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Module 3 | Course on:

Civic participation and Advocacy Training



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INTRODUCTION

How to Use This Module (Week 3)

You are now in **Week 3** of the E-internship. This week focuses on **Civic Participation and Advocacy Training** to support your team's Company Play work.

After this module, you should have a basic understanding of civic participation and advocacy and be ready to use them in your teamwork and mentor session.

<p>What to take from this material to your team work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start with a real issue affecting a specific group (not a general idea). • Turn your concern into a clear message: what needs to change and why. • Think about who has the power to make that change (target audience/decision-maker).
<p>What you should do based on this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1 key issue you want to address ○ 1 target group affected ○ 1 decision-maker or stakeholder you want to influence <p>Write this in a short advocacy statement (3–4 sentences).</p>
<p>Link to the previous modules</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous module focused on project development • This module adds a civic and social impact dimension, helping you connect your idea to real societal needs, develop and manage a project based on a real societal need.
<p>Discuss with your mentor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is your issue clearly defined and relevant to the community? • Is your target audience realistic and reachable? • Is your advocacy message clear, specific, and actionable? • What is the best approach to influence stakeholders?

You use this in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining the social impact of your project idea • Aligning your Company Play with real community needs • Preparing for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Simulation exercises ○ Final project presentation (impact & relevance section)
What is the link to the entrepreneurs' presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I make my idea relevant to society and influence stakeholders to support it?

Getting along with civic participation

Civic participation is a key word of this course. Why is this topic at all?

We know that any segment of social and economic life we look at, is either regulated, or is not, regardless of whether we like it or not. And such state of the art may affect our lives and businesses. We may also see that some segments are badly regulated preventing us from enjoying the full scope of rights and privileges. And some other segments are not regulated at all, making a situation where our rights and privileges (in private life or business) may stay unprotected from potential violation.





Anyways, we will often be encountering solutions which will be more or less unfair, restrictive, ineffective, discouraging or inappropriate, and we will wish to challenge them, improve them or completely change them. And this is where the civic participation and advocacy come as concepts important to know.

Civic participation is about partaking (of us - citizens, individuals or groups) in public life to influence decisions, improve environments and services, and strengthen democracy and social cohesion. This the least refers to public elections and political parties. At first place this is about us - citizens, consumers, students, parents, farmers, patients, entrepreneurs, employers and employees (identity or role we have), partaking in social dialogue and influencing public policies and solutions, shaping them to better match our expectations or expectations of the groups we belong to (parents, consumers, patients, etc.) in the periods between elections. This is why we say for civic participation that it belongs to **participative democracy** (Golubović 2009)¹.

¹ Golubović stresses a great importance of that participative democracy in democratic societies as it contributes to better effectiveness of representative democracy. He further says that participative democracy allows the citizens to partake in political processes aimed at promoting and protecting their

To be an actor in participative democracy, capable of successfully presenting and protecting our legitimate general or particular interests, we need to have **civic competence**. This is a key competence for active life and civic participation, and as such is developed through lifelong learning. It includes understanding democratic and social relations in the society and how institutions function, knowing one’s rights and responsibilities, engaging in public dialogue through various forms of civic participation, and contributing constructively to society. Without civic competence, participation can be meaningless, passive, misinformed, or easily manipulated. With it, participation becomes informed, constructive, and impactful.

Civic competence builds on:

Knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding democratic systems and institutions • Awareness of rights, laws, and public policies • Knowledge of social, economic, and environmental issues
Skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical thinking and media literacy • Financial literacy • Digital literacy and ability to use the internet, computer, smart phones and apps • Dialogue and conflict resolution • Participation in decision-making processes • Evaluating information and identifying misinformation
Attitudes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Openness and tolerance • Respect for diversity and inclusion • Sense of responsibility toward the community • Ethical and sustainable thinking
Values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to democratic values (“My freedom is limited by the borders of your freedom”) • Rule of law • Human rights • Solidarity and social justice

But let’s for couple of minutes stop here and reflect on the genesis of the concept of civic participation, and change of paradigm.

Paradigm change

Promotion and protection of general or particular interests refers to the interests of vulnerable categories such as (single) parents, patients, children and minors, elderly, and other marginalized or deprived groups or individuals who are not capable for self-representation. Thus, we need to understand here the change in paradigm related to civic participation and representation of the needs and (legitimate) interests vulnerable groups. For decades, the society cherished perception

legitimate interests always when needed, not only in the periods prior to elections. This builds on the fact that contemporary societies are characterized by pluralism and complex relations.

of vulnerable and socially excluded groups colored by their needs. In such perception, the charity was promoted and encouraged as a way how to support the vulnerable groups in meeting their needs, while the responsibility of the public institutions was neglected². Such approach was feeding image of vulnerable groups depending on charity, while there is a blurred vision of public institutions "that the problem is being solved" and do not feel the need to solve it systematically. Any support measures would be short-term and partial, because there was no holistic approach to social inclusion, but only sporadic interventions. This perception begins to change with the UN Declaration on the Right to Development (1986), which placed people at the center of development and set the right of every individual to participate, contribute and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which human rights and freedoms are fully realized³.

The right to development is based on the following important principles:

UNIVERSALITY	All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.
EQUALITY	Rights and freedoms belong to everyone, without distinction as to race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion.
INDIVISIBILITY	No right is more important than another. Setting priorities does not mean giving up other rights.
INTERDEPENDENCE	All human rights are interrelated, interdependent and affect each other. The right to education affects the right to work, and the right to work affects the right to good health, and vice versa.
PARTICIPATION	Everyone has the right to freely contribute, participate and enjoy the economic, social, cultural and political development of their community.
THE RULE OF LAW	Rights must be protected by a strong legal framework and an independent judicial system, thus ensuring the fairness of the law and equal application.
RESPONSIBILITY	All people have rights, and are called rights holders. Those who are obliged to ensure these rights are duty bearers. The most common defaulters are states and they are responsible for ensuring the protection of human rights and access to those rights.

This right for development set up a new framework for public institutions and policies in terms of public responsibility for taking care for vulnerable groups and their needs, and it triggered the change of paradigm in perception of this responsibility, from needs-based perception implying no public responsibility ("This is their particular need, there is no public responsibility of institutions"), to rights-based perception implying full public responsibility of institutions and policies ("This is their universal human right, we public institutions need to take care for that"). Thus the citizens and their organizations became those reminding the public institutions about their responsibilities through various forms of civic participation.

² How to successfully advocate, Civic Initiatives, 2009

³ Ibid

Forms of civic participation and close concepts which are not civic participation

Now, after this short historical reflection, let's go back to civic participation and advocacy.

As mentioned before, through civic participation we act to promote and protect our general and particular interests, always, and not only in the period prior to elections, when politicians are more open to hear our voice and promise that they will meet our needs and solve our problems. Civic participation builds on the universal freedoms⁴, such as:

- Freedom of opinion and expression
- Freedom of movement
- Freedom of peaceful assembly and association;

Based on these freedoms, civic participation may take any legitimate form which is not contradicting these freedoms and which is not explicitly prohibited by the law. However, we will single out here several most relevant ways of civic participation, regardless of the role or capacity in which we act. But first of all, let's make reflection of the interests, because they were mentioned often here.

Yes, we speak about promotion and protection of **interests**. First of all, interests are legitimate category. They refer to our legitimate needs, goals, ambitions, benefits, priorities, or intentions. We say that interests are legitimate, because everyone has a right to development. The interests may be general or particular, and both are legitimate. General interests are shared by many people or categories or people, like for example parents or patients, or employees, while particular interests are those of individuals (personal) or smaller groups of individuals. Interests may also be commercial or for public benefit. Both are legitimate, but commercial interests are related to maximization of profits, or to making a personal benefit, and are considered particular interests, while the public benefit interests are related to benefits for society (decrease of pollution, protection of environment, care for vulnerable populations, etc.), and are considered general interests.

Each of those interest categories may be subject to promotion and protection, but only those for public benefit are promoted or protected through civic participation which may take the form of NGOs, community projects, campaigns, advocacy initiatives, petitions, consultations, street actions, etc. The commercial interests are promoted and protected in a different way: through lobbying, PR, advertising and propaganda.

⁴ Universal human rights and freedoms are defined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (1948). They apply to all people, everywhere, without discrimination.



Reflection Task: Think about your perception of lobbying, PR, advertising and propaganda. What does it refer to in your view and could you think of real-world example for each of those categories, and point out type of interest they are protecting or promoting through these concepts.

Lobbying is the organized action of companies, influential individuals, governments and interest groups, to influence the decisions of representatives of the executive and legislative powers in order to protect certain legitimate interests represented by lobbyists (Golubović, 2009). It can be formal (immediate or direct), and informal (indirect). The formal lobbying refers to the engagement of professional lobbyists and lobbying offices, whose registered business activity is lobbying, to represent a certain legitimate interest with government representatives. All other forms of interest representation are considered informal lobbying or advocacy. Lobbying and advocacy are similar terms with a similar meaning, where the correct usage depends on the context in which they are used.

For example in the USA, lobbying is a strictly regulated activity and cannot be carried out by anyone who is not registered for lobbying, as they would risk fines from the regulatory authority. Thus, in the USA and some EU member states such as Germany, France, Ireland, Lithuania and Austria, regular activities of NGOs leading to better representation of vulnerable social groups and their needs to better regulate policies they benefit from, cannot be called lobbying but advocacy. On the other hand, in other European countries where lobbying is not strictly regulated by law, such as Sweden, Hungary, Portugal, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, Estonia and others, we may use both terms to indicate the activities the purpose of which is the protection or promotion of some legitimate interest towards the executive and legislative.

The nature of the interest we are representing also determines the context in which one or another term will be used. Changing a policy so that it favors the legitimate private, particular, especially commercial interests of individuals or a small group of business entities, often contradicts the legitimate general interest of society, and may cause resistance of public opinion to such a change. Such examples are investments in mining capacities and infrastructure near the settlements or in agricultural areas, or development of hydro plants on small rivers, which all trigger protests and resistance of local communities. That is why there is a general intention of investors and lobbyists to communicate their business interests directly *tete-a-tete*, *in camera*⁵ to decision-makers, in generally non-transparently way and far from the eye of the public, which creates a lot of controversies. The major business asset they have are their contacts and access to policy-makers, decision-makers and people in powerful positions and capacities (public and private), which make their services expensive and inaccessible to general population. Unlike advocacy which is addressing the issues of general interest, and take place in public space to

⁵ *In camera* is a Latin phrase meaning "in chambers" or "in private," commonly used in legal and professional settings to describe proceedings held in secret, usually in a judge's private office, with the public and press excluded. It signifies confidentiality, often used to protect sensitive information or privacy.

engage the wide range of supporters, lobbying mostly serves to protect the particular political and commercial interests, and mostly is done in camera involving narrow circle of decision makers and influencers.

Public relations - PR is a professional activity of fostering a desirable public perception of a company, organization or a famous person (Oxford Dictionaries). Thus, PR does not aim to change the policies or practices, but rather to promote specific perception and affect the attitudes of specific and general public. The carriers of PR activities are professional and specialized PR outlets, and their multidisciplinary teams of experts from the fields of marketing, communication, sociology and psychology and other professions. These services are expensive and most often used by companies, governments and individuals from showbiz and business and political elites.

Marketing & advertising refers to attracting public attention through paid advertising with the aim of increasing sales (Mirriam-Webster Dictionary). Advertising, unlike advocacy, does not aim to change any policy, regulation or practice, but rather to ensure increased sales of goods or services. Advertising is also handled by specialized companies that produce advertisements and sell advertising space. Advertising is done through electronic and printed media (internet, TV, radio, magazines), and in public space (billboards and posters, installations, etc.). Modern forms of advertising use guerilla marketing methods to attract attention in a public place, in a manner similar to performance.

Propaganda is a form of communication that is deliberately designed to influence people's opinions, beliefs, or behavior, often by presenting information in a biased, selective, or emotionally charged way rather than in a fully balanced or objective manner. It aims to persuade, not simply to inform, it often highlights certain facts while omitting or distorting others. It also appeals to emotions, values, fears, or identity, and serves the interests of a specific group, organization, or government. Propaganda can be used in politics, war, advertising, social movements, or ideological campaigns. While the term today usually has a negative connotation (associated with manipulation or misinformation), historically it simply meant the organized spread of ideas or beliefs.

This is what companies, governments, politicians and influential individuals do to promote and protect their particular interests. Citizens on other side act differently. Here we have singled out most relevant forms of civic participation. Lets' start.

Non-governmental organizations. Civic association in organizations is based on universal freedom of peaceful assembly and association of citizens sharing the same or similar interests and objectives. Civic participation through non-governmental organizations (NGOs) allows citizens (and entrepreneurs, employers, etc.) to promote and protect their interests in an organized way representing the group interests of the members of NGO, but also all others who are in the same position. Advantage of this form of civic participation may be the following:

- Activities are organized and governed by the statute, and rights and responsibilities of the members are regulated;
- Though NGOs is easier to articulate and represent collective interests than is we have to do it as individuals or group of individuals;
- In some fields of social life, there might be co-management arrangements between the authorities and citizens, where NGOs are invited to delegate their representatives;
- NGOs may more easily raise funds than individuals, through the membership fees, donations and competing for grants;
- NGOs may associate with other NGOs into networks, unions and alliances to work together to influence decision-makers. This way they will represent the multiple number of organized groups of people members of those NGOs.

Disadvantage of the civic participation through NGOs may appear in fact that we need to align with limitations set by the majority of members in the organization, which for some people may seem inappropriate, restrictive, insufficiently effective, etc.

Community projects are actions designed to address specific social, environmental, cultural, or economic needs within a community, and create expected changes through the course of time and set of activities. They are initiated and implemented by citizens, NGOs, local authorities, schools, or partnerships between public and private actors. They are practical, action-oriented forms of civic engagement that focus on solving real problems at the local level.

Community projects turn participation into action, and unlike petitions or consultations, community projects move beyond discussion and directly implement solutions. They also strengthen local ownership by involving community members to partake and thus actively shape and manage initiatives that affect their lives.

Community projects can strongly influence business practices by shaping values, expectations, and local economic models. They also strengthen CSR. Community projects may promote and support sustainable business models such as: circular economy practices, local sourcing, cooperative business models and social entrepreneurship. Businesses that actively support community projects gain legitimacy and long-term credibility, which is essential for sustainable operations and keeping a positive public image, trust and reputation. UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasize partnerships between communities and businesses to promote sustainable development.

Awareness raising (campaign) refers to a series of organized activities that increase the visibility of a certain topic (of our project) or a social phenomenon or a problem (our project is addressing), ensure its better understanding in public opinion, or influence a change in the attitude of public opinion about a given topic/social phenomenon/problem. Awareness raising campaigns have the function of informing the public about a topic/social phenomenon/problem, than educating the public about it, and improving the communication with the public, so they are also called IEC campaigns (informing, educating and communication campaigns). However, the

ambition of awareness raising campaigns stops at the change of attitude and does not go further towards the change of public policy (which than would be considered a advocacy campaign). Therefore, advocacy always aims to change public policy and always addresses decision makers as the primary target group. The awareness raising campaigns aim to address a wide range of people. The campaign initiators can be citizens, civic organizations (NGOs), foundations, consortia within their projects, but also state agencies, bodies, ministries, local and regional authorities, in the framework of their policy or regulatory initiatives, when they want to inform the public opinion about the new regulations, procedures or standards, improve public understanding, approval and acceptance of these novelties. Example of such campaign is UEFA & FARE Network *No to Racism campaign*,⁶ designed in 2013 to eliminate racism, discrimination and intolerance from football, where UEFA is using its high-profile platforms (Champion League / UEFA Ligue / Women's Champions League matces) to send out a key and unequivocal message: No to Racism.

Awareness raising campaigns in public space may also come from the businesses. Some may have comercial and profit-oriented character while some other may have non-profit and non-commercial character and address some topics of the general interest and for the sake of society. This may be a gesture of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) of the companies that find CSR important for their public image.



Reflection Exercise :

What awareness raising campaigns are present in your country? How often do they happen and do you participate in any way?

Advocacy is a process organized to create a change in (public) policy or practice. At the beginning of the process, there is always a small group of people who, representing a certain legitimate interest, undertake a series of activities, and over time earn a greater degree of public support. Advocacy is also considered a synonymous with informal lobbying⁷, or for situation when grassroots initiatives and legitimate interest groups partake in in public life in any legitimate way (e.g. podcasts, articles, press statements and releases, policy briefs, participation in TV shows, round tables, public gatherings and discussions, etc.), with goal to influence the decisions of authorities by forming public opinion. Unlike formal lobbying, informal lobbying is never per se subject to special legal regulation, but is incorporated into the corpus of basic human rights, especially freedom of speech, the right to petition, the right to association and the right to public assembly (Golubović, 2009).

⁶ <https://www.uefa.com/news-media/news/0211-0e75c25ed9d8-4ada33b00b6b-1000--no-to-racism/>

⁷ Golubovic D. Advocacy and Lobbying in the parliament and the bodies of the Executive Authority: Comparative practice and recommendations for Serbia, UNDP Belgrade, 2009

Contemporary social relations are marked by pluralism and complexity of interests, and advocacy should be seen as a way to promote or protect legitimate (general or particular) interests (Golubović, 2009). For example, groups advocating banning the use of fossil fuels promote a general interest, because the right to a healthy environment belongs to the corpus of basic human rights. On the other hand, advocating for the allocation of the local council budget funds to help a socially vulnerable citizens, we aim to protect the legitimate particular interest (of vulnerable individuals).



Reflection Task:

In your view, does the campaign for the establishment of state fund for medical treatment of children with the specific and rare conditions, promote general or particular interests? Please justify your position on this.

Petitions are formal requests submitted by citizens to public authorities requesting action (to solve an existing problem), change of policy, or to consider proposal. They are a tool of civic participation that allows individuals or groups to raise issues directly with decision-makers. The petitions are regulated by the law and to be valid, it need to present certain number of signatures. A civic petition usually includes a clear description of the issue or problem, a specific request or proposed action, arguments or evidence supporting the request and signatures of supporting citizens. Petitions can be submitted at local, national, or supranational levels, including to institutions such as the European Parliament (by the citizens of EU member states). Civic petitions and important tool for strengthening democratic accountability and encouraging participatory governance.



Self assessment :

How familiar are you with the petition process in your area?

Consultations are structured processes through which policy-makers seek input, opinions, expertise, or feedback from citizens, stakeholders, or experts before making decisions, adopting laws, or implementing policies, but also vice-versa - citizens through consultations and consultative processes seek the same from authorities, institutions, stakeholders and decision makers, to formulate, present or validate their policy positions or models they want to advocate towards authorities, policy-makers/decision-makers. Consultations are a formal mechanism of dialogue between decision-makers and society. In many countries they are compulsory phase in developing and adopting new legislation. The European Commission is regularly conducting public consultations on draft legislation and policy initiatives.

Consultations may take place in various forms, out of which most often are:

- Public consultations through open online questionnaires or comment forms
- Citizen panels or deliberative assemblies
- Stakeholder consultative meetings or round tables targeting expert or sectoral input
- Focus groups, workshops
- Public hearings
- Written submissions on draft laws;

Consultations strengthen ownership and social legitimacy of a policy, which are preconditions for policy to be widely accepted, and thus effective.



Reflection Exercise :

Are public consultations effectively done in your area? What could be done differently to ensure citizen participation in policy making?

Street actions are organized in frequent streets, squares and parks where many people pass every moments, to inform the people, raise awareness, express opinions, demand change, perform an action or a play, or demonstrate support for a cause, and thus mobilize support of the people. Street actions are grounded in the right to freedom of peaceful assembly, as protected in international human rights standards established by the United Nations.

The street actions are important tool of civic participation because:

Street actions bring visibility: they bring issues into public space, attracting media attention and broader societal awareness.

Making noise: street actions are good for demonstrating the scale and intensity of public support.

Strengthen civic engagement: participation in collective action builds solidarity and shared identity.

Increase accountability: public pressure can prompt decision-makers to respond, reconsider policies, or engage in dialogue.

Street actions are important for mobilization for further participation as they often lead to additional forms of engagement such as petitions, consultations, advocacy campaigns, or electoral participation.

Flash mobs are a specific form of street action where group of people gather suddenly in a public place (outdoor), perform a brief, coordinated action, and then quickly disperse. The event is usually organized in advance through social media or messaging platforms. Flash mobs can include choreographed dances, silent performances. artistic or theatrical actions, etc. They are short, creative and performative, visually engaging, designed to attract attention quickly.

They may be used for:

- Raising awareness about social issues
- Civic campaigns
- Cultural expression
- Public engagement initiatives
- Advocacy or protest (in some cases);

Flashing mob is impactful form of civic participation as it capture traditional and social media attention, communicate message in a memorable way, and engage younger audiences. They are peaceful and different from spontaneous unrest or violent crowd behavior.



Mini Exercise :

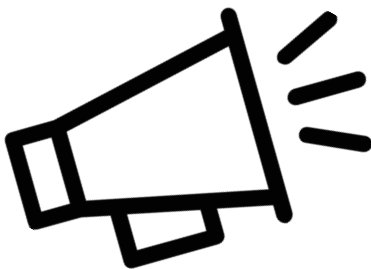
Suggest measures to ensure street actions remain peaceful. What could be done or avoided?

Advocacy & campaigning



Stop and reflect ::

*What is your understanding of the meaning of **advocacy**? What does it refer to and could you make real-world example?*



The term advocacy (public advocacy) is derived from the Latin word *vox*, which means voice, and loosely translated means *giving a voice to someone who does not have one's own*. A frequently used synonym is *representation*. Although it is about representation, this term does not refer to what solicitor / attorney of law does, and has nothing to do with legal representation in terms of law practice.

Advocacy is a process with purpose is to change a policy or practice. At the beginning of the process, there is always a small group of people who, representing a certain legitimate interest, undertake a series of activities and over time receive a greater degree of public support. Key elements for understanding the concept include:

- ☞ **The process** - it lasts and takes time to inform, raise awareness, educate, encourage and achieve the expected change.
- ☞ **Change in policy or practice** - this is always the aim of advocacy. We want to see the change.
- ☞ **A small group of people in the beginning** - it is always like that at the beginning, but our activities of informing, raising awareness, and educating, the support will grow and we will become a movement.
- ☞ **Legitimate interest** - advocacy campaigns aim to protect and promote legitimate interests, especially of vulnerable groups not capable for self-representation.
- ☞ **A series of activities** - we need to plan a set of complementary activities (informing, raising awareness, educating) aiming to achieve smaller milestones, but milestone by milestone, the goal of our campaign will eventually be achieved.
- ☞ **Greater public support over time** - this is achieved with informing, raising awareness, and educating, creating networks and alliances with groups with similar goals and interests. This is when advocacy might have the most chances to create a change.



Self-assessment Exercise :

Why should entrepreneurs prefer advocacy when addressing community issues?

To achieve the change of a policy or a practice, 3 necessary elements (Bradvić, Alić, 2001.) include:

Problem recognition - first of all it is important that we achieve that decision makers start perceiving that problem is existing. They need to understand the nature of the problem, who suffer, what are the consequences, and how are decision makers responsible for this situation. This may be achieved through activities of informing, awareness raising, educating.

Finding the solution - next step is to offer a solution. A solution we may create or co-create with other groups, initiatives, institutions or authorities. And we need to find the way to communicate it with decision-makers.

Advocating the change - finally, it is necessary that we undertake a set of activities to contribute to problem recognition, finding the solution and communicating and disseminating this towards the stakeholders and decision-makers in a way that will ensure growing and significant support and pressure that will achieve the change of policy or practice, and solution to the problem.



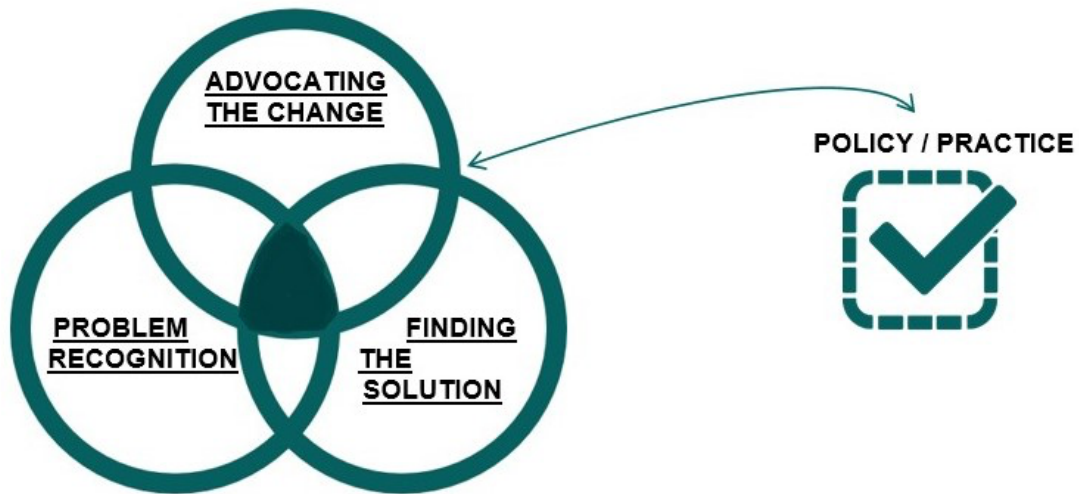
Advocacy Explained

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NnOK2tTz468>



Civic Engagement Explained

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zNR5ZB3ApdU>



Reflection on campaigning

Even if we say only *advocacy*, it normally refers to *campaigning*. Advocacy to be effective and successful, it needs every element to be carefully planned. Yes, campaign consist of elements or steps, where each needs to be planned carefully.



8. Activities

3. Target groups

7. Resources

4. Message

6. Support

5. Channels of Communication

TOPIC - A subject of advocacy, problem, controversial issue... The topic normally refers to is a negative circumstance or consequence, caused by a policy or practice in place. Our campaign thus wants to influence, i.e. change the policy. In other words, the selected topic of our advocacy campaign should be a problem that requires a policy solution (Civil Initiatives, 2009). The topic must be clear and understandable, and must come from the beneficiaries (vulnerable groups), or needs to be generally accepted by the beneficiaries.

When analyzing the topic, the following aspects should be considered:

- Who is affected by the problem and how?
- What are the consequences created by the problem?
- What is causing the problem – lack of policy, inadequate policy or inadequate practice?
- What is the policy solution to the problem?
- Have there been previous attempts to solve the problem and what they resulted in?

The responses to the above questions will form a basis for our advocacy campaign. Therefore, the responses need to be clear and evidence-based, not arbitrary and unreliable.

GOAL - This is a general statement of what we specifically want to achieve through advocacy campaign. The goal should be aligned the SMART criteria.

S (specific) + **M** (measurable) + **A** (achievable) + **R** (relevant) + **T** (time-bound)

In module 3 "Project development" you will find the instruction about using the method "The Problem Tree - Solution Tree" which you may use to analyze alternative and connected problems, and select the topic for your campaign. The method will help you to develop the goals of your campaign, once you decide on the topic.



Mini Exercise :
Write and design one campaign using SMART criteria

TARGET GROUPS are the decision makers who we address in the campaign. We should analyze their positions and attitudes, and see how best to approach them and influence decision-making process.

For effective analysis of the target groups (decision-makers), useful tool is the Stakeholders influence map (Image 1).

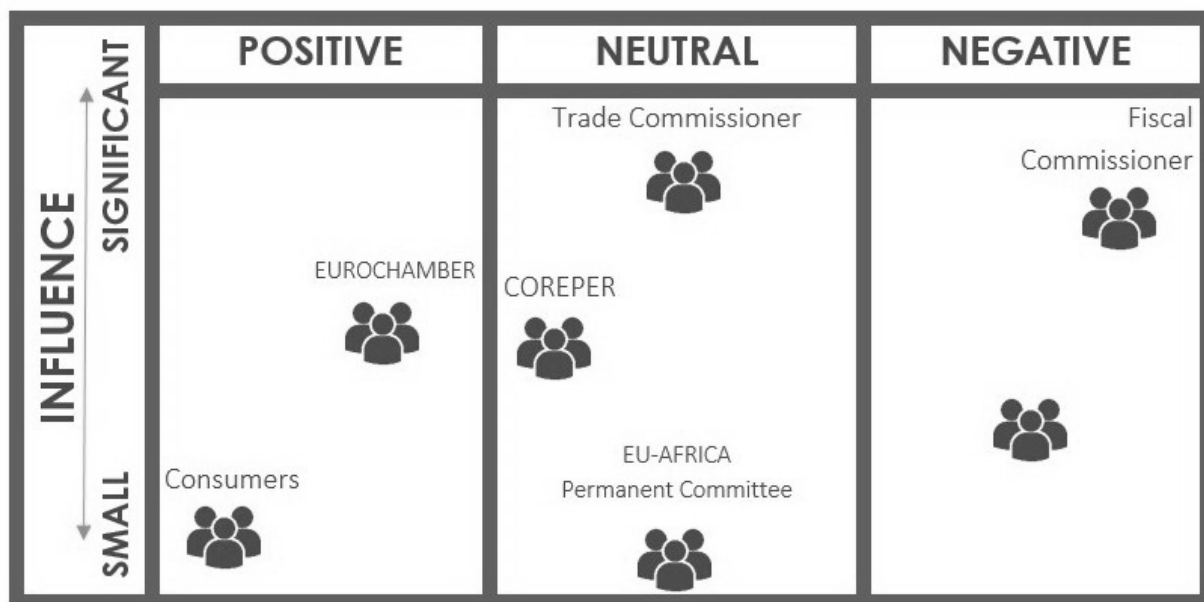


Image 1: Stakeholders influence map

The Stakeholder influence map will indicate the support we have for the campaign, and do we have any opposition. This should inform our planning of campaign and how best to benefit from activities we plan to undertake.

We should use the map in the following way. First of all we will be identifying stakeholder by stakeholder, for who we think may be relevant for our advocacy campaign. Then we should analyze their profile, attitudes and positions vis-à-vis the campaign objectives, and according to what we know about them, we should place them either in the field with stakeholders with positive attitudes, or middle field for stakeholders with neutral attitudes, and in third field for stakeholders with negative attitudes. We will either place them in the bottom of the field if their influence and relevance for the topic is small, or we will put them higher in the field if their influence is greater, or on the top of the field if their influence is crucial. Once we put all the stakeholders on this map,

we will have a clear overview of support and opposition we have for the goals of our campaign. This will better inform our strategic planning of the campaign and decisions.

MESSAGE - The messages will be understood and remembered if planned well and contains 3 key elements:

- information about the problem,
- introduces potential solution in a persuasive way, and
- encourages the target group to take action.

Designing effective message require that following questions are discussed and reflected⁸:

- **What is the point of the message** that we want to bring up? Is it an information, or dissemination or call for action, or something else?
- **What language is appropriate** to use in relation to specific target groups, but also in relation to the point we want to bring up through the message? What language our target group understand and react to?
- **How, when and where to present** / transmit the message? What way is most effective, appropriate and aligned way, method, physical or virtual space?
- And **who should do that?** Should the message come from the beneficiaries, from stakeholder with legitimacy and reputation, or from someone who is popular and present in the media and showbizz, or is famous public figure, or popular politician? Should it come from someone who might create empathy, or someone who provokes?

At the end of this analysis, we need to make sure that message, regardless of the delivery mode and setting, needs to be short and informative in order to be perceived, understood and remembered by the target groups.

According to communication experts, one-minute message containing 4 key segments (introduction statement + proof + example + call for action) is the most effective way of sending out the message:

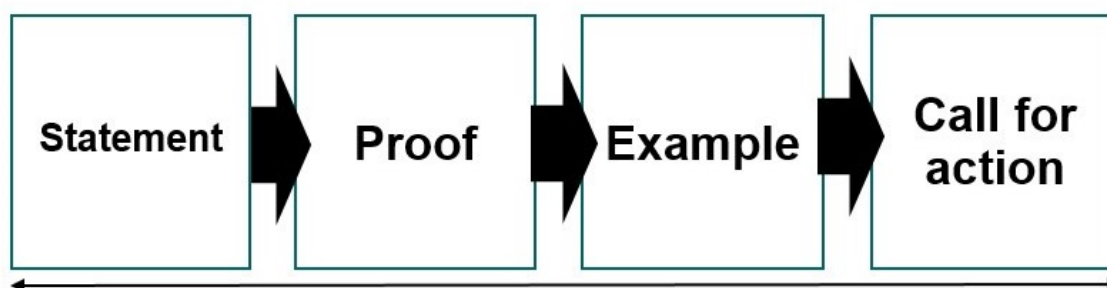


Image 6: 1-minute effective statement

⁸ "Towards Impact Pathways", STREAMING project, Western Balkans Institute Belgrade, 2026

In the first part of the message (introduction segment) we are informing the public about the problem and consequences for target groups. In the next segment, we build on this by introducing the proof. The example from real-world should underline the introduction statement and the proof. At the end we should point out by introducing the call for action.

This refer to both, oral and written statements / messages. Each segment should be of approx. 15 seconds, or equivalent text length.

Example of an effective message might be:

(Introduction statement) *“African food trade sector faces complex challenges that hinder its ability to effectively contribute to food security, economic growth, and poverty alleviation.”* **(Proof)** *“According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, nearly 20% of food produced in sub-Saharan Africa is lost between harvest and market due to inadequate storage, transport, and trade infrastructure. At the same time, the World Bank reports that agriculture employs more than 60% of the region’s workforce, yet productivity and market integration remain significantly below global averages. These figures demonstrate the scale of inefficiencies limiting the sector’s contribution to food security and economic resilience.”* **(Example)** *“In countries like Nigeria, smallholder farmers frequently experience post-harvest losses because of insufficient cold-chain systems and fragmented market access. As a result, farmers lose income, urban consumers face higher prices, and national food systems become more vulnerable to shocks.”* **(Call for action)** *“Therefore STREAMING project is calling governments in Africa to take part in a dialogue established within the STREAMING project and provide matching funds for cascade funding provided by STREAMING project for smallholders in Africa.”*

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS - We will carefully plan how best to reach out to target groups and send out the message, or achieve any other milestone, and what communication channels to use. We will take into account the following communication channels:

- virtual (websites, portals social networks, mobile apps groups such as Viber, Telegraph and WhatsApp groups)
- traditional media (TV, radio and press), and
- public space (streets, squares, parks, billboards and advertising space in physical space such as shopping malls, public busses, taxies, etc.).

Virtual public channels are convenient for publishing the posts and messages which will be illustrated by an image or followed a video. Traditional media are convenient for presenting the statements and policy positions, while the public space is convenient for communication through performances, flash mobs and similar actions, but also to talk to citizens and community members, training and workshops to grow support and empower the supporters, and similar activities.



Mini Exercise :

What communication channels are effective for advocacy and campaigning?

SUPPORT - The success of a campaign often depends on support. The mobilization of like-minded people and groups can be critical in creating effective public pressure on decision-makers. Mobilization of support from various angles of society and wider masses, may be crucial for decision-makers to understand the topic of our advocacy campaign (or a problem we attempt to solve), reflect on alternative solutions, and make decision to make expected change (change of policy or practice).

This support may be active and passive⁹. **Active support** is any form of support where our supporters (stakeholders, impact communities, target groups) engage in promoting our messages, creative active pressure, and thus actively contributing to creating project impacts. **Passive support** refers to support with no active engagement of external supporters, but only passive through provision of letters of support, signing petition, providing writing contribution for the publication, reviewing the policy and position papers, providing a piece of advice, contacts, and thus contributing to the success of our impact strategies.



Task :

Create a list of possible supporters for a campaign you're passionate about

RESOURCES - The campaign planning needs to take into account what resources will be needed, do we have them (or access to them) and how to secure them. Resources include:

- TIME
- KNOWLEDGE
- REPUTATION
- CONTACTS
- INFORMATION
- EQUIPMENT
- SPACE
- FUNDS (MONEY)

⁹ Ibid

Time is something we all need to plan to donate for the campaign. It is free of charge but it is scarce and thus we should respect everyone donating the time for the campaign.



Question :

How long does it take to conduct a campaign in your home town/country?

Knowledge is important in few ways. First of all for planning an effective campaign. This knowledge is also scarce. Second, we might need the knowledge on the topic, which might be needed to prepare the position paper, policy model, communication strategy, negotiation principles with authorities, etc. Thus think how to secure this important resource.

Reputation often goes along with the knowledge. Those who have the knowledge, often also have good reputation. And why is reputation a resource? Well, if you have people with reputation on your side of the table, it will be easier to grow public support for your case, but also easier to persuade the decision-makers that your solution will solve the problems your campaign is drawing attention to.



Question :

Which is important? Reputation or knowledge? Or a combination of both? Explain it from your local context.

Contacts often goes along with the reputation and knowledge. Those who have the knowledge and good reputation, often also have contacts. And contacts might be needed to create a network of support for your campaign, to get to your side people with knowledge and reputation and provide for services and resources your campaign might need. And also for growing the public support for your campaign and your objectives.

Information might be essential for the success of your campaign. General information are needed to inform the planners of campaign. Specific information, for example about who among decision makers is like-minded, may be crucial for providing support among decision-makers.



Mini Exercise :
What are reliable sources that could be used to gather information for a campaign in your area?

Equipment might be needed such as laptops, flip charts (for training), speakers and mixtape (for rallies and street actions), etc. We may borrow the equipment, or it may be provided by the partners supporting us.

Space might also be needed for campaign, for example for the meetings, training, workshop, etc. We may borrow it or have it for use from the partners supporting us.



Mini Exercise :
Are campaigns effective under a 'mugumo/acacia tree' as in informal settings or do they thrive in formal settings i.e conference halls? Why/Why not?

Funds are most difficult to secure. However community members are often willing to financially support campaigns if they see the value and believe in your solution.



Question :
Do financially supported campaigns change course or become part of the very same thing they are advocating against? If so, how could this be mitigated?

ACTIVITIES - The choice of activities and their setting depends on other elements of the campaign - resources, profile of target groups, other important circumstances beyond the campaign e.g. the period of the election campaign can be a perfect moment to launch the campaign and communicate with the parties about their policies and practice. However, if the election campaign is dominated by some serious social problem that burdens the society, our topic will probably not gain expected attention and will be in the shadow of that bigger problem.

Activities are best presented in the form of an action plan, as in the table below.

Objective of advocacy campaign:					
Activities	When?	Where?	Who?	Resources needed	Indicators of progress

This table should help us to manage the campaign activity by activity. For each activity we need to define when and where, by who, what resources are needed, and what indicators will we monitor to know if we are succeeding or we need to reconsider and redesign the campaign.

EVIDENCE-BASED - Campaign planning should be based on evidence and not on gut feeling, intuition and unreliable estimates. Some of the sources that we can use in planning the campaign: official reports and statements, research reports, interviews from the press, pools, media content, NGO reports and findings from the field work, etc.

MONITORING & EVALUATION - A well-planned campaign will include progress indicators on the basis of which will campaign success be monitored and evaluated. Indicators numerical or descriptive, should inform us whether the activities are going according to the action plan. Indicators should be simplified and defined in such a way that they are clear to us and that progress in the implementation of activities can be seen in them and easily measured.

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https://youth.europa.eu/strategy_en

- UNDP – *Youth Advocacy Toolkit*
https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2024-06/a_638465072881174770.pdf

- “What is Civic Engagement?”
<https://youth.gov/youth-topics/civic-engagement-and-volunteering>

Videos

- Civic Engagement Explained (YouTube)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zNR5ZB3ApdU>
- How Advocacy Works (YouTube)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NnOk2tTz468>

Tools

- Google Docs (collaborative writing)
<https://docs.google.com>
- Trello (task management)
<https://trello.com>
- Miro (brainstorming & mapping stakeholders)
<https://miro.com>
- Canva (advocacy visuals & campaigns)
<https://www.canva.com>