Using aid and budget analysis for advocacy

Module 5

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Introduction

Budget and aid advocacy is about successfully combining the traditions of budget analysis with civil society advocacy work. Budget and aid information should be used as instruments to address problems that you are trying to solve: ways of building the evidence that can advance your advocacy objective. This module identifies strategies and processes for planning and implementing budget advocacy.

The fifth in a series of six, this module was developed using content created by Development Initiatives, Integrity Action, the International Budget Partnership and Publish What You Fund. The module aims to develop and strengthen the skills, capacities and strategic visions of civil society organisations working in the areas of aid and budget analysis, monitoring and advocacy.

Expanded versions of these materials have previously been used in pilot workshops in Nepal and Kenya. Participants engaged in practical, experiential learning activities, which encouraged collaboration and peer learning. This module includes lessons from these pilot workshops.

The advocacy objective

Budget advocacy is a term that covers many different areas. It can aim to improve: **public financial management** (budget policies, laws and systems); **transparency, accountability, oversight and participation in the budget process**; **budget formulation** (allocation) and **implementation** (service delivery).

Defining the advocacy objective is the starting point that will shape the advocacy process, as this will clearly show <u>what</u> CSOs want governments to do, <u>how</u> it should be done, <u>where</u>, by <u>when</u> and by <u>whom</u>. It builds on the research and analysis you have done while identifying the root causes of the issue you are tackling. The more analysis you carry out, the clearer your advocacy objective will become. Make sure that the objective is **SMART: S**pecific, **M**easureable, **A**chievable**, R**ealistic and **T**imebound.

The advocacy objective should aim to answer the following questions:

- <u>What</u> do you want to achieve?
- <u>How</u> will you achieve it?
- What is the <u>timeline</u>?
- How will you <u>measure success</u>?
- <u>Where</u> will you achieve this?
- <u>Who</u> will achieve this?

> **Advocacy objective – An example**
> Imagine that you are focusing on the issue of poor access to safe drinking water in rural areas. A SMART advocacy objective might look like this:
>
> "*The Ministry of Water must construct 10,000 new taps that provide safe drinking water to those in rural areas who do not have a safe water source within 2km of their homes by 2016.*"
>
> **S**pecific – clear parameters for the community in need (those without safe water within 2km of their homes)
> **M**easurable - 10,000 new taps to be built
> **A**chievable – constructing new taps is a task that can be undertaken by the Ministry
> **R**ealistic – the number of new taps is feasible in the time period
> **T**imebound – the intervention should take place by 2016

Core advocacy messages

A message is a series of short, clear statements that summarise the advocacy objective and provide an argument for why it is important. Your argument should be convincing, draw the audience in, and encourage them to take the desired action. Core messages should contain information on the **problem**, the **solution** and the **action** that you want to see happen.

Messages should also be **framed**. Framing explains the rationale for your argument. It should give the **foundation** and **overall theme** of your advocacy (e.g., human rights, good governance and poverty reduction). Shape your frame to reflect the interests of the intended audience.

> **Core messages – an example**
> The above advocacy objective might translate into the following core advocacy message:
>
> "*As many people in rural areas have limited access to safe drinking water, the government should provide new taps in deprived areas to improve people's health and livelihoods.*"
>
> **Problem**: Many people in rural areas have to walk for more than 2km to access safe drinking water.
> **Solution:** Safe drinking water must be provided to those in rural areas that have the most need.
> **Action:** The Ministry of Water must build 10,000 new taps over the next three years in the areas where residents have to walk over 2km to access safe drinking water.

Stakeholder analysis

Advocacy does not happen in a vacuum. It is defined by several factors: individuals and institutions that work for or against your campaign (or that are neutral/immobilised); their position in the political environment; and windows of opportunity that might influence the success of your campaign.

Stakeholder analysis can maximise support and minimise opposition for your advocacy campaign, by identifying the correct audience.

To carry out a stakeholder analysis, you will need to analyse the following elements:

- Primary and secondary **audiences;**
- Who they **support** and **oppose;**
- What **power** they have to help you achieve or prevent you from achieving your objective
- The **opportunities** and **risks** of collaborating with them.

> **Audiences**
> Primary – Decision makers
> Individuals or institutions that can help you achieve your objective. They have the power needed to make change happen. In the case of aid and budget advocacy, the decision maker will be within the policy and budget process.
>
> Secondary – Influencers
> Individuals or institutions that can pressurise and influence the primary audience and raise the profile of the issue. They sit either inside or outside the policy and budget-making process. Inside influencers might include legislators and government officials, while outsiders incorporate a range of stakeholders including the media, CSOs and political constituencies.

There are several tools that you might want to use to analyse your key stakeholders. One of these is a power mapping diagram. The one shown below was developed by the Mexican CSO Fundar, while campaigning for earmarked funds for HIV/AIDS in the 2008 budget.
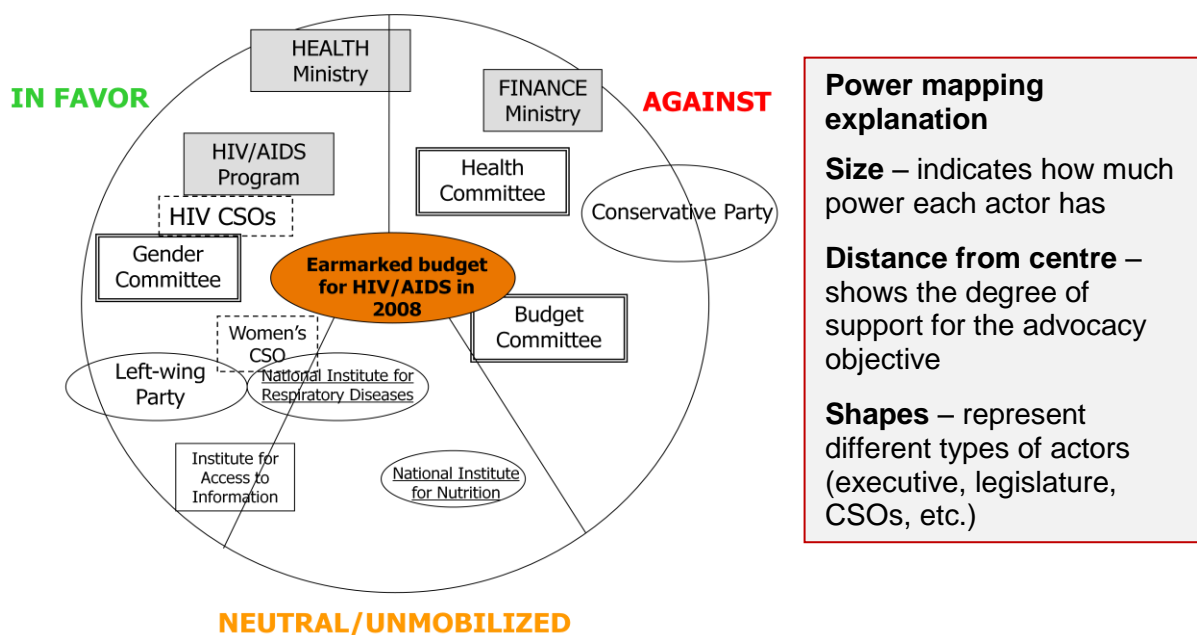
Once you have developed a power map, you might want to add arrows to indicate where you want specific stakeholders to move in order to make your advocacy campaign a success. For example, if an important stakeholder is neutral, you would want them to move into the 'in favour' position; or if a powerful stakeholder is 'against', you would want them to move to at least a neutral position.

Tailored advocacy messages

Once you have developed a core advocacy message and have a clear picture of your audiences, the next step is to tailor your advocacy message to each. When creating this message, consider the following:

- Reflect the **audience's values and interests** and present a vision that connects with what is important to them
- **Overcome any barriers** that might prevent them from taking action
- Ask the audience to **take action** that will support the achievement of your objective.

Tailored messages – an example

Continuing with the example used above, and focusing on the **Ministry of Water**, a tailored message might look something like this:

"*Building 10,000 taps in rural communities over the next three years will mean that 85% of the population will have access to safe drinking water. This meets both the MDG target and the government's own target for provision of safe drinking water in its 5-year National Development Strategy. We call on the Ministry of Water to prioritise the provision of safe drinking water in rural areas in its annual plans, and to allocate sufficient funds in its budget over the next three years to meet this target.*"

Interests: The Ministry already has an interest in meeting the MDG target and fulfilling targets in the National Development Strategy.
Take action: The Ministry is called to prioritise water provision in annual plans, and to allocate sufficient funds to those plans.

Message delivery

The way you deliver your message will be crucial to your overall communications strategy for your advocacy campaign. Message comprises two parts:

1. *Messenger* – who conveys the message

   This could include an expert, a public figure or a constituency that is affected by the issue you are tackling. Groups conducting budget advocacy have used legal, economic and media experts as messengers in their campaigns. These messengers could be staff within the organization and/or external supporters. The messenger should always be **familiar with the advocacy objective and message**, and even if there are multiple messengers, they should have a **unified voice**.

2. *Medium* – how the message is conveyed

   Conducting budget advocacy may require reaching a **wide audience**, so be strategic about how you deliver your message. Methods of delivery might include print, electronic and social media, grassroots media (such as community theatre, puppet shows, visual arts and songs), public meetings or discussions, workshops, hearings, rallies and strikes. When choosing the medium, consider the **experience of staff in the organisation**, the **audience**, the **political environment** and the **opportunities available**.

It is useful to note that there is a difference between **public and private messaging.** What is said publicly may differ from the way you speak to your key audiences in private. A CSO could criticise a donor harshly in public messaging, but hold constructive meetings with them in private to help them address the issue. This approach can be very effective.

Schedule and action plan

The schedule and timing of your advocacy activities should be planned around the budget process and aid cycle. Different decisions are made at each stage, and it is important that your intervention takes place **before the decisions are made** and not after.

Different countries will have different schedules and planning processes, so make sure you are really familiar with the context in which you are working. It is likely that to achieve impact with your campaign, you will need a year-round commitment to engage with stakeholders at the right times. You should also make use of **opportunities** that present themselves where you can promote your advocacy – perhaps a conference or a meeting of key stakeholders on the issue on which you are focusing.

Engaging with **networks**, **movements** and **transparency and accountability initiatives** can be incredibly effective, as you can build on the expertise and experience of others. Some to consider are:

- **IATI** – The International Aid Transparency Initiative www.aidtransparency.net
- **EITI** – The Extractives Industry Transparency Initiative www.eiti.org
- **BTAP** – The Global Movement for Budget Transparency, Accountability and Participation www.globalbtap.org
- **GIFT** – The Global Initiative for Fiscal Transparency www.fiscaltransparency.net
- **CoST** – The Construction Sector Transparency Initiative www.constructiontransparency.org
- **OCP** – Open Contracting www.open-contracting.org
- **OGP** – The Open Government Partnership www.opengovpartnership.org

Glossary

Advocacy objective	A statement that shows clearly what you want to achieve, how it can be achieved, where, by which stakeholders, and by what time.
Framing	The way to make explain the rationale behind your message and the reason you are advocating on a particular issue.
Medium	The way in which an advocacy message is delivered.
Messenger	The individual or institution that delivers the advocacy message.
Stakeholder analysis	Detailed analysis of the audiences for your advocacy campaign, their likes and dislikes, their level of power to influence your issue, and the opportunities and risks of collaborating with them.

Further reading

- de Toma, Costanza. (2012) *Advocacy Toolkit: Guidance on how to advocate for a more enabling environment for civil society in your context*, Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness, Brussels.
- O'Connell, Mary. (2007) *The Advocacy Sourcebook*, WaterAid, London.
- van Zyl, Albert. (2011) *The Super Duper Impact Planning Guide*, Partnership Initiative of the International Budget Partnership, Washington, D.C.
- International Budget Partnership (2012) *Budget Advocacy Work: Bridging Research and Advocacy.*