How to design a policy influence plan?

Toolkit Nº5

Who should we work with.
Define actors and alliances

This toolkit is part of a series addressing the various components of a public policy influence plan.

Once the influence objectives have been established, the organization will be able to move towards the third step: it is necessary to identify the involved stakeholders with those objectives and, according to their power and interests, think about possible alliances among them.

For this, two basic questions may be asked:
- Who will be allies in the changes that are sought to be made?
- Who will block the proposed objectives?

To answer these questions, it is useful to make an a stakeholder´s map or analysis.

1	Diagnostic
2	Objectives
3	Actors and alliances
4	Proposal
5	Strategies and actions
6	Communication plan
7	Resources and timeline
8	Monitoring
9	Evaluation

Useful Tool

Stakeholder´s map or analysis	
It consists in clearly identifying all the involved stakeholders that have interests and / or resources that can affect or be affected by the changes promoted by the organization.	
Advantages	• It allows to detect potential allies and opponents as well as stakeholders that share interests but who are not aligned with the proposals of the organizations, and stakeholders who do not know much about the issue, but who support the organization´s initiatives in general. • It reflects the power level of each stakeholder according to their resources and the needs and interests of the interested parties in the change (Weaving global networks, 2006).
To take into account	Think about those stakeholders with whom different works have been carried out on other occasions. It is convenient to identify those stakeholders who have real capacity for decision making and carrying out changes. Try to be as specific as possible in the definition of the stakeholder, try to identify concrete people within involved institutions or agencies (for example, think about ministers, advisors, political party leaders or journalists and not about ministries or organizations). To carry out the stakeholder analysis, **the force field analysis can be used**[1]: it is highly probable that some stakeholders who are in favor or against the change be strongly involved with interests and resources of the other identified stakeholders (Weaving global networks, 2006).
How is it implemented?	In Figure 1 we present an example of the information that should be specified when drafting a stakeholder's map. 1) Point out the **levels** in which each stakeholder operates and makes decisions (global, regional, national, and local). 2) List the **involved actors**, according to the levels previously identified. 3) Reflect about the **interests** that make stakeholders relevant and important in relation to the organization´s objective. 4) Identify the resources that the stakeholders have (from material resources to knowledge, information access, contacts, etc). Finally, think about the resources that may give us an idea of the level of power of each stakeholder in order to drive or block the change that the organization wants to carry out. According to Mintzberg (1992), power sources may be very diverse (legal authority, knowledge, moral authority, technical skills, etc.) and they grow as they become more essential and irreplaceable for all the involved stakeholders (Weaving global networks, 2006). Besides, power can be classified into levels: high, medium, low.

1   See **Toolkit N° 4: What we desire. Define influence objetives**

Figure 1. Stakeholder´s map or analysis

POLICY GOAL: TO PROMOTE BUDGET ALLOCATION TO HIV PREVENTION TRAININGS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE				
LEVEL	**STAKEHOLDER**	**INTEREST/NEED**	**RESOURCES**	**POWER**
Global	International organisations UNICEF UNAIDS	National governments' engagement the rights of every child are realized Convince governments to implement global AIDS responses for HIV prevention CSO engagement in monitoring policies	Budget (cosponsors) Reputation and public recognition Links with CSOs and policymakers at the national level Knowledge Access to policymakers	High
Regional	African network of researchers involved in HIV prevention	Promote the use of evidence in policies for HIV prevention	Knowledge about HIV prevention strategies in the region Capacity to convene African policymakers Credibility	Medium
	Asian advocacy network focused on promoting children rights	Ensure fulfillment of children rights Visibility of the HIV-AIDS threat for youth	Alliances with a wide array of local CSOs Reputation Access to most important national media	Medium
Local	Executive Power	Gain more votes among youth population	Budget	High
	Parliament	Gain more votes among youth population	Officially in charge of budget approval, but with low actual role	Medium
	National Ministry of Health	Increase budget Prevent wide HIV dissemination	Local knowledge Staff specialized in delivering courses on the topic Good access to Executive Power	High
	National Ministry of Education	Increase budget Implement youth targeted policies	Local knowledge Access to schools Relative access to Executive Power	Medium
	CSOs fighting against HIV-AIDS	Strengthen prevention activities Influence local policymakers	Access to community based organisations, schools and health care centers	Low
	CSOs promoting young people's rights	Strengthen promotion of youth rights Influence local policymakers	Access to national media Credibility	Low

Source: Weaving global networks (2006)

Recognizing stakeholders on the web

Apart from being useful to communication[2], web 2.0 tools can also be used to obtained information about other stakeholders working on the issues related to the proposed influence objectives. Involving and interacting in virtual spaces where there are discussions and sharing information interesting for the organization, actively following web sites or social media accounts of decision-makers and other relevant stakeholders, and establishing virtual communication channels are some of the strategies that can contribute to creating a more complete stakeholder´s map. Some relevant 2.0 tools are: Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin, virtual fora or blogs.

To recognize the power that each of the identified stakeholders has and how they are aligned or not with the organization´s influence objective, it is also valuable to use the following diagram:

Figure 2. Diagram of stakeholders in favor or against the influence objective
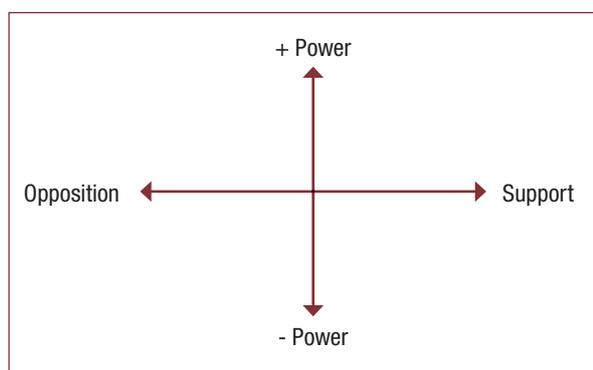
Elaborated by CIPPEC, based on Save the children (2007)

Probably, the time and available resources that the organization has may not be sufficient to develop the links with all the stakeholders identified in the map. Therefore, it is fundamental to prioritize the work with those stakeholders that are more important in relation to the objective (either because they have more power or skills to provide a greater possibility of reaching the organizations' objective) or to those that are more accessible in order to establish contacts and concrete the effort in actions that involve them.

Finally, once the relevant stakeholders for the objectives are chosen, it will be possible to define the strategy to follow with each of the actors involved (available in **Toolkit Nº7: How to carry out the proposal. Define strategies and actions**) and prioritize those that need to be highly emphasized from the communicational point of view (available in **Toolkit Nº8: What will be the message. Design the communication plan**).

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2   See **Toolkit N° 8: Which will be the message. Design the communication plan**

To continue searching!

Reading recommendations by CIPPEC´s Civil Society Directorate to design an influence plan

- *Weaving global networks. Handbook for policy influence.* CIPPEC, 2006, pages 73-75. Available at www.vippal.cippec.org.
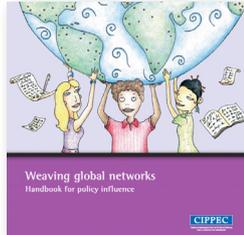
- *Advocacy Matters: Helping children change their world. An International Save the Children Alliance guide to advocacy,* Save the Children, 2007, pages 85-87. Available at www.savethechildren.org.uk.
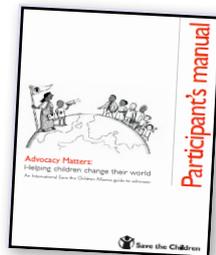
In Spanish:
- *Manual para la Facilitación de Procesos de Incidencia Política,* A. Mc- Kinley y P. Baltazar, *(Handbook for Policy Influence Processes)* Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) and Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA) 2005, pages 109-124. Available at www.wola.org.

Next Toolkit:
How to generate the desired impact. Define the proposal

Other guides from the series:

How to design a policy influence plan?

Toolkit Nº 1.
What is an influence plan. Why should we plan.

Toolkit Nº 2.
The policy making process. Analyze the context for effective influence planning.

Toolkit Nº 3.
Where are we and how far can we go. Identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges.

Toolkit Nº 4.
What we desire. Define influence objectives.

Toolkit Nº 5.
Who should we work with. Define actors and alliances.

Toolkit Nº 6.
How to generate the desired impact. Define the proposal.

Toolkit Nº 7.
How to carry out the proposal. Define strategies and actions.

Toolkit Nº 8.
How to communicate. Define the strategy and key messages.

Toolkit Nº 9.
Who, how much and when. Define resources and timeline.

Toolkit Nº 10.
What have we learned? An approximation to monitoring and evaluation of policy influence.

Other series:

How can we monitor and evaluate policy influence?

Tools for policy influence

Available at www.vippal.cippec.org

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