

Advocacy and public relations

Advocacy = making a persuasive argument for a specific outcome.
Public relations = managing reputation by communicating and building good relationships with stakeholders.

Both activities should always take humanitarian principles into account and ensure no adverse consequences for the affected population.

Advocacy Benefits	Advocacy Risks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increase political, human, financial support protect the rights of the affected population increase humanitarian access complement and strengthen the humanitarian response initiate long-term change: 'building back better' policy development and change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> divert scarce resources over-extend capacity alienate existing support conflict of interests with partners undermine staff or partner security damage to reputation (among affected population, staff, supporters) loss of external and internal legitimacy, including loss of access.

Developing an advocacy strategy and plan

- Set a goal and objectives:** What is your desired outcome? What will guide the advocacy? Where will you focus your advocacy efforts? What are the key issues to advocate for?
- Select the target audience:** Who can bring about the change you want? What are their interests or opinions?
- Build support:** Which other organisations or individuals share your views?
- Develop the message:**
 - POINT:** Develop clear messages with evidence-based examples.
 - ACTION:** Make a specific request: What do you want advocacy targets to do?
 - WIFT:** What's In It For Them? How will they benefit?
- Select methods:** What are the best ways to get your message across? Is it by letter? Social media campaign? Email? One-to-one meeting? Community meeting? Newspaper? Informal networking?
- Develop implementation plan:** Who is the best 'messenger'? How might you follow up or reinforce your message?
- Monitor and evaluate:** How will you know if you have achieved your goal?

Public relations (PR)

NGOs need healthy relationships with the public to meet their goals. They need PR materials for a variety of reasons: to attract funds; describe services to beneficiaries; inform the public about accomplishments; distinguish themselves from other NGOs, and to campaign on specific issues.

NGOs need to be innovative in reaching stakeholders. Increasingly, NGOs of all sizes are using 'social media', such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and blogs as cost-effective ways of reaching the general public.

Advocacy and the media

You may need to use the media to deliver your message. In every country the media is different and each organisation has different guidelines.

Decide if a media approach is best

- Advantages (large audience and credibility) versus Disadvantages (bad publicity)
- Is the time right?
- Do you have the skill?

Plan an approach

- Who is your target audience and which media are right for them?

Make media connections

- Which media are fair and reliable?
- Do you know any reporters?

Prepare

- **Situation:** specify the problem or issue
- **Solution:** outline a specific solution
- **Public action:** what can individuals do?

Consider

- Why is your story important and new?
- Have you prepared talking points?
- Do you have good photos?
- Have you considered other stakeholders?

(See also 'Humanitarian Communications' page.)

Additional resources on All In Diary website

Engaging with the media, Sustainable Development 2015
 Advocacy and campaigning © BOND How to guide 2013
 Reporting on Humanitarian Crises © Internews 2014
 What roles does PR play for NGOs? Shree Lahiri, Reputation Today 2016

Web links for further information

UNICEF Advocacy Toolkit:
https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/files/Advocacy_Toolkit.pdf
 Social media strategy: <https://knowhownonprofit.org/how-to/how-to-develop-a-social-media-strategy-for-your-organisation>