
- Why is the news important?
- Where and when is it happening? (if applicable)
- How did the announcement come about?

Style and Grammar
- Write as a reporter–not from a first-person perspective
- Write in the present tense and use action verbs
- Break down your issue into short, powerful messages that the public can quickly absorb
- Any opinion, assertion, or judgment should appear in quotes (e.g. from your spokesperson). A strong quote answers: "Why is this important?"

Format
- The press release should be limited to 1 page
- Include the date and place of your release in the upper left corner of your release
- Include contact details at the end of your release
- Type "# # #" centred below the last line to indicate the end of your release

Sending the release
- Send the press release in the morning, so that journalists have the time to write their story before the evening deadline
- Send your press release in the text of an email (not as an attachment) to all relevant newspapers
- Follow up with selected journalists via phone to ensure they don't overlook your release

Figure 12: How to write a press release

Press release and press conferences

Press releases and press conferences are important tools for earned media coverage. Releasing a press statement or organising a press conference can help to bring widespread public attention to a campaign. In a press conference, you can invite media representatives as well as other prominent people to speak about your issue, work or campaign. Press releases aim at influencing media coverage for your cause, by framing the issue for the media in a self-determined way, where you decide which points and messages should be stressed.

A press-release is different from a general statement, that you may publish in response to a certain event or development. A well-written press release follows a defined structure and uses elements that will make it most useful for journalists (see Figure 9).

Strategic timing is crucial. Identifying opportunities for earned media in your campaign and leveraging key moments or developments can help to gain media attention.

Identifying what is ´newsworthy´. Approaching media too frequently risks an over saturation of the media and may make your cause seen less seriously. You need to be sure that the content is interesting enough to the public and your target audience. Press releases or press conferences can be organised to announce the release of a major report or start of a new project, to comment on a major development, or for the announcement of the completion of a major activity.

Developing a Media Contact Registry

To effectively engage with the media, it is important to have an up-to-date list of media contacts who can be approached to disseminate your message. You can conduct a mapping of media outlets relevant in your context and issue and use media monitoring to identify which news outlets and journalists are covering our issue. The media contact registry should include the following information:

1. Name of the journalist
2. Title
3. Organisation
4. Stance or 'angle' taken on our issue
5. Preferred time to contact/send stories
6. Contact details
7. Digital handles
8. Who is your contact to reach them

Relevant tools and guidance

Social media and digital advocacy

Social media can offer a space to create, produce, articulate and disseminate self-owned narratives to counter dominant representations, and can be considered as powerful tools for advocacy. For instance, from the onset of the Arab revolutionary struggles in 2010, the regimes banned conventional media coverage to prevent the spread of images of the protests and demonstrations. Social media networks offered crucial platforms to raise international awareness on the social and political transformation and diaspora social media activists became important actors in linking the voices of protesters inside the region to the outside world[35].

Digital advocacy aims at engaging with audiences and targets through electronic or internet-based communications channels, mostly through owned media channels, such as social media sites. Social media tactics range from creating content that raises awareness of a cause, mobilising others to take tangible actions towards social change, to directly engaging decision-makers or key opinion leaders. Social media can help us in fundraising efforts, to plan, promote and document events, call others to join activities, spread stories and raise awareness of a cause.

The power of images: Using visuals or images to convey a message is a central aspect of advocacy and even more so on social media, with limited space for text and low readers' attention to details. A concrete language, images and visuals can help to make often-complex causes more understandable, highlight the human experience (beyond the facts) and enable people to make their own conclusion, rather than telling them what is right or what is wrong.

Figure 13: The power of the image

The Power of the Image

The death of Mahsa Amini on 16th of September 2022, a 22-year-old woman, who died at a Tehran hospital after being taken into custody by the country's morality police, caused massive protests across Iran and in the diaspora.

The image of Iranian women cutting their hair at home and abroad to express their anger and grief has been shared widely on social media and became a symbol of resistance and an act of defiance in honour of Mahsa Amini.

The political act of hair-cutting has been explored in ancient Persian poetry and literature in which women cut their hair in mourning or protest.

Artwork by Sahar Goreshi (all images courtesy the artists)

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35   Arab Reform Initiative. (2022). *Mediatized Arab Diasporas: Understanding the role of transnational media in diasporic political action formation.* Retrieved from: https://s3.eu-central-1.amazonaws.com/storage.arab-reform.net/

Yet, using images - especially in the context of conflicts - often comes with an ethical dilemma. Being exposed to the cruel realities of the conflict often on a daily basis, may urge us to share the images of violence and suffering on social media to awaken the public and call for action. In addition, we may use images to document and report actions to donors. However, this also comes with the risk that these representations dehumanise and devalue the very individuals we intend to support and 'give voice' to. Unintentionally, we might feed into the very racialized stereotypes and contribute to the process of 'othering' which we actually aim to fight. Being a good and powerful advocate sometimes means stepping aside and letting people speak in their own words.

Developing a social media plan and code of conduct

While social media can be a powerful tool to raise awareness and mobilise others for our struggle, it can - if not used ethically - very much harm your cause. Developing a social media code of conduct is crucial to limit potential harm and risk.

Below is some guidance on how to develop a code of conduct:

1. State the mission, vision and values of your organisation, as well as examples of content that align with or violate your purpose.
2. Define accurate representations of marginalised groups of people in text and image, to avoid one-dimensional, harmful or stereotypical portrayal.
3. Reflect and define what truthfulness, credibility, transparency, respect, accuracy and responsibility in the context of digital advocacy means for your team.,
4. Ensure inclusivity: Using videos or audio helps to ensure that less literate people can understand your message. Using different languages helps to reach a broader audience.
5. Respect intellectual property rights.
6. Respect the privacy of others.

Relevant tools and guidance

Taking a cause from the screen to the street: You might be inclined to think of yourself as a great agent of change due to the followers and clicks you have generated and mobilised for an online cause. Yet, getting people following (or contesting) online, is much easier than actually mobilising others for your activities on the ground. "Clicktivism" is often less impactful, and creates an illusion for people, where they *feel* like they have contributed to a cause, when in reality their actions have had little impact. Also, we tend to typically connect with likeminded people online - which means that spreading awareness and knowledge gets limited to an echo chamber. Sharing a message and raising awareness online is a critical part of advocacy, but it needs to translate into concrete action on the ground to drive real change.

Podcasts

Storytelling is an essential aspect of advocacy work - a powerful story helps to build solidarity, to develop a shared understanding of a social problem and can mobilise others to participate in a cause. Nowadays, audio mediums such as radio and podcasts can help us to reach a large number of people and are an effective way of conveying powerful messages. In advocacy work you want to educate, raise awareness and empower others, and podcasting provides a powerful platform to spread campaigns, to offer news/updates, and to deliver educational content. Especially, when a cause is confrontational, podcasts can offer an alternative space to raise a variety of voices that may not have been heard otherwise.

Producing a podcast needs time, money, and a significant amount of labour. Creating a concept and content for a podcast series and identifying and reaching out to potential guest speakers needs a lot of time and effort. You need to keep in mind that podcast episodes must be delivered on a regular schedule, which requires continuous commitment. Time is also needed for advertising the podcast via social media and other communication channels. And finally, to produce a high-quality podcast, you will need technical equipment such as microphones, audio editing software, and podcast hosting services.

Additional resources

Sowt - Audio for Advocacy: Podcasts and Storytelling Online Course

Sowt (صوت) is a podcast platform that provides audio content for Arabic speakers around the world. Through its content, Sowt means to inform and engage populations across the Arab world to foster critical conversations.

Sowt offers an Audio for Advocacy: Podcasts and Storytelling Online Course on Advocacy Assembly, a free online training platform for human rights activists, campaigners, and journalists. The course in English language is designed for organisations and individuals who are interested in audio storytelling and human rights advocacy. It serves as an introduction to podcasting and how human rights advocates can utilise audio storytelling in their work. This course examines what podcasts are, how they can be useful to your work, and what are inspiring examples of shows out there.

You can access the course here: https://advocacyassembly.org/en/courses/37/#/chapter/1/lesson/1

3.4. Promoting (and Protesting) Countries of Origin

Demonstrations and Protest - Awareness raising and collective healing

Diaspora advocacy actors can capitalise on the opportunities of expression and protest to indirectly influence decision-making towards their cause. Critical social and political developments, such as revolutionary or violent conflicts, are often transformative events that shape and influence diaspora consciousness and mobilise actors to take their cause to the street to show solidarity and support the struggle from abroad. Diaspora actors may organise demonstrations to call out injustice related to structures of racism and discrimination in the residence country. For instance, for 54 days around 100 asylum seekers organised a protest camp in front of the BAMF building in Dortmund in 2015, demanding the repeal of the Dublin regulation, faster processing of asylum applications, facilitated conditions for family reunification, German language courses and facilitated access to work and higher education for all asylum seekers. The movement put pressure on local authorities to improve the living conditions of asylum seekers and to raise awareness among the wider German public for their situation. Protests can also provide a space for collective healing, to express long-felt grievances and to relieve collectively from feelings of suffering, despair and outrage.

Below are some tips and strategies to increase the likelihood of success and sustainability of protests. **Creating a community feeling**[36] helps to ensure that protests or demonstrations not only mobilise people for a one-time event, but can create senses of belonging and more long-term and sustainable commitment. Performing culture, by singing, music or dancing can create a sense of 'we-ness' and artistic intervention are powerful tools that creatively call out injustices. Art and photography can also be used to publicise injustices suffered during protests and often serve as snapshots of a protest that can outlast the protest message.

Ensuring diversity in representation. The diasporic experience is often characterised by great diversity and shaped by the intersection of class, ethnic, religious, generational or gendered structures and processes. When inviting supporters and speakers for a demonstration, you should be mindful about creating a space that ensures the representation and visibility of more marginalised voices in the community. This also includes taking care that your event is accessible for different groups, e.g., by ensuring physical accessibility for people with different abilities, or that you have somebody interpreting the speeches into different languages.

Dealing with internal conflicts. Diasporas are social formations sometimes characterised by a strong shared collective consciousness and other times by fragmentations, due to conflicting ideas and positions. Sometimes it happens - despite jointly taking a cause to the streets - groups end up in heated discussions and disputes, which can harm a cause and negate influence. Next to tactics for conflict resolution during the process, creating connections and common grounds, before, during and after the protests needs critical efforts in which you should invest on a constant basis. The Toolkits on Community Outreach[37] and Networking and Alliance-Building[38] offer some guidance on how to organise communities and create sustainable networks.

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36   CIVICUS (n.D.). Protest Resilience Toolkit: Strategies for sustainable protest. Retrieved from: https://civicus.org/protest-resilience-toolkit/strategies/

37   Diker, E. & Ragab, N.J. (2021). Community outreach toolkit for diaspora organisations, commissioned by Danish Refugee Council's Diaspora Programme

38   Ragab, N.J. & Diker, E. (2021). Networking & Alliance Building Toolkit, commissioned by Danish Refugee Council's Diaspora Programme.

Developing a safety plan helps to ensure that you are aware of and have measures in place that address security challenges that might emerge during protest. Even if you reside in a country that officially respects and ensures that freedoms of expression and the human rights of protesters are protected, you might still face police violence or aggression from outside actors who are against a cause. The CIVICUS Protest Resilience Toolkit offers some practical guidance in this regard.

Developing an awareness concept that outlines the problems of physical and psychological disregard of personal boundaries and even violence and identifies methods to address them helps to create a safe space during a protest. Violating behaviour, such as sexist, racist, homophobic, transphobic, dismissive, or comparable assaults, should not be tolerated in protests. Discrimination and transgressive behaviour should be clearly named as such, and such behaviour should be resolutely opposed. For this, you should make sure to have an awareness team present at demonstrations that can be approached and knows methods to address misconduct.

Inviting allies and creating space for them to educate about their own cause, not only helps to mobilise a bigger crowd but also is an investment in sustainable forms of solidarity and gives us the chance to highlight how struggles are interconnected. Inviting politicians and celebrities may increase visibility and media coverage. Yet, especially when diaspora voices are already silenced, you need to ensure to create enough space for your communities, to not further marginalise your position and concerns.

Reaching out to local media before and after the demonstration helps to raise awareness and get media coverage on your action. In addition, you may want to document and livestream the protest and disseminate the content on social media as this allows you to cover the issues that mainstream media will not report on. It is important to have dedicated spokespersons, who are properly trained before the event to ensure that your message is articulated the way you want.

Being mindful of potential adverse impacts on the broader public. Often demonstrations in the diaspora are organised to challenge injustices, be it in the country of origin or in the context of residence. Some opponents might misuse images or statements from your event to amplify or vindicate negative stereotypes about communities both at home or abroad. Being aware of the risk and thinking about strategies and tools to combat backlash and misrepresentation, helps you to be prepared and ready to respond to it if needed.

Relevant tools and guidance

Checklist: planning a demonstration, march or rally

- **Define your purpose:** As with all public events, you need to decide what your purpose and main message is, what you want to achieve with the demonstration and who you want to reach.
- **Who is doing what - assign roles**: Appointing one person or a team in charge of overall organisation of the protest and dividing specific responsibilities and roles to other participants is crucial not only for the success of the protest, but also for its safety. Organising a demonstration or protest needs significant human resources – reach out to allies and supporters, who can help fill different roles.
  - *Media spokespersons:* responsible for talking to the press and to deliver your main message.
  - *Public speakers:* are holding speeches during the event and should be selected carefully to ensure that more marginalised voices also get to the stage and are represented.

- *Performers:* you may want to have a dedicated group of performers, who through chanting slogans, singing, music, dancing or other artistic performances keep the powerful spirit alive.
- *Awareness team:* can be approached in case of physical and psychological disregard of personal boundaries or violence and knows methods to address misconduct. The awareness team should be easily identifiable, e.g. by holding signs.
- *Stewards:* guide participants along the route and are responsible for safety and conflict resolution. Stewards should be easily identifiable, e.g. by wearing bright t-shirts.
- **Organise training and debriefing for those with responsibilities:** After having assigned roles and responsibilities, you need to ensure that the persons in charge are equipped with the right skills, methods and tools and that they have a shared understanding of the main message, values and positions. Have a safety plan and awareness concept ready to be shared.
- **Planning the place or route, and timing**: Start and end the demonstration in easily accessible places, which are safe for public gatherings and choose a route in areas that allow for drawing maximum public attention. Make sure that the route is accessible for people with different abilities. Plan for max two hours to keep the presence and attention of people high and try to stick to the timeline of your program.
- **Check legal requirements and complete necessary formalities** to ensure that your campaign cannot be accused of illegal conduct. In many countries, demonstrations must be formally announced or permitted by local authorities.
- **Organise technical equipment** such as megaphones, public address equipment (loudspeakers, microphones) and digital cameras as needed.
- **Get creative** and prepare slogans, placards, banners and other colourful displays that convey your cause and catch attention. Organising a preparation event, where material can be created collectively not only unleashes creativity but also helps to create a sense of community beforehand.
- **Outreach:** Advertise for your march or rally with flyers, e-mails, posters and on social media, invite the press to report on your event. Think also about opportunities for face-to-face mobilisation, e.g. through announcements at community events, or network meetings.
- **Organise a reflection meeting after the event** to discuss and document strengths and weaknesses of the demonstration and to derive lessons learnt. Discuss ways to follow-through with activities to maintain the event's momentum as part of a spectrum of engagement.

Arts and cultural productions

The performing arts are powerful tools for challenging the status quo and can be important sites of social and political transformation. Poetry, music and other forms of cultural expressions, were used to address social injustice in different political struggles around the world, such as in the Civil Rights movement in the U.S, and South African apartheid movement. Diasporic cultural and artistic productions, such as paintings, drama, dance, music, literature, photography and film, can develop ways for expressing the challenges of the community in the residence country and to raise voices against stereotypes and discrimination, as they enable alternative representations and the creation self-owned narratives. Arts and culture also provided a space and alternative channels for raising awareness on the situation in the country of origin and are, hence, powerful tools for addressing political struggles within both residence and origin country contexts.

Berlin - Damascus in exile

The revolutionary movement in the Arab world not only led to social and political transformations in the WANA region, but also significantly contributed to social, cultural and political change in countries of refuge. Among those who have found refuge in Germany are artists, writers, musicians, performers, theatre directors and filmmakers. In particular, Berlin's cosmopolitan vibrancy and diverse political and cultural scene is considered a centre of attraction for many artists in exile. This has led to a well-documented increase in Arabic-language events across Berlin, ranging from theatre, poetry evenings, culture and politics, conferences, gay parties, drag shows, as well as raves and film festivals. In recent years, artists from the WANA region have thus made an important contribution to the Berlin art scene, but also provide spaces for alternative political expressions.

See: Unicomb, M. (2021). Berlin: Inside Europe's capital of Arab culture, Middle East Eye.

Case examples

Artistic and cultural productions can be used in advocacy work to influence public perception and to call for policy change that promotes human rights and justice. Individual or collective activism of diaspora groups may use the performing arts to express their political voice and articulate their resistance against human right violations, by documenting, celebrating, and critiquing social conditions and realities. Diasporic cultural practices can provide a creative space for the exploration and expression of identities and promote community building and solidarity, by practising collective joy.

Artistic interventions can be powerful tools to disrupt public space and call attention to causes and injustices. For instance, The Center for Political Beauty, based in Berlin, embodies a radical form of humanism and sees "resistance as an art that needs to hurt, irritate, and unsettle". An example of a powerful advocacy action by the Center can be seen in their YouTube video Die Totten kommen.

Arts and Uncertainty designing creative interventions in times of crisis

Ettihajat – Independent Culture and the British Council have developed the toolkit for artists *Arts and Uncertainty: Designing Creative Interventions in Times of Crisis*, as part of the wider *Create Syria: A Project to Empower Syrian Art in Exile*. The toolkit consists of theoretical and practical content, in addition to a number of case studies, all of which were designed to benefit artists through practical experience and their involvement in wider cultural discussions. The content has been also designed to promote freedom of expression and enhance community-level creative projects, so that the latter can play their natural roles in influencing decision-makers and enhancing the legitimate presence of art in daily life.

The toolkit targets artists, both individuals and groups directly involved in contributing to social change. Initiatives or creative interventions of different nature are presented: small initiatives (in terms of resources) with a limited scope (geographically) that create great impact within their social and cultural contexts as well as international interventions that maintain their effectiveness on wider geographical scales and for longer periods of time.

Additional resources

SECTION 4 - NAVIGATING RISKS OF ADVOCACY IN FRAGILE CONTEXTS

Risk analysis is important to ensure that advocacy brings no harm to the affected communities or to the diaspora, in any way. As in any project, you need to assess potential risks that may occur throughout the project cycle. Diaspora actors may need to take into account additional factors as they operate on the transnational level. Although states are not able to exercise their full sovereignty abroad, countries of origin can introduce long-distance measures and policies to monitor and exert control over diaspora communities. There are several well-documented examples, where governments of countries, including Turkey, Morocco, Syria and Tunisia[39] used state-run institutions abroad in surveillance and intelligence measures to repress diaspora political activism and to prevent the emergence of a political opposition from outside. Tactics used by origin governments such as assassinations, the collective punishment of family members back home or death and rape threats can pose significant risk to diaspora advocates. In less democratic states in the global south, civil society organisations may face accusations of being driven by "foreign" or "Western" interests. Advocacy efforts of diaspora actors on the home country level, particularly in countries affected by conflict, can be vulnerable to such accusations due to potentially troubled relations with the homeland.[40]

Acknowledging that risks are part of advocacy, identifying them and being prepared for dealing with them is important for advocacy success. It is important to keep an eye on the people you want to influence and your opponents. Following the news related to organisations, institutions or individuals in decision-making roles or influencing power, helps to observe and monitor the often dynamic advocacy context.

Tool: Risk Matrix

While tools like the SWOT analysis, help us to identify potential threats and risks, the risk matrix exercise helps to decide which threats and risks you should prioritise and which actions you should take in response to them. Some risks have a higher impact and probability than others, and you should focus on the ones that cause the biggest losses and gains.

The Y-axis portrays the likelihood that the risk becomes reality, and the X-axis gives insights on how big the threat will be to your advocacy campaign and safety. The tool also helps to derive concrete action and to decide when to take action, and when not. This enables you to anticipate different scenarios and to have strategies in place for different outcomes.

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39   see for example Brand, L. A. (2006). *Citizens Abroad: Emigration and the State in the Middle East and North Africa*. New York: Cambridge University Press; Østergaard-Nielsen, E. (2003). *Transnational politics: Turks and Kurds in Germany*. London: Routledge; Moss, D. M. (2016). Transnational Repression, Diaspora Mobilization, and the Case of The Arab Spring. *Social Problems*, *63*(4), 480–498.

40   Ross, J. (2013). Advocacy A Guide for Small and Diaspora NGOs.

Table 6: Risk Matrix

Consequence	Likelihood		
		Likely	Possible	Unlikely
	Major	Extreme	High	Medium
	Moderate	High	Medium	Low - no action required
	Minor	Medium	Low – no action required	Low - no action required

After having the risks and consequences identified and rated, you will be able to think of different measures to avert or minimise the damage. Depending on the likelihood and the level of consequence, you can develop measures that fall into the following categories:

1. **Avoid:** A preventive way of managing risks is to not undertake them at all or to adjust your actions and tools.
2. **Reduce:** With measures that address the causes of the threat, you can try to reduce the risk, but you will most likely only be able to limit the damage.
3. **Transfer:** You may think of some actions that you can outsource, which would shift the responsibility (and the risk) to another actor.
4. **Accept:** If the risk is insignificant or does not compensate for the positive outcomes, you can accept the risk for now and no additional measures have to be taken.

Digital security is crucial in the digital age. It is important that you ensure that the computer equipment you use is functioning and has a robust anti-virus system and that your communication applications and channels use a secure and encrypted transmission of files and information. Valuable and sensitive data should be copied and stored on a secure cloud system as well as on a physical drive to minimise disruption if your software crashes. You need to always ask yourself "How badly do I need this data?"

> **Resources for digital security**
>
> Platforms such as the Surveillance Self-Defense, the Digital Defenders Programme and Security in a Box provide digital security tools and training for human rights advocates.

Being prepared for backlash and having strategies and measures in place to respond to it. In the face of accusations or threats, you should act as a team and agree on a common approach. Escalating the issue further, may not help your cause and too often you may find yourself responding to accusations by developing counter-arguments, instead of creating and sustaining a self-owned narrative. Moreover, taking the issue directly to the media could backfire, so in case you decide to do so, you should have a strategy and concrete messaging in place, to respond. You should reflect carefully on which struggles are worse to fight. Sometimes, not responding saves time and energy to focus on your main cause. In other cases, you may decide to take a low-key approach to resolving the conflict by, for example, meeting with

opponents, where both sides are equally represented. Here, you should remember, campaigns are not won by overpowering the opposition, but rather by moving the various actors closer to your position. Rallying your allies for support, can build a strong front against accusations.

Ensuring accountability and transparency, by timely and proper implementation of administrative processes (e.g., complying with the procedures for income and expenses, record books of associations) that leaves no room for ill-intentioned monitoring is of utmost importance. When it comes to budgets, you shouldn't design it as if you have the funds in the bank - always leave room for a sudden loss of funds.

Considering ethical issues in fundraising.[41] Which donors you acquire funding from reflects your organisational principles, credibility and accountability. Therefore, it is important to be aware of the actual source of funds. For example, a company using child labor to produce its products, or a wealthy businessperson that engages in weapon trade are far from being good partners of civil society organizations. Acquiring funds from improper sources may damage our legitimacy as advocates.

> **'Do no harm' principle in advocacy: Case of Armenian diaspora and Armenians in Turkey**
>
> The Do No Harm approach was introduced in the early 1990s by CDA Collaborative Learning Projects (CDA) and it was mainly used as a tool to ensure conflict sensitivity in aid programming.[42] It was then adapted in other fields of action as an important principle. In advocacy work, 'do no harm' can be understood as avoiding exposing people to additional risks through our actions.
>
> It requires advocates to take a step back and identify potential adverse impacts of actions on affected communities, or more broadly, the social fabric, the economy and the environment. For example, the lobbying efforts of the Armenian diaspora in the United States sometimes creates a hostile environment towards the small community of Armenians living in Turkey. While their lobbying efforts paved the way for the recognition of Armenian genocide by the US, and contributed to justice, the ongoing denial of the Turkish government creates tension between the Turkish government and Turkish citizens of Armenian origin. This issue was voiced repeatedly by Hrant Dink, an Armenian journalist and activist from Turkey, who was critical about the attitude of diaspora Armenians. He wrote articles where he urged the Armenian diaspora to give up their hatred of Turks, which was then taken out of context and misunderstood, resulting in several court cases against him.[43] Hrant Dink was assassinated in front of his office in 2007 by nationalist groups.

Case examples

41   Diker, E. & Ragab, N.J. (2021). Fundraising for diaspora organisations, commissioned by Danish Refugee Council's Diaspora Programme.

42   CDA (2016). Collaborative Learning Projects. Do No Harm Workshop Trainer's Manual. Cambridge, MA.. CDA developed a manual to guide practitioners to facilitate a "Do No Harm" workshop. The manual can be found here: https://www.cdacollaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Do-No-Harm-DNH-Trainers-Manual-2016.pdf

43   Let's Talk About the Living: An Interview with Hrant Dink. (2007). Index on Censorship, 36(2), 32–42. https://doi.org/10.1080/03064220701334451

SECTION 5 - EMOTIONS AND ADVOCACY WORK

Social and political transformation happening in the country of origin often inspire actors in the diaspora to contribute to social change. Being part of a movement even from abroad creates a shared feeling of we-ness - is often energising, rewarding and empowering. Yet, members of the diaspora are often confronted with a 'portfolio of obligations', in which demands, needs, responsibilities to their own life and family and the desire to show commitment to the struggles of the broader diaspora community have to be balanced and negotiated. In protracted conflicts, constant exposure to death, displacement and destruction often not only leads to feelings of guilt and obligation to act, but may also come with feelings of despair, frustration, and resignation. In the context of residence, the diasporic experience is often not only marked by exile, displacement, instability and insecurity but also by experiences of exclusion, discrimination, and racism. As a result, advocates may act in a constant mode of reaction in order to address the multitude of challenges arising from conflict and displacement.

It's hard to work under these conditions of exhaustion and trauma. Being active advocates means often working in high-pressure (and sometimes hostile) environments and bearing witness to violations and violence, which can lead to burnout, exhaustion and stress. Taking care of ourselves is an often overlooked aspect of advocacy, because the work feels urgent and necessary. Yet, to help others and contribute to social change we have to make sure that we take care of ourselves and our physical and emotional wellbeing. This includes to imagine ourselves not only as individuals but also as part of a community. If we understand our struggle as a collective struggle, this means that we can sometimes rest, because there are others that keep our work going.

Self-care, then, is not only about us feeling good as individuals, but also collective care, where the well-being of others becomes the responsibility of all. Self- and collective care is essential in building resilience and collective strength, supports the sustainability of our actions and builds the power we need to bring about change. This starts by seeing self-care not as a separate task, but as an aspect that guides how we do our work.

Additional resources

Practising self- and collective care

The worksheets created by TARSHI can help you become more aware of your stress, thoughts, emotions and beliefs. The worksheets are on a range of topics, from finding happiness in the small things, to understanding stressors, from mindful breathing with body movement, to reflecting upon your core values.

Website: https://www.tarshi.net/selfcare/resources-self-care/

The diasporic experience is often shaped by war, repression and displacement, marked by grief, anger and despair, as much as stories of hope, desires, dreams and happiness. It is crucial to create a space for emotions in advocacy to harness them for mobilising others for our causes and to make our individual and collective engagements more sustainable.

Diaspora advocacy often aims at changing deeply entrenched structures of injustices, be it to fight corruption, repression, or other forms of violence in the country of origin, or racism, exclusion and discrimination in the context of residence. Anger can be a powerful emotion that motivates us to act on our sense of injustice or concern. At the same time, it can be highly frustrating once we realise that we can do little (especially from abroad) to tackle structural injustices, which may turn anger into a destructive force. Therefore, anger interacts with self-efficacy - the belief that one's action could influence the political process and contribute to social change. The question then becomes, how can we channel our anger toward positive outcomes, to make sure that we act - rather than react - and that we have control over our actions, rather than being controlled by a challenging environment.

> **Check your anger**[44]
>
> Anger is a universal emotion that all human beings feel. However, cognitive behaviour theorists argue that anger is a secondary emotion, and there is often a more vulnerable emotion underneath. It can be fear, it can be feeling disrespected, or it can be about feeling lonely in your efforts. Feeling anger is normal, and it can be helpful to be angry in certain situations. However, knowing what's underneath that anger is key in terms of mental health and in terms of figuring out what you need so that you choose your behaviours wisely.

Relevant tools and guidance

Thought-Feelings-Behaviours (TFB) Cycle[45]

Another idea proposed by cognitive behaviour theorists is that our thoughts determine our feelings, which, in turn, determine our behaviour. If, for example, we struggle to stay motivated, we may start thinking that we are not successful advocates. This may lead to a negative feeling, of, for example, feeling worthless. That feeling may in turn determine the way we behave. If we feel worthless, we are inclined to think that our contributions are not necessary, thus, we make no progress towards our goals. Our behaviours, however, have consequences. The negative consequences of not making any progress will in turn create new negative thoughts. For example, one may begin to think "in addition to being a failure at work, I'm not even a good partner/parent", which will then feed into new negative feelings. While failing at work and being a good partner has nothing to do with one another, human thinking tends to lump them together because we tend to relate different issues. As a result, the TFB cycle becomes a vicious cycle of negativity. Then, how can we break out of this cycle? While we cannot change the way we feel, we may have control over our thoughts. Research has shown that as human beings, we are most successful in changing the way we think. It is therefore important to distinguish thoughts from feelings to figure out what we need to focus on changing.[46]

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44   "Fostering Wellness: Transforming Stress & Trauma through Self-Care and Resilience", session by Dr. Heidi Kar, Rotary Peace Fellowship Program, Chulalongkorn University. August 2022.

45   ibid.

46   To distinguish thoughts and feelings, it may be helpful to check out the different ways emotions manifest themselves, so that we better judge what is our emotion and what is our thought. The vocabulary of emotions developed by Tom Drummond (2021) may be a helpful tool: https://tomdrummond.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Emotion-Feelings.pdf

Figure 14: Thought-Feelings-Behaviours (TFB) Cycle
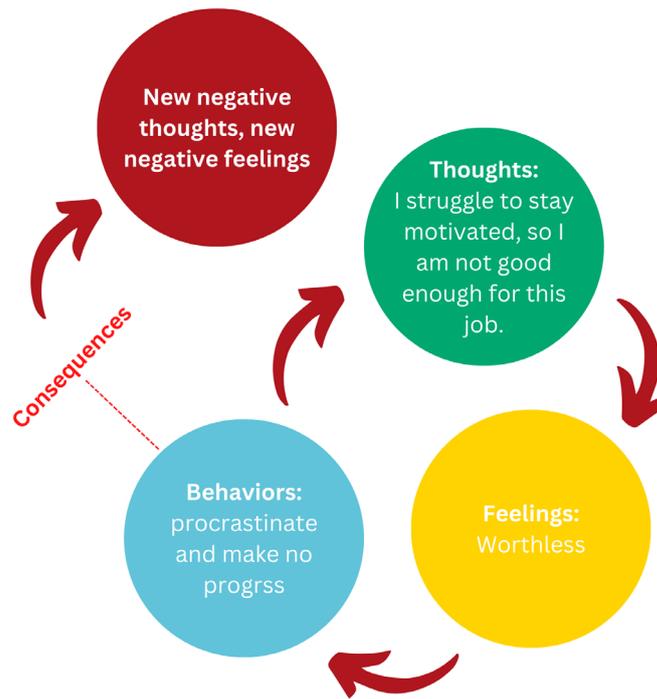
While we are often driven by the seriousness of our cause, we sometimes forget about the things that bring happiness to our advocacy. Changing the world doesn't have to be just another form of work, and more importantly, joy and pleasure can co-exist alongside anger, pain, and grief. We should not neglect the power of positive emotions that not only bring us together but also helps us to stay committed to our cause. Claiming and celebrating success, even when small, is a crucial aspect of building stronger, healthier, and more impactful communities. We can create space for pleasure in all aspects of our advocacy, especially by practices of collective joy, which means experiencing joy within our community:

1. Creating moments of release like the celebration of victories, no matter how small!
2. Making and having food together
3. Dancing when decisions are made
4. Practising music, singing and dancing on events and demonstrations

Pleasure activism

"Pleasure activism is the work we do to reclaim our whole, happy, and satisfiable selves from the impacts, delusions, and limitations of oppression and/or supremacy". — adrienne maree brown
Learn more:

Hurley, Cari. The Power of Pleasure Activism, The Intersectionalist Magazine.
Bracy, Emma (2019). Pleasure Activism: A Feel-Good Approach to Changing the World, Repeller.
brown, adrienne maree (2019). Pleasure Activism. AK Press

Relevant guidances

SECTION 6 - CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Diaspora groups, organisations, and individuals have become influential advocacy actors in their countries of origin and of residence. In fragile origin country contexts affected by war, violence and conflict, diaspora actors can play an important role in influencing the decisions affecting the lives of their communities.

With this toolkit, we aimed to provide a useful resource to support advocacy work led by diaspora actors based on a review of existing resources and conversations with members of diaspora communities advocating for social, economic, and political change in their country of origin, country of residence, and internationally. While many existing resources and tools can be adapted and used in the diaspora context, the unique position of diaspora communities at the juncture of host-state, home-state and the transnational field makes diaspora actions susceptible to influence of the diverse political and social contexts on these levels and their interactions. While non-diaspora advocates usually deal with a single country context, diaspora advocates often need to assess the broader external context which may include both the residence and origin country, as well as the transnational context.

Throughout this toolkit, we hope to have provided sufficient guidance to diaspora advocates in planning and implementing an advocacy strategy with a step-by-step approach. We presented various methods that can be used to carry out advocacy, with a specific focus on their relevance for diaspora communities. We discussed the potential risks diasporas may face during their advocacy particularly in fragile contexts, and, offered tools and strategies to navigate these challenges and to protect affected communities and ourselves from harm. In the final section, we addressed the often overlooked aspect of emotions in advocacy and presented some tools and guidance focussing on the importance of self- and collective care. In each section, we provided subject-specific recommendations, checklists and good practices and lessons learnt based on examples of different country cases.

While it is difficult to provide broader recommendations on the topic given the diversity of diasporas, their advocacy issues, contextual settings and the pros and cons associated with specific methods, our conversations with diaspora actors during the workshops[47] we organized as part of this study allowed us to identify some overarching issues worth to take into consideration by diaspora actors from fragile origin country contexts affected by war, violence and conflict. These learnings can be roughly summarised as below:

Connectedness to countries of (ancestral) origin. If diaspora members are advocating for members of their communities elsewhere, either in origin countries or in other countries of residence, the legitimacy of their actions may be questioned by affected communities. While diaspora actors may be better positioned to influence policymakers and use this leverage to support affected groups, there is also

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47   Two workshops were organized to contribute to the development and revision of this toolkit. The first one titled "Diaspora Advocacy" was held online on August 10. 2022 with a small group of advocacy actors in diaspora from conflict-affected origin countries before we started developing this toolkit. The second workshop session titled "Diaspora Advocacy Toolkit" was organized on November 5, 2022 as part of the ADSP-CAPRS-DRC and Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) Professional Development Short Course on Evidenced Based Advocacy for the Afghan Diaspora in Europe 2022, with the aim to gather feedback from diaspora actors on the draft version of the toolkit. The recommendations are mainly shaped around the conversations we had with diaspora actors during these workshops.

the possibility of being disconnected from the reality of the communities in their countries of origin. Collective work between origin country advocates and diaspora actors, bringing voices from the ground without trying to be their voices, is important to ensure representation and legitimacy.

Fragmentations within diaspora communities. The fragmentations within diaspora communities may complicate the aspect of unity and commitment if existing disputes overshadow the common goal. The divisions within diaspora communities in terms of how they perceive a certain issue also has to be addressed, which may, on a separate level, require advocacy within certain diaspora communities. During the first workshop we organised with advocacy actors, one of the Afghan participants noted the challenges of mobilising a certain segment of the diaspora in supporting newly arrived refugees, which she argued may be linked to fears that their acceptance in the society could be compromised given the increasing negative stereotypes against the refugees. It is therefore a delicate task to ensure a sense of unity and activism given the complex internal dynamics and the diverse external context surrounding diasporas. Targeting diaspora communities in our advocacy efforts can help to raise awareness and foster unity in diversity.

Alliance across diasporas and beyond. The sphere of influence of advocacy efforts depends above all on the extent to which the position of the diaspora advocates is in line with the foreign policy stance of the country of residence and what priority the issue has on the political agenda and the wider public. Especially in the context of protracted conflicts, there is a risk that your efforts may be neglected due to more pressing topics on the agenda. Fostering networks, alliances and spaces for solidarity with other diaspora groups from other countries, may help to create a new window of opportunity to amplify causes and stress the interconnectivity of diaspora struggles. For instance, during the first workshop, participants mentioned that the Ukraine war and the diaspora activism around it may bring a new momentum to the forgotten conflicts in other contexts. Network building between diaspora advocates – sharing opportunities with each other, but also lessons learnt – creates solidarity and helps to amplify different voices and struggles. Alliances with other civil society actors (e.g., refugee led, community organisations – NGO) also helps to mobilise a broader base of support.

Establishing a shared set of values. Diaspora advocates often act in a mode of emergency, in which crisis follows after crisis. As a result, there is often limited space for reflecting on core actions and shared values, as advocates are pressured to act immediately to address the multitude of needs arising from the conflict. For example, a workshop participant from Syria highlighted how the constant mode of emergency prevented diaspora actors to reflect on their understandings of key issues (justice, democracy, freedom), which -while mutually shared - often carried different meanings. She stressed that advocacy efforts are not sustainable if actors don't invest in the more invisible work of creating shared values as bases for advocacy, hence the vision and mission that guides our action.

From reaction to pro-action. Sustainable influence is possible only through long-term commitment and unity. Next to creating a base of shared values, developing an advocacy strategy and space for reflecting and learning is crucial to build more long-term and sustainable advocacy efforts. Being aware of the trend trap - that people lose interest quickly - and exploring methods and spaces of alliances and networking that keep our cause alive is crucial here. Advocacy is more successful if it's built on sustainable community organising. Managing expectations of what we can and cannot achieve with advocacy and celebrating successes - even when small - helps us to keep our community motivated and mobilised.

Recognising emotions, self and collective care as essential aspects of advocacy. Being active in advocacy means often working in stressful (and sometimes hostile) environments and bearing witness to violations and violence, which can lead to burnout, exhaustion and stress. The diasporic experience is often shaped by war, repression and displacement, marked by grief, anger and despair, as much as stories of hope, desires, dreams and happiness. It is crucial to create a space for emotions in advocacy to harness them for mobilising others for your causes and to make our individual and collective engagements more sustainable. Self- and collective care is essential in building resilience and collective strength, supports the sustainability of actions and builds the power needed to achieve change. This starts by seeing self-care not as a separate task, but as an aspect that guides the way we do our work. Building collective leadership within organisations, helps to prepare all to contribute to success of the advocacy, through carrying the responsibilities on many instead of one strong shoulder.

Assessing impact. Without knowing the impact, or believing in the impact you made, it becomes difficult to stay motivated and to inspire others to take action for your cause. Diaspora advocacy often aims at changing deeply entrenched structures of injustices, be it to fight corruption, repression, or other forms of violence in the country of origin, or racism, exclusion and discrimination in the context of residence. Looking at changes on different levels can help us identify the various impacts your advocacy efforts have, beyond the more structural level. We need to ask ourselves, how much did we grow? We need to ask our team, what kind of relationship we have built, and ask our community, what actions and successes have been achieved on the collective level? We need to link our action to the needs and aspirations of our community and create spaces for self-empowerment. If we see people engaging in our cause and action, this can be a good indicator of success.

Catching the momentum in countries of residence. Critical social and political developments, such as revolutionary or violent conflicts, are often transformative events that shape and influence diaspora consciousness and mobilise actors to take their cause to the street to show solidarity and support the struggle from abroad. Yet, sometimes it can be wise to catch the social and political contexts in countries of residence, which can be more enabling at times. For example, if there are elections in the countries of residence, which provides more space than usual for citizen voices, it can be a good opportunity to publicise campaigns to reach wider audiences.

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APPENDIX: USEFUL RESOURCES FOR CSOs

Advocacy Assembly

Is a free online training platform available in six languages. It offers unique courses provided by internationally recognised organisations to suit different advocacy needs and helps people to learn and develop practical advocacy skills.
Website: https://advocacyassembly.org/en/

Beautiful Trouble Toolbox

Beautiful Trouble provides an online Toolbox for grassroots and social change actors. In different sections you will find the theories behind their tools, as well as strategic frameworks and hands-on exercises to help you assess your situation and plan your campaign. It also highlights specific forms of creative action, such as a flash mobs or blockades. The website and tools are available in Arabic.
Website: https://www.beautifultrouble.org/

Commons Social Change Library

The Commons Social Change Library is an online collection of educational resources on campaign strategy, community organising, digital campaigning, communications and media, working effectively in groups, fundraising, diversity and inclusion and much more.
Website: https://commonslibrary.org/

Eirene Peacebuilding Database

In this database, you can find more than 3,300 indicators that are compiled together from publicly available peacebuilding resources. You can search for indicators based on country, field and program activities. If your organisation is engaged in peacebuilding or if your advocacy issue is linked to a conflict, this is a useful resource to help you figure out potential indicators to measure your impact. It is completely fine to use pre-used indicators in your programming if it fits well in your theory of change.
Website: https://www.allianceforpeacebuilding.org/eirene-peacebuilding-database

NGO Connect

NGO Connect, is a website dedicated to connecting and strengthening civil society organizations, networks and support organizations worldwide. The Resources and tools database contains technical and program-related materials to support organizational development and institutional strengthening.
Website: https://www.ngoconnect.net/resources-tools

OECD DAC Criteria

The OECD DAC Network on Development Evaluation (EvalNet) has defined six evaluation criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. These criteria can be used to make evaluative judgements about an advocacy campaign.
Website: https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm

Oxfam Policy Practice

Offers free access to research reports, policy briefs, case studies, tools, guidelines, and more on the topic of advocacy and influencing
Website: https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/tools-for-influencing/

Power Shift Network Resource Bank

Power Shift Network Resource Bank is a crowd-sourced compendium of all the movement's best tools and trainings capturing methods for community building, storytelling, coalition building, fundraising and much more.
Website: https://www.powershift.org/resources

Racial Equity Tools

Supports individuals and groups working to achieve racial equity. It offers tools, research, tips, curricula, and ideas for people who want to increase their understanding and to help those working for racial justice at different levels – in systems, organizations, communities, and the culture at large.
Website: https://www.racialequitytools.org/

Resources for digital security

Platforms such as the Surveillance Self-Defense, the Digital Defenders Programme and Security in a Box provide digital security tools and training for human rights advocates.

Save the Children's Indicator guidance

Save the Children's open education session on "Monitoring and evaluating advocacy and campaigns" provides detailed guidance on how to create indicators to successfully monitor and evaluate advocacy.
Website: https://www.open.edu/openlearncreate/mod/resource/view.php?id=53739

TARSHI

The worksheets created by TARSHI can help us become more aware about our stress, thoughts, emotions and beliefs. The worksheets are on a range of topics, from finding happiness in the small things, to understanding our stressors, from mindful breathing with body movement, to reflecting on our core values.
Website: https://www.tarshi.net/selfcare/resources-self-care/

The Vocabulary of Emotions

To distinguish thoughts and feelings, it may be helpful to check out the different ways emotions manifest themselves, so that we better judge what is our emotion and what is our thought. The vocabulary of emotions developed by Tom Drummond (2021) may be a helpful tool.
Website; https://tomdrummond.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Emotion-Feelings.pdf

Trainings 350

Offers practical tools for organisers, facilitators and trainers, including tools to build long-term capacity and power, activities for leading interactive workshops, seminars, and retreats, as well as methods for leading group meetings. The website and tools are available in Arabic.
Website: https://trainings.350.org/

Advocacy Toolkits

Advocacy Institute. (2002). Nine Questions - A Strategy Planning Tool for Advocacy Campaigns. https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/Handout%201%20-%20Nine%20Advocacy%20Questions.pdf

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