WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

• All communication that is intended to persuade or produce a particular change in action or behaviour.

• Advocacy can take the form of a single meeting or a series of meetings, confidential or public discussions, direct or indirect communication through intermediaries, written correspondence, public statements or reports, and so on.

• All require regular follow-up action.

NATIONAL LEVEL ADVOCACY

• Intervention with the authorities with a view to corrective action is one of the most effective human rights protection strategies available to a PEN Centres.

• It consists of interactions with State officials – based on verified and corroborated information about individual human rights violations or broader human rights concerns.

• The purpose is to address individual cases, patterns of violations, structural causes of violations or the general human rights situation, to make the authorities commit to acting on the information provided, including to carrying out their own investigations and to remedying human rights violations or problems.

PROBLEM TREE ANALYSIS

• Problem Tree Analysis Problem tree analysis is central to many forms of project planning and is well developed among development agencies. Problem tree analysis (also called Situational analysis or just Problem analysis) helps to find solutions by mapping out the anatomy of cause and effect. This brings several advantages:

  • The problem can be broken down into manageable and definable chunks. This enables a clearer prioritisation of factors and helps focus objectives;

  • There is more understanding of the problem and its often interconnected and even contradictory causes. This is often the first step in finding win-win solutions;

  • It identifies the constituent issues and arguments, and can help establish who and what the political actors and processes are at each stage;

  • It can help establish whether further information, evidence or resources are needed to make a strong case, or build a convincing solution;

  • Present issues – rather than apparent, future or past issues – are dealt with and identified;

  • The process of analysis often helps build a shared sense of understanding, purpose and action.
4 STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

- Helps establish who & what the political actors are at each stage of advocacy
- Proper analysis and actor mapping with help understand how different actors relate to influence each other
- Enables strategic identification of other individuals and organisations with influence over decision makers
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5 BUILDING THE ADVOCACY STRATEGY

- Complex process depending on strategy
- Building relationships with national actors as key to establishing influence
- In tense situations, use intuition when deciding how best to communicate & achieve advocacy objective

Key steps in advocacy strategies

(a) Identify the target audience;
(b) Coordinate interventions;
(c) Plan meetings;
(d) Design messages;
(e) Conduct meetings;
(f) Evaluate the outcome and ensure follow-up;
(g) Consider alternative or complementary strategies.

- Stakeholder analysis will identify key government officials to ask to meet
- Officials often prone to influence of policymakers, religious leaders, the media, community-based organizations – important to understand the wider stakeholder influences

5 COORDINATING INTERVENTIONS

- Identify other national and international organisations to ensure there is no unnecessary duplication or conflict
- Build support and coordinate advocacy and follow-up actions with other organizations on the basis of individual mandates, capacities and tactics
- The wider the coalition, the greater the chances of success
- Assess and clearly divide capacity of each actor
- Coordination of joint/ separate interventions is key
PREPARING THE ADVOCACY MEETING

Considerations when preparing meetings with contacts, from the highest government authority to local community leaders, including:

(a) Objective and desired outcome of the meeting;
(b) Timing;
(c) Nature of the counterpart, context and sensitivities;
(d) Counterpart’s perception of the PEN Centre and its work;
(e) Selection of the team attending the meeting;
(f) The setting.

- Effective advocacy requires clear message based on thorough analysis of the situation

Key questions:
- Who are you trying to reach with the message?
- What do you want to achieve with the message?
- What action do you want the recipient of the message to take?

(a) Objective and desired outcome of the meeting

In preparing for meetings, PEN Centres should identify the different issues they wish to raise and the order in which they wish to do so. They can consider the following questions:

- What is the precise objective of the visit?
- What is the desired outcome of the meeting?
- What specific information or undertaking is sought from the authority?

The substantive elements must be carefully considered and prepared. This implies not only gathering detailed information about the human rights issue to be raised, but also reviewing pertinent national legislation, policies and programmes, and the applicability of international human rights treaties and standards.

If available, previous recommendations from regional and international human rights bodies or special procedure mandate holders should also be taken into account.

(b) Timing

- PEN Centres should consider the optimal timing for a meeting, since there may be pressing issues or other pressures affecting the counterpart and this could have an impact on the meeting. Whenever possible, it is best to approach people when they are in a good position to listen, rather than when they are distracted by other matters.

- Furthermore, PEN Centres must always consider whether their intervention could potentially harm or endanger anyone, or contribute to a deterioration of the human rights situation, especially if tensions are running high. Nevertheless, urgent situations may require immediate intervention.

(c) Nature of the counterpart, context and sensitivities

- Available information on the authority and its institutional role are key - important for the preparations. Information about its sensitivities, interests and concerns can help PEN Centres to establish a rapport or provide an opening to discuss sensitive topics without prompting defensive reactions.

- PEN Centres should anticipate as far as possible the issues and counter-arguments that the authority may raise. They must be willing to concede some valid points, if required, and not insist on their own position.

- To better prepare, they should always review notes of any past meetings with the same actor and talk with colleagues who attended such meetings.

- PEN should also take into account the political context in which the counterpart operates. Perhaps the counterpart has concerns about the meeting. For example, reform-oriented individuals in a State administration may themselves be in danger if seen or perceived to be collaborating with the human rights field presence. This analysis helps PEN to gauge what can realistically be achieved. Knowledge of the context will also bolster their credibility.
(d) Perception of PEN & its work

- How is PEN perceived by the government and partner organisation?
- Seek honest opinions for the strengths and weaknesses of your Centre’s reputation

(e) Selection of the team attending the meeting:

- It can be good to draw on a wide range of the membership for this – find out who will work best
- Be tactful in selecting who attends – ensure good representation PEN should endeavour to control the environment or setting of a meeting to the extent possible.

(f) The setting

- Some meetings may be more effective if held in the PEN's offices, others not. Some meetings may require privacy and care must be taken when unexpected guests are brought in.
- Efforts should be made to ensure that sufficient time is set aside for a meeting. When setting up meetings, especially with Government officials, it is useful for PEN to know in advance how much time is available for the discussion, as their strategy will depend on this.
- Nonetheless, PEN should take advantage of opportunities for accessing key contacts in unexpected situations or informal gatherings even if the setting is not optimal, such as official ceremonies, embassy parties, etc. These informal encounters, which may not offer sufficient privacy or be long enough, will require a communication strategy appropriate to the particular setting and circumstances.

Running the meeting

- Introductions set the tone
- Recap on introducing PEN and its work and any previous work/meetings with the government
- Clearly explain the reason for the visit – avoid getting side-tracked
- Pursue argument firmly but without arrogance or provocation
- Support issue (CD) with illustrative cases
- Welcome any positive changes
- Close the meeting by restating/clarifying any commitments and establishing follow-up

Counter-Arguments

Anticipate the sorts of objections that the authorities are likely to raise and think of how to counter them:

- Using relevant national or international human rights and humanitarian law standards;
- Showing that it is in the interest of the Government official to cooperate;
- Politely giving counter-arguments;
- Restating the question or the point to show that you cannot be diverted from the objective; or
- Indicate that it may be necessary to take the issue higher.

Evaluate the outcome and ensure follow-up

- Did they obtain the expected reaction from the authorities?
- Did the outcome of the meeting contribute positively or negatively to the planned strategy?
- Is there a need to change strategy?
- Were specific commitments made? If so, which ones? What is the timeline?
- Is there any particular follow-up to commitments needed?
- Was the relationship with the authority strengthened or weakened? If so, why?
- What lessons can be learned (e.g., mistakes)?
Consider alternative or complementary strategies

• How to maximize the impact of interventions, not only during the meeting but in the long run?
• Needs more than a single meeting – follow up essential
• If particular official unresponsive, try others
• Try alternative methods of addressing the issue – media interviews/ op-eds/ different gov institutions

Risk analysis and mitigation

• What if any are the risks your Centre may face through this work?
• How can we mitigate these risks?

Knowing when to attract attention and when to avoid it

• Risk refers to the possibility of events, however uncertain, that will result in harm. In order to develop and implement protection strategies HRDs must analyse what levels of risk they face. Threats are indications that someone will harm somebody else’s physical or moral integrity or property through purposeful and often violent action. Vulnerability refers to the factors that can make it more likely that a HRD or a group will suffer an attack or will suffer greater harm as a result of an attack. Capacities are the strengths and resources a group or a HRD can access to improve their security and/or survive an attack.

Threats or exposure to threats can be reduced by:

• Increasing the political cost of carrying out such threats, for example, through publicising the threat extensively by generating a response by domestic and international networks to the threats
• Increasing the perception that an attacker might be caught and punished
• Increasing the perception that the political cost of acting openly against a journalist/ HRD far outweighs the benefit
• Persuading powerful interests that respect for international human rights standards is desirable and that the State has a duty to protect
• Increasing lobbying and advocacy for the strengthening of the rule of law necessary to fight impunity
• Developing, in appropriate cases, contacts with the authorities, police, army etc. NB: This last point has its own pros and cons. Advantages could be early warning or dissuasion – disadvantages could be allegations of compromising security, leaking, being untrustworthy – also authorities/security